

China Policy Study Group

# BROADSHEET

PROBLEMS OF NATIONAL LIBERATION AND SOCIALISM

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## CHINESE BALANCE SHEET

**B**ELOW we summarise the Resolution passed on 27th June by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, reviewing its experience over the last 32 years. Only once before has the Party attempted such a summing-up and that was in 1945, before the People's Republic was established.

The publicity media of the West have greeted the Resolution as a complete repudiation of Mao Zedong and his teachings. This is reminiscent of their frequent reports of his death, 20 years before he led the Chinese people to independence. The Resolution does not repudiate Mao but contains an unstinting tribute to his achievements. It also attributes to him a number of serious errors, particularly during his later years, but says they are far outweighed by the benefits of his wise leadership over a period of two generations.

Selecting from a host of references we quote: 'Comrade Mao Zedong was a great Marxist and a great proletarian revolutionary, strategist and theorist... his contributions to the Chinese revolution far outweigh his mistakes. His merits are primary and his errors secondary... Mao Zedong Thought is Marxism-Leninism applied and developed in China... It is... the valuable spiritual asset of our Party. It will be our guide to action for a long time to come.' About 40 of his writings and speeches are recommended by name for reference and study.

Reading through the proposals formulated for the coming period it becomes clear that in most instances they involve a return to Mao's policies rather than a departure from them. *On the Ten Major Relationships* is an example. The wrong balance between agriculture and industry and between heavy and light industry which developed in recent years, also the tendencies to excessive centralisation where increased decentralisation would have been more prudent, were the result of failure to implement Mao's policies and it is this which the Resolution says it wishes to correct.

Outside China some may ask (and they are entitled to do so), 'Are they really summing-up their experience in the thoroughgoing sense familiarised by Mao, or are they smoothing over differences and battenning down the hatches on the disturbing thought that something has been wrong with the whole style of work of the Party?'

This is a question which only time and further examination of the experience of the Party can answer.

The Resolution does not modify in any degree the violent criticism of the cultural revolution which one has seen for some time past in responsible articles and speeches. There will certainly be those in the West who will aver that its proclaimed aim—to test the actions of leaders against the principles of Marxism-Leninism—is vindicated by what happened after it was launched.

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## SUMMARY OF RESOLUTION

*The following synopsis is greatly compressed—from about 22,000 to less than 3,000 words—and omissions have been necessary. The Resolution consists of three parts: first, a review of the history of the Chinese revolution; second, an evaluation of Mao Zedong; third, plans for the future. We strongly advise perusal of the full Resolution, which is obtainable in English, published by the Foreign Languages Press, Beijing.*

### The 28 years before the People's Republic (1921-49)

**A**FTER the revolution of 1911 it was only the Communist Party that insisted from its formation in 1921 on the need to overthrow imperialism and feudalism and then to turn to socialism.

In 1927 the policy of armed uprising by the peasants was decided on and the first revolutionary base was set up in the Jinggang Mountains. But leadership errors elsewhere forced its abandonment and led to the Long March. During the March the Zunyi Conference established the leadership of Mao Zedong, resulting in the successful conclusion of the March in northern Shaanxi. In spite of enormous losses it was a turning point.

After the Japanese invasion the Party took the lead in

organising the anti-Japanese united front. The Red Army became the mainstay of the resistance and in eight years victory was won. Then the Party led the People's Liberation Army to defeat the treachery of the Kuomintang and set up the People's Republic.

Victory was won under the guidance of Marxism-Leninism; the system of Mao Zedong Thought came into being and strong political unity was forged around the Party. Only a new type of people's army could have achieved this, which was basically due to adherence to the principles of independence and self-reliance. The world balance of forces was changed.

All China's nationalities took part in the struggle but one should not underrate the role of leaders, of whom Mao Zedong was the most prominent. With others he gradually worked out the overall strategy which brought success. The system of Mao Zedong Thought was born.

### The 32 years since the founding of the People's Republic

**T**HESE were, in general, years of success in socialist revolution and construction, the main achievements being: the people's democratic dictatorship; welding China into a single nation; safeguarding the country's security; the development of a socialist economy; building an industrial base and economic system; a big increase in agricultural production; substantial growth of

internal and foreign trade, with a greatly improved standard of living; considerable progress in science, education, health and culture; improvement in strength and quality of the PLA; a socialist foreign policy, leading to an increasing role in international affairs and helping to create a situation favourable to the people everywhere.

#### **Basic completion of socialist transformation (1949-56)**

**T**HE basic Party policies for the transition from new democracy to socialism were correct and led to brilliant successes. In spite of the war in Korea, by the end of 1952 industrial and agricultural production had reached record levels.

In 1952, at Mao's suggestion, the Central Committee put forward a general line for socialist transformation. It pointed out that socialist industrialisation was essential, that the contradiction between the working class and the bourgeoisie, between the socialist road and the capitalist road, had become the principal internal contradiction, that the peasants wanted co-operation, and that industrialisation would provide ever stronger support for the transformation of agriculture.

In capitalist industry and commerce the peaceful redemption of the bourgeoisie was realised as was, in agriculture, the advance to fully socialist producers' co-operatives. This was a historic achievement.

Under the first Five-Year Plan (1953-57) there were major successes in economic construction. Economic growth was quite fast, the key sectors were well balanced and prices were stable.

The first National People's Congress (September 1954) enacted the first Constitution. The 'hundred flowers' policy brought advances in education, science and culture. A virile revolutionary morality prevailed.

The 8th Congress of the CPC concentrated all efforts on developing the productive forces. The principal internal contradiction was now that between existing conditions and the demand for rapid development of the economy and culture.

#### **Beginning to build socialism in all spheres (1955-66)**

**D**URING this period the material and technical base for modernization was largely established but there were also serious errors. Mao Zedong and many leading comrades had become impatient. The resolution of the 8th Plenary Session of the Central Committee, against Peng Dehuai and others, gravely undermined inner-Party democracy, leading to serious difficulties.

Owing to correct policies the economy recovered but 'Left' errors remained, for which Mao Zedong was largely responsible. It was wrong to say that the main target should be 'those Party persons in authority taking the capitalist road'.

The task of national economic readjustment had in the main been accomplished but the next step, modernization, was not taken owing to the 'cultural revolution'.

#### **The 'cultural revolution' (1966-76)**

**I**NITIATED and led by Mao Zedong, this was responsible for the heaviest losses since 1949. He based himself on incorrect theses, inconsistent with Mao Zedong Thought. Taking advantage of these errors Lin Biao, Jiang Qing and others committed many crimes behind Mao's back and tried to seize power.

Many Marxist and socialist political principles were denounced, right and wrong were confused. The movement was divorced from both the Party and the masses; it was neither a revolution nor social progress; it led to domestic turmoil and catastrophe.

In the early stages of the movement Mao's personal leadership took the place of collective leadership. Leading Party members were wrongly criticised and chaos developed. The 9th Congress of the CPC legitimised erroneous theories and practices. Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiaoping and in some respects Mao himself worked to correct the errors, but plotting by the Jiang Qing clique

continued. The 10th Congress confirmed the 'Left' errors of the previous one. In October 1976, after the death of Mao, the Political Bureau of the Party, executing the will of Party and people, smashed the Jiang Qing clique and brought the 'cultural revolution' to an end.

Mao's error here was the error of a great revolutionary. In his later years he made serious mistakes but even then rectified some specific mistakes and opposed the Lin Biao and Jiang Qing cliques. He continued a correct foreign policy and outlined the three worlds thesis.

In addition to Mao's mistakes there were complex social and historical factors underlying the 'cultural revolution'. Many of the laws of development of socialist society are still not understood and Marxist writings do not provide ready-made explanations. The struggle against revisionism within the country, launched as a result of the polemic with the Soviet leaders, led to tension in inner-party relations and it became difficult to resist 'Left' views.

Mao began to get arrogant just when the Party faced new tasks. Collective leadership and democratic centralism were weakened, but the Central Committee was partly responsible. It is still difficult to eliminate the influence of centuries of feudal autocracy. The Party failed to institutionalise inner-Party democracy and democracy in political and social life, so that conditions favoured the development of arbitrary individual rule and it was hard to prevent or check the 'cultural revolution'.

#### **Great turning point (1976-78)**

**V**ICTORY over the Jiang Qing clique started a new period of development. Production was fairly quickly restored and education, science and culture began to return to normal. In the struggle over the demands to correct the errors of the 'cultural revolution' Hua Guofeng, in spite of the useful work he had done, continued to commit 'Left' errors. He tried to suppress discussion and obstructed the redressing of injustices. Under his influence the 11th Congress of the CPC (August 1977), while playing a positive role in some respects, reaffirmed some of the errors of the 'cultural revolution'.

The 3rd Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee (December 1978) was a significant turning point, shifting the focus of work to socialist modernization, stressing the need to strengthen socialist democracy and the legal system and redressing wrongs in Party history.

Ye Jianying's speech on the 30th Anniversary helped to unify the thinking of Party and people. The political situation is one of stability, unity and liveliness. Industry is better co-ordinated, some errors in rural areas have been corrected and grain output reached a record.

People's congresses at all levels are working better and at and below county level direct election is universal. The powers of local and primary organisations are being extended. The Party has decided to put an end to the virtually life-long tenure of leading cadres, change over-concentration of power and gradually reduce the average age of all leading cadres.

#### **Mao Zedong's historical role and his Thought**

**M**AO's contribution to the Chinese and world revolutions far outweigh his mistakes.

Mao Zedong Thought is Marxism-Leninism applied and developed in China by Chinese Communists, with Mao as their chief representative. Many Party leaders made important contributions. It has enriched and developed Marxism-Leninism in the following respects:

1. On the new-democratic revolution—forming a united front with most of the bourgeoisie, led by the proletariat; the need for protracted armed struggle, with the peasants as the most reliable ally of the proletariat.
2. On socialist revolution and construction—effecting socialist industrialisation simultaneously with socialist transformation; democracy for the people and dictator-

ship over the reactionaries; correctly handling contradictions among the people; not using foreign experience mechanically; maintaining balance between different branches of the economy; cadres taking part in labour and workers in management.

3. On army building and military strategy—forming a new type of people's army; building rural base areas and relying on the masses; raising guerilla warfare to the strategic plane.

4. On policy and tactics—despising the enemy strategically and taking him seriously tactically; crushing enemies one by one; combining legal and illegal struggle; giving the defeated a chance to become working people.

5. On ideological, political and cultural work—being both red and expert; the importance of intellectuals, who should identify themselves with the workers and peasants; serving the people and fearing no sacrifice.

6. On Party building—integrating theory and practice; forming close links with the masses; practising self-criticism; remaining modest and prudent.

The stand, viewpoint and method embodied in the above is the soul of Mao Zedong Thought. There are three basic points: seeking truth from facts, the mass line and independence. There is no right to speak without investigation; give full scope to man's dynamic role; resolve contradictions which are different in nature by different methods. Reliance on the masses is everything; their ideas must be systematised and tested in practice over and over again. Proletarian revolution is an internationalist cause but each proletariat should base itself on its own country's realities and rely on its own forces. Uphold peaceful coexistence and mutual assistance; no one must impose his views on others.

Continue to uphold and study Mao's works and those of other Marxist-Leninists. Distinguish between Mao Zedong Thought and Mao's later mistakes.

#### **Unite to build a powerful, modern, socialist China**

**T**HE aim now is to modernize China's agriculture, industry, national defence, and science and technology. Taiwan must return to the motherland. Four principles—the socialist road, the people's democratic dictatorship, the leadership of the Communist Party, and Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought—are the basis of the unity of Party and people and the guarantee of socialist modernization.

The key pointers are:

1. Economic construction is the central task.
2. Bring about proportionate and harmonious development of the economy. Oppose impetuosity and passivity.
3. State economy and collective economy are the basic forms, but a necessary complement is the working people's individual economy within prescribed limits. Planned economy must allow for the supplementary role of the market on the basis of public ownership.
4. Class struggle has not died out but it should not be overemphasised. Contradictions in Chinese society not of a class nature must be resolved by other methods.
5. It is necessary to establish gradually a highly democratic socialist political system and realise direct popular participation in the democratic process. The socialist legal system must be strengthened.
6. The status of education, science and culture must be raised. The intellectuals are a force to rely on. The people and youth must be educated in the Marxist world outlook and socialist morality.
7. The right of minority nationalities to autonomy must be respected and measures taken to help their cultural and economic development. Freedom of religious belief must be maintained.
8. National defence must be strengthened and the tradition of unity between army, government and people restored and developed.

9. Imperialism and racism must be opposed and world peace safeguarded. Promote relations with other countries on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and uphold proletarian internationalism.

10. Build a sound system of democratic centralism in the Party, prohibiting the personality cult. Go deep among the masses, practise criticism and self-criticism and eradicate unhealthy tendencies.

The tasks of the revolution have not yet been accomplished and there is still need for determined struggle. Socialism aims to expand the productive forces, developing socialist relations of production and the superstructure and gradually eliminating class differences—mainly due to the inadequate development of the productive forces—until communism is reached. This is a revolution more profound and arduous than any before, demanding many generations of hard work and sacrifice.

## **EMANCIPATING THE MIND**

**A**T the 3rd Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, in December 1978, Chairman Hua Guofeng called on the whole Party and people to emancipate their minds from old conventions and prejudices. It was this Session which also decided to shift the focus of the Party's work to the Four Modernizations (See BROADSHEET No. 4, 1979).

Since then many measures have been taken, especially in the economic field, to encourage people's initiative and creativity: decentralisation of control and management in enterprises and the extension of private ownership by households and their responsibility for production in rural communes. There has been a complete change of policy towards overseas Chinese. Visits to relatives are now welcomed and many visitors have bought houses for their stays in China.

The policy of co-operation with democratic political parties has won their support, greatly helping the unity and stability of the nation, which is essential for the Four Modernizations. Intellectuals as a group have been treated with suspicion for over 20 years, especially during the cultural revolution when most were persecuted and many thousands died. The new policy towards them has greatly raised their enthusiasm to use their qualifications and experience, not only in production but in training the younger generations. Modernization is unthinkable without the intellectuals' contribution.

The new policy towards national minorities is another unifying factor, strengthening national security.

Since the 3rd Plenary Session the Party has called on members to study Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought, not as a mass movement, which in the past became a mere ritual and a means of suppressing free discussion. The main aim is to get people to make up their minds which course leads in the right direction and which is the wrong one, to correct their own ideas and 'seek truth from facts'. This, it is believed, is the way to apply Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought in practice. The new willingness to speak out in letters to the press against abuses is an encouraging manifestation of independent thinking among ordinary people.

A start has been made on the reform of Party leadership in national life. Many leading cadres, old or in poor health, have been retired; some of them have become 'advisers'. Younger ones, many in their 40s or 50s, many of them eagerly learning new professional skills, have been promoted.

Alongside the reform of Party leadership is the progress in the democratic election of workshop leaders by workers and of brigade and team leaders by peasants. In civil administration the heads, from county level downwards, are directly elected by the citizens. These changes

mean the separation of responsibility of Party and administration (members of the latter may or may not be members of the Party). This division of labour increases efficiency and avoids possible misuse of power by Party leaders whose ideological discipline has weakened.

All the changes mentioned above are salutary for the Chinese people. However, we in the West must not repeat the mistake we made when we took for granted, as fact, everything reported by the Chinese media during the years when the Lin Biao-Jiang Qing group had usurped the leadership. Then we had no way of recognising their distortions and lies and did not fully realise the strength of the influence of China's past history, the unquestioning acceptance of the word of those in authority, the nature of the inner-Party struggle or the extent of the conspiracy of the careerists.

We have now learned, following the Chinese people in their painful experience, something of the complexities, problems and difficulties of the creation of a socialist society, which has no precedent in history. The aim is not only to raise the level of the productive forces and quickly develop an economy and culture to meet the needs of the people, but also, and more difficult, to inculcate Communist morality among the people and particularly among Party members, so that they may again set an example as they did in Yan'an and in the early years after liberation. The old generation of revolutionary leaders, like Zhu De, Zhou Enlai, Dong Biwu, Chen Yi, He Long and numerous others did this to the very end of their lives.

Realising the difficulties and complexities of creating a socialist society we must try to understand some of the weaknesses and stumblingblocks that exist in China. Three examples of the remarkable strength of traditional ideas and customs, which hinder the emancipation of the mind and Four Modernizations, may be cited.

The Chinese still show far too lavish hospitality and generosity towards guests. To give expensive presents to people far better off than themselves is irrational to the point of absurdity. Any protest, however reasonable, is met with 'It is our custom' or 'We want to show our gratitude for your help'.

There is even a revival of extravagance in weddings. Many well-educated young couples serve only tea, soft drinks and simple snacks at their wedding party. Dinners are limited to the family circle and a few intimate friends. But many families, with less exposure to new ideas, stick firmly to the old conventions: expensive

presents to the girl's family, expensive dowry, expensive furniture for the bedroom and rich feasts for large numbers of people. Inevitably they get badly into debt, even though guests give cash as a wedding present. Constant pleas by the state for economy and simplicity go unheeded by these people. They want to keep up with the Joneses, to use an English expression. Even a university graduate whose fiancée is a doctor may be unable to get married because his parents will not permit it without extravagance.

Another example, seen especially in rural areas, is the lingering desire to have sons to ensure security in old age. Urban populations have by and large accepted the government's policy of controlling population growth, but progress among the peasants is slow. They are willing to have only one or two children if one of them is a son. If two or three babies are girls the couple—or more likely their parents—will want to try again, hoping for a boy. Such surviving attitudes can be countered only by persistent and patient education and propaganda.

The influence of traditional methods of education still lingers on. Students must 'du shu', study books thoroughly and memorise as much as possible. Questions and discussion are rare, though throughout China's long history there have been many outstanding thinkers who questioned and argued against theories of previous scholars. University students are not in the habit of expressing their own independent ideas. They simply accept what they are told and what is published. This habit certainly contributes to social harmony and may be preferable to the Western habit of expressing opinions, not necessarily soundly based, just to be different.

Finally, Chinese intellectuals talk much more freely when not in the company of their fellows. Otherwise, they seem very reluctant to express an opinion on any subject. This attitude can be traced back to the anti-Rightist movement of 1957 and, even more, to the period of the cultural revolution, when everyone was afraid of being reported as a counter-revolutionary or a capitalist-roader. No wonder such people negate the cultural revolution completely and see no positive value in it.

The really important thing is that the retrograde tendencies which have been described, though they are still widespread and take their toll, are gradually becoming subordinate to the people's desire to make socialism work and to contribute to it themselves. They accept present hardships in anticipation of better times, not just for their own families but for the Chinese people as a whole.

## Regular Publication of BROADSHEET to Cease

**T**HE China Policy Study Group announces, with regret that regular publication of BROADSHEET will cease at the end of the year.

In January 1964, when our first number appeared, reliable information about China was not readily available even though, in view of the Sino-Soviet polemic, it was badly needed. BROADSHEET rapidly built up its circulation. The job which we set out to do, to provide accurate information about the polemic and other aspects of Chinese policy, has long since been accomplished. Information and comment on China is still needed but there are now many sources from which it can be obtained. The Chinese themselves put out several publications much better suited to the needs of foreigners.

The main reason for our decision, however, is that with inflation our receipts have fallen seriously below our costs. For a number of years we have been enabled to keep going by profits from the sale of books by George Thomson but, as was to be expected, receipts from that source have gradually fallen and in 1980 our total in-

come was considerably less than our outgoings, despite generous donations from readers.

Before taking our decision we consulted some of our long-time supporters and in the end had to conclude that BROADSHEET cannot continue as at present.

A number of readers expressed the wish that the Group should remain in existence and try to publish something, even if at irregular intervals. We are considering whether the obvious difficulties can be overcome.

By ceasing publication at the end of the year we hope to leave no debts behind us. We shall accept no subscriptions from now on and shall continue to send the journal to those whose subscriptions expire before the end of the year.

Our decision has been a painful one to take, for in our 18 years we have made friends throughout the world and, we think, done work of some value. Cessation does not indicate any reduction in our personal support for China, which we shall continue to express in other ways.