

China Policy Study Group

BROADSHEET

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NEW VICTORY, FRESH TASKS

For the peoples of the African continent, and particularly Southern Africa, the political choices are much greater now than they were just a few years ago. It is in white-dominated Southern Africa that the change is most remarkable. In large areas those who had been denied any semblance of a share in power and the rich natural resources have within their grasp the right to decide what happens in their countries, including how to deal with new threats to them from within and without. They, the masses, have helped to make new African history. In Mozambique and Angola (as in Guinea Bissau farther north) they have through revolutionary organisation and armed struggle liberated themselves from colonial rule, while in Zimbabwe they have forced Ian Smith's backers in Pretoria, London and elsewhere to retreat, after years of British government and U.N. 'sanctions' had proved ineffective.

The rulers of South Africa, bastion of racism and colonialism, have taken alarm. Vorster realises that he is not dealing with people for whom the refined enjoyment of seeing white South Africans play rugby or cricket outweighs the daily torture of hundreds of thousands of black South Africans. In South Africa itself and in Namibia (which Vorster has been allowed to turn into a new colony), the masses are increasingly realising that it is only by their own collective efforts and armed struggle that they can create an order in which there is freedom and dignity. Guerillas have been reported to be active. The achievements of the aroused people in Southern Africa, where the continent's industry and mining is most

developed, constitute the new factor which has made the enemies of national liberation and revolutionary struggle rack their brains, in the hope of hitting on a new tactic for outwitting the 'backward' Africans. Vorster has been getting a good press lately because he has been trying hard, by diplomacy, to outflank his enemies politically, before, in South Africa itself, the arms and other hardware of repression supplied by Britain and France become ineffective against a politically conscious working class and the Bantustans turn into bases of armed resistance.

The workers of Britain and other Western European countries have been led for years by organisations which have made them forget that only when the workers of the world and the oppressed peoples rise in revolution will imperialism be overthrown. Far from backing the struggles of the oppressed peoples of Southern Africa, they have ignored and even despised them. The revolutionary proletariat looks at the world with eyes very different from those of the reactionaries or even of petty-bourgeois liberals. While conservatives and liberals and revisionists saw only a backward Africa which the 'advanced' countries could control, patronise or manipulate, Chou En-lai, in his famous address in Mogadishu in 1964, spoke respectfully to the African people from the vantage point of the revolutionary experience of another Third World country:

The dark days when the imperialists could carve up Africa at will are gone. No barriers built by the imperialists and old and new colonialists can check the historical currents of the national independence movements in Africa.

The awakened and fighting African peoples will certainly win complete victory in their struggles for national liberation so long as they heighten their vigilance, close their ranks, persist in struggles and dare to seize victory. No matter how tortuous the road of struggle and how long the struggle, an independent new Africa free from imperialism and old and new colonialism will certainly emerge; a prosperous new Africa with an advanced economy and advanced culture will certainly emerge. In the cause of creating a new human civilisation, the African peoples who have created a glorious ancient civilisation will certainly leave far behind the Western civilisation which was based on colonial rule over the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The haste with which Lisbon and Pretoria, and the 'big' powers and their allies, are pressing for a detente in Southern Africa may for a time confuse some people who fought to defeat Portuguese colonialism. It is clear, and will become clearer, that the neocolonialism of the superpowers is aiming to disarm, literally and politically, the African revolutionaries, who still have a task to finish. The blandishments of Vorster and his collaborators should make the intended victims think about their next step. Whether the masses are still to be relied upon, after the old colonialism is overthrown, or whether the new leaders should depend on deals made, behind the backs of the revolutionaries, with Vorster, Smith, Callaghan and others is a fundamental political issue. The way in which it is resolved will decide the class character of the independent economies and societies of Southern Africa.

THE OVERALL LEADERSHIP OF THE PARTY

Since Liberation the Chinese people have worked hard to transform their country, and have made rapid progress, not just in a few things but in all important sectors, and in every part of the country: in the factories and mines; in irrigation, crop cultivation and other aspects of agriculture; in developing a new system of socialist commerce; in education, science and the arts; in the government of communes, municipalities, provinces and

the country as a whole; in building revolutionary mass organisations of workers, poor peasants, women and youth; and in organising armed forces to defend their achievements. There is also the Communist Party of China. It, too, has made big and important advances. In Party committees, as in factories, production brigades and shops, and in the government of provinces, the ablest men and women from among the workers and

peasants are now in Revolutionary Committees, giving sound and vigorous leadership. But now that China is a country in which the producers are taking on the responsibilities of socialist leadership in production and the state, has the main task of the C.P.C. not been accomplished? During the years of revolutionary struggle, before Liberation and the socialisation of the economy were achieved, the Party was a more important sphere of work than any other. Today, however, should the Party organisation function on the same level as the Revolutionary Committees in industry, the trade unions and government? Should it continue training and organising C.P.C. members, doing theoretical work in Marxism, and guiding and influencing the course of events in China?

Chinese Marxists, following Mao Tse-tung, answer emphatically that through its Party the proletariat must continue to give unified leadership to work going on in all sectors, for the vast and complex revolutionary task it has begun is far from completed. Wang Hung-wen, in his report on the new Party Constitution at the C.P.C.'s Tenth National Congress, explained: 'It is laid down in the articles that state organs, the People's Liberation Army and revolutionary mass organisations "must all accept the centralised leadership of the Party". First, as regards the relationship between various organisations at the same level, "of all the seven sectors—industry, agriculture, commerce, culture and education, the Army, the government and the Party—it is the Party that exercises overall leadership"; the Party is not parallel to the others and still less is under the leadership of any other.' At the same Congress Chou En-lai, for twenty-four years the head of the government, was just as emphatic about the Party's centralised leadership. Local Party committees have been putting the principle into practice. On 1 July last year, the C.P.C.'s 53rd anniversary, the *People's Daily* editorial, 'The Party Exercises Overall Leadership', encouraged fresh study and observance of the principle. This was followed by other leading articles in *Red Flag* and some provincial papers.

The actual powers and responsibilities of the Party Central Committee, and of the National People's Congress which met recently illustrate the practice of Party leadership. The highest central government organ, the State Council, is directly accountable to the N.P.C., the highest organ of state, and its Standing Committee; the state is the instrument through which the ruling class, the proletariat, exercises its dictatorship (*Constitution*, Chapter One, Articles 1, 2, 8, 9, 10 and 11, Chapter Two, Section 1, Article 17), and it is subject in practice to the C.P.C. Central Committee, the central Party organ of the class. Chang Chun-chiao explained at the Fourth N.P.C.'s 1st Session how the revisions in the State Constitution would 'certainly help strengthen the Party's centralised leadership over the structure of the state and meet the desire of the people of the whole country'.

The C.P.C. as the 'Core' of Leadership'

The Party, according to the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, is 'the core of leadership of the whole Chinese people. The working class exercises leadership over the state through its vanguard, the C.P.C. Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung Thought is the theoretical basis guiding the thinking of the nation'. The preamble says, 'We must adhere to the basic line and policies of the C.P.C. for the entire historical period of socialism'.

The leaders of the National People's Congress, the Premier and Vice-Premiers, the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Provincial Revolutionary Committees, must be people who adhere to the basic line and policies of the Party, not those who win in a power struggle or a popularity contest. Clearly, no one who is known to be a 'pragmatist' or to have reservations about following Marx, Lenin and Mao or to favour benevolence towards class enemies and imperialists would be allowed to hold any of

these key posts. The armed forces are commanded by the Chairman of the Central Committee, and are directed by two members of the Central Committee's Political Bureau. In communes and cities, in factories and production brigades, the Party Committee is separate from the Revolutionary Committee, and Communists form the core of the R.C. leadership.

It may seem as if the Communists in China are monopolising the leading positions. They are a minority. However good they are, will their special position not stifle the initiative of others, encourage repression and intolerance, and give rise to bureaucracy? Indeed, while they may be good Marxists, are they the best people to get on with the jobs that need to be done?

To some, insistence on Communist Party leadership may seem unjustified when there is a 'Red' premier as head of government who seriously believes that the *primary* task of the people of all nationalities in China in 1975 is 'to continue to broaden, deepen and persevere in the movement to criticise Lin Piao and Confucius' and who reports to the N.P.C. that ambitious plans for the development of the country's economy will succeed 'only when we do well in revolution'. The continuing and intensifying class struggle, the campaigns for busy administrators, workers and peasants to give valuable time and attention to the study of Marx, Lenin and Mao, the requirement that indispensable office workers (including ministers of state) should engage regularly in collective productive labour, the persistent

MOBILISING CONFUCIUS

When delegates gathered in Taipeh for the Pacific-Asian Conference of Municipalities, each was presented with a statue of Confucius, 18 in. high. According to the *New York Times* (8 November 1974) the Taiwan 'government' believes that the movement to criticise Confucius will 'baffle many foreigners and perhaps win Taiwan increased support'.

campaigns against the political and cultural domination of the bourgeoisie—all features of the Marxist-Leninist line—may, in combination, seem most undemocratic. For freedoms considered fundamental by many people in the West are denied. Some outside China are also anxious about the C.P.C.'s 'privileged' position when they recall that in the past those who claimed to act as Communists have sometimes, elsewhere, carried out the most cruel and oppressive policies, or condoned them. But, these anxieties apart, all such objections to the C.P.C.'s 'monopoly' of leadership as we have referred to are based on assumptions about benevolent and democratic government under bourgeois rule which are not shared by the vast majority of non-Party leaders in China. To ask that the political Party of the working class as a whole should share leadership of the Chinese Revolution with other parties, or that it should cease to exercise dictatorship through its state, based on the worker-peasant alliance, over the bourgeoisie, is to object, whether from the 'left' or the right, on behalf of the bourgeoisie, and not of the workers, poor peasants and soldiers who have been in the forefront of the struggle against imperialism, the Kuomintang, revisionism and Confucianism.

China is a country in which the Communist Manifesto, Marx's *The Critique of the Gotha Programme* and Lenin's works are widely studied. The workers and peasants see the C.P.C. as their own Party, and have given it the strength and life it has. They would agree with Lenin:

'The proletariat needs state power, the centralised organisation of force, the organisation of violence, both to crush the resistance of the exploiters and to lead the enormous mass of the population—the peasantry, the petty-bourgeoisie, the semi-proletarians—in the work of organising socialist economy.

'By educating the workers' party, Marxism educates the vanguard of the proletariat which is capable of assuming power

and of leading the whole people to Socialism, of directing and organising the new order, of being the teacher, the guide and leader of all the toilers and exploited in the task of building up their social life without the bourgeoisie and against the bourgeoisie'.

(*The State and Revolution*, F.L.P., Peking, p. 30)

From what they have learned in several decades of struggle, the masses in China know how true this is. For them the proletarian vanguard is not a bureaucracy or an elite which has to be got rid of. The political party of the proletariat is not a bureaucracy, unless it degenerates and becomes transformed into its opposite, a stronghold of the bourgeoisie.

Oppressed Masses as Revolutionaries

It was Mao Tse-tung's line of work which came to be decisive for the Revolution. The tight discipline and hard training of the vanguard was achieved by their paying close and constant attention to the well-being, the immense revolutionary enthusiasm, and the criticism of the masses. This policy was designed to strengthen the worker-peasant alliance under proletarian leadership, to lead the oppressed in their millions to throw themselves into the revolutionary struggle and revolutionary war against the oppressors. In the Kiangsi Soviet area policy was based on the principles emphasised in, for example, Mao's *Pay Attention to Economic Work and Be Concerned with the Well-being of the Masses, Pay Attention to Methods of Work*. The revolutionary vanguard could not be a mass organisation; but as 'the revolutionary war is a war of the masses', it had to rely on and serve them—that is, the labouring people in factories and transport, in the fields and at sea, in homes, offices and classrooms, and even those with no share in the means of production and livelihood. For it is the people who are the makers of history.

In the Yen-an period and later the bookish Marxism, the warlord and bureaucratic style of leadership, the idealism which gave rise to sectarianism and subjectivism, had to be corrected. These were vividly analysed in *Rectify the Party's Style of Work* and other documents of the Rectification Campaign of 1942-44, which went a long way to correcting tendencies which elsewhere led to Communists being identified with cruel and oppressive policies and being corrupted by bourgeois ideology. There was disciplined study of Marxism in relation to the practice of revolutionary work in specifically Chinese conditions, and relentless criticism and self-criticism among erring leaders. The C.P.C. as a whole was never isolated from the masses. It came to use the methods, particularly that of the mass line, described in *Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership*, in order to engage correctly in revolutionary practice; it learnt how to give workers and peasants the kind of leadership of which Marx and Lenin wrote. In withdrawing into the countryside in order to surround and then take the cities, the working class vanguard, though small in numbers, had learnt how to forge the alliance with peasant revolutionaries. It was a basically correct Party which, because of its excellent political work, led the Chinese people to victory in 1949.

Mao had made clear that the revolutionary vigour of the C.P.C. depended mainly on the working class. In 1950 he told the Party, 'attention must be paid to drawing politically conscious workers into the Party systematically, expanding the percentage of workers in the Party organisation.' The 12th Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee called on the revolutionary classes and all revolutionaries to observe the principle of working class leadership, and resolved to step up recruiting into the C.P.C. 'advanced elements with Communist consciousness from among the industrial workers'. Millions of class conscious and politically experienced workers, poor and lower-middle peasants, soldiers, women, minority nationals and youth have joined the Party; new basic level Party organisations have been formed in factories, production brigades, shops, schools and neighbourhoods all over the country. The Party has

become more deeply proletarian than ever before, and consequently more able to accelerate the revolutionary transformation of agriculture, industry and the superstructure. The mass of the people are not passively 'the led'. They are actively involved when applicants for Party membership have to show that they fulfil the five basic requirements laid down in Chapter II, Article 3, of the C.P.C. Constitution.

Towards the abolition of all classes

Marx wrote of the first attempt to set up the dictatorship of the proletariat, 'The working class know that they have to pass through different phases of class struggle'. The working class in China knows this, too. Its Party has inspired workers, peasants, soldiers and students to dare to think, to dare to speak out and to dare to act, and to go on doing it as every new task and challenge looms. The great upsurge of the Cultural Revolution, the formation of the Revolutionary Committees, the initiatives which are being taken in class struggle, production and scientific discovery all over the country, the extensive democracy of public debate and *dazibao* criticising leaders—all this is the result of Party leadership. It is out of this democracy and struggle that unity representing all the revolutionary forces is achieved. To weaken Party leadership is to threaten the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Socialist Revolution has been going on in a society formed by thousands of years of class exploitation and oppression, and by the division of labour under imperialism in the modern era. One consequence of this is that the construction of a new socialist order begins while features of the old exploiting society still persist. They exist among workers in the cities, peasants in the rural areas, women in their homes, people living in separate national and cultural groups even within one state, intellectuals in universities, soldiers in remote frontier posts, and so on. Socialism (or what Marx called, in *The Civil War in France*, 'the superseding of the economical conditions of the slavery of labour by the conditions of free and associated labour') cannot be built by coercion of the producers. With people in different brigades, factories, municipalities, provinces exercising initiatives, there arise contradictions which have to be handled correctly. Particular interests have to be related to general ones, local to national and international, everyday tasks to long-term goals, agriculture to industry, production to government, the promotion of greater opportunities for women to the deepening of proletarian class consciousness, the safeguarding of proletarian state power in China and elsewhere to the easing of international tensions. These are vast and complex problems for the revolutionary proletariat, requiring a distinctive approach, analysis and method of work. Even to state all this is to raise many questions which there is no room even to attempt to answer.

Unlike all previous revolutions, this one can be carried out only by the people of the world, the vast majority, working together. The Socialist Revolution is protracted and difficult, but it is a combined task. The Party enables the people in every unit and situation to think, make policy and organise on revolutionary lines, enables them to fight the counter-attacks of the enemy which will come at every stage, and identifies the line of policy which will unite all the struggles, and connect one stage with the next. It is the nature of the task during the long period of transition to communism that makes it necessary for the proletariat to continue to give leadership and unity through its political party.

ARROGANCE AND IGNORANCE

When the Allende government was in office in Chile Mr. Kissinger stated 'I don't see why we need to stand by and watch a country go Communist due to the irresponsibility of its own people.' Mr. Kissinger specialises in saving people from Communism, but doesn't know what it is.

TO OUR READERS

George Thomson's new book, *The Human Essence*, is now available, price 70p. Please send orders, with payment, to C.P.S.G. Books, 41 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1, not to the BROADSHEET office. Well over 1,000 copies have already been sold and we warmly recommend it to all who are interested in the sources of science and art and in a discussion, in Marxist terms, of the place of science and art in modern life. It will make you think!

Donations and costs

During the last quarter of 1974 we received the very good total of £55 in donations. Towards the end of the year many subscribers send in renewals and we thank all those who added a gift. Please continue to do so.

New postal charges go into effect from this month. We do not yet know the increase in overseas rates, but the inland postal rates for second class mail are to increase by 57 per cent!

The best way of helping BROADSHEET is to increase circulation. With the new Constitution marking another step along the road to Communism, events in China are, as we know from our readers, of interest all over the world. We are especially keen to increase our circulation in Africa and South America, but new subscribers from any part of the world will be welcome. See what you can do. If you will send us names and addresses of friends who are potential subscribers we will send them free copies for three months.

Correction

Owing to hasty editing there was an incorrect formulation in the article *The Impetus of Ideology* in our February issue. The passage in question (near the top of page 2) should have read: 'The principle contradiction the oil workers had to solve was not that between the primitive material conditions and the possibilities of the socialist way; it was between developing by capitalist methods or by following the socialist method of reliance on class struggle, with the working class in the lead.'

At the bottom of the same column, the quantity of grain reaped in 1973 should have been 310 tons and of vegetables 875 tons. We are sorry about these mistakes.

THE CHINA POLICY STUDY GROUP

ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT IN CHINA, by Joan Robinson. Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding, price 30p.

First issued in 1972, this booklet has now been amended in some respects and a postscript added following Professor Robinson's latest visit to China, in the summer of last year.

In the postscript she summarises the changes in emphasis which she noticed in China since 1972. The relatively relaxed atmosphere at that time was followed by a certain drift to the right. In the middle of 1974 she found a return to the left in full swing. She points out that according to Mao Tse-tung one should not look forward to the achievement of a final 'correct' balance. 'As every set of problems is solved, other problems emerge.'

The pamphlet is essential reading for those interested in China's economy. It should be ordered from The Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding, 152 Camden High Street, London, N.W.1.

CHINA'S SOCIALIST REVOLUTION, by Elsie and John Collier. Monthly Review Press, price \$8.95.

We also welcome the publication of an American edition of this book, which was reviewed in BROADSHEET in July 1974. It is an account of the experiences of two English people who were directly involved in the Cultural Revolution.

COMMENT

The following comments on Socialist Community Life, in our January issue, are from a member of the China Policy Study Group at present in China.

It treated the Neighbourhood Committees very comprehensively; but, and this I'm aware is the most difficult thing about reporting Chinese phenomena of this kind, there is a social function of the Neighbourhood Committees which goes beyond the services provided. How shall I put it? It preserves the community against the alienation of urbanisation as we know it. It preserves the human, person-to-person contact and relationship that nourishes mutual responsibility, and nourishes it not only because of the ethic encouraged but also because it is a unit working together, with all relationships interacting at a self-manageable level. This is the direct opposite of the alienation which causes so much anguish in our cities and our society. So while the structure and framework operate to assume responsibility (the welfare state does too to some extent) and encourage mutual help, there is no isolation within the unit, no one is alone, uncared for and forgotten, biting his nails and wondering who he is and why.

This isn't a criticism of the article, really; it is just my way of trying to understand the social structure here, or rather the social texture—which always eludes any words I can find and which I pursue because it seems to be an essence permeating the society, made up of intangibles that are very difficult to communicate.

The Neighbourhood Committees seem to me to be a remarkable form of social organisation, as important in their way as the Communes on quite a different level. Also, of course, it is a form of organisation which stretches the protective state umbrella over all who are not in the larger units—factories, state organisations, etc.—that is, retired people, housewives not at work for one reason or another, etc.

A MODERN CANUTE

The attentions which were showered on Mr. Harold Wilson in the Soviet Union remind one that in his Guildhall speech on 15 November 1965 he said:

In the last resort the struggle for the soul of Asia is a struggle for economic success between democratic methods of which India, with her 400 millions, is an outstanding example, and the Communist way represented by China and those whom she seeks to subvert. And in this war there can be no neutrals. Or if there could, Britain cannot be amongst them.

Mr. Wilson would hardly venture to make such a comparison with India today, but the lack of any progress in relations between Britain and China is evidence that his basic opinion has not changed. Others may learn from history, but not Harold Wilson.

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