

China Policy Study Group

BROADSHEET

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TRIUMPH OF PEOPLE'S WAR

The sweeping advance of the people of South Vietnam, under the leadership of their National Liberation Front, has brought into sharp focus the colossal defeat which the Indochinese are inflicting on U.S. imperialism and its allies and puppets. After two years of trying to get Saigon to respect the Paris agreements of 1973, the South Vietnamese have acted. In province after province they have destroyed the massive political and military apparatus of repression set up in violation of the Paris accords. The writ of the Provisional Revolutionary Government extends over an ever-expanding area.

In neighbouring Cambodia, where the superpowers and other imperialist forces shamelessly began trying to make new friends even before their 'government' was finally defeated, the people's armed forces have written into history one of the greatest victories ever won over imperialism by its victims. As the anti-imperialist forces celebrate this triumph, they will also humbly learn from the Cambodian revolutionaries.

The policy of the Vietnamese—relying primarily on their own efforts, seizing the initiative, engaging in political work and armed struggle to liberate their country—has been justified. They were not daunted when the U.S., to prevent the Paris Agreements from taking effect, gave Thieu the fourth largest air force in the world, with vast stocks of bombs, guns and napalm, made illegal reconnaissance flights over liberated territory, sent military advisers to Saigon, and conducted a chorus of hostile propaganda.

The liberation forces have rejected the principles of compromise and surrender implicit in 'detente'. They have not won the battle in the conference chamber, but in the field. They have not defeated one tyranny in order to hand themselves over to another; social-imperialism will not take over from imperialism.

Yet while we confidently await the final overthrow of neocolonial Saigon, we remember that the U.S. government still has to be made to respect the demand of the peoples of Asia for all imperialisms to get out completely. The final defeat of imperialism and social-imperialism is still to come and the three Indochinese peoples are showing it can be accomplished.

CHINA'S CLASS STRUGGLE

People often ask 'What is the guarantee that, as the country's economy improves and standards of living rise, China will not succumb to the blandishments of the so-called "affluent" society and become less "socialist"? Will she not go the way of the Soviet Union?' they ask. One important aspect of this question is the continued existence of 'bourgeois right' during the period of socialism, and its relation to the tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In March 1949, Mao Tse-tung warned, 'There may be some Communists who were not conquered by enemies with guns and were worthy of the name of heroes in standing up to those enemies, but who cannot withstand sugar-coated bullets; they will be defeated by sugar-coated bullets'. Twenty-six years later the problem of bourgeois hang-ups and the social bases for revisionist ideas which still persist in a socialist society is being sharply posed in China: 'Regarding bourgeois rights as something natural and reasonable, getting used to them, even enjoying them—these are the very things that get people entangled in bourgeois conventions'. (*Read and study seriously*, by Chen Yueh, *Red Flag* No. 3, 75, and *People's Daily*, 4 March 75.)

The Chinese people have recently deepened still further their study of the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat. 'This question must be thoroughly understood', said Mao Tse-tung. 'Lack of clarity on this question will lead to revisionism'. The fact that these issues are now being discussed on such a scale across the length and breadth of the country is a measure of the political maturity of the Chinese workers, peasants, soldiers and students.

With this latest development in China, the divergence between the paths taken by the Soviet Union and China becomes even wider. In the Soviet Union, a group of people with the characteristics of a class by Lenin's definition, have usurped power and reduced to a meaningless form the dictatorship of the proletariat. He said:

Classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production, by

their role in the social organisation of labour, and, consequently, by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it. Classes are groups of people one of which can appropriate the labour of another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social economy.

In China the law of contradiction—that one is always dividing into two—is at every stage applied to social conditions and political and economic development. Bourgeois forms not yet eliminated in the period of transition are exposed, their social basis analysed and people's minds orientated towards suppressing them stage by stage.

A comprehensive and penetrating analysis of the difficulties and contradictions which faced the Bolshevik Party after the seizure of power and up to the death of Lenin is now available to us in the recent work of Charles Bettelheim.* His material is invaluable not only in explaining the situation in the U.S.S.R. and the roots from which revisionism has grown but also in throwing light on the struggle in China since 1949 against similar policies and practices which would have led the country along a revisionist road. Bettelheim observes:

Soviet experience confirms that the most difficult thing is not the overthrow of the old ruling class; the most difficult is, first of all, to wipe out the old social relationships—on whose basis may be reconstituted a new system of exploitation similar to the one which was thought to have been overthrown once and for all—and then to prevent the reconstitution of these relationships from among certain old elements which continue to exist for a long time within the new social relationships. (p. 15)

In March 1949, Mao Tse-tung commented: 'The Chinese Revolution is great, but the road after the Revolution will be longer, the work greater and more arduous'. Mao was speaking as Liberation was coming into view. The Communist Party had behind it the experience of the Long March—'a manifesto, a propaganda force, a seeding-machine'—and thirteen years governing

* *Les Luttes de Classes en URSS—1917-1923*, Paris (Seuil/Maspero) 1974. An English version is not yet available, but an extended review by Paul Sweezy has appeared in *Monthly Review*, Nov. 74, Jan. 75.

a large area and a population of millions in North China. They had also the Russian Revolution of 1917 from which to learn. The salvos of the November Revolution brought Marxism to China.

In both China and the Soviet Union the question of the class struggle after the seizure of power has been a cardinal issue.

Stalin in 1930 (XVIth Congress) poured scorn on 'Bukharin's childish formula about the capitalist elements peacefully growing into socialism' and called the Party's attention to the wrecking activities of the top stratum of bourgeois intellectuals, the brutal struggle of the kulaks and sabotage by bureaucratic elements. (*Works*, Vol. 12, p. 311)

At the Seventeenth Party Congress (December 1933) Stalin insisted that a classless socialist society can only be built 'by strengthening the organs of the dictatorship of the proletariat, by intensifying the class struggle'. (*Works*, Vol. 13, p. 357)

However, three years later in introducing the Soviet Constitution, he reported:

The landlord class, as you know, had been liquidated. . . . The capitalist class in the sphere of industry has ceased to exist. The kulak class in the sphere of agriculture has ceased to exist. And the merchants and profiteers in the sphere of trade have ceased to exist.

Thus all the exploiting classes have now been liquidated.

Bettelheim comments—'Such a thesis disarms the proletariat and persuades it that the class struggle is already over' (p. 18).

By March 1939 (18th Congress) Stalin was arguing that 'Soviet society, liberated from the yoke of exploitation, knows no such contradictions, is free of class conflicts' (*Land of Socialism Today and Tomorrow*, pp. 19 and 33). He went on to explain that the function of 'military suppression' (significantly he made no reference to the dictatorship of the proletariat) inside the Soviet Union had died away—for exploitation had been abolished and there was no one to suppress. The Army, the punitive organs and intelligence service needed to be concerned only with external enemies.

In China, too, from 1949 advocates of the theory of the disappearance of classes and, therefore, of class struggle, have fought against the policy of uninterrupted revolution pursued by Mao Tse-tung and his colleagues.

In March 1949, Mao had to oppose Liu Shao-chi and others who 'think we should not rely on the working class' and those who 'think we should rely on the bourgeoisie' (*Selected Works*, Vol. IV, p. 364).

Right up to 1964 Liu Shao-chi and his 'theoretician' Yang Hsien-chen opposed the basic dialectical conception of the law of the 'unity of opposites' ('one divides into two') with the contrary thesis that 'two combine into one', which was associated with the theory of a 'synthesised economic base' (co-operation between the five sectors—state-owned, collective, individual [peasants and handicraftsmen], private capitalist and state-capitalist). The theories of Liu and Yang in fact assumed the merging of classes and the consolidation of a mixed economy.

Revisionism exposed

Taking a similar position, *Izvestia* (19 Feb. 75), in attacking the new Chinese Constitution, is more revealing of the Soviet leaders' attitude to class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat than it is illuminating on the question of the new Constitution:

The constitution is permeated with the spirit of the Maoist idea of 'continuing revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat', which echoes Trotsky's bankrupt theory and implies in practice the use of coercion against the Chinese Communists and all working people who disagree with the Maoist pseudo-socialist concepts. . . . that the class struggle grows fiercer as long as the socialist society exists. The utilization of the tried and tested socialist methods of managing the affairs of the state and economy is alleged to be fraught with the danger of the 'restoration' of capitalism.

Today the Chinese people are facing squarely the fact that bourgeois rights have not been totally abolished in the system of ownership and that the conversion of all the means of production into the common property of the whole society is an arduous task which still lies ahead. Mao Tse-tung has forcibly reminded the Chinese people and progressives throughout the world that 'socialist transition' is not a catch-phrase but means what it says, a continuing process of suppressing new bourgeois elements the social bases for which still exist in the period of socialism, and bourgeois ideas and attitudes with which people, including a small number of workers and youth, can be infected.

Constant vigilance

In similar vein a P.L.A. unit commented: 'If we neglect the struggle in our life-style and relax our vigilance against the attacks of the bourgeoisie's sugar-coated bullets, both the bourgeois life-style and new bourgeois elements will emerge from within the working class and the Communist Party'.

Even now, says *Mao Tse-tung*, China practices an eight-grade wage system, distributing according to work and exchange through money, and in all this differs very little from the old society. What is different is that the system of ownership has been changed.

Obviously the transition will take time; the changes will not come overnight. What is important is that the Chinese people are alerted to the dangers of an 'ossified' socialism which still retains bourgeois forms, covert and overt, and to the need for the working people to continue to take affairs into their own hands. This means that the dictatorship of the proletariat must, continually and with ever-growing effectiveness, discard and suppress 'the muck of ages' left over from bourgeois society.

Precisely after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie the class struggle assumes its sharpest forms and those Democrats and Socialists are good for nothing who deceive themselves and then deceive others by saying that since the bourgeoisie has been overthrown, the job is done (Lenin, *The Deception of the People*).

TO OUR READERS

The Parliament Hill office will be closed from May 27 to June 27.

Circulation

We are glad to report that circulation of BROADSHEET continues to increase, especially in those parts of the world where information about China is hard to come by. After the overthrow of the Portuguese dictatorship it did not take very long for us to get subscriptions from Portugal.

To increase our circulation we must rely mainly on the efforts of our readers. We are always happy to send sample copies (we usually send them for three months) to all potential subscribers whose names and addresses are given to us. We are especially anxious to build up our readership in Africa and South America.

Paperbacks

We have recently received copies of the German translation of *Capitalism and After*, which in appearance is a credit to the publishers, Neuer Weg. They are now translating *The Human Essence*, which is likely, we think, to pose them some difficult problems in the translation of verse, some of which is in dialect! We have also been sent copies of the Finnish and Swedish translations of *From Marx to Mao*, which, too, look excellent.

All these books are still obtainable, in English, from C.P.S.G. Books, 41 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1. The price (cash with order, please), including postage, is 70p for *The Human Essence* and 60p for the others.

Donations

We thank all those who sent us donations totalling, in the January-March quarter, £39. This is especially helpful at present, when our postage bill has increased greatly and when we are trying to find part-time help to spread the load of office work.

THE CHINA POLICY STUDY GROUP

TUNG PI-WU, 1886—1975

Tung Pi-wu, Vice-President of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, who died in April, in his 90th year, took part in the 1911 Revolution. From that time, as Han Suyin has said, he spent every day of his life in revolutionary work. A classics scholar, he began to study Marxism after the Russian Revolution, established a Marxist group in Hupeh Province in 1920 and took part in the inaugural Congress of the Chinese Communist Party. His death leaves Mao Tse-tung as the sole surviving founder-member of the C.P.C.

In 1927 Tung Pi-wu opposed the disastrous policy of disarming the peasants and in 1934 took part in the Long March. Agnes Smedley (in *The Great Road*) quoted his vivid description of the almost incredible hardships of crossing the Great Snowy Mountains.

In 1937 he became President of the Central Party School in Yen-an and was also Acting Chairman of the Shensi-Kansu-Ninghsia liberated area. With Chou En-lai in Chungking in 1943 he waged a difficult struggle against Kuomintang sabotage and splitting tactics. In the same year he was a member of the Chinese delegation to the San Francisco Conference of the United Nations, representing the C.P.C. In 1948 he headed the North China People's Government.

He was a member of the Central Committee continuously

from the 6th Congress on. When delivering the funeral oration Vice-Chairman Yeh Chien-ying described him as one whose life was 'a life of perseverance in continuing the revolution', recalling Mao Tse-tung's words: 'It is not hard for one to do a bit of good. What is hard is to do good all one's life'.

The Chinese People's grief at the death of Tung Pi-wu will be translated into action in continuing the revolution; young people especially will take him as a model.

* * *

What a contrast was the life of Chiang Kai-shek, who died in the same month! Both men took part in the 1911 Revolution and the 1924-7 Revolutionary War, but the peak of Chiang's career was in 1926 when, as military commander of the Northern Expedition, he was, briefly, with the revolutionary masses in the anti-imperialist struggle. Thereafter he betrayed the revolution, even while nominally leading an anti-Japanese united front after the 'Sian incident' of December 1936.

Hated by the Chinese people, he fled to Taiwan in 1949, living out the rest of his life under the protection of U.S. guns, oppressing the islanders, mouthing threats and anti-communism and treated with contempt, eventually, even by his U.S. 'allies'. He received elaborate obituaries in the Western press but no one mourned him.

Educated Youth and the Chinese Revolution

The May Fourth Movement of 1919 began as a massive patriotic demonstration by Chinese students against the virtual handing over of China's Shantung peninsula to Japan under the terms of the Versailles Peace Conference. The movement later broadened and deepened into a conscious and accelerated effort to transform Chinese society by direct political action on the part of the masses, and marked the point of transition of the Chinese Revolution from a democratic revolution of the old type led by the petty-bourgeoisie, to a democratic revolution of a new type led by the proletariat. While it was undoubtedly the educated youth of the period who provided the initial momentum of the movement, it was the masses of the Chinese people, in particular the Chinese workers by their great strikes in the cities, who propelled the movement forward.

Since the first May Fourth, students and other educated young people have been in the vanguard of the revolutionary struggle in China. In the Canton revolutionary leadership in 1924, in the leadership of the Northern Expedition of 1926, during the resistance to Japanese imperialism, and in the 1945-1949 Civil War, the struggle carried on by students in schools and universities and outside was part of the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggle for liberation of the Chinese people. They had relatively easy access to progressive ideas, while their idealism and mobility took them to the forefront of the struggle. In this pre-Liberation period, however, education was still partly under the control of the reactionaries, who used it as means to cultivate a privileged group to serve their rule; moreover, many educated young people came from a petty-bourgeois, official or comprador background. For these reasons, and because of the soft and hard tactics adopted by the reactionaries to sabotage the students' movement, there were a number of students who took part in the struggle out of a variety of selfish motives, and many of them did not remain with the revolution. It was the workers and peasants, who lived under the daily exploitation and suppression of feudalism and imperialism, who steadfastly persevered in the revolution and, under C.P.C. leadership, maintained the correct orientation.

The class struggle continued after the establishment of the People's Republic of China and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution burst forth in 1966. The Red Guards began as a movement of left-wing students in determined protest against 'reactionary' school authorities. The Cultural Revolution was at first mainly in the cultural and educational fields and it was only with the entry and participation of the masses of workers and peasants that the movement broadened and deepened into a struggle on all fronts in the superstructure. Again, as in the May Fourth Movement and the larger Chinese Revolution, although it was educated youth who initially stormed the citadel of reaction, it was the masses who brought success and a correct orientation to the movement. Speaking in 1939 of 'the army' of young intellectuals and students in the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal ranks of the Chinese people, Chairman Mao Tse-tung had said:

This army is not enough; we cannot defeat the enemy by relying on it alone, for when all is said and done it is not the main force. What then is the main force? The workers and peasants. Our young intellectuals and students must go among the workers and peasants. (*The Orientation of the Youth Movement*)

Young people in the cities, even the sons and daughters of working class revolutionaries, could be content to seek work in the cities and turn their back on the peasants. It is of great importance for the course of the Chinese Revolution that, following the advice of Chairman Mao in 1968, in the last six years over 10 million of those who completed their secondary education in the cities have gone into the countryside to work, sometimes to provinces and regions far from their parents' home.

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American-born Shirley Wood has lived for many years in one of the smaller cities of central China and works at the Teachers' Training College there. Some readers will remember articles she wrote for us in 1966-69. From her own experience, on the next page, she is able to complement the above outline.

'UP' OR 'DOWN'?

During China's big leap forward of the late 50's Chairman Mao urged, 'All intellectuals who can work in the countryside should be happy to go there. Our countryside is vast and has plenty of room for them to develop their abilities to the full'. A number of young people followed this advice, while Shanghai city organised brigades of school-leavers to develop an agricultural base in the culturally under-developed North-west.

Within a few years these pioneers had so developed their abilities that the value to both youth and localities was undeniable. In 1964 mobilisations were carried out among school-leavers throughout the country. My eldest son went 'down' to the country in 1965, two daughters in the first great mobilisation in 1968, and two more children in 1973 and 1974.

There has been bitter opposition to this programme. Both Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao called it forced labour-reform, a cheap way of dumping surplus labour from the cities. The line they set influenced the programme at lower government levels. After the massive response of youth to the 1968 mobilisation, Lin Piao utilised prejudices and ways of thinking current since Confucius' time to block the growing appeal of the programme among the masses. The young people would become rustics, it was said, with no future, forever leave their parents' side. Better take them out of school before they graduated and get them a job, because an education wasn't much use anyway. Better run around 'back doors' getting one's children off the mobilisation rolls or back into town if one had any influence.

Some foreign newspapers are also dreadfully concerned with the welfare of China's youth. Aunt Galina's newspaper, which she renews regularly through the Chinese Post Office, periodically publishes tirades about how Mao Tse-tung duped the youth for political purposes, then when they were no longer useful to him sent them off to the desolate mountains and border regions with no hope of further education or any sort of future.

The reason for these attacks is obvious. John Foster Dulles said openly that hopes for a capitalist restoration in China had to be placed on the post-liberation generations. Chairman Mao saw, too, that youth 'growing up under the red flag', if not tempered through hard struggle might fall into a web of personal advancement and comfort, as China's living standards improved. If the only way a young person could consider going was 'up', a factionalist bureaucracy could develop composed of those most adept at currying favour and advancing themselves, resulting in a broad privileged stratum in positions of basic power, dependent upon one or another patron. In 1957 Chairman Mao wrote:

We must help all our young people to understand that ours is still a very poor country, that we cannot change this situation radically in a short time, and that only through the united efforts of our younger generation and all our people, working with their own hands, can China be made strong and prosperous within a period of several decades. The establishment of our socialist system has opened the road leading to the ideal society of the future, but to translate this ideal into reality needs hard work. . . .

Because of their lack of political and social experience, quite a number of young people are unable to see the contrast between the old China and the new, and it is not easy for them thoroughly to comprehend the hardships our people went through in the struggle to free themselves from the oppression of the imperialists and Kuomintang reactionaries, or the long period of arduous work needed before a happy socialist society can be established. (*On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People.*)

Before the 1968 mobilisation Chairman Mao said again:

It is highly necessary for young people with education to go to the countryside to be re-educated by the poor and lower-middle peasants. Cadres and other people in the cities should be persuaded to send their sons and daughters who

have finished junior or senior middle school, college or university to the countryside. Let us mobilise. Comrades in the rural areas should welcome them.

Evolution of education as a door to status and privilege would sharpen contradictions between technical and administrative cadres and the mass of manual workers. As modern technology developed, the working people would lose power and the gap between town and countryside would widen. Living near a suburban village of thirty families from 1953 to 1957, I saw ten young people finish primary or evening school, and not one remain in the village. By 1957 when the village had formed co-operatives, the only member vaguely capable of keeping accounts was a former peddler.

The arrival of urban youth encourages educated rural youth to return to their villages, and the programme enables modernisation of agriculture and development of county and commune industries. Urban youth, unfettered by conservative clan ties, provide impetus for new developments, while local youth give them a permanent character. Some urban youth remain in the countryside as medical workers, teachers, cadres, technicians or cultural workers, often combined with the role of commune member. My eldest daughter was sent to medical college from Taikang county and will return on graduation to work in a brigade clinic. Those recalled by urban development retain close ties with the communes and knowledge and concern about rural development. My eldest son, in a lorry plant after seven years in a suburban commune, has cycled out to repair tractors on his day off and is helping the peasants develop marsh gas stoves for home cooking.

For the young people, going from years in the classroom to the fresh countryside is excellent for their health. There, too, they learn to organise collective living and manage their own affairs. Besides agricultural work, all of them participate in local propaganda teams.

Of my daughters' ten-girl group in Taikang, one became brigade Party secretary, one a school-teacher, one team tailor, one agronomist and correspondent (for the provincial newspaper), one barefoot doctor and county women's basketball team captain. My eldest son was agronomist, mechanic, commune electrician, and my daughter-in-law propagandist, medic and accountant. Of two younger children still in the country, my pig-feeder daughter now drives a tractor and her younger brother plays the accordion in local programmes (he has made much progress) and is probably in basketball now spring has come. Educated rural youth, too, do a stint at various jobs and are the major source of team, commune, county and militia cadres and for all varieties of non-agricultural tasks.

From the quality of students entering our college since the cultural revolution, I can see that educated youth with a term of service in society are concerned, capable and responsible. They are truly a guarantee that China will retain her revolutionary vigour and drive.

SHIRLEY WOOD

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