

CHINA POLICY STUDY GROUP
BROADSHEET

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

BRITAIN'S OPPORTUNITY

THE visit of Premier Hua Guofeng to Britain is the first-ever personal contact between the two countries at highest level. It has come at a crucial moment in history, when the balance of world forces is changing. US imperialism is in retreat while Soviet social-imperialism is becoming ever bolder and, in military power, stronger. As pressure mounts and Soviet diplomacy claims the whole world as its field of action, governments are beginning to realise that it is China, rather than the US, which is the most intractable obstacle to Soviet global ambitions. Britain is threatened, along with the rest of Europe, by Soviet expansionism and now has a great opportunity to bring about closer, durable relations with her most important potential ally.

Of course, the Chinese and British governments have very different purposes. The British wish to preserve British capitalism's room for manoeuvre on the world scene; the Chinese pursue proletarian ends, in the interest of their own working people and those of the whole world. On some questions viewpoints coincide and there is a possibility of cooperation which China is *duty bound* to use.

One such area of agreement is trade. The Chinese want to modernise their agriculture, industry, science and defence to create a proletarian state secure against all attacks and providing a rising standard of living for its citizens; the British want to boost their exports and revive some of their failing industries. From the Chinese point of view a particular interest in the British visit arises from possibilities of sharing defence systems developed in Britain, a logical step forward from investing, as she has already done, in the complex of licences needed to manufacture a British turbofan jet engine. In trade generally, if Britain were to win as generous a ration of Chinese orders as her German and US competitors, the benefits to the British trade balance would be very noticeable.

At his Beijing press conference on October 7th Premier Hua said that during his time in the four European countries (Britain, France, West Germany and Italy) he 'would observe at first hand these countries' experience in industry, agriculture, culture and other fields and meet with people from all walks of life'. He also looked forward to discussing with government leaders 'international issues of common concern and ways of further strengthening cooperation, expanding economic and commercial dealing, and broadening scientific, technical and cultural exchanges'. In China he is noted for his readiness, and ability, to learn from others and he will certainly use his visit well.

He has been preceded by many specialist delegations, several headed by Vice-Premiers, covering almost the whole field of Chinese science, industry, and defence. Never in the whole thirty years of the People's Republic of China have they been so numerous.

Is the British government showing equal seriousness and single-mindedness in its response to this Chinese initiative? Only the future will show the answer to this question; rarely has it fallen to the British government and people to make a more momentous choice.

DAZHAI

At a recent press conference, Zhung Pinghua, First Vice-Minister in charge of the State Agricultural Commission, said that China intends to produce 400 million tons of grain by 1985 (1978 production was 304.75 million tons). From a first-hand study of 29 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions he was confident that this could be achieved. Besides absorbing advanced experience from abroad China would, he said, 'always be ready to offer the experience and scientific and technological achievements of our people for the benefit of the people of the world'. Asked whether China intended to continue learning from Dazhai (Tachai), he said:

The basic points of Dazhai's experience are: putting politics in command and taking ideology as the leading factor, persevering in self-reliance and hard struggle, and the Communist spirit of cherishing the state and the collective. These points summed up by the late Premier Zhou Enlai are valid, past and present. We will continue to follow them.

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SINO-BRITISH RELATIONS OVER THREE DECADES

IT is a hundred and sixty years since Britain first shot her way, in the gangster fashion typical of gunboat diplomacy, into an unwelcoming China, thus opening the door for the imperialist bullying, domination and exploitation of that once-great country. Those 'glorious' days are long past. But, except for a minority, British people have not yet faced the fact that, until Japan took

her place in the 1930s, Britain was the most oppressive of the countries which took advantage of old China's corrupt rulers and social decline. This relationship between the two countries found expression in a number of racist myths about the Chinese people (as in other circumstances about the Indians and the Africans) which have remained a part of the culture of Britain in its

decline. Though the Amethyst fiasco in 1949 put paid to gunboat diplomacy in China, it is still easy, respectable and 'patriotic' for British politicians, reporters, newspaper columnists and others to lie about China.

The false attitudes of British superiority persist, both on the 'left' and on the right. Even in regard to Britain's conduct towards the New China the record has still to be set straight in the mass media and in official communications. In 1950 'recognition' of the People's Republic turned out to be an empty gesture. Only a year later the British government took a leading part in getting China branded by the UN as an 'aggressor'. Together with the US, Britain was responsible for mounting the 'strategic' embargo and the penal 'Chincom' extension of it aimed at preventing China's industrialisation.

Era of falsehood

During the period when British foreign policy was subordinate to that of America, Britain at first supported the Dulles line by helping to develop the 'Two Chinas' policy. After Dulles it gave full support (short of direct military involvement) to the Kennedy-Nixon policy of 'containing' China by intervening in Indochina. SEATO was a failure. But Home could still speak in 1966 of British and Soviet interest in creating along the Chinese border a *cordon sanitaire* of states dedicated to containing China; BROADSHEET has before this (Nov. 66 and May 68) written about this and of George Brown's talk of a Britain-Tokyo axis directed against China. These attempts to link up with the enemies of China, and such things as Harold Wilson's absurdity: 'Britain's frontier is on the Himalayas' were not due to any perceptible threat of Chinese aggression, but were a cover-up for the disreputable record and current practices of the British ruling class. To all this must be added the massive campaign in the press and in the universities to propagate all sorts of falsehoods about New China's heroic efforts to transform its backward industry and agriculture, science and culture, and to develop independently and self-reliantly. The reporting of the 1950s of China's magnificent achievements not only set abysmal standards in British analysis of what was happening in the Third World, but also achieved the intended purpose of persuading the workers in Britain to regard the achievements of China's workers and peasants with horror and hostility.

These people, however, have not had things their own way. The curtain of ignorance and prejudice has been torn at too many points in the last twenty years for the old-style sensational distortions of Chinese reality to be credible. Yet even today there isn't a single daily or weekly newspaper or journal or broadcast programme on which the people can rely for consistently honest and truthful reporting and analysis of the exciting and remarkable things the Chinese are doing.

Of course, it is not the business of bourgeois politicians and journalists to advertise the great benefits of working class rule and socialist development. Nowhere in Britain, West Germany or Italy does the indigenous working class get a 'fair' deal. The point is that Hua Guofeng is receiving a welcome in Western Europe, and bourgeois governments are going to have to give the people and the country he represents their due. That they cannot do if they, and the press which serves them, persist in the usual reactionary and chauvinist propaganda. In the last three years the Chinese people have resumed with tremendous spirit and enthusiasm the 'long march' on which they began thirty years ago. Their remarkable achievement has been due in no small measure to the good leadership of Hua, who has proved to be a political leader worthy of his predecessors in the Communist Party of China and in the State Council, and an administrator

of rare talent. His leadership has enabled the workers, peasants and other labouring people of China to continue and to speed up, with fewer mistakes than before, the work they pioneered under the leadership of Mao and Zhou. In welcoming Hua, the British people are giving due honour to Mao and Zhou.

If relations between Britain and China have improved in recent years it is largely because of Chinese initiatives. While overthrowing feudal and capitalist rule, China has been eradicating the chauvinism and reactionary nationalism of her old society, and perfecting the practice of proletarian internationalism. The aggressions and atrocities of the past have been forgiven, and friendship and cooperation for mutual benefit sought with all countries on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. With all the nations—Russia, Japan, France, Britain and so on—they might have hated, had they been bourgeois nationalists, the Chinese have striven hard to be friendly. Any who imagine they are superior peoples to whom the Chinese and other Third World peoples ought to kow-tow will find Hua Guofeng no more obliging than Mao and Zhou. But, understanding the political backwardness of the imperialist countries, the Chinese have shown themselves prepared to go more than half-way. In the last year or two, several of China's distinguished deputy premiers have taken time off busy schedules to visit some forty countries.

The development of a new relationship of friendship and cooperation between China and Britain, and between China and the EEC countries, can be mutually beneficial. The Chinese are carefully and critically appraising the enormous material and social advances which socialist revolution and socialist modernisation have made possible in their country. They are proud of what they have been able to achieve in just thirty years, under the most unpropitious conditions. But they are aware of how much further they have to advance. They come in friendship, with modesty, to learn what they can. Hua, we know, will learn from his brief first visit to the part of the world where bourgeois rule was first established, where the industrial revolution first took place, to countries which have rich associations for all Third World Marxists. He and his colleagues will no doubt have an eye for what lies beneath the glossy exterior. After all, social practice, not advertising or political rhetoric, is the test of the claims made for the democracy, the equality, the economic miracles of the bourgeoisie. Those who are leading the Chinese people in their 'long march' of socialist modernisation can benefit from observing both the good and the bad aspects of capitalist modernisation.

Lessons for Britain

Britain can on its part learn a great deal from how the Chinese turned their weakness into strength, seemingly hopeless decline into massive and unprecedented growth and progress. The capitalist 'solution'—cutting down the standard of living of the working masses, cutting education, health, transport facilities, housing, etc. while beefing up police and army—can profitably be contrasted with what can be achieved under working class rule. If Europeans can shed their attitude of superiority, they can also learn useful lessons from the way in which the Chinese have moved rapidly from feudal despotism towards socialist democracy.

Most important of all is the opportunity the visit affords to face up to the common interests of the British and Chinese peoples. The world situation has changed radically in the last thirty years. From being aggressive, ready to take the offensive, to 'roll back' socialist regimes by force, at the time when NATO was created, what used to be the US camp is now fearful, on the defensive, inclined to appeasement—contrasting with a Soviet

Union which is now aggressive, expansionist, on the rampage everywhere. Chinese and British interests—those of the proletariat and of a Second World bourgeoisie respectively—do not coincide, but they overlap. The oldest of the bourgeoisies may include elements which cannot bear the prospect of nearly a quarter of mankind becoming an increasingly secure socialist base, but circumstances are making cooperation with People's

China inevitable. China has taken the lead in telling the truth about the dangers they face and the need to be ready to resist aggression, and it has set a good example. Its interest in having stable and peaceful conditions for socialist modernisation and Britain's interest in remaining an independent country, whose affairs are determined by its people, should be a good basis for cooperation.

AGENDA FOR CONTINUING THE REVOLUTION

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary celebrations of the People's Republic of China, the CPC's senior Vice-Chairman, Ye Jianying made a comprehensive summing up of China's first 30 years.

This key document (see *Beijing Review*, 5 Oct, 1979), of which we summarise only the first half, is several things at once—a celebration of revolutionary victories and achievements; a tribute to revolutionary pioneers, fighters and martyrs; a self-criticism by the CPC; a Marxist analysis; and an agenda for continuing the Revolution. Ye begins by saying 'the establishment of socialism in China, was the work of the people under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party which based itself on the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism and acted independently and in accordance with China's social and historical characteristics.' He speaks of the victorious Chinese Revolution as having given 'a new and powerful impetus to world politics and world revolution. He goes on:

The victorious Chinese revolution is a victory for Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. Marxism-Leninism develops through the revolutionary struggles of the people in different countries. It cannot be monopolised or ossified by anyone in whatever form. Mao Zedong Thought is Marxism-Leninism as applied and developed in the Chinese revolution. It is the result of integrating the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution. Comrade Mao Zedong was a great Marxist and a great revolutionary and strategist. He early made important contributions to the founding of the Chinese Communist Party and to the development of our new-democratic revolution. After the failure of the Great Revolution in 1927, when conditions were very difficult, he creatively solved a series of essential problems concerning the Chinese revolution and found the correct road for it. He did this by proceeding from realities in China, not merely from books... We hold that all our victories were achieved under the guidance of Mao Zedong Thought, without which there would be no New China today. This is in full conformity with historical reality. Of course, Mao Zedong Thought is not the product of Mao Zedong's personal wisdom alone, it is also the product of the wisdom of his comrades-in-arms, the Party and the revolutionary people, and, as he once pointed out, it emerged from the 'collective struggles of the Party and the people'... Comrade Mao Zedong was the most outstanding representative of the great Chinese Communist Party and the great Chinese people. The Chinese people will always remember his immortal contributions, and resolutely defend and develop the scientific system of Mao Zedong Thought.

Ye, a revolutionary leader, a member of the CPC for 55 years and a close associate of Mao and Zhou, rightly enjoys very high prestige and popularity. His position in the CPC Central Committee is second only to Hua's, and he is Chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, which supervises the work of the State Council. The draft of his speech was widely circulated and discussed before he delivered it. It can be taken as an authoritative expression of the Party and State leadership's view, Ye summed up

in five points the 'earth-shaking revolutionary changes'.

The first change was the setting up of the new state power, the dictatorship of the proletariat; the second, the abolition of the exploitation of man by man, and the socialist transformation; third, the building up of independent and fairly comprehensive industrial and economic systems; fourth, the necessary reforms in culture and education and the promotion of science, education, culture, the press, publishing, public health and sports 'in the interest of the people'; and, fifth, China's defeat of foreign aggression and interference and consolidation of her independence.

Tremendous as these achievements are, they are still not commensurate with the arduous efforts of our entire people and with the potential of our superior social system. We must earnestly sum up our experience and strive for greater successes.

To this end he carefully reviews the major developments since the founding of New China and repeatedly draws attention to the crucially important role of Mao.

Ye then discusses the CPC's errors and makes a collective self-criticism. The Cultural Revolution, he says, 'was launched with the aim of preventing and combating revisionism. For a proletarian party in power, it is of course necessary to be constantly on guard against going down the revisionist road characterised by oppression of the people at home and pursuit of hegemony abroad. But the point is that, at a time when the Cultural Revolution was launched, the estimate of the situation in the Party and the country ran counter to reality, no accurate definition was given of revisionism, and an erroneous policy and method of struggle were adopted, deviating from the principle of democratic centralism.'

It was this situation that provided an opportunity for people like Lin Biao and the gang of four to engage in counter-revolutionary activities, with disastrous consequences for the country—'the most serious reversal to our socialist cause since the founding of the People's Republic.' Later on in his speech Ye goes into greater detail, when he specifies the main characteristics of the ultra-left line of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four in the spheres of ideology, politics, economics, culture and organisation.

However,

while acknowledging past mistakes and setbacks, we must at the same time fully appraise the achievements and the victories we have scored in overcoming difficulties and setbacks. As in the period of the democratic revolution, our Party and revolutionary people have not lost heart because of difficulties and setbacks. Instead, by summing up experience and drawing appropriate lessons, we have become more mature politically, and the revolution will develop more rapidly. 'Difficulties and hardships help one achieve success.' Only such an assessment of the past 30 years accords with historical facts, with revolutionary dialectics and with the unshakable, revolutionary optimism of the world outlook of proletarian fighters...

Comrade Mao Zedong said: 'The people, and the people

alone, are the motive force in the making of world history'. Socialism is the dynamic, creative undertaking of hundreds of millions of people. The dictatorship of the proletariat means democracy for the broadest masses and dictatorship over the tiny handful of enemies. The leadership of the Communist Party means leadership representing the interests of the people and carrying out their will. And Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought is the theoretical summing-up of the revolutionary experience of the people as well as a science rooted in a firm faith in the strength of the people. Thus, the source of strength of the four fundamental principles is the people, and to give them full scope it is necessary to rely on the people.

In the second half of his speech Ye, after reviewing the battle against Lin Biao and the gang of four, speaks of consolidating and broadening the people's victory, and about development in practice and theory along the ideological, political and organizational lines of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. Of great interest is the discussion of 'the fundamentals of the proletarian world outlook and the quintessence of Mao Zedong Thought', and that of 'the true meaning of holding high the banner of Mao Zedong Thought in real earnest'.

BOOK REVIEWS

CHINA'S ROLE IN WORLD AFFAIRS, by Michael B. Yahuda. Croom Helm, price £10.95.

MR. YAHUDA takes a cool look at China's relations with the rest of the world since 1949. From a partisan position one might consider him 'uncommitted'; though others who consider themselves uncommitted would deny him the adjective and perhaps he would not even claim it for himself. Be that as it may, his book, by its balanced presentation and thorough documentation, makes a very favourable impression.

He divides the period of his study into two parts: the first from 1949 to 1963, when China was an ally of the Soviet Union; the second from 1963 on, when China was a 'self-reliant, autonomous international actor'.

Published at the beginning of 1978, the book does not cover the opening of full diplomatic relations between China and the USA, but that important event would not surprise anyone who had read the book carefully. It would be seen as a natural consequence of previous policies. The fall of the 'gang of four' is touched on only briefly because foreign policy, thanks to Zhou Enlai, remained in the main free of their influence. On the other hand, the harm done by Lin Biao is treated rather thoroughly and convincingly, showing not only that he put forward Mao Zedong Thought as superseding that of Marx, Engels and Lenin, but that he encouraged the growth of chauvinism in China, a tendency very much in evidence during some stages of the Cultural Revolution.

Until 1963—that is, until the Sino-Soviet polemic became public—China was a steadfast supporter of the Soviet Union and paid unstinted (perhaps even exaggerated) tribute to its help in reconstructing the Chinese economy after the ravages of the Civil War, as also to the part it had played in helping to win that war. The official Soviet statement of 9 September 1959, on Sino-Indian border clashes, which did not support China, was the first public intimation of differences between the two governments. Even after the withdrawal from China of the Soviet experts and the termination of the aid contracts, the Chinese made no public reference to differences and even many Chinese were unaware until some time later that all the experts had left. Khrushchev had hoped to bring China to heel, but even though assisted by three climatically disastrous years (1959-61), he was unable to do so.

China's policies of self-reliance and refusing to be

bullied in fact bore fruit very quickly. Mr Yahuda says:

Even in retrospect the speed by which China's international role was transformed is still breathtaking. Within a space of only five years the Chinese state moved from a position of revolutionary isolation, apparently disdainful of inter-state relations, to one of a fully recognised great-power participant in a system distinguished by such relationships.

He goes on to say that China had 'normalised relations with most countries in the world largely in accordance with Chinese terms for mutual recognition... Any lingering doubts that self-reliance implied self-seclusion were removed'.

He quotes the earliest (so far) known reference by Mao Zedong to the 'three worlds', in a talk in February 1974 with President Kaunda of Zambia. Yahuda points out that the words show 'that it was not until 1974 that he decided the international processes "of great upheaval, great division and great reorganisation" he had identified as beginning in the 1960s had finally ended in a new coherent pattern. Only then did it become possible to identify more clearly China's chosen place in world politics as a socialist developing country and a member of the Third World.' This supports the belief that the theory of the three worlds is based on present conditions and could not have been developed in full at an earlier date.

Mr. Yahuda's style is straightforward and lucid, pleasantly free from the jargon of both the political analyst and the sociologist. The thesis he puts forward is a coherent one and his book gives a valuable birds-eye view of China's policies and relations with the world throughout the whole period since the setting up of the People's Republic.

CHINA AND THE THREE WORLDS, edited by King C. Chen. Macmillan, price £15.00 (hard cover), £6.95 (paperback).

Useful compilation of Chinese documents on foreign policy, mainly from present decade, all likely to be known to specialists, including a few of perhaps dubious authenticity. Scope of book wider than title suggests: theory of three worlds, Sino-US rapprochement, relations with Indochina, Albania, Yugoslavia, struggle against hegemonism, Taiwan, modernisation. Helpful 60-page introduction, not always supported by material that follows.

TO OUR READERS

We warmly thank all those subscribers who helped us to a total of £38 in donations during the third quarter of the year.

We can also report that recently we have received a number of interesting new foreign subscriptions, indicating that our readership is being strengthened in some countries where readers were previously rather thin on the ground. Alongside this has been a welcome increase in correspondence which raises questions and puts forward opinions which do not always agree with our own. We always pay careful attention to such letters.

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