

CHINA POLICY STUDY GROUP
BROADSHEET

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LOOKING AT THE FACTS

Just at present it is easy to be confused by reports of what is happening in China. If you get your information from the daily press or radio your picture will be an inadequate and confused one—though probably based on some of the criticisms the Chinese themselves have made about their economy. If, on the other hand, you read a publication like BROADSHEET you may sometimes feel we give a picture too rosy to be true.

It is often useful, as a check, to look at statements by scientists and other experts who go to China to assess achievements in their own speciality. Such reports can hardly avoid political bias altogether, but on the whole their authors try to follow the scientific tradition of looking at facts objectively. Some interesting articles are printed in the journal *Nature* for 8 December 1977. Several scientists who visited China recently think that science there lags behind the West, but they also speak of the high enthusiasm now evidenced, of the determination to make progress in research now that the obstacles put in the way by the 'Gang of Four' have been removed, and of the resolve to learn from more advanced countries.

The journal makes a perceptive editorial comment:

... perhaps an even more difficult task will be for the Chinese to hold fast to those elements of people's science which have proved so successful in recent years, most notably the accurate reporting of natural phenomena whether they be connected with health, agriculture or stirrings within the earth. For in some instances this mobilisation of the masses has had major successes—the use of amateur scientists in earthquake prediction, for instance, with many quakes now successfully predicted, puts the Chinese well ahead of the rest of the world.

This is indeed a problem—one which has been with the Chinese since 1949: how to introduce high technology while maintaining unity between professionals and masses. It has been solved in the past by strictly applying the mass line ('the masses are the real heroes'), walking on two legs (using both scientists and laymen), and working all the time to reduce the contradiction, the potential separation, between mental and manual workers. We do not believe that these policies will be abandoned.

In our November issue we asked for readers' questions about Chinese policies and comments about how we are doing our job. The response has been very gratifying and questions are still coming in from various parts of the world. Some of them have been answered by letter, some we are answering in the columns of Broadsheet and others we feel deserve fuller treatment in articles which we shall try to provide in the near future.

In addition to questions we have had many helpful comments on the content and style of Broadsheet. We shall try to profit from them all and hope to continue to receive them.

We hope you will approve of what we have done in this issue. Each question has been answered by an individual member of the group.

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THE 1977 CONSTITUTION OF THE CPC

It is not unreasonable to ask why the Chinese Communist Party has needed three Constitutions in eight years. A new one was adopted by the 9th Party Congress in 1969, yet another by the 10th Congress in 1973, and yet another by the 11th Congress in 1977.

The 8th Congress took place in 1956 when Liu Shao-chi was in the ascendant and it was later considered to have made mistakes which had to be corrected by the 9th Congress. The 10th Congress eradicated the influence of Lin Piao. The revised Constitution which was accepted

then is not now considered to have contained errors; in fact Yeh Chien-ying said in his report to the 11th Congress 'the line of the 10th Congress was correct politically and organisationally.'

But the political and economic confusion created by the Gang of Four did show the need for filling loopholes and spelling out some rules of conduct for Party members. As a result the new Constitution is considerably longer than the previous one, drawing on the experience gained in the 11th great inner-Party struggle, that against

the Gang of Four. The new Constitution emphasises that the whole Party must strictly observe Party discipline, safeguard the Party's centralisation, strengthen its unity, oppose all splittist and factional activities, oppose the assertion of independence from the Party and oppose anarchism.

Evidence from many parts of the country and many industrial, agricultural and distributive and administrative organisations confirms Yeh Chien-ying's statement at the 11th Congress that the Four 'recruited renegades, enemy agents, alien class elements, degenerates and bad elements of all kinds who seriously disrupted public order.' In some instances for their proteges, they by-passed the regulations requiring a probationary period before applicants could become full Party members with voting rights. In their attempts to win personal support they began to change the character of the Party as the proletarian vanguard of socialist revolution. The new Constitution therefore contains an expanded definition of the Party.

SPELLING IT OUT

Much more precise rules are laid down for the admission of new Party members and for their ideological training. It is recognised that discipline within the Party must be stricter. Education will assist this and any necessary disciplinary action must be accompanied by safeguards. The Four were able to persecute many who did not follow them, showing that new rules both for discipline and protection were necessary.

A completely new measure is the setting up of 'commissions for inspecting discipline' elected by Party committees at all levels, to deepen understanding and to check 'on the observance of discipline by Party members and Party cadres, and to struggle against all breaches. The admonition of the 10th Congress to 'dare to go against the tide' had been used by the Four and their supporters to justify many kinds of anarchistic behaviour and in the new Constitution an explanation has been added.

All Party comrades must implement Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line comprehensively and correctly and adhere to the three basic principles: Practise Marxism and not revisionism; unite, and don't split; be open and above-board, and don't intrigue and conspire. They must have revolutionary boldness in daring to go against any tide that runs counter to these three basic principles.

The present Constitution, like the previous one emphasises that the guiding ideology and theoretical basis of the Communist Party of China is Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. The 1973 Constitution refers to the strength of the Party through struggles against 'Right and "Left" opportunist lines', but the 1977 version is more specific in its analysis and more detailed in specifying future tasks. Only a few examples can be given here of the many aspects of class struggle covered in the opening section—the General Programme.

The Gang of Four caused damage in many fields. Production was widely affected, with some factories even coming to a halt, communications were disrupted; education, science, professional training and the arts were thrown into confusion. The Four branded as revisionism the linking of class struggle with the struggle to promote production, to advance scientific research, to train and educate experts. Their ideology was not materialist, was not based on the realities of life, on facts, and denied that an essential prerequisite for the construction of socialism in a developing country is the creation and consolidation of a sound material base. The General Programme now stresses that the application of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung Thought means—among other things—strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat, mobilising all positive factors by relying on the working class and the poor and lower-middle peasants, uniting with the vast numbers of intellectuals and other working people. 'The Party must lead the people of all nationalities in

making China a powerful socialist country with a modern agriculture, industry, national defence and science and technology by the end of the century.'

The new Constitution states, as the 1973 Constitution did not, that it is the responsibility of the Party 'to carry on the three great revolutionary movements of class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment'. The need to emphasise them resulted from the sabotage by the Gang of Four. Without the three great revolutionary movements, it would not be possible to attain the objectives in any field. 'This basic line holds good for the entire period of socialism'.

The non-dialectical, non-materialist, metaphysical line of the Four had caused confusion by attempting to isolate class struggle from the building of the material and scientific base of socialism. The Constitution now says: 'The Party persists in combating revisionism, and dogmatism and empiricism. The Party upholds dialectical materialism as its world outlook and opposes the idealist and metaphysical outlook.' The Constitution clearly opposes ultra-leftism, empiricism (which relies solely on experience, brushing analysis and theory aside) and rightism (which dogmatically quotes theory without relating it to practical experience). In other words, as Hua Kuo-feng said in his report to the Congress, it is essential to seek truth from facts

The 1977 Constitution specifies more explicitly the dangers to be overcome in the building of socialism but cites the Marxist principles which guide the Party in order to stimulate vigilance against capitalist restoration and subversion and aggression by imperialism and social-imperialism. It says, the Communist Party

is to persist in continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, eliminate the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes step by step and bring about the triumph of socialism over capitalism. The ultimate aim of the Party is the realisation of communism.

To Our Readers

DONATIONS. In the last quarter of 1977 we received the excellent total of £74. We are very grateful to all who helped towards it.

PAPERBACKS. We take this opportunity to remind you of George Thomson's books which can serve as an introduction to a study of Marxism.

FROM MARX TO MAO TSE-TUNG: a study in revolutionary dialectics Price 90p.

CAPITALISM AND AFTER: the rise and fall of commodity production Price 80p.

THE HUMAN ESSENCE: the sources of science and art Price 70p.

The second of these is especially interesting at present, in the light of widespread discussion on China's way forward.

BOUND VOLUMES. In our next issue we hope to be able to announce the price of the 1976-77 bound volume. We still have copies of the 1974-75 volume at the special price of £3, including postage. All earlier bound volumes are sold out.

BACK ISSUES. We are always happy to supply back numbers when possible and we do get a considerable number of orders for them every year. Now, however after 14 years of publication, we find that our limited storage space is becoming over-full and we must try to reduce our stocks. We supply back issues, if they are available, at 10p per copy, which is little more than the cost of postage. Some of our earlier issues are completely sold out, but if you want them badly we can supply photocopies at 30p per issue.

THE CHINA POLICY STUDY GROUP

QUESTIONS OF THE MONTH

When the same question has been asked by more than one correspondent we have paraphrased, as briefly as possible, the contents of different letters.

* * *

RECOGNISING ALLIES

Q The Sadat government of Egypt was hailed as anti-hegemonist, anti-imperialist when it deported the Russians, but what about the concessions given to the Americans and other imperialists? The Cairo Conference of Arab countries like Saudi Arabia, which was behind every American conspiracy in the Middle East, is described as progressive and anti-imperialist. For me it was a conference for dismantling the Lebanon and the Palestinian struggle. It is wrong to treat all Third World countries in the same way and consider the Jordanian King, the King of Saudi Arabia and the Shah of Iran as anti-hegemonistic and anti-imperialist fighters for the independence of their peoples.

A Obviously the Palestinian movement is a major progressive force (as the Chinese have always recognised), so reactionary forces can either try to crush it (which was the American line, expressed for instance in the September massacre in Jordan), or try to turn it into a tool in the service of their own foreign policy (which is, generally speaking, the Soviet line). It seems to me that, with regard to the Palestinians, Syrian intervention did serve the aims of Soviet social-imperialism, but it would not be true to say that Syrian policy on the whole constitutes a pawn in the game of Soviet power-politics. This may be the reason why it was not easy for the Chinese to condemn Syria diplomatically.

Whatever the difficulties over the Lebanese question, I don't think they spring from the Three Worlds analysis as such. The point is that if the Arab people or the people of particular Third World countries manage to exclude imperialist intervention, this will enable the internal class struggle to develop favourably. The situation in the Middle East is a particular one, in that the Arabs consider themselves to be one nation.

It seems to me that China gives her support to the *people* of the Third World. The anti-hegemonic policy pursued by Third World governments is a product of the consciousness of the masses in these countries. If some governments persist in being subservient to the superpowers they will be swept out of the way by revolution.

The Chinese follow Lenin in making a distinction between oppressed and oppressor nations. Of course the ruling class in the oppressed nations isn't oppressed in the same way as the working people, but rulers are nevertheless forced to adopt anti-imperialist policies to some extent.

The era of imperialism is characterised by uneven development, and naturally the anti-imperialist movement also differs from place to place. All national-bourgeois governments in the Third World have certain weak points (Libya may sometimes favour Soviet policy, Saudi Arabia may take a weak line over the new international economic order, etc.), but on the whole the political positions taken by the Third World governments are opposed to the superpowers and opposed to the imperialist-dominated world economic and political system.

The Arab and other Third World countries as a body

realise that without unity they have nothing, so there has to be a process of negotiation, compromise and give-and-take in order to arrive at a common line. The common line of the 'Group of 77' developing countries, which together make up over two-thirds of the countries in the world, is worked out before all the major international conferences, it has shown an increasingly firm anti-imperialist, anti-hegemonic content.

TENG HSIAO-PING

Q We are doubtful about the position of Teng Hsiao-ping, who has been criticised more than once as a rightist.

A Teng Hsiao-ping was, with Liu Shao-chi, a main target during the early stages of the Cultural Revolution, though he was never mentioned officially by name. We believe the criticisms of him were legitimate. He himself thought the matter over and eventually made a self-criticism. This has never been released for publication but it was circulated throughout the CPC and we are informed that it was considered satisfactory and accepted. Teng was never expelled from the Party and eventually, as we know, he returned to office.

His abilities were appreciated by Chou En-lai, among others, and this earned him the opposition of the Gang of Four, for whom he was a main enemy. We think it true to say that the second wave of criticism of Teng was inspired by the Four and that there was not a great deal of substance in it. Our issue of May 1976 described how he was accused of having said that Mao's 'three directives' should be taken as the key link, whereas he should have said that class struggle, which was one of the three directives, was the key link. This perhaps indicated a failure to consider the directives carefully enough, but it can hardly be said to be a completely wrong line. Correspondents in China tell us that the second wave of criticism got only lukewarm support from the Chinese masses, whereas his second return to office was enthusiastically received. With drive and involvement he combines a great deal of common sense and it is perhaps these qualities which have endeared him to the people. Very possibly he has defects of hasty judgement and impulsiveness. If so, the supervision of the masses will be a good thing, as will his demonstrated willingness to accept criticism.

Much has been made of Mao Tse-tung's reported criticism of him, but the matter is far from clear. When was the criticism made? What were the words used? In what connection were they used? Criticism is not necessarily condemnation and Mao probably criticised, at some time or other, most of his comrades. We feel that all the circumstances of this reported criticism are too vague to permit proper consideration to be given to it.

The same is true of Teng's alleged responsibility in connection with the Tien An Men incident of April 1976. No official report has ever been made public; it is very likely that the matter is still being investigated and it would not be right to draw conclusions yet.

If Teng has at times been guilty of errors (as he certainly has), it is also worth remembering that he was a very successful general during the Civil War before Liberation and that for ten crucial years, from 1956 to the Cultural Revolution, he was Secretary General of the CPC. This is the period which saw the establishment of the People's Communes, the Great Leap Forward, the Sino-Soviet debate and China's offensive against revisionism. It makes him a key figure in one of mankind's great revolutionary advances and enables one to understand the people's respect for him.

TAKING SIDES

Q I do not think it a proper thing to take sides in the Soviet-Chinese dispute, at least without serious qualification.

A Without going into exactly *how* the dispute arose (on this see BROADSHEET Vol. 1, No. 12), and avoiding the doctrinal terminology that has always enveloped it, three fundamental divergencies can be cited on which our questioner may find it difficult not to veer to one side or the other.

1. The Soviet Union claims that socialism is achieved with public ownership and control of the means of production. The Chinese insist that it is at bottom a question of changing the *motivation* of society, which means the men and women who make up the society. Instead of an income structure, differentials and enticement by reward they have a single imperative: Serve the people. They believe that until the motive force has changed—in *people*—the social revolution is still uncompleted.
2. Under the Soviet system power is concentrated at the centre and the trend is towards increasing political uniformity. China has adopted a different principle and incurred the strong censure of the Soviet Union and others for doing so. The maximum devolution of responsibility, and of initiative and authority to give decisions, is seen as a necessary feature of socialism. This applies to localities and units within a country, but is reflected also in the attitude towards relations among states. China leans all the time towards the course which forces people and states to think for themselves instead of accepting solutions prescribed for them by others, thus developing the capacity to take charge of their own destiny and build up the economy and political structure themselves. (The People's Communes, an example of devolution in China, were condemned by the Soviets as a move towards fragmentation.)
3. The Soviet Union maintains that the world consists of the socialist sector and the capitalist sector and, on the principle of whoever is not with us is against us, all states must gravitate towards one or the other, which means either towards the bloc centred on the Soviet Union or towards the demi-world linked to the United States. The Chinese reject this as superpower politics, holding that only by asserting and defending their right of self-determination can countries escape complete vassalhood and find their proper path to development and socialism.

TRANSLATIONS

Q The other day I compared the text of Chairman Mao's essay, *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People*, as given in Volume 5 of the *Selected Works*, with the original 1966 edition. I was shocked to find that the translation is entirely different and very many new words and phrases have taken their place in the new translation. Why was there need for such a completely new translation of something which has circulated throughout the world for 11 years?

A We have not had time to go right through this work, but three of us have started to do so and have noted a few verbal changes. If these are typical they are not 'entirely different' but, in one case at least, closer to the original. This particular example is on page 388 of Volume 5, where there occur the words, 'In a society where class struggle exists'. We are not sure what is meant by 'the original 1966 edition', but in the *Selected Readings*

this passage reads, 'in a society rent by class-struggle'. The version in Volume 5 is what the Chinese says and that has not been altered, to the best of our knowledge and belief, since the first version published in *Renmin Ribao* on 19 June 1957. If you would care to give further examples of changes we shall be glad to check them.

The Chinese are always trying to improve their translations. If, for instance, you compare a text published in Hsinhua's daily bulletin with that published a few days later in *Peking Review*, you will often find changes aimed at making the translation more accurate and improving the English. The first four volumes of Mao's *Selected Works* have been published in two different English editions, the later translation certainly being nearer to the original Chinese.

THE NON-CAPITALIST ROAD

Q What is your opinion of the 'theory' of the non-capitalist road to socialism?

(This line, pushed by the Soviet Union in Africa at the moment, is that a Third World country can attain socialism without passing through a capitalist stage if it develops the state sector of its economy and is supported by a developed 'socialist' country—Ed.)

A The question of the 'non-capitalist road' is a very important one. The democratic revolution in the developing countries is a capitalist one, while at the same time it is part of the world proletarian movement. Revolutionaries should support their struggles for economic development because these struggles weaken the imperialist system.

Today's democratic revolution is different from the old democratic revolution which prepared the way for capitalism. In fact in the era of imperialism, the growth of a fully-developed capitalist society in any Third World country is improbable.

It seems to me that the new-democratic revolution can be *begun* under bourgeois leadership, but it can only be *carried through* under the leadership of the worker-peasant alliance headed by a Marxist-Leninist party. In any case it is a bourgeois revolution in form, but unlike the old democratic revolution which prepared the ground for capitalism, it prepares for the immediate beginning of the socialist revolution which takes place as soon as the new-democratic one is completed.

Some Third World countries claim to be already carrying out a socialist revolution, others are openly opposed to socialism. But objectively they are all part of the same movement which is, for all its imperfections, the most powerful anti-imperialist force in the world today. What unites the Third World countries is more important than what divides them, and China concentrates on emphasising what unites them.

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