

# The Late Cultural Revolution

2016-12-13 01:42:22 -0400

## **The Struggle from 1969 to 1976 of Mao Zedong and his Political Allies against the Attempts of the Revisionist Forces in the CCP and PLA to Reverse the Socialist New Things and the Revolutionary Internationalist Foreign Policy brought forward by the Cultural Revolution**

*This document was written by a comrade of Mass Proletariat. It provides a comprehensive account of the struggles internal to the dictatorship of the proletariat in China in the late Cultural Revolution and how these struggles were reflected in the foreign policy of the Chinese Communist Party. The questions that lie at the heart of this paper are what political line for developing socialism and what foreign policy are needed to advance the class struggle in socialist countries and on the global scale in order to work towards communism? And, because of the primacy of internal contradictions, how is this foreign policy a reflection of the class struggle in a socialist society?*

## **Introduction: The First Stage of the Cultural Revolution**

Some of the most important political features of domestic policy in the first phase of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1969 include:

- (1) In 1957, Mao made a path-breaking analysis that classes and class struggle would continue and take new forms in socialist society. In the “Sixteen Point Decision” of the Central Committee published on August 8, 1966, Mao identified the capitalist-roaders in the leadership of the CCP as the primary target of the Cultural Revolution.<sup>1</sup>
- (2) Mao’s understanding of the necessity for class struggle and his leadership of the Cultural Revolution over the course of ten years constitute his most important contribution to the world revolutionary movement. This revolution in a socialist society was an attempt—unprecedented anywhere or anytime—to mobilize and empower hundreds of millions of workers,

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<sup>1</sup>See Points 1-3 of the 16 Point Decision in *People’s China: 1966 through 1972*, edited, annotated and with introductions by David Milton, Nancy Milton and Franz Schurmann (1974) pp. 272-275.

peasants, women, youth, intellectuals and minority nationalities in order to stay on a long and difficult socialist road to communism.

- (3) After the first dazibaos appeared at Beijing universities and colleges criticizing conservative professors and their supporters in the Municipal CCP Committee in early 1966, Mao called on millions of middle school and college students to rebel against conservative academic authorities. Some of the first Red Guard organizers, whose parents were leading party cadres, asserted their right to lead the Red Guard movement due to their “red bloodline.” Mao and his allies rejected this position and supported the formation of “Mao Tsetung Thought Red Guard” groups, whose members were judged on their political performance and class stand.
- (4) In the January 1967 Storm in Shanghai, the proletariat took the political stage in the GPCR. The seizure of power from the capitalist-roaders in Shanghai was led, under Mao’s overall guidance, by Zhang Chunqiao (the new CCP secretary in Shanghai); by Yao Wenyuan (a young national pacesetter in the field of propaganda); by Wang Hongwen (the 39 year-old chair of the revolutionary alliance of the Shanghai proletariat that took the form of the Workers’ General Headquarters in late 1966); and by Jiang Qing (the leader of revolutionary cultural work in the PLA and the CCP).
- (5) From 1966 into the 1970s, the masses and their Maoist leadership developed “socialist new things” in dozens of areas, from education and the liberation of women to factories and collective farms. (See 8-10 below for a discussion of these achievements of the GPCR and how they came under attack in the early 1970s.)
- (6) The development in the provinces of a “checkerboard” of leftist-led and rightist forces whose clashes led to the dominance of the PLA in the three-in-one Revolutionary Committees. They were made up of worker-peasant-student masses, party cadre and PLA officers. The revolutionary committees replaced people’s communes—patterned after the Paris Commune in 1871—that had been formed in Shanghai and several provinces in February 1967.
- (7) After Mao called on the PLA to “support the Left” in January 1967, an important battle took place in July 1967 in Wuhan between central PLA forces and a revolutionary alliance of mass organizations (the General Workers Council Headquarters) on the one hand, and an uprising of rightist organizations (the One Million Warriors) supported by a mutiny of regional military forces. Mao, Defense Minister Lin Biao and Premier Zhou Enlai set up a secret headquarters outside Wuhan in order to direct the battle.<sup>2</sup> Maoists and revisionists around the country followed the situation in Wuhan carefully.

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<sup>2</sup>“The Wuhan Incident: Local Strife and Provincial Rebellion during the Cultural Revolution” by Thomas Robinson, *The China Quarterly*, No. 47, July-September 1971.

At the other end of the political spectrum, PLA generals in Guongzhou (Canton) supported Red Guard groups who claimed that their “red class origin” as children of party cadre gave them the right to control their campuses. When armed conflict started between conservative Red Guards and Maoist students in 1968, the PLA intervened on the side of the rightists. The PLA also excluded leftist forces from the founding of the provincial Revolutionary Committee.<sup>3</sup>

Shanghai was one of the few cities where PLA units intervened on the side of leftist forces. In 1967 and 1968, in a majority of the provinces PLA generals supported revisionist groups and alliances.

## **Part A: The Struggle for Power between the Maoists and the Capitalist-Roaders**

### **The Ninth Party Congress in 1969 and its 1970 Plenum**

The rebuilding of the CCP at all levels in 1968 and 1969 brought many young revolutionary activists into the party. The number of CCP members grew from 17 million in 1962 to 28 million in 1973. This process culminated in the Ninth Congress of the CCP in the spring of 1969.

Just before the Congress convened, armored Soviet forces attacked Chinese defense units on the Amur and Ussuri Rivers in northern China. The growing Soviet imperialist threat to socialist China played a major role, spoken and unspoken, in all of the political battles within the CCP and the PLA in the early 1970s. (See Part B of this paper for a discussion of the opposed political lines on foreign policy of the Maoist and revisionist forces during those years.) At this Congress, Lin Biao gave a Political Report whose content had been shaped by Mao. Lin became the only Vice-Chairman and positioned himself to become Mao’s successor. More than half of the Central Committee and the Politburo were PLA generals and high-ranking officers. Visitors to China at this time were struck by the number of uniformed members of the PLA on city streets, but the implications of this presence would not become publicly known until 1972.

Mao was concerned that China could become a military dictatorship if the party did not command the gun. Chen Boda (who had been a reliable supporter of Mao and propagandist for Maoism since the Seventh Congress in 1945, and was the secretary of the Central Cultural Revolution Group) lined up behind Lin’s position that political conditions in China made it necessary for the PLA to command the party.

At a Central Committee Plenum in late 1970, Chen Boda supported Lin’s plan that the People’s Republic re-instate the post of State Chairman that had been

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<sup>3</sup>“The Radical Students in Kwangtung during the Cultural Revolution” by Hong Yung Lee, *The China Quarterly*, No. 64, December 1975, see pp. 669-672.

vacant after the overthrow of the “Number One Capitalist-Roader,” Liu Shaoqi, in 1967. Lin expected to take this position.

At this plenum, Zhang Chunqiao opposed Lin’s attempt to insert a reference to “Mao’s genius” into the CCP Constitution, which Zhang had drafted. Lin often squelched political and ideological struggle and study by stating that “We must firmly implement the Chairman’s instructions, whether we understand them or not.” Mao and his allies responded by forcing Chen out of the CCP leadership, deferring the settling of accounts with Lin to the fall of 1971.

### **The Struggle between Mao Zedong and Lin Biao is Joined**

The next round of struggle between the Maoists and Lin’s forces in the leadership of the CCP and the PLA (including PLA Chief of Staff Huang Yung-sheng) took place in 1971. Lin placed two other issues on the table: The view that only “geniuses” like Mao (and Lin) can liberate the masses, and Lin’s opposition to the “opening to the West,” which Mao, his closest political allies and the forces grouped around Zhou Enlai believed was necessary to avoid fighting against two imperialist superpowers at the same time. In July 1971, Peking Review stated that Mao’s revolutionary line on foreign affairs was facing “interference from the Left.”

The objective of Mao’s “inspection trip” to the provinces in mid-1971<sup>4</sup> was to check on the political reliability of the regional PLA commanders that Lin was courting. When Lin found out that his support was limited to the air force (where one of his sons was in control) and to some of the Beijing-based PLA generals, Lin scuttled his counter-revolutionary coup attempt, Project 571. His plane crashed in Mongolia, killing Lin and his family. Even though Lin’s plane was headed towards the Soviet Union, I am not aware of evidence that Lin and his allies had ongoing political connections with the Soviet revisionists, as Liu and Deng did in the early 1960s.<sup>5</sup>

After Lin’s coup attempt, Mao issued the following directives: Practice Marxism and not Revisionism; Unite and Don’t Split; Be Open and Aboveboard; and Don’t Intrigue and Conspire. In 1973 these principles were incorporated into the CCP Constitution in the report given by CCP Vice-Chairman Wang Hongwen.

Lin’s theory of “genius” was idealist, self-serving and negated Mao’s long-standing view that the masses make history, not heroes. Lin’s view of the primary role of the PLA in the GPCR also demonstrated a lack of faith in the masses and the party. Finally, Lin’s opposition to the “opening to the West” was a form of ultra-leftism that would have weakened socialist China’s defenses

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<sup>4</sup>This trip is described in *Chairman Mao Talks to the People: Talks and Letters, 1956-1971*, edited by Stuart Schram, 1974. pp. 290-299.

<sup>5</sup>“The Fall of Lin Biao” by Philip Bridgham, *The China Quarterly*, No. 55, July-Sept. 1973.

against a very real military threat from the Soviet Union beginning in the late 1960s.

Lin's position was similar to that of Trotsky in opposing the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with imperialist Germany in 1918 close to the end of inter-imperialist World War I. Lenin convinced the majority of the Bolshevik leadership to sign the treaty, which gave the new socialist Soviet state time to build a Red Army for the coming civil war, and to prepare for military interventions by more than a dozen imperialist states, including the U.S.A. After Germany's defeat later in 1918, the Red Army was able to take back most of the territory it had given up at Brest-Litovsk.

### **Understanding Lin Biao's Coup Attempt**

Lin's treachery and coup attempt was difficult for Mao and his allies to explain to the Chinese people. Lin had played a positive role after he replaced the pro-Soviet Peng Dehuai as Defense Minister in 1959. Lin led Maoist campaigns to democratize the PLA during the early 1960s; the Quotations of Chairman Mao Tsetung (the 33 chapter Red Book) first appeared in the PLA in 1964; in 1965 Lin issued "Long Live the Victory of People's War"; and Lin's forces answered Mao's call for the PLA to "support the Left" in Shanghai, other cities and several provinces in 1967 and 1968.

Mao may have recognized some of Lin's weaknesses during the 1960s, but the PLA was a key instrument for defending China against U.S. imperialism and Soviet imperialism on its southern and northern borders, and for holding China together in conditions in many provinces that Mao called "all around civil war" in 1967 and 1968.

It is important to understand how Lin Biao, Chen Boda and their networks in the PLA and CCP could play a positive role at a certain stage in the Cultural Revolution, and make a counter-revolutionary grab for political and military power at another stage in this complicated revolutionary process.

In talks given during his inspection tour in August and September 1971, Mao said: "We have been singing The Internationale for 50 years, yet on 10 occasions certain people inside our Party have tried to split it. As I see it, this may happen another 10, 20 or 30 times. You don't believe it? You may not believe it. Anyhow I do. Will there be no struggle when we get to communism? I just don't believe it. There will be struggle even then, but only struggle between the new and the old, between what is correct and what is incorrect. Tens of thousands of years from now, what is wrong still won't get by, it won't stand up."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>In "On the Social Base of the Lin Piao Anti-Party Clique" by Yao Wenyan, Red Flag no. 3, 1975 and Peking Review no. 10, March 7, 1975.

## The Aftermath

Lin's coup attempt had a deeply negative influence on the course of the Cultural Revolution. Mao's replacement of the leadership of Lin's Fourth Field Army and most of the PLA's central leaders in Beijing took place under the leadership of Marshal Ye Jianying, who had been the leader of the February Adverse Current. This factional movement of high-ranking rightists in the CCP and PLA sought to stop the Cultural Revolution in its tracks in February 1967. Many of Lin's allies in the CCP leadership were replaced by high-ranking cadre who had been overthrown or demoted during the early mass revolutionary upsurges of the GPCR.

Premier Zhou Enlai presided over this process of rehabilitating revisionists<sup>7</sup> who made limited or no "self-criticism." While Mao's four close allies who rose to prominence in Shanghai (the Four) kept their positions in the party leadership, Zhou brought back Deng Xiaoping, the "Number Two Capitalist-Roader," from internal exile in March 1973 in order to serve as his Deputy Premier. Within a year, Deng also became a Vice-Chairman of the CCP and the head of the Military Affairs Commission of the CCP. In January 1976, Mao and the Four stripped Deng of power in the CCP leadership a second time. However, Deng was not expelled from the party, as Liu was in 1967, making it possible for Deng to make a second political comeback after a revisionist military coup took place in October 1976.

Even more negative consequences took place in China's foreign policy from 1971 to 1976. During those years Zhou and Deng discarded the Maoists' support for national liberation and revolutionary struggles during the 1960s and replaced it with the pro-U.S. imperialist Three Worlds Theory.

## Attempts to Reverse the Achievements of the GPCR in Education

The first "socialist new thing" of the GPCR that Zhou, Deng and their allies sought to overturn was in the realm of higher education. The political stakes were high: China's universities and colleges would either bring forward revolutionary successors for socialist society or provide specialized training for revisionist leaders for state capitalism, and eventually imperialism, in China.

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<sup>7</sup>In a capitalist or imperialist society, a revisionist political line makes reforms ends in themselves; denies the ferocity with which the ruling class will try to retain state power; and denies that the state is an instrument of class rule. This leads to the view that a peaceful transition to socialism is possible, and that durable international peace is possible in this, the era of imperialism. In a socialist society, a revisionist political line asserts that the primary task of socialism is economic development, and denies the decisive role that political consciousness and revolutionary ideology play in empowering the working class; defends and widens inequalities in education, wealth and decision-making power that continue to exist in socialist society; and denies the necessity of class struggle in order to advance along the socialist road to classless society, communism. During the Maoist era, the revisionist forces in the leadership of the CCP and PLA also functioned as capitalist-roaders.

At Tsinghua in Beijing, China's leading university of science and technology, revisionist educators attempted to unseat two young military officers, Chi Qun and Xie Jingyi, the leaders of the Workers' Propaganda Team that Mao and Zhang Chunquiao had sent in 1968 to provide proletarian leadership to the Tsinghua campus and to its affiliated factories and research institutions.

From one end of China to another, the Maoist-led Workers' Propaganda Teams brought large numbers of young workers and peasants into universities and colleges, with a first graduating class of 200,000 in 1974.<sup>8</sup> At Tsinghua and other educational institutions, the Maoists advocated the principle of "red over expert."

Between 1971 and 1973, a veteran party cadre at Tsinghua, He Dongchang (who was supported by Premier Zhou Enlai), advocated the restoration of traditional teaching programs at Tsinghua. Along with the revisionist secretary of the Tsinghua CCP branch in the early 1960s, he advocated replacing the "recommendation" system from factory units and collective farms with formal national university examinations that favored children of high-ranking party members.<sup>9</sup>

According to an active participant in the educational transformations at a university in Fujian province on the eastern coast of China, due to the renewed emphasis on admission exams, by 1975 at least half of the student body were the sons and daughters of urban party cadre and intellectuals.<sup>10</sup> In late 1976, the Workers' Propaganda Team at Tsinghua was dismissed and its leaders and members were sent back to their factories and military units.

In the early 1970s, the political line guiding education in China's countryside, focusing on whether to rapidly expand it in order to achieve universal middle school education, was also hotly contested.<sup>11</sup>

## The Socialist New Things of the Cultural Revolution

"Socialist new things" in many areas were developed and expanded during the early 1970s. One of the most important revolutionary transformations was narrowing and overcoming class differences and inequalities in socialist society. Throughout the GPCR, Mao and the Four explained that there were significant differences in education, cultural level, technical expertise, wage inequalities,

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<sup>8</sup> *Wind in the Tower: Mao Tsetung and the Chinese Revolution, 1949-1975* by Han Suyin, page 332. Han Suyin was a liberal friend of the Chinese revolution but became an apologist for Deng's regime and an uncritical biographer of Zhou Enlai.

<sup>9</sup> For a detailed description of this campaign to reverse the achievements of the GPCR at Tsinghua, a "radical Maoist bastion," see *Rise of the Red Engineers: The Cultural Revolution and the Origins of China's New Class* by Joel Andreas, 2009.

<sup>10</sup> *Mao's People: Sixteen Portraits of Life in Revolutionary China* by B. Michael Frolic, 1980, page 85.

<sup>11</sup> See *The Unknown Cultural Revolution: Life and Change in a Chinese Village* (Shandong province) by Dongping Han, 2008, and *Gao Village: Rural Life in Modern China* (Jiangxi province) by Mobo Gao, 1999.

differences between and rural areas and the cities, and in access to political decision-making power.

The Maoists stated that addressing these “great differences” required continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. In this revolution under socialism, the working class and its party exercises dictatorship over the bourgeoisie. In socialist China, the bourgeoisie was the capitalist-roaders in the CCP leadership. From 1966 to 1976, proletarian dictatorship—working class rule—enabled hundreds of millions of people in China to employ democratic and empowering methods to transform and revolutionize society.

Important revolutionary transformations were made in the late 1960s and continued into the early 1970s in forming teams of workers, technicians and managers in China’s factories; making challenges to feudal/Confucian ideology; forming Iron Girls Brigades to break into traditional-male employment enclaves<sup>12</sup>; spreading collective values and internationalism broadly; extending health care throughout the countryside; and revolutionizing culture by means of model works that featured heroic women, workers, soldiers and peasants.<sup>13</sup>

The central political issue of the early 1970s was whether to uphold and extend, or to block and reverse, the socialist new things of the GPCR. At the Tenth Party Congress, Mao issued a statement that “reversing correct verdicts goes against the will of the people.”

While the revolutionary transformations of the Cultural Revolution were not universal, and met stubborn resistance from revisionist forces in the CCP and the PLA, it is the politically advanced experiences of the GPCR that are most important to understand and uphold.

### **The Tenth Party Congress and Afterwards**

As this struggle between the Maoists and the capitalist-roaders intensified in 1972 and early 1973, the Tenth Party Congress was held in October 1973. Mao was able to bring the Four into the top echelons of the CCP leadership: Wang Hongwen became a CCP Vice-Chairman (just behind No. 2 Premier Zhou); Zhang Chunqiao joined the five-person Standing Committee of the Politburo and became Director of the General Political Department of the PLA; and Yao Wen Yuan and Jiang Qing joined the CCP Politburo.

It was not until after Mao’s death and their arrest in October 1976 that these four Maoist leaders could be publicly referred to and attacked as a “gang of four” jointly by Hua’s and Deng’s forces.

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<sup>12</sup>See *Some of Us: Chinese Women Growing Up in the Mao Era* edited by Xueping Zhong, Wang Zheng and Bai Di, 2001.

<sup>13</sup>For a summary of these revolutionary transformations, see pp. 24-52 of *Evaluating the Cultural Revolution in China and its Legacy for the Future* by the MLM Revolutionary Study Group in the U.S., March 2007, at [www.mlmsrg.com](http://www.mlmsrg.com).



In his Report on the Revision of the Constitution at the Tenth Congress, Wang Hongwen stated that “We must train millions of successors for the cause of the proletarian revolution in the course of mass struggles.” Wang continued with Mao’s statement that “In order to guarantee that our party and country do not change their colour, we must not only have a correct line and correct policies but must train and bring up millions of successors who will carry on the cause of proletarian revolution.”

Wang’s also stated that ‘We must have the revolutionary spirit of daring to go against the tide [which has been] most important in the two-line struggle within the Party.’ Wang was referring not only to line struggles in the CCP dating back to 1927, but to the high-stakes political battle between revolutionary and revisionist lines in the CCP that had erupted in the early 1970s.<sup>14</sup> Wang emphasized Mao’s statement that “In our international relations, we Chinese people should get rid of great-power chauvinism resolutely, thoroughly, wholly and completely.” Wang stated, with prescience, that while “our country has a large population, vast territory and abundant resources...we must ‘never seek hegemony’ and must never be a superpower under any circumstances.”<sup>15</sup>

At the Tenth CCP Congress, the revisionist forces grouped around Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiaoping and Marshal Ye Jianying were not removed from power. There was a political stalemate between the Maoists and the revisionists at that time.

By 1973, Mao had become more critical of Zhou, whose authority and prestige in the party and the government was second to that of Mao. Zhou’s espousal of the “four modernizations” along with Deng—which made economic development the primary task for the country—was in opposition to Mao’s view that socialist economic growth required bringing forward the political initiative of the masses of people to consciously direct production in their interests, overcome social and economic inequalities, strengthen working class rule, and continue to wage class struggle against revisionist party leaders and their policies.

Following the Tenth Congress, the Maoists initiated a Campaign to Criticize Lin Biao and Confucius. This campaign all but explicitly targeted Zhou Enlai, who maintained a network of supporters in the CCP as a modern-day, “benevolent” Confucian.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Point 6 of the “16 Point Decision” from August 1966 stated that “The method to be used in debates is to present the facts, reason things out, and persuade through reasoning. Any method of forcing a minority holding different views to submit is impermissible. The minority should be protected, because sometimes the truth is with the minority. Even if the minority is wrong, they should still be allowed to argue their case and reserve their views.” While this was not followed on many occasions by different forces during the GPCR decade, Mao and his political allies were consistent proponents of this principle.

<sup>15</sup>“Report on the Revision of the Party Constitution,” delivered by Wang Hongwen on August 24 and adopted on August 28, 1973.

<sup>16</sup>As noted earlier, Premier Zhou Enlai had shifted to the right in the early 1970s. He was protecting and promoting Deng, and was himself attempting to reverse some of the most important gains of the Cultural Revolution in education. Since Zhou had a considerable base of support in the party, the military and among the masses, different tactics may have been required to expose his political line, his behind-the-scenes role in the revisionist offensive of

Much like Lin Biao, Zhou Enlai played a mainly positive role in the first stage of the Cultural Revolution. However, Zhou's political weaknesses and Confucian-bourgeois tendencies came to the fore in the early 1970s when he was confronted with the questions of whether to support, or oppose, the socialist new things of the GPCR and its revolutionary internationalist foreign policy.

### **The Political Struggle Heats Up in 1974 and 1975**

In 1974, Mao issued three directives concerning class struggle, unity and stability, and economic growth. When Deng tried to twist them so economic development became the main task, Mao insisted that class struggle was of primary importance and should be taken as the "key link." Deng is reported to have replied, "How can we talk about class struggle every day?" Deng knew all too well against whom, and against whose political program, class struggle was being waged by the Maoists. Around this time, Mao publicized a statement from Deng in 1962 that "it does not matter if a cat is red or white, as long as it catches mice."

In 1974 and 1975, three additional political campaigns were launched by the Maoists: To Study Mao Tsetung Thought, Study the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, and Criticize Water Margin, a classic novel that the Maoists used to raise the danger of capitulation of the people's forces to imperialists and reactionaries.

In these campaigns, Mao, the Four and their political allies in Beijing, Shanghai and the provinces were trying to find the means to bring forward the political initiative of the masses of people to advance on the socialist road, to foster widespread debate in order to sort out incorrect from correct ideas, and to enable hundreds of millions of people to criticize revisionist and bourgeois ideas and practices in the CCP.

In 1974 and 1975, there was considerable resistance to Deng's forces by the Four and their allies. At a machine tools plant in Guangzhou, workers attacked their managers for relying solely on technical solutions without "mobilizing the spirit of the workers." Dazibaos appeared in Beijing in 1974 defending the revolutionary committees as a vital achievement of the Cultural Revolution. In one dazibao, six mass representatives exposed the fact that of the original 24 workers on the Beijing Municipal Revolutionary Committee, only one remained.<sup>17</sup>

### **Maoists and Revisionists Face Off in Zhejiang: A Case Study**

The province of Zhejiang and its capital, the heavy industrial city of Hangzhou, is located just south of Shanghai in East China. Based on research conducted

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the capitalist-roaders in the CCP and PLA, and to win over some of the middle forces in Chinese society.

<sup>17</sup>*Going Against the Tide: On Dissent and Big Character Posters in China* by Goran Leijonhufvud, 1990, pp. 116, 123.

by an Australian academic in the late 1970s, it is possible to piece together the main features of a back-and-forth political and military struggle in Zhejiang from 1969 to 1976 between local Maoist forces with the support of Vice-Chairman Wang Hongwen in Beijing, and revisionist party leaders who had the ears of and political backing from Zhou and Deng.<sup>18</sup>

Forster reports that in the aftermath of the Ninth Party Congress, 10,000 study classes with 200,000 participants commenced in Hangzhou. In late 1969, provincial May 7th schools opened, in which party leaders and members combined agricultural work and study of Mao Tsetung Thought. Zhang Youngshen, the principal leader of United Headquarters, an alliance of revolutionary mass organizations in Zhejiang, attended one of these cadre schools. (101-103)

In the wake of Lin Biao's attempted coup, the leaders of the pre-Cultural Revolution CCP committee in Zhejiang were rehabilitated. Under the editorial direction of Yao Wenyuan, People's Daily stated that Premier Zhou's attacks on "ultra-leftism" and "anarchism" were in fact a "rightist counter-current." In order to stem the attacks on the Cultural Revolution as ultra-leftist, Mao decided in 1972 that Lin should be criticized as a revisionist, an intriguer and a splitter. Jiang Qing, stated that Lin had been "splitting the center." (114-115)

In 1972 and early 1973, Zhou's focus was making an "economic adjustment." In February 1973 the Premier directed that bonuses and piece-rates, abandoned from 1966 to 1969, be re-introduced for jobs involving heavy labor. Zhou also proposed a more sweeping "rectification" of the national economy. This became one of Deng's buzzwords after his rehabilitation in the spring of 1973. (116)

At the same time that Zhou chipped away at the achievements of the Cultural Revolution, the CCP Center decided to send Wang Hongwen on a provincial inspection tour to Zhejiang. In January 1973 Wang visited Hangzhou, where he met with the leaders of the United Headquarters alliance, the Zhejiang Workers Congress, the Women's Federation and the Communist Youth League. All of them were engaged in political struggle with revisionist forces led by the pre-CR CCP committees in Zhejiang and Hangzhou. (118-126)

The Maoists took the offensive immediately after the end of the Tenth Party Congress in late August 1973. People's Daily and Liberation Army Daily called for a buildup of urban militia forces, based on the experience in Shanghai of forming revolutionary workers' militias. The militias in Zhejiang were placed under the leadership of municipal trade union congresses and local CCP committees, instead of the PLA, which had previously organized and trained these forces. One of the principal tasks of the militias in Zhejiang was the political education of the working class. (152-153)

At a meeting in February 1974, Zhang Chunqiao and Wang Hongwen called the

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<sup>18</sup>See *Rebellion and Factionalism in a Chinese Province: Zhejiang, 1966-1976* by Keith Forster, 1990. While Forster is not a friend of the Cultural Revolution and the Four, much of his account of the political struggle in Zhejiang is detailed and useful. Page references in Forster's book are included for the reader's use.

general staff of the PLA “as far right as you could go,” and that power should be seized by the revolutionary forces in the PLA General Political Department, where Zhang was the Director. (159-160)

Also in February, Mao Tsetung Thought Propaganda Teams were formed in Zhejiang in education, cultural and propaganda departments of the CCP. According to Forster, young “helicopter cadres” from revolutionary mass organizations replaced rehabilitated pre-CR party leaders. Zhejiang’s leftists cited Mao’s directive on “combining the old, middle-aged and the young” in rebuilding CCP committees in the province. (144-151)

In June 1974, a school to train cadres and theorists from the working class in Zhejiang opened in Hangzhou, modeled after a similar school in Shanghai. The criteria for selection to enter the school included being “activists in revolutionary mass criticism” and to have the courage to “go against the tide.” (152-153)

According to Forster, the allies of the Four in the United Headquarters alliance, the MTT Propaganda Teams, the militia and other leftist mass organizations believed that a “second Cultural Revolution” was underway in Zhejiang. In June 1974, Zhejiang Daily wrote that “The broad revolutionary masses have risen up in rebellion against a handful of capitalist-roaders within the Party and have dared to go against the tide. Why have some comrades regarded this as ‘offending one’s superiors and creating havoc?’” (166-168)

In 1975, an ally of Zhang Chunqiao announced that this was the year to “take class struggle as the key link” in Zhejiang. After Wang Hongwen and other central leaders persuaded workers in Huangzhou to put aside their factional differences and resume work on the basis of “grasp revolution, promote production,” industrial production in Huangzhou rose by 30% in the fourth quarter of 1975. (230-234)

Forster states that due to “concerns by the Party Center [about the] disruption of production and factionalism in the provinces,” in the summer of 1974 the PLA took control of the urban militias in the country, with the exception of Shanghai. (169-170)

Under the direction of Marshals Ye Jianying and Li Hsien-nien, with Deng Xiaoping playing an important supporting role, in July 1975 the CCP Military Affairs Commission ordered army and air force units into 15 factories in and around Huangzhou, the most industrialized city in China at that time. (199-248)

The only other time that the PLA was sent into factories during the Cultural Revolution was in response to a counter-revolutionary mutiny by regional PLA units in Wuhan in the summer of 1967. This alleged suppression of “industrial anarchy” in Huangzhou may have been a dress rehearsal for the military coup in October 1976.

### **The Three Poisonous Weeds**

For the two years after his rehabilitation in 1973, Deng worked on a 10,000 word “General Program of Work for the Whole Party and the Whole Nation” that included restoring top-down management of enterprises, factory rules to push workers harder, re-orienting teaching in the universities to train a new elite of specialists, and importing Western technology. This was a program to overturn the social transformations of the Cultural Revolution, and to suppress the political activism of hundreds of millions of workers, peasants, soldiers and women.

The second and third weeds were “Some Problems in Accelerating Industrial Development” and “On Some Problems in the Fields of Science and Technology.” Issued in the fall of 1975, these reports were the product of writing groups under the leadership of Hua Guofeng (a CCP leader from Hunan who was briefly demoted during the Cultural Revolution) and Hu Yaobang, who served under Deng as CCP Chairman and General Secretary from 1981-1987.<sup>19</sup> The Maoists called these reports “the three poisonous weeds,” a name that Deng and his allies had difficulty shedding from 1975 to 1976.

In 1974 and 1975, Deputy Premier Deng’s response to continuing political struggle in the main industrial centers was to label as “bourgeois factionalists” any group associated with the Four and their provincial allies who called for the removal of revisionist cadres and factory managers.

### **The Maoists Raise the Level of Theoretical Understanding on the Role of Capitalist-Roaders in Socialist Society**

An article that appeared in the Shanghai-based theoretical journal *Study and Criticism* discussed the nature of “capitalist roaders in power” such as Deng and Liu. “As individuals they may not necessarily own capital, run factories and operate banks like the former capitalists, but their political line which energetically upholds the capitalist relations of production [including inequalities that continue to exist in socialist society, ed.] reflects in a concentrated way the economic interests and political aspirations of the bourgeoisie as a whole.”

In a prescient statement, the author points out that “Once they usurp the Party and state power, [the new bourgeoisie] will completely overthrow the dictatorship of the proletariat and the socialist system, change the nature of the socialist system of public ownership, and openly restore the capitalist system. By then, capitalist roaders, big and small, will re-divide among themselves and in proportion to their capital and power, all the wealth created by the laboring

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<sup>19</sup>These three reports were translated into English and published in *The Case of the Gang of Four* by Chi Hsin, Cosmos Books, Hong Kong, 1977.

people.”<sup>20</sup>

In early 1976, Zhang Chunqiao recognized the need to step up this revolutionary theoretical work: “There are still no works with depth that describe the struggle against the capitalist roaders inside the party in the era of the socialist revolution...If we don’t properly investigate what constitutes the distinctive characteristic and essence of capitalist roaders inside the party, we will have great difficulty writing good works of quality devoted to this topic. Such works would not only be able to teach the people of today something, but also have an educational value for future generations.”<sup>21</sup>

In 1975, Mao and his allies launched a political campaign to Study the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. They also called for the restriction of the “bourgeois rights” (inequalities in socialist society) that were being expanded by the capitalist-roaders in the CCP leadership. Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan pressed the issue in *Honqi* (Red Flag), calling for the elimination of material incentives in China’s factories and collective farms. According to a Canadian student in Beijing, changes in the wage system in some areas raised the lowest grades and lowered the highest.<sup>22</sup>

In 1972, Mao’s health was failing; he suffered from heart disease and from partial paralysis due to amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). Still Mao recognized the danger posed by Deng’s program for capitalist restoration. Beginning in November 1975, a series of Politburo meetings criticized Deng, leading to his removal from all of his posts in the CCP, the state (government) and the PLA. In the spring of 1976 Mao issued a statement that “You are making the socialist revolution, and yet don’t know where the bourgeoisie is. It is right in the Communist Party—those in power taking the capitalist road. The capitalist-roaders are still on the capitalist road.”<sup>23</sup>

In early 1976, Mao launched a campaign to Criticize Deng and Beat Back the Right Deviationist Wind. Deng was removed from power a second time, but it was a case of too little, too late. Deng’s forces, including the acting Premier Hua Guofeng<sup>24</sup>, and PLA generals Ye Jianying, Li Hsien-nien and Chen Hsi-lien (the commander of the PLA’s Peking Region) were positioned to launch a military

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<sup>20</sup>“Capitalist Roaders are Representatives of the Capitalist Relations of Production” by Chuang Lan, Study and Criticism no. 6, 1976.

<sup>21</sup>*Mao’s Last Revolution* by Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, 2006, page 433. This book is a prominent political assault on the Cultural Revolution, but it contains some useful factual detail.

<sup>22</sup>Forster, pp. 179-182.

<sup>23</sup>In “Reversing Correct Verdicts Goes Against the Will of the People” in *People’s Daily* on March 10, 1976, and translated in *Peking Review*, no. 11, March 12, 1976.

<sup>24</sup>The post-October 1976 regime claimed that Mao chose Hua to take the place of Premier Zhou Enlai after his death in January 1976. There is no evidence outside the claims of the Hua-Deng forces that Mao told Hua that “with you in charge, my mind is at ease.” Lai Keke, the head of the Zhejiang Provincial CCP Committee since 1975, told a meeting of provincial leaders shortly after the arrest of the Four that “I have seen the Chairman’s handwriting many times. That slip, “with you in charge, I’m at ease,” simply does not look like his handwriting. Furthermore, why were we shown only a photocopy and not the original?” Forster pp. 303-306.

coup after Mao's death in September 1976.

As long as socialist states face imperialist and hostile powers, they will need standing militaries for defensive purposes. But if ongoing political education, revolutionary transformations and mass campaigns against revisionism are not carried out in the armed forces of socialist states, the generals can accomplish from within what imperialist armies have not been able to do from without—overthrow working class rule.

### **The Role of an Unfavorable Balance of Forces in the Defeat of the Maoists**

The “16 Point Decision” in August 1966 made the important point that the revolutionary forces can sometimes be defeated due to an “unfavorable balance of forces.”<sup>25</sup> This was true of the political situation, in both the class struggle in China and the international situation, in the fall of 1976.

While Zhang, Wang, Yao and Jiang and their allies took correct positions on major dividing-line political questions of domestic policy during the GPCR, their political and military support was not as strong as that of the revisionists in the CCP and especially in the PLA. According to some researchers, the strongest and most reliable support for the Four and their Maoist allies was in Shanghai, Beijing and other industrial cities, in Zhejiang and Shandong provinces,<sup>26</sup> and in the fields of education, propaganda and culture. The greatest weakness of the Maoists lay in the military; the lightly-armed leftist militias in Shanghai and other cities were not in a position to stand up to the revisionist-led PLA in 1975 and 1976.

The Maoists were waging an uphill battle to re-launch the revolutionary upsurges of the Cultural Revolution. Because they made that attempt, but an unsuccessful one, the Four were arrested at a pretextual meeting of the Central Committee. A few years later they were placed in public show trials with pre-determined prison sentences of 20 years to life. Following a counter-revolutionary plan, the majority of the PLA and CCP leaderships purged members of the party, leaders of urban militias and PLA officers who continued to uphold the political objectives and achievements of the Cultural Revolution in the political confrontations that took place from 1971 to 1976.

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<sup>25</sup>The Sixteen Point Decision,” Point 10. In *Where Do Correct Ideas Come From?* in May 1963, Mao wrote: “In social struggle, the forces representing the advanced class sometimes suffer defeat not because their ideas are incorrect but because, in the balance of forces engaged in struggle, they are not as powerful for the time being as the forces of reaction; they are therefore temporarily defeated, but they are bound to triumph sooner or later.” “Methods of Thinking and Methods of Work” in *The Red Book*, page 208.

<sup>26</sup>In October 1976, the PLA arrested five Maoist leaders. This included Mao Yuanxin, a PLA commander from Shandong province in Manchuria who became Mao's secretary after his health deteriorated in 1972.

Edoarda Massi, an Italian teacher at the Foreign Languages Institute in Shanghai during 1976 and 1977, reported on resistance to the coup by workers' groups and city and factory militia members. In 1977, Massi visited a machine tools factory in Shanghai where the Revolutionary Committee (composed of alliances of mass organizations, revolutionary cadre and PLA officers) had been purged, and the workers' productivity scores were kept on a large scorecard.<sup>27</sup>

Immediately after the coup, hundreds of revolutionary leaders who had come forward during the Cultural Revolution in Luoyang, an industrial city in Henan province, were arrested, paraded in public, and then disappeared. In the early 1980s, the new regime launched an even more extensive campaign of retaliation against former rebels. Government departments, factories and schools set up special offices to investigate charges of "crimes" committed during the Cultural Revolution. Tens of thousands of people lost their jobs and housing, and many were imprisoned.<sup>28</sup>

In the spring of 1975, Mao stated that "If the Rightists stage an anti-Communist coup d'état in China, I am sure they will know no peace either and their rule will most probably be short-lived because it will not be tolerated by the revolutionaries, who represent the interests of the people making up more than 90 per cent of the population[...]The conclusion is still the two familiar comments: The future is bright; the road is tortuous."<sup>29</sup>

### **Some Understandings on the Nature of Socialism and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat**

A fundamental part of departure is the understanding that it is working class rule—the dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie—that makes it possible for the vast majority of people to have and exercise real political rights, especially the power to continue to transform socialist society in their collective interest.

As indicated by statements such as "Hitler and Chiang Kai-shek were dictators," in everyday language the word dictator is often used to refer to a person who has an absolute power to rule over society.. For Marxists, however, the main characteristics of any society are shaped by relations among classes, not among individuals. All societies are dictatorships insofar as one class rules in its own interests.

Within the ruling class there is democracy because there can be considerable debate among its members. They have meaningful opportunities to influence what the state does. But the capitalist state exercises dictatorship over members

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<sup>27</sup> *China Winter: Workers, Mandarins and the Purge of the Gang of Four*, 1981, pp. 291-292.

<sup>28</sup> *The Unknown Cultural Revolution* by Dongping Han, pp. 158-159.

<sup>29</sup> See the last paragraph of "On the Social Basis of the Lin Piao Anti-Party Clique" by Yao Wenyan. Honqi (Red Flag) no. 3 1975, translated in Peking Review no. 10, March 7, 1975.



of other classes, who lack comparable opportunities to influence what the state does.

As Lenin once put it, bourgeois democracy, the people have the right to choose which pre-selected candidates of the ruling class will oppress them for the following years. Under this system, the capitalist state protects existing property relations and suppresses, frequently violently, serious challenges to these relations and to its rule.

Among many political activists, there is a common misunderstanding that the dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie is in reality not an unleashing of the heretofore pent-up capacity of the working masses, but is instead a dictatorship of a communist party over the masses of people, and that any form of dictatorship is incompatible with democratic forms of organization under socialism.

In fact, the history of the modern state has shown that all states have a class character, and that it promotes the interests of a particular class against (in open or disguised form) other classes. The prolonged struggle against bourgeois or capitalist dictatorship, in its more repressive or less repressive forms, has brought forth many political movements which aim to reform the bourgeois state.

In this view, the state becomes, without revolution, a truly democratic-for-all state which no longer expresses the interests of any particular class. This is an illusory pursuit, developed by privileged strata, who deny the necessity for revolutionary opposition to bourgeois rule.

Socialist states must have armed forces—and use them when necessary—in order to defend themselves against external enemies and prevent the overthrown bourgeoisie and new-born bourgeois forces from making a comeback or from seizing power.

However, the dictatorship of the proletariat is not simply the operation of the state apparatus. It is a dynamic process that continues throughout the socialist transition period, in which millions of working people develop higher levels of political consciousness, knowledge and organization that enable them to exercise ever-increasing and effective power over state affairs, the economy, education, culture and foreign policy.

In this process all classes, from the peasantry to the privileged, will increasingly be drawn into the productive daily work of society and proletarianized. Through this long period of socialism, mental and manual work will be increasingly shouldered by all. In looking at how socialist society will be organized in the future, several related questions should be posed.

- Do these proposals strengthen the ability of the leading communist party to constantly renew its revolutionary character?

- Do they raise the political consciousness of the masses and strengthen their ability to distinguish between the socialist and capitalist roads?
- Will they restrict to the maximum extent possible the class differences and inequalities in socialist society?
- Do they promote the ability of the masses to supervise and point out defects in the party's work?
- Do they promote the understanding that socialism cannot advance in one or more countries without actively supporting the development of struggles to overthrow all of the imperialist powers and reactionary regime all over the world?

One aspect of the role of dissent, which is usually the sole focus of critics of socialism, is the relationship of privileged classes and intellectuals to the new society. Here the question is very contradictory. On the one hand, socialism needs to bring the skills and knowledge of traditionally privileged forces into the process of developing the new society. It needs to enlist them and urge them to step forward as part of the new world being created.

The revolutionary communists also need to struggle with the privileged forces, so they join this process rather than keeping, as many do, to personal gain and power as their motives. In time, many of the privileged intelligentsia will join the working class, in both the productive labor of socialist economics, and in shaping the health, education, culture and media of socialism. Through this process new class relations are brought into being. In this way, the centuries-old division between mental work and manual work is repeatedly challenged and finally put to rest.

Engaging different class forces in socialist society means encouraging debate and dissent, but also checking efforts to sabotage the socialist system. Experience has shown that, in the main, such checks are best made by the masses of working people, who must learn to lead society. While that process is led by a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist party, history also shows that bureaucratic attempts to suppress dissent not only prove futile in defending socialism in the long run. Such measures also prevent the masses from coming forward in the revolutionary struggle and advancing on the socialist road to communism.

### **The Growing Military Threat to Socialist China from the Soviet Imperialists**

Just three years into the Cultural Revolution, the military intervention of the Soviet imperialists in Czechoslovakia in April 1968 and the growing threat of a Soviet nuclear attack on China in 1969 led to a radically different international playing field for the Maoists and for the People's Republic. On its northern border, the PLA faced a million Soviet troops and nuclear-armed bombers and missiles.

This threat from the Soviet imperialists forced Mao, the Maoists in the CCP leadership and Zhou (up to 1971) to reassess their position of seeing U.S. imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism as equally dangerous to socialism in China. They agreed that an “opening to the West” was necessary in order to avoid fighting two imperialist superpowers at the same time.

This new military and political situation also favored PLA commanders such as Ye Jianying and supporters of Premier Zhou, who argued that the Cultural Revolution should come to an end in order to focus on modernizing the armed forces and obtaining advanced weapons and technology from the U.S. and other Western imperialist powers.

### **The Political and Military Obstacles the Cultural Revolution Faced**

In order to reach a deeper understanding of why the Cultural Revolution was ultimately defeated, the objective conditions that it faced—both internal and external—must be understood.

To begin with, the Cultural Revolution was an uphill battle. The Chinese revolution had gone through an extended period of new democratic revolution beginning in the 1920s. Even taking into consideration the revolutionary social transformations in the liberated areas in north China and after nationwide victory in 1949, it was not possible to completely eradicate feudal and bourgeois ideology in a few years, or even in one or two generations.

The deep roots of Confucianism, especially its reverence for established authority, were a major target of the Maoist forces in both the opening and later stages of the GPCR. “It is right to rebel against reactionaries!” was a call to break the stranglehold of thousands of years of ideological indoctrination and to prevent a new class of Confucian sages—dressed up as Marxist-Leninists or Maoists—from usurping power.

There was a relatively short 10-year period of socialist construction before the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution in 1966. Much of that followed the model of building socialism in the Soviet Union, which had many weaknesses even prior to the rise of Khrushchev and Soviet state capitalism in 1956 and 1957. Much of the CCP leadership was implementing a pro-Soviet revisionist line with “Chinese characteristics,” and their network of party, state and military officials was firmly entrenched at all levels.

The GPCR was also an uphill political battle because of a lack of historical experience. Just as Lenin had no experience to draw on in building a socialist society on the ashes of the former Tsarist empire the early 1920s, Mao had to develop new understandings of the persistence of class struggle in socialist society, of how capitalism can be restored relatively peacefully, and to develop a revolutionary political line and mechanisms for keeping China on the socialist

road. In launching the Cultural Revolution, Mao and the other revolutionaries in the CCP were moving into uncharted political territory.

There is a pragmatic view that because the Four and their Maoist allies were defeated, they must have made serious political errors. This position was taken by William Hinton in his writings from the early 1970s until the 1990s. Hinton believed that the Cultural Revolution could not consolidate its gains and advance because of opposition by both rightist and “ultra-leftist” forces.

Hinton did not distinguish between Mao’s closest allies and actual ultra-leftist forces that appeared in late 1967 among five members of the Central Cultural Revolution Group in Beijing (the unofficial May 16 grouping) and in Hunan (the Shengwulian) which believed that a “Red capitalist class” had emerged in the leaderships of the CCP and PLA, and had to be overthrown by force.<sup>30</sup>

### **The Political Legacy of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution for Future Generations**

Given the uphill nature of the battle, the lack of historical experience and the development of an unfavorable international and domestic situation in the early 1970s, it was not possible to defend working class rule in China and keep it on the socialist road. More important, what is remarkable about the Cultural Revolution is that it accomplished so much in a few short years.<sup>31</sup>

We should ask what the world would be like without the experience of 1966 to 1976 in China. We would not have the experience of a revolutionary socialist society, of tens of millions of people awakening to political struggle and the achievement of many socialist new things. Today’s revolutionaries around the world would not have the necessary tools to explain the reversals of socialism, first in the Soviet Union, and then in China. Without the divergent roads of revisionism and revolution having been clearly marked, the difficulties of charting the course forward from here would be daunting, and the pull toward discarding the socialist project would be massive.

Instead, the Cultural Revolution has passed down a precious legacy of theoretical understanding and revolutionary practice for future generations. Future socialist societies will reach for a higher level of revolutionary consciousness and efforts by the working class to exercise more direct control over all of society.

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<sup>30</sup>In *The Cultural Revolution at the Margins: Chinese Socialism in Crisis*, 2014, Yiching Wu describes and supports these ultra-left forces.

<sup>31</sup>This is the same attitude that Marx, Engels and Lenin took to the Paris Commune of 1871, the world’s first proletarian revolution. Even though it was crushed by the French bourgeoisie with the backing of the German army after only two months, Marx wrote that it was correct for the Communards to “storm the heavens”; Lenin observed that the success of the October Revolution was due in part to correctly summing up the strengths and weaknesses of the policies of the Paris Commune.

Just as successful revolutions never repeat themselves, future cultural revolutions in socialist societies, even in today's imperialist China,<sup>32</sup> will not simply replicate the Chinese experience from 1966-1976. In the future, informed by the historic lessons of the GPCR, genuine communists will be more aware of the threat of a revisionist seizure of power and will exert every effort to mobilize the masses to expose and remove bourgeois elements in the party before they become strong enough to challenge proletarian rule.

Through the rich experience of the Cultural Revolution, we know that in every socialist society there will be intense class struggle, and there will be repeated tests of strength between those who seek to stay on the socialist road and revisionists who advocate policies that will restore capitalism. The forms that these periodic tests of strength will take will be varied and complex, but they will undoubtedly include mass upheavals such as the Cultural Revolution.

Fundamental principles of the Cultural Revolution remain relevant in today's revolutionary movements, such as continuously revolutionizing the party and mass organizations, encouraging the masses to criticize mistakes made by party leaders and members, and the importance of society-wide struggle over culture and ideas, including the study of revolutionary theory to guide practice. The polemics of the Chinese Communist Party against the Soviet revisionists before and during the Cultural Revolution, especially refuting the notion of a peaceful transition to socialism, also hold critical lessons for revolutionaries today.

Revolutionary parties and groups that are battling against imperialist powers and reactionary regimes around the world are studying and debating these questions. It is a real advance for the oppressed worldwide that Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, including the legacy of the Cultural Revolution, has been upheld and creatively applied today by Maoist parties and organizations in India, Turkey, Brasil and many other countries.

The struggle for proletarian revolution, socialism and communism cannot inspire billions of people without answering difficult questions about the reversals suffered by the first wave of socialist revolutions, and what will be done differently in the future. One of the bourgeoisie's most potent ideological weapons against revolutionary movements is the ubiquitous and suffocating claim that socialism is a "failed system." This must be answered with a materialist and dialectical analysis of the roots and process of capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union and China, and how the masses of people in socialist countries can use the lessons of the Cultural Revolution to stay on the socialist road. With a deeper understanding of the positive and negative lessons of socialist revolutions in the 20th century, communist ideology will emerge as a stronger and more vibrant force in the 21st century.

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<sup>32</sup>See *Is China an Imperialist Country?—Considerations and Evidence* by N.B. Turner et. al., March 2014, [www.red-path.net](http://www.red-path.net).

## **Part B: China's Foreign Policy and International Line from 1969 to 1976**

### **The International Situation Faced by Socialist China in the late 1960s**

In 1966, the situation in the world was favorable for an unprecedented revolution in a socialist society. It was no exaggeration to say that “revolution is the main trend in the world, and that the imperialist powers were on the defensive.

U.S. imperialism was bogged down in South Vietnam, and national liberation and revolutionary struggles were on the rise in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, as well as in the U.S. , France and other imperialist countries. The CCP had launched a bold challenge to the revisionist Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and to its undisputed leadership over the international communist movement.

From 1966 to 1973, China sent billions of dollars in economic and military aid to North Vietnam. The PRC sent 320,000 troops to North Vietnam to operate anti-aircraft batteries, build roads and perform logistical work that freed up North Vietnamese divisions to engage and defeat the U.S. imperialists in the South, along with the military forces of the National Liberation Front.

In April 1967 and in the years that followed, the Chinese leadership publicized and supported the armed Naxalbari peasant rebellion in a northern area of West Bengal, India. The Naxalbari leadership broke away from two revisionist pro-Soviet parties that had attempted to suffocate the revolutionary struggle. The Maoists in India identified the enemies of the Indian masses as “four mountains”—feudalism, the comprador bureaucratic bourgeoisie, U.S.-British imperialism, and Soviet revisionism. Socialist China quickly recognized the significance of the Naxalbari peasant uprising for the 500 million people of India and for the international proletariat.<sup>33</sup>

In the late 1960s, the People's Republic and the PLA provided military aid and training to guerillas fighting against apartheid South Africa (Azania), Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), the Portuguese colonies in Africa, neo-colonialist regimes in former French West Africa, and against the Zionist settler state of Israel.

### **The People's Republic Meets a Growing Soviet Military Threat—and the North Vietnamese Leadership Aligns Itself with the Soviet Imperialists**

After Nikita Khrushchev was ousted by Leonid Brezhnev as Secretary of the CPSU in October 1964, the Soviet Union adopted a new policy of “armed revisionism” that replaced collaboration with the U.S. with armed contention

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<sup>33</sup>See the People's Daily article “Spring Thunder Over India” on July 5, 1967 and on July 14 in Peking Review, [www.massline.org/PekingReview](http://www.massline.org/PekingReview).

against U.S. imperialism. This led to a major realignment in the “Vietnam Triangle”—the strategic relationships among North Vietnam, China and the Soviet Union.

In February 1965, Soviet Premier Kosygin, accompanied by a group of missile experts, travelled to Hanoi where he reached the first in a series of agreements with the DRV (Democratic Republic of Vietnam) to supply it with SAM-7 surface-to-air missiles, MiG-17 jet fighters and other advanced weapons that required large numbers of Soviet and Eastern European technicians and operators.<sup>34</sup>

The Soviet Union was now the main military danger to socialist China, but the DRV adopted a bourgeois nationalist line that replaced proletarian internationalist solidarity with socialist China with a pragmatic dependence on military aid from the imperialist Soviet Union. This provision of Soviet weapons led the North Vietnamese leadership to side with the CPSU in the ongoing polemics between socialist China and the Soviet Union, where capitalism had been restored for nearly a decade. In the face of this growing military threat to the People’s Republic, the leaders of North Vietnam were silent.

The leaders of the Vietnam Workers Party took a negative view of Mao and the Cultural Revolution that was in line with the Soviet revisionists. According to VWP secretary Le Duan; “After 1967-1968 and the Cultural Revolution, we no longer looked on the Chinese leaders who succeeded one another in the long power struggle as socialists. ...Non-socialists have eliminated the outstanding militants. Those who fought against Mao after 1966 were in general the best of the lot.”<sup>35</sup> “Those who fought against Mao” could only mean the leading pro-Soviet capitalist roaders in the CCP at that time, Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping.

While the leaders of the VWP hailed Brezhnev and the Soviet Union as the leading force in an anti-U.S. “socialist camp” even after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, China identified the USSR as a country that had developed into a social-imperialist superpower. In an article in April 1970 titled “Leninism or Social Imperialism?” the editors of People’s Daily quoted Mao:

“Representatives of the bourgeoisie who have sneaked into the Party, the army and various spheres of culture [...]once conditions are ripe will seize political power. From this stratum, there has emerged a bureaucrat monopoly class, namely, a new type of big bourgeoisie which dominates the whole state machine and controls all the social wealth[...]In order to extract maximum profits and maintain its reactionary rule, this new type of bureaucrat monopoly class not only exploits and oppresses the people of its own country, but it necessarily engages in rabid expansion and aggression, joins the company

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<sup>34</sup> *The Communist Road to Power in Vietnam* by William Duiker (1981) pp. 240-241.

<sup>35</sup> Le Duan quoted in *The Manchester Guardian*, October 29, 1978; “Vietnam: Miscarriage of a Revolution,” July-August 1979, 4. See the Vietnam page at [www.bannedthought.net](http://www.bannedthought.net).

of world imperialism in re-dividing the world, and pursues the most vicious social-imperialist policies.”<sup>36</sup>

### **Mao’s Continuing Support for the Vietnamese People’s Struggle in the early 1970s—and the Withdrawal of Support by Deng and Zhou**

For 30 years, Vietnam was a storm center of revolutionary struggle against French and U.S. imperialism and their dependent neo-colonial regimes. The Vietnamese people and their military forces inflicted repeated defeats on the overconfident French and American armies, and attracted political support and sympathy from millions all over the world. Yet from the late 1960s to the final defeat of the U.S. backed regime in Saigon in 1975, the anti-imperialist revolution of the Vietnamese people and its goals of national independence and socialism were betrayed from within, and Vietnam was delivered into the hands of the Soviet imperialists.

In early 1975, the NVA (North Vietnamese Army) launched a final offensive that crossed the 17th parallel with mechanized armored forces provided by the Soviet military. The combined forces of the NVA and the National Liberation Front in the South crushed the decaying Thieu regime. Large-scale military aid from the Soviet Union after 1968 enabled the North Vietnamese leadership to discard the strategy of people’s war, to adopt conventional and positional warfare that was aimed at a quick victory, and to align their international positions with those of the Soviet imperialists.

While the advanced Soviet weapons that were employed by NVA units brought their victory closer, Vietnam’s revolutionary forces could have fought with captured U.S., Chinese and indigenous weapons; they could have defeated both the U.S. and its puppet South Vietnamese forces under revolutionary leadership. Such a strategy might have taken longer to implement. However, it would have supported the ability of revolutionary forces in South and North Vietnam to maintain their independence from the Soviet imperialists both before and after they liberated the South.

Even while the revisionist leaders of the DRV tied themselves more closely to the Soviet imperialists, Mao and his allies maintained a principled internationalist position of political and military support for both the DRV and the NLF.

On the eve of U.S. Secretary of State Kissinger’s secret visit to Beijing in 1971, the CCP Politburo met and agreed that in addition to relieving the Soviet military pressure on their northern border, talks with the U.S. government would facilitate the final withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Vietnam and promote

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<sup>36</sup> *People’s China: Social Experimentation, Politics, Entry Onto the World Scene, 1966 through 1972* edited, annotated and with introductions by David Milton, Nancy Dall Milton and Franz Schurmann pp. 455-456. Also see *Mao’s China and the Cold War* by Chen Jian (2001) page 232.



the ongoing peace negotiations in Paris between the North Vietnamese and U.S. governments.<sup>37</sup>

In his talks with Kissinger in Beijing in October 1971, Mao made U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam a priority. After a meeting between Zhou and Kissinger, Mao said that “We are not in a hurry on the Taiwan issue because there is no fighting there. But there is a war in Vietnam and people are being killed there. We should not invite Nixon to come just for our own interests.” After decades of pressing China’s claim for Taiwan, Mao told Kissinger that he would be satisfied if the Shanghai Communique acknowledged that Taiwan was part of the People’s Republic.<sup>38</sup>

After listening to Zhou’s report on his meeting with Kissinger on October 23, 1971, Mao told Zhou that “it is desirable to let each side speak out for itself. If the American side wanted to talk about “peace, security and no pursuit of hegemony,” Mao continued, then the Chinese side should emphasize “revolution, the liberation of the oppressed peoples and nations in the world, and no rights for big powers to bully and humiliate small countries.”<sup>39</sup>

At the U.S.-China summit in Beijing in February 1972, Mao told Zhou to tell Nixon and Kissinger that normalization of relations between China and the U.S. required that the U.S. military withdraw from Vietnam. Mao rejected Nixon’s request that China put pressure on the Vietnamese to make concessions in the ongoing Paris Peace Talks between the U.S. and North Vietnam.

In the 1972 Shanghai Communique, the Chinese position, shaped by Mao, stated that: “[China] firmly supports the struggles of all the oppressed peoples and nations for freedom and liberation ... and opposes foreign aggression, interference, control and subversion. All foreign troops should be withdrawn to their own countries [and gives] its firm support to the seven-point proposal of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam.”<sup>40</sup> In order to convince the North Vietnamese leaders that China’s strategic opening to the U.S. imperialists would not undermine their war effort, the Chinese leadership raised its military assistance to the DRV from 1971 to 1973, which had declined between 1969 and 1970 in order to meet the threat from the Soviet imperialists.<sup>41</sup>

In 1972, Nixon sent hundreds of B-52s to bomb more extensive targets in North Vietnam. The U.S. also mined the port of Haiphong and other harbors. Between July 1972 and August 1973, the PLA Navy sent twelve minesweepers to North Vietnam. China also built five oil pipelines from southern China to the DRV. Chinese military aid to North Vietnam reached 1968 levels.<sup>42</sup> This was a sign

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<sup>37</sup>People’s China page 195.

<sup>38</sup>*China & the Vietnam Wars, 1950-1975* by Qiang Zhai (2000) page 267.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid. page 271.

<sup>40</sup>People’s China page 599.

<sup>41</sup>Zhai page 195.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid. page 203. See Table I on “China’s Military Aid to the DRV, 1964-1975,” page 136.

that the Maoist forces in the leadership of the CCP still had substantial political influence over the level of military aid to the Vietnamese people's struggle.

The position of Mao and his allies on the level of Chinese military aid to Vietnam and its objectives was opposed in the top leadership of the CCP. In 1972, Congressman and future U.S. President Gerald Ford returned from China after holding talks with Premier Zhou Enlai and Foreign Minister Qiao Guanhua. In his report to President Nixon, Ford stated that China encouraged a U.S. presence in the Pacific to counter the Soviet military threat.<sup>43</sup>

Thus, at least by 1972 there were sharp differences in the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party around its approach to the Vietnam War. The former Vietnamese ambassador to Beijing describes a meeting held after the signing of the Paris Peace Accords in 1973 between Mao, Zhou, Premier Pham Van Dong and party secretary Le Duan: "At this meeting, Zhou stated that "Vietnam should win a spell of time to get prepared ... After a period of armistice, it would be difficult for the United States to barge in."<sup>44</sup>

A DRV delegation to Beijing in 1975 was "politely advised" (undoubtedly by the Zhou-Deng forces who were in command of Chinese foreign policy at that time) that it should not renew the fighting.<sup>45</sup> At the same meeting, Mao stated that "The problem of [Thieu's] troops can only be solved by war ... to liberate the South."<sup>46</sup> Differing with Zhou, Mao rejected any "preparation" period for the Vietnamese people to pursue their revolutionary struggle to victory.

Zhou's cautionary statements around the revolutionary struggle in Vietnam were a product of his position that the Soviet Union was not just the main danger to China, but to the whole world. In September 1975, Deng Xiaoping described this theory to VWP Secretary Le Duan. Based on his support for the Soviet imperialists, Le Duan rejected Deng's lecture out of hand. The revisionist Chinese leadership grouped around Zhou and Deng sharply reduced China's aid to the DRV in 1974 and 1975. This undermined socialist China's political standing in Vietnam, throughout the Third World and in the imperialist countries, including in the U.S.A., the chief enemy of the Vietnamese people.

Both the increasing influence of the pro-U.S. Three Worlds Theory in the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and the enlistment of North Vietnam in the Soviet bloc were counter-revolutionary actions whose main difference was that they supported rival imperialist superpowers.

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<sup>43</sup> *The Sino-Vietnamese Conflict* by Eugene Lawson (1984) page 250.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* page 235-236; Zhai page 207.

<sup>45</sup> Lawson page 239.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* 235, citing the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 15, 1979.

## The Political and Military Terrain for Chinese Foreign Policy Shifts from 1969 to 1971

In the late 1960s, China's foreign policy drew strength from the revolutionary upsurge of the Cultural Revolution. The Ninth National Congress of the CCP, held in April 1969, proclaimed support for the revolutionary struggles of the people of all countries, supported the five principles for peaceful coexistence with countries with different social systems, and called for the formation of a broad united front of peoples and countries against U.S. imperialism and Soviet revisionism.

In 1963, the CCP proposed that a new Sino-Soviet treaty be negotiated that would return to China an area in the Soviet Far East and northern Manchuria that had been seized by the Tsarist empire in the 19th century through unequal treaties. The Soviet leadership, which the CCP later called "New Tsars," rejected the Chinese position. Instead, Leonid Brezhnev concluded a "defense" pact with Mongolia in 1966 and stationed several divisions there. The number of Soviet divisions on the border with China rose from 15 in 1968 to 40 in 1969.<sup>47</sup> This rapid military buildup took place at a time when the PLA's forces were concentrated in southern China to deter a U.S. invasion of North Vietnam and of China itself.

By early 1969, the Soviet Union had massed a million troops (one-quarter of its total of 160 divisions), including SS-4 and SS-5 medium range missiles, along the border with China demarcated by the Amur and Ussuri Rivers. In March 1969, on Zhenbao Island in the Ussuri River, two pitched battles were fought between Soviet and Chinese forces, leaving hundreds of casualties. According to U.S. satellite photos, "the Chinese side of the river was so pockmarked by Soviet artillery that it looked like a moonscape."<sup>48</sup>

Due to their rapid military buildup, Soviet conventional forces had the capability of striking deeply into China along many sections of their 4,000 mile border. In addition, according to U.S. National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger, in August 1969 Soviet diplomats were sounding out their European communist allies on the possibility of a Soviet pre-emptive attack on China's nuclear facilities.<sup>49</sup> The most likely targets were the Lop Nor test site in Sinjiang and seven large nuclear diffusion plants in central China. Ominously, the Soviet military flew bomber units to bases in Mongolia and Siberia, where it carried out attacks on simulated nuclear facilities.<sup>50</sup>

The CCP and the PLA were placed on a war footing. Plans to relocate key military industries to a "third line" of defense in the interior of the country were

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<sup>47</sup> *China Under Threat* by Melvin Gurtov and Byong-Moo Hwang (1980) pp. 212-214.

<sup>48</sup> *Mao's Last Revolution* by MacFarquhar and Schoenhals page 309.

<sup>49</sup> *White House Years* by Henry Kissinger (1979) page 184.

<sup>50</sup> "The Soviet-Chinese Conflict of 1969," Igor Sutyagin, <http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/94-96/sutyagin/02-03.htm> China detonated its first nuclear bomb in northwest China in 1964.

accelerated, and networks of underground tunnels and shelters were built in major cities. After a top-secret study commissioned by Mao, four marshals of the PLA stated that even though the Soviets' main forces were still concentrated in Europe, they were preparing for an attack on China. This study concluded that the key element holding the Soviet imperialists back was the attitude of the U.S. government.

This assessment buttressed the decision of the Chinese leadership to initiate an "opening to the West." This strategy enabled China to avoid fighting on two fronts by exploiting the imperialist rivalry between the U.S. and Soviet Union. This policy had the best chance of heading off a Soviet attack. Another part of the CCP's calculations was that the U.S. imperialists were headed to defeat in Vietnam and no longer posed as serious a military threat to China.

During these years Mao and Zhou, the two chief architects of Chinese foreign policy, were in basic agreement on this shift of Chinese foreign policy. One element of the shift was that China would pursue a strategy of normalization of relations with over 100 countries. This resulted in the People's Republic's admission to the UN as the sole representative of China in October 1971.

At the same time, Mao continued to stress that China's support for revolutionary struggles in other countries should not be cut back. In August 1970, Mao told the American journalist Edgar Snow that "he would place his hopes on the American people" and that "he would be happy to see a party emerge there to lead a revolution, although he was not expecting that in the near future."<sup>51</sup>

As the danger of a Soviet military attack on China became acute in 1969, the PRC established secret diplomatic contacts with the U.S. in Warsaw. In order to keep the Soviet Union off balance, Kissinger's trips to China in 1971 were followed by President Nixon's summit meeting with Mao in Beijing in February 1972.

In Mao's view, fundamental revolutionary principles could not be compromised in the course of playing the "American card." In 1971-72, Mao told Kissinger and Nixon that normalization of relations between the PRC and the U.S. could not take place unless the U.S. withdrew all of its military forces from Vietnam and stopped bombing Cambodia.

In the Shanghai Communique issued on February 28, 1972, the Chinese position, shaped by Mao, affirmed its support for wars of national liberation and opposition to foreign aggression, while the U.S. stated its support for "peace."<sup>52</sup>

<sup>51</sup>"A Conversation with Mao Tse-tung" in *The Long Revolution* by Edgar Snow (1973) page 171.

<sup>52</sup>*The Kissinger Transcripts: The Top-Secret Talks with Beijing and Moscow*, edited and annotated by William Burr (National Security Archive, 1999) 28-29. These declassified transcripts ("U.S.-China Transcripts") are based on the verbatim notes taken by Chinese and American translators of secret talks between Chinese and U.S. leaders, including Mao, Zhou, Kissinger, Nixon and Ford, from 1971 to 1976. They contain material that National Security Advisor and later Secretary of State Kissinger omitted in his voluminous memoirs.

The conditions that Mao set for the question of Taiwan included breaking all U.S. diplomatic ties with Taipei, ending U.S. military aid to Taiwan, and abrogating the 1954 U.S.-GMD Mutual Defense Treaty. The Shanghai Communiqué did not state how the unification of Taiwan with the PRC would be accomplished. Up to his death in 1976, Mao insisted that it was an internal matter for China, and could not be accomplished peacefully.

Kissinger repeatedly offered to “share” intelligence from U.S. military satellites on the status of Soviet missile sites and bombers aimed at Chinese targets in return for allowing the U.S. access to Chinese military bases in north China. Under Mao’s direction, China’s lead negotiators rejected these proposals as a violation of Chinese sovereignty.<sup>53</sup> In 1979, when full diplomatic relations between the U.S. and the People’s Republic took place, Deng accepted these terms, bringing China under the U.S. imperialist military umbrella in Asia.

In December 1971, the basic orientation of the CCP leadership was summarized in an internal report on the international situation: “The general strategy of our nation for the present is to push forward preparations against war and promote revolution.” In a world divided into “three parts”—the U.S., Soviet Union and the Third World—China was “resolutely on the side of the Third World” in opposing the two main enemies. The report called for exploiting contradictions between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, and between the U.S. and the “second intermediate zone”—Western Europe, Japan, Canada and Oceania.<sup>54</sup>

The report also called for continued military support for the revolutionary struggle in Vietnam, and for backing national liberation movements elsewhere in Asia, Africa and Latin America, mainly with political and moral support. It also stated, “As the people’s revolution in the U.S. gradually gains momentum, we have to do more work,” and noted that normalization of relations with the U.S. would make it easier to carry out this work.

Mao’s support for revolutionary struggles around the world was powerfully expressed in his statement on the U.S. invasion of Cambodia in May 1970:

“U.S. imperialism, which looks like a huge monster, is in essence a paper tiger, now in the throes of its death-bed struggle. In the world of today, who actually fears whom? It is not the Vietnamese people, the Laotian people, the Cambodian people, the Palestinian people, the Arab people or the people of other countries who fear U.S. imperialism; it is U.S. imperialism which fears the people of the world. It becomes panic-stricken at the mere rustle of leaves in the wind. Innumerable facts prove that a just cause enjoys abundant support while an unjust cause finds little support. A weak nation

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid. pp. 84, 89, 112, 169, 203-204, 305. The Chinese described the SALT agreements reached by the U.S. and the Soviet as “phony détente,” in which the superpowers claimed that they were engaged in disarmament, but in reality were expanding their nuclear arsenals.

<sup>54</sup>*Chinese Foreign Policy During the Cultural Revolution* by Barnouin and Yu (1998) pp. 188-196.

can defeat a strong, a small nation can defeat a big. The people of a small country can certainly defeat aggression by a big country, if only they dare to rise in struggle, take up arms and grasp in their own hands the destiny of their country. This is a law of history. People of the world, unite and defeat the U.S. aggressors and all their running dogs!”<sup>55</sup>

### **Zhou and Deng’s Pro-U.S. and Counter-Revolutionary Three Worlds Theory**

The Three Worlds Theory was developed in the early 1970s by Premier Zhou Enlai, by Deputy Premier Deng Xiaoping after his rehabilitation in 1973 and by PLA Marshal Ye Jianying. They asserted that the neo-colonial countries of the Third World and the West European and Japanese imperialists played a progressive role in the world by defending their “national independence” against the Soviet Union, the “most dangerous” imperialist superpower.<sup>56</sup> In January 1976, *People’s Daily* claimed that the Soviet Union was not only the “main source of war,” but was “the biggest international exploiter and oppressor.”<sup>57</sup>

This position was justified by historical parallels to World War II, when the Soviet Union allied itself with the Western imperialist countries against German imperialism. This was not simply a necessary tactic to defend socialism in the USSR, but was a general political and military strategy imposed on the international communist movement by Stalin and the Soviet leadership through the Comintern.

This line of identifying one bloc of imperialists as more dangerous than an opposing imperialist war bloc demanded class collaboration on the part of communist parties in Britain, France and the U.S.A. This line was also imposed on the parties in their colonies such as India, Palestine, Nigeria, Indochina, Algeria, the Philippines, Puerto Rico and Guam. This strategy was rejected by Chairman Mao Zedong and the majority of the CCP leadership from 1935 to 1945.

According to Zhou, Deng and Ye, the Soviet Union had become the main danger not only to China, but to the countries and people of the world. With the U.S. imperialists still the dominant power in most of the world, this had a deeply disorienting effect on many Maoist parties and organizations around the world.

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<sup>55</sup>Peking Review May 23, 1970. Also found in *People’s China* page 421.

<sup>56</sup>On a “friendship military delegation” to Albania in 1972, Ye stated that social-imperialism is “more deceptive than old-line imperialism, and therefore more dangerous.” *People’s Daily*, November 7, 1972, reprinted in *People’s China* 532-535. Ye was the leader of the February Adverse Current in 1967 that sought to bring the Cultural Revolution to a halt. In October 1976, he led the military forces that arrested the Four and their allies in Shanghai and other cities that were Maoist strongholds.

<sup>57</sup>*Chinese Foreign Policy after the Cultural Revolution, 1966-1977*, by Robert Sutter (1978) pp. 41, 68.

### **Zhou's Support for the Suppression of a Rural Insurrection in Ceylon in 1971**

Under Zhou's leadership, China continued to send economic and military support in 1971 to the pro-Western government in Ceylon (which became Sri Lanka in May 1972) after it suppressed an insurrection organized by the Janatha Vimukti Peramuna (People's Liberation Front). The JVP was based in rural areas among unemployed and under-employed educated Sinhalese youth. Its attacks on 74 police stations lasted less than a week. 1200 suspected insurgents were rounded up by the army, shot and their bodies burnt to prevent identification.<sup>58</sup>

In the midst of this reactionary bloodbath, Zhou sent a message of support to Prime Minister Bandaranaike commending the Sri Lankan government for having brought under control "a handful of persons who style themselves Guevarists, and into whose ranks foreign spies have sneaked." Zhou did not specify what country or countries had sent spies to direct the insurrection.

However, his letter was accompanied by an interest-free, long-term loan of Rs 150 million (\$27 million) to the Ceylonese government.<sup>59</sup> Zhou also promised an outright grant of five high-speed naval boats to guard against "external assistance to the JVP," which were delivered in 1972.<sup>60</sup>

At a banquet in Beijing in June 1972 in honor of Bandaranaike, Zhou praised Sri Lanka for "achieving considerable success in[...]safeguarding and consolidating independence[...]and developing the national economy." Bandaranaike brought home another interest-free loan of Rs 265 million from China, repayable in 20 years. In the 1970s, China became Sri Lanka's main trading partner.<sup>61</sup>

### **Zhou's Support for the Pakistani Junta's Military Intervention in East Pakistan in 1971**

In the early 1970s, the majority of the population of Pakistan lived in its eastern section, and were ruled by a comprador military dictatorship based in West Pakistan. In December 1970 elections in East Pakistan were swept by the Awami League, a bourgeois nationalist organization which was seeking autonomy. When it was met with repressive measures, the Awami League demanded an independent Bangladesh.

China supported West Pakistan in this confrontation. In a message to General Yahya Khan during his trip to Beijing in April 1971, Premier Zhou Enlai stated

<sup>58</sup>A detailed description of the JVP's ill-fated insurrection comes from *Mankind*, December 1981, "The Sri Lankan 'Insurrection' of 1971" by Paul Alexander.

<sup>59</sup>*Foreign Policy of Sri Lanka* by Shelton Kodikara (1982) pp. 137-138.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.* page 138.

<sup>61</sup>*India and Sri Lanka-China Relations (1948-84)* by Vijay Kumar (1986) pp.116, 133-138, 150.

that “In our opinion, unification of Pakistan and unity of the peoples of East and West Pakistan are basic guarantees for Pakistan to attain prosperity and strength.”<sup>62</sup>

Zhou provided Pakistan with \$20 million in economic aid in May 1971 even while West Pakistani troops had placed East Pakistan under martial law and extensive army massacres were under way. The main targets of the Pakistani army in East Pakistan were members of the pro-Bangladesh Awami League, radical students and intellectuals, Hindus living in East Pakistan, and Bengali military units that had mutinied.<sup>63</sup>

Ten million refugees fled to West Bengal and other areas of India. Instead of opposing the unfolding war crimes committed by the Pakistani army, in December 1971 China denounced only the invasion of the Indian army, and the formation of Bangladesh as a “puppet state” of India and the Soviet Union.<sup>64</sup>

The Chinese Foreign Ministry coordinated its support for West Pakistan with the U.S. imperialists. In order to get around Congressional restrictions on direct military aid to Pakistan, President Nixon and National Security Adviser Kissinger worked with Iran, Jordan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia to supply fighter planes and other American weapons to the Pakistani military. These secret arms shipments enabled the Pakistani military to deploy squadrons of U.S. F-86 jets that bombed colleges, mosques, markets and other areas suspected of Bengali nationalist organizing.<sup>65</sup>

In a trip to China in February 1972, Zhou and PLA Marshal Ye Jianying provided President Bhutto and the commanders of the West Pakistani armed forces with more political and economic support. Their joint communiqué asserted the continuing existence of a Pakistan with “two parts.”<sup>66</sup> In a November 1973 meeting with Kissinger, Zhou asked the U.S. military to provide “heavy arms” to Bhutto and other “Pakistani friends” and to assist the Pakistani government in building a naval port in the Indian Ocean in order to counter Soviet and Indian influence.<sup>67</sup>

### **Zhou Recognizes the Pinochet Dictatorship after the 1973 Coup in Chile**

Zhou’s pro-U.S. imperialist line appeared in a very damaging fashion in Chile after a U.S.-backed military coup on September 11, 1973 against the reformist

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<sup>62</sup> *India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Major Powers* by G.W. Choudhury (1975) page 211.

<sup>63</sup> *The Rape of Bangladesh* by Anthony Mascarenhas (October 1971) pp. 111-120.

<sup>64</sup> Choudhury page 214.

<sup>65</sup> *The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger and a Forgotten Genocide* by Gary Blass (2013) pp. 67-68. Kissinger informed Huang Hua, China’s Permanent Representative to the UN, about these arms shipments in a meeting on December 10, 1971. U.S. China Transcripts pp. 43, 49-50, 80.

<sup>66</sup> Sutter pp.133-136.

<sup>67</sup> U.S.-China Transcripts page 208.



Allende regime that had received support from the Soviet Union and Cuba. Zhou and the Chinese Foreign Ministry did not condemn the pro-U.S. dictatorship of General Pinochet, and instead recognized it several days later. The Chinese embassy in Santiago did not offer political refuge to revolutionary activists who were being hunted by the Chilean army.

The Foreign Ministry made a veiled reference to the perpetrators of the coup, stating that it had been “engineered by certain reactionary forces at home and abroad.” Through diplomatic channels, Zhou only asked Kissinger to “exercise some influence” over the Chilean military, stating that “they shouldn’t go in for slaughtering that way.”<sup>68</sup>

While the CIA engineered the coup and Pinochet carried it out, the primary political responsibility lay with the adoption of a Soviet-backed “peaceful road to socialism” by the leaders of the revisionist Chilean Communist Party. The CP claimed that Chile’s “constitutionalist generals” would uphold democracy. Toeing Moscow’s line about working for a peaceful transition to socialism in Chile, the leader of the Chilean CP, Luis Corvalan, issued an order to party members and supporters to turn in their guns to the military. These actions directly played into the hands of the fascists and U.S. imperialism.

Zhou’s actions enabled the pro-Soviet and pro-Cuban parties in Latin America to attack socialist China and avoid badly needed scrutiny of the peaceful road to socialism that paved the way for the counter-revolution in Chile.

In November 1973, two months after the coup in Chile, Zhou assured Kissinger that “we give only limited support to Latin American countries’ revolutions. We are still learning[...]It takes time to have the people rise up.”<sup>69</sup> What Zhou meant was that it would take time to withdraw all Chinese support for revolutionary movements in Latin America in the face of Maoist opposition centered in Beijing and Shanghai.

Even after the Chilean coup in September 1973, the Chinese Foreign Ministry presented the Soviet Union as the primary threat to the countries and peoples of Latin America, replacing U.S. imperialism which still dominated the continent economically, politically and militarily.

Instead of supporting wars of national liberation in Latin America, China now claimed that these U.S. neo-colonies could attain “national independence” by means of economic development in league with the Western imperialists and with China’s capitalist-roaders. In November 1974 and January 1975, Zhou and Deng met with Eric Williams, the Prime Minister of Trinidad, to discuss joint development of their petroleum industries. The Chinese revisionists showed similar interest in Venezuela’s undeveloped oil reserves.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>“China’s Foreign Relations with Latin America” by Robert Worden in *Dimensions of China’s Foreign Policy* (1977) page 215, citing Peking Review, September 21, 1973. Also see U.S.-China Transcripts page 167.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>Worden page 218.

## **The Inter-Imperialist Proxy War in Angola: Deng Xiaoping Joins the U.S. Imperialist Camp during 1973-1975**

Under the tutelage of Deputy Premier Deng Xiaoping, China's position on the Angolan civil war in the early 1970s and its relationship with two of the three anti-Portuguese colonial movements propelled China into the camp of U.S. imperialism and into the arms of the South African apartheid regime. The civil war in Angola gave pro-Soviet groups around the world political ammunition to lump together Deng's pro-U.S. Three Worlds Theory with Mao's anti-imperialist three worlds perspective and his continuing support for revolutionary struggles in the early 1970s.

In 1973, the Chinese Foreign Ministry, represented by the newly rehabilitated Deng Xiaoping, threw its political and military support to Holden Roberto's FNLA (the National Front of Liberation of Angola), which was based among the Bakongo people of northern Angola and southern Congo. The FNLA was under the control of the U.S. puppet Joseph Mobutu of the Congo, renamed "Zaire" by Mobutu.

In December 1973, an FNLA delegation visited China and met with Deng. From this point on, Roberto began to receive Chinese aid in the form of military training and arms. Between May and August 1974, over 100 military advisers, led by a PLA Major-General, and accompanied by 450 tons of weapons, arrived in Zaire.<sup>71</sup> China provided military assistance to the FNLA from early 1974 until October 1975.

This period saw the steady escalation of a reactionary civil war between three bourgeois nationalist forces supported by rival imperialists: UNITA, backed by the U.S. imperialists and South Africa; the FNLA, supported by the U.S. imperialists, Mobutu and China; and the MPLA, supported by a Cuban expeditionary force armed with Soviet weapons and several thousand Katangese mercenaries opposed to Mobutu. There was little difference between the political programs of the three groups, other than which imperialist superpower and their proxies to rely on to make a grab for power.

In October 1975, in an attempt to head off the MPLA from its plan to proclaim an "independent" government in the capital city of Luanda, around 2,000 members of the South African Defense Force and former Portuguese officers invaded southern Angola. In coordination with UNITA, the SADF rolled over MPLA forces on its way to Luanda. In northern Angola, a U.S. and Chinese-backed FNLA-Zairean offensive was launched against the MPLA. This was the signal for the desperate MPLA to formally request "internationalist" Cuban military assistance.

In November 1975, in preparation for the MPLA's declaration of independence, a battalion of elite Cuban troops was airlifted into Luanda to hold the capital

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<sup>71</sup>*The Origins of the Angolan Civil War: Foreign Intervention and Domestic Political Conflict* by Fernando Andresen Guimaraes (2001) pp. 158-159

for the MPLA. The Cuban expeditionary force under “Operation Carlota” soon reached a total of 10,000 troops. The intervention of the Soviet-supplied Cuban military forces assured the defeat of the FNLA and Zairean troops to the north, and the defeat of the South African forces to the south—and a victory for the MPLA.<sup>72</sup>

In October 1976, President Neto traveled to Moscow, where he signed a 20 year Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, officially inducting Angola into the Soviet military bloc as well as the COMECON economic alliance.<sup>73</sup>

By the time the Angolan civil war was in full swing in 1975, Deng Xiaoping’s forces found themselves pitted against the Soviet Union, as they wished. However, their support for the reactionary FNLA and UNITA forces brought it into an alliance with the U.S. imperialists and the South African racist regime. This was a serious liability for China’s political image in Africa and the Third World.

In order to cut his losses, Deng withdrew from the civil war in late October 1975. Chinese military assistance to one of the pro-Western Angolan “liberation” organizations resumed after Mao’s death. In 1979, China airlifted 550 tons of weapons to UNITA bases inside Angola.<sup>74</sup>

In order to defeat the MPLA and its Cuban and Soviet military backers, Maoist-led revolutionary forces would have had to assist the masses of Angolan people in the countryside and the cities to distinguish between pro-Soviet and Cuban revisionism, and genuine national liberation and socialism. As it turned out, the MPLA regime installed by Cuban troops in Luanda joined the Soviet bloc economically, politically and militarily in 1976, achieving neither national liberation nor socialism.<sup>75</sup>

### **Chinese Support for Reactionary Arab States and for the Shah’s Iran**

In the Middle East, China’s prior support for revolutionary movements was reversed in the early 1970s. Closer ties with the Shah’s dictatorship in Iran was the centerpiece of the Zhou-Deng plans to oppose Soviet “hegemony” in the Gulf. In August 1976, People’s Daily claimed that a five-year U.S.-Iranian arms deal signed during Kissinger’s visit to Iran was a “necessary measure” to meet the threat posed by the Soviet Union in the Gulf region, and applauded Iran for taking the lead in the struggle against “big power hegemonism” in the Gulf.<sup>76</sup>

An important part of this U.S. arms package was state-of-the-art CIA interrogation equipment that was used by the SAVAK, the Shah’s secret police, to suppress the growing revolutionary movement in Iran. The Chinese Foreign Ministry’s support for supplying the Shah’s regime with U.S. arms was used

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<sup>72</sup>Ibid. page 147

<sup>73</sup>*A Political History of the Civil War in Angola* by W. Martin James (2011) page 191.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid. page 179.

<sup>75</sup>Sutter page 148.

<sup>76</sup>*The Middle East in China’s Foreign Policy* by Yitzhak Shicor (1979) page 175.

by the reformist pro-Soviet Tudeh Party as an occasion to attack both socialist China and the Union of Iranian Communists.

In 1973, Chinese aid to the People's Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf (PFLOAG) and other revolutionary forces in the Gulf was withdrawn in order to develop ties with oil-rich Saudi Arabia and the reactionary emirates in Oman and Kuwait. With the support of China, Iran dispatched several hundred troops to help the Sultan of Oman suppress the PFLOAG. Chinese military instructors in the PFLOAG were withdrawn, and military supplies from China were discontinued.<sup>77</sup>

After Anwar Sadat took power in 1972, Egypt steadily moved into the U.S. camp. In March 1976, Egypt abrogated its "friendship treaty" with the Soviet Union and denied naval facilities to Soviet warships. The Chinese government reacted by supplying Egypt with jet engines and spare parts for Egypt's Soviet-built MiG fighters. The following month, Vice-President Hosni Mubarak (and subsequent pro-U.S. dictator) headed a military delegation to China.<sup>78</sup>

### **The Reversal of Maoist Opposition to the Zionist Settler State**

After China took its seat on the UN Security Council in 1971, it failed to use its veto on behalf of the Palestinian people.<sup>79</sup> Under the influence of Zhou Enlai, Palestine Day, celebrated in Beijing every year since 1965, was not held after 1971.<sup>80</sup> Zhou's actual thinking about the Zionist settler state was learned by European visitors to China in 1972, including Pierre Mendes-France and Pietro Nenni. Zhou told them that Israel's right to exist must now be reckoned with and recognized post-factum.<sup>81</sup>

In 1975, Foreign Minister Qiao Guanhua stated that China was reconciled to the "continued existence" of Israel. Qiao also indicated that he opposed the repatriation of Palestinian refugees to their homes lest "a new problem of Israeli refugees might be created as a result."<sup>82</sup>

Beginning in 1973, the Chinese Foreign Ministry condemned the Soviet Union's attempts to expand into the Middle East in much stronger terms its weakening criticisms of the billions of dollars the U.S. imperialists were sending to Israel in military and economic support. From the mid-1970s to 1992, when Deng's China formally recognized Israel, a clandestine Chinese-Israeli relationship developed,

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<sup>77</sup>"The Palestinians and China's Foreign Policy" by Yitzak Shichor in *Dimensions of China's Foreign Relations* (1977) pp. 181-182. Also see *China's Foreign Policy in the Arab World: 1955-1975* by Hashim S. H. Behbehani (1981) page 185.

<sup>78</sup>Shichor (1979) pp. 169-170.

<sup>79</sup>"The PRC and the Arab Middle East, 1948-1966" by Lillian Harris in *China and Israel, 1948-1998* (1999) page 51.

<sup>80</sup>Shichor (1977) page 183.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid. page 179.

<sup>82</sup>Shichor (1977) pp. 180, 247.

based mainly on Israeli assistance to the Chinese armaments industry.<sup>83</sup>

### **Chinese Support for the U.S.-Japanese Military Alliance and for a U.S. Military Presence in Southeast and South Asia**

After the U.S. defeat and withdrawal from South Vietnam in April 1975, the Chinese revisionists encouraged closer U.S.-Japan strategic military ties and the maintenance of a Mutual Defense Treaty from the 1950s to defend against a growing Soviet “threat” to East Asia. Only five years earlier, NCNA had issued a lengthy attack on the U.S. imperialists for their military occupation of Japan and Okinawa.<sup>84</sup>

In the spring of 1975, the Chinese revisionists moved to enlist the Philippines in their “anti-hegemonic” alliance. China established full diplomatic relations with the Marcos regime in July 1975, while ending support for the then-Maoist Communist Party of the Philippines. At the same time, NCNA gave favorable reportage to the U.S. Navy’s presence in the Indian Ocean, where it was building a massive base on the islands of Diego Garcia.<sup>85</sup>

After 1971, the Chinese Foreign Ministry withdrew its prior support for revolutionary and Maoist movements in the Third World at an accelerated pace. Parades of U.S. puppets, including Marcos who had placed the Philippines under martial law, the repressive Shah of Iran, and Mobutu, the dictator of Zaire, were honored in Beijing for their contributions to “the struggle against Soviet hegemonism.”<sup>86</sup>

It was only after Mao died in September 1976, and his four closest allies in the CCP leadership were arrested a month later, that the revisionist leaders of China attempted to attribute the counter-revolutionary Three Worlds Theory to Mao.<sup>87</sup>

### **Mao and His Allies Fight for a Revolutionary Direction for Chinese Foreign Policy in the 1970s**

As Deng and Zhou developed and imposed their pro-imperialist Three Worlds Theory in the early 1970s, there were signs of sharp struggle in the leadership of the CCP over foreign policy.

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<sup>83</sup>Harris pp. 51-53.

<sup>84</sup>Sutter 51-53.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid. page 51.

<sup>86</sup>In his capacity as head of state, Mao received some of these figures. He did not make any statements that they were playing a positive role in their countries. However, Mao’s appearance at these public receptions gave a different impression to the international public and press. The question of whether Mao could have refused to attend these receptions deserves further investigation.

<sup>87</sup>See “Chairman Mao’s Theory of the Differentiation of the Three Worlds is a Major Contribution to Marxism-Leninism,” Peking Review, November 4, 1977,

In July 1973, Mao began to criticize the Foreign Ministry, whose appraisal of the world situation he did not agree with. In Mao's view, the ministry failed to discuss "important matters" with him while producing reports on "minor matters." He refused to read Premier Zhou's speeches, and warned that "if the situation does not improve, revisionism is bound to occur." In a superficial self-criticism, Zhou wrote a letter to Mao declaring that he was responsible for the Foreign Ministry's errors, and that his mistakes "have to do with my political thinking and my style of work."<sup>88</sup>

At the same time, Mao promoted five young women through the ranks of the Foreign Ministry. Mao made Wang Hairong and Nancy Tang his principal liaisons with the Ministry. In order to reinforce their status, Mao requested that they attend Politburo meetings beginning in November 1973.<sup>89</sup> However, they were out-ranked and over-numbered by Zhou's and Deng's supporters in the Foreign Ministry.

On the question of Taiwan, Zhou and PLA Marshal Jianying advocated the "peaceful liberation" of Taiwan, while Mao stated that a peaceful transition was not possible there. In November 1973, Mao told Kissinger that the Guomintang "are a bunch of counter-revolutionaries. How could they cooperate with us?" Mao also stated that the People's Republic was not in "great haste" to liberate Taiwan, pointing out "it is only such an island with a population of a dozen or more million."<sup>90</sup>

While Ye assured Taipei that even "those with wrongdoings in the past" were welcome to join the patriotic family, the Maoists attacked Chiang Kai-shek as a "traitor" and a "political mummy." In addition to calling on the PLA to maintain its preparedness to liberate Taiwan, in 1974 and 1975 the Chinese press reported on popular resistance in Taiwan, whose "protracted struggle" would eventually overthrow Chiang Kai-shek's regime and bring about the reunification of Taiwan with the mainland.<sup>91</sup> At a meeting of the Politburo in late 1973, Mao forced Zhou to make a self-criticism for taking a "capitulationist" stance toward U.S. imperialism based on his position on Taiwan.<sup>92</sup>

The anti-Confucius Campaign in 1974, which was aimed at Zhou as a modern-day Confucian who had restored Deng and other rightist elements to office, also featured criticism of Western films, music and other cultural works. In August 1975, Mao and his allies on the Politburo launched a criticism of the historical novel *Water Margin*, whose leading figure posed as a revolutionary

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<sup>88</sup> *Zhou Enlai: A Political Biography* by Barnouin and Yu (2006) 295.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.* 299.

<sup>90</sup> U.S.-China Transcripts pp. 67, 186. While negotiations over Taiwan continued, the U.S. military continued to provide Taiwan with advanced weapons, and Northrup Corporation built a complete factory for Taiwan to produce F-5E jets. *Ibid.* pp. 173, 213, 268.

<sup>91</sup> *China Quandary: Domestic Determinants of U.S. China Policy, 1972-1982* by Robert Sutter (1983) pp. 43-45.

<sup>92</sup> *Chinese Foreign Policy During the Cultural Revolution* by Barnouin and Yu (1998) page 37.

but eventually capitulated to the emperor. Parallels to Deng and Zhou were made directly and indirectly in the leftist Chinese press.

In April 1974, Deng delivered a speech to the United Nations General Assembly in which he called on Third World countries to “achieve national independence” through economic development and opening up their countries to imperialist investment.<sup>93</sup> During 1974, articles in Peking Review and Red Flag called attention to the revisionist line of “the liquidation of struggle against the imperialists, reactionaries and modern revisionists, and the reduction of assistance and support to the revolutionary struggles and the people of various countries.”<sup>94</sup> This political line was recycled from that advanced in 1962 by the followers of Liu Shaoqi in the International Liaison Department, which was responsible for relations with foreign communist parties.

In the mid-1970s, China’s foreign trade policy was a subject of sharp contention. Under Deng’s influence, China began purchasing integrated industrial plants and inviting foreign experts to supervise their construction. The Maoists criticized this economic strategy, stressing the principles of independence and self-reliance in China’s national economic development.

In May 1976, after Deng had been removed from power by Mao and the Four a second time, Deng’s “servility to things foreign” came under criticism. A NCNA comment in May advocated importing foreign goods (mainly agricultural goods) “in a planned way” while criticizing catering to foreign tastes in Chinese exports.<sup>95</sup>

At a Politburo meeting in October 1973, Jiang Qing and Deng locked horns over the policy of buying ships from the imperialist countries for China’s merchant fleet. Jiang criticized this as an example of a “slavish comprador philosophy,” and pointed to the Fang Qing, a 10,000 ton ocean-going cargo ship designed and built in China, as a symbol of Mao’s policy of self-reliance and national independence. After it arrived from its maiden voyage from May to September 1974, the leaders of the Shanghai Revolutionary Committee came out to greet the Fang Qing.<sup>96</sup> In April 1974 a rally of 10,000 people in Beijing’s Great Hall of the People welcomed Prince Sihanouk and the National United Front of Cambodia.<sup>97</sup> The speech for the CCP was given by Vice-Premier and CCP Vice-

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<sup>93</sup>In order to keep up the appearance of following Mao’s line in foreign affairs, Deng stated that “the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, are vainly seeking world hegemony,” adding that “the superpower which flaunts the label of socialism is especially vicious.” At the same time that he was providing military support to pro-U.S. forces in Angola, Deng ended his speech with a quote from Mao: “Countries want independence, nations want liberation and peoples want revolution.” [www.bannedthought.net](http://www.bannedthought.net) in Writings of Mao and Other Individuals, Deng’s 1974 Speech pp. 3, 4, 22.

<sup>94</sup>Sutter 51-53, 220. Also see “History Develops in Spirals” by Hung Yu, Peking Review, October 25, 1974. See [www.bannedthought.net](http://www.bannedthought.net) in Magazines from China.

<sup>95</sup>Sutter pp. 79-80, 155-157.

<sup>96</sup>*The End of the Maoist Era, 1972-1976* by Frederick Teiwes and Warren Sun (2007) pp. 206-207.

<sup>97</sup>Sihanouk was living in exile in Beijing after a pro-U.S. military coup in 1970, and travelled extensively to build diplomatic support for the Cambodian resistance forces. After the

Chairman Wang Hongwen. Wang referred to Mao's well-known statement from May 1970 in support of national liberation and revolutionary movements around the world: "A just cause enjoys abundant support, while an unjust cause finds little support. The people of a small country can certainly defeat aggression by a big country if only they dare to rise in struggle, dare to take up arms and grasp in their own hands the destiny of their country."

Elaborating on Mao's statement, Wang said:

"A tidal wave of struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism, Zionism and racism is sweeping the globe. Moving against the tide of history, the two superpowers inevitably run up against a wall everywhere and land themselves in every greater difficulty." Wang called for continued support for revolutionary struggles and said that Mao had recently reminded them: "We are communists, and we must help the people; not to help the people would be to betray Marxism."<sup>98</sup>

Wang could not have made these statements unless he was acting with Mao's approval. Mao's health was deteriorating, but he was certainly aware of who in the CCP leadership and the Foreign Ministry were not helping the people, and who were betraying Marxism.

### **Continuing Maoist Support for People's Wars and National Liberation Movements**

In the early 1970s, socialist China provided political support and military assistance—where possible—to people's wars and national liberation struggles in India, the Philippines, the white settler states in Africa, Palestine and in many countries in Latin America.

Mao's view of the nature of the Indian government was expressed at a November 1973 meeting with Kissinger, who praised Gandhi's philosophy, recommending it to China. Mao replied: "The influence of Gandhi's doctrine on the Indian people was to induce them into non-resistance. . . India did not win independence. If it did not attach itself to Britain, it attaches itself to the Soviet Union. And more than one-half of their economy depends on you. Did you not mention during your briefings that India owes ten billion dollars in debt to the U.S.?"<sup>99</sup>

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Communist Party of Kampuchea (commonly known as the Khmer Rouge) took power in April 1975, it abolished private property and schools, emptied the cities, immediately collectivized agriculture, and executed hundreds of thousands of "coup plotters" and ordinary "enemies of the revolution." *The Tragedy of Cambodian History: Politics, War and Revolution Since 1945* by David Chandler (1991), chapters 6-8. The policies of the CPK had nothing in common with the paths of the Chinese new democratic and socialist revolutions.

<sup>98</sup>"Speech at Peking Rally Welcoming Cambodian Guests," *Peking Review*, April 12, 1974. [www.bannedthought.net](http://www.bannedthought.net) in Magazines from China.

<sup>99</sup>U.S.-Transcripts pp. 195-196.



The Philippines was a prominent example of continuing Maoist support for people's wars. Even as China was normalizing political and trade relations with the Philippines, the CCP and PLA stepped up their support for the Maoist forces led by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the New People's Army (NPA). Beginning in 1968 and 1969, CPP and NPA members visited and received military and political training from the PLA in China.

In 1971, the PLA provided 1,400 M-14 rifles and 8,000 rounds of ammunition in a ship that had been sent to China from the Philippines by the NPA. Socialist China sent at least four ships containing small arms to the NPA in 1972 and 1974, but these shipments were mainly unsuccessful. One ship was intercepted and the other ran aground. Another two ships were sent from China but were not able to make it to the Philippines as the Armed Forces of the Philippines and its U.S. advisers were on the lookout for these arms shipments from China.<sup>100</sup>

Premier Zhou Enlai intervened more than once to limit the size and frequency of the CPP's delegations to China in the early 1970s. This was an indication of continuing struggle in the CCP over whether the "opening to the West" required cutting back support for revolutionary struggles such as that led by the CPP. In his leading position at the Foreign Ministry, and as part of his efforts to ingratiate China to the U.S. imperialists, Zhou assured Philippine Governor Benjamin Romules at a secret meeting in February 1972 that he was cutting off aid to the CPP-NPA.<sup>101</sup>

Since the revolutionary internationalist forces grouped around Mao and the Four were able to continue sending military aid to the CPP-NPA until at least 1974, it is clear that Zhou did not completely control China's relations with the CPP and the NPA in the early 1970s.

### **Support for the Palestinian Liberation Struggle**

China's support for the Palestinian national liberation struggle in the early 1970s was the result of a political standoff between the Maoists and Zhou's revisionist forces. Due to the alliance between the U.S. imperialists and the aggressive Zionist state of Israel, the Chinese Foreign Ministry, where Zhou's forces were concentrated, could not openly join the U.S.-Israeli axis without alienating the reactionary Arab states that it was courting.

Even while China was identifying Soviet "hegemonism" as the main target elsewhere in the world, after the 1973 war in the Middle East, Chinese diplomats condemned both superpowers for contending and colluding to impose a settlement against the interests of the Arab states and the Palestinian people.

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<sup>100</sup>Recollections of Juanito Rivera, a founding member of the NPA, April 2006.

<sup>101</sup>*China in World Affairs: The Foreign Policy of the PRC Since 1970* by Golam Choudhury (1982) pp. 238-239.

At the same time, a 1973 NCNA article described the objectives of the Soviet Union's military supplies to the Arab states and the Palestinian people: "The arms supplied by the Soviet revisionists are not only costly, but many restrictions are attached. For example, they did not provide offensive weapons, and prohibited their use for recovering lost territories[...] This 'assistance' has become a major means of Soviet revisionist penetration and expansion in the Middle East."

While Yasser Arafat and the other leaders of Al-Fatah began to travel to Moscow to shop for advanced Soviet weapons in the early 1970s, China still continued to send military supplies and instructors to "Fatahland" in southern Lebanon, the remaining land-base for the Palestinian armed struggle adjoining Israel. China also sent military supplies to the Popular Front for the Liberation Front and other smaller groups in the mainly secular Palestinian Resistance Movement. Chinese support to the Palestinian forces in Lebanon was stepped up with the outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War in 1975 after the massacre of thousands of Palestinian refugees by the Israeli-backed Phalangist-Christian forces.<sup>102</sup>

Even while the Chinese Foreign Ministry and the PLA were maintaining a public position opposed to Zionist Israel and in support of the Palestinian struggle, it was preparing the ground for recognizing Israel and throwing its support to Egypt and other U.S.-backed Arab states.<sup>103</sup>

### **Mao Zedong's Anti-Imperialist Three Worlds Perspective**

In the early 1970s, Mao and his political allies advocated a "three worlds perspective" for Chinese foreign policy.<sup>104</sup> This was a retreat from the revolutionary internationalist line followed earlier in the Cultural Revolution. According to this perspective, the two superpowers (the U.S. and the Soviet Union—"the first world") were the principal enemies on a world scale; the Western imperialists and Japan (the "second world") were part of an international united front against the superpowers; and the peoples and countries of the "third world" were the most reliable revolutionary force in opposing the superpowers.

The view that the neo-colonial governments of the "third world" could be united with against the imperialist superpowers undermined the position (implemented by the CCP leadership earlier in the first phase of the Cultural Revolution) that it was essential to provide aid to revolutionary and national liberation movements in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East.

<sup>102</sup> *China's Foreign Policy in the Arab World, 1955-1975* by Hashim S. H. Behbehani (1981) pp. 111, 120-128.

<sup>103</sup> "The Palestinians and China's Foreign Policy" by Yitzhak Shichor in *Dimensions of China's Foreign Relations* (1977) pp. 180, 183, 247.

<sup>104</sup> It is important to distinguish this "perspective" from Deng Xiaoping's Three Worlds Theory. While Mao advocated *tactical* unity in some areas with the U.S. in order to counter the Soviet threat to China, Deng and Zhou sought to implement a *strategic* political and military alliance with the U.S., Japanese, West European and Israeli imperialists.

As a perspective for the world's revolutionary movement, the "three worlds perspective" had serious flaws. It downplayed the reactionary nature of the Western imperialist countries other than the U.S., imperialism, and it created confusion about the nature of bourgeois nationalist regimes in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. Emphasis on economic development in these countries and their disputes with the U.S. government obscured the neo-colonial relations that persisted and grew stronger in them.

Some of the problems with this perspective were reflected in a widely quoted statement by Mao, "Countries want independence, nations want liberation, and the people want revolution." This statement is eclectic. It placed the struggles of Third World countries for national independence on a par with revolutionary movements in these same nations that are still oppressed and exploited by one or more imperialist powers.

### **A Few Speculative Remarks on the Struggles in the CCP**

Most of the debate in the CCP leadership during the 1970s over foreign policy was non-public. We know that Zhou and Deng, not Mao and the Four, were in control of the Foreign Ministry and were able to claim that their counter-revolutionary policies were official. For reasons that are not clear, Mao and his allies did not launch a public campaign that explicitly opposed the direction that Deng and Zhou were taking Chinese foreign policy from 1971-1973 (Zhou) and 1973-1976 (Deng and Zhou).

Since Mao's four closest allies in the Politburo did not have powerful allies in the Foreign Ministry, it is possible that Mao made the choice to focus his political energy on the defense of the achievements of the Cultural Revolution and on the struggle against the capitalist-roaders in the leadership of the CCP in the domestic arena. Another factor that may have played a role in the unfavorable outcome of this inner-party struggle was Mao's deteriorating health. He had a serious stroke in 1972. Mao also suffered from the paralyzing Lou Gehrig's Disease, heart disease and anoxia (a shortage of oxygen). These conditions made it increasingly difficult for Mao to read and write documents without assistance. They may have played a role in the fact that Mao made few major statements on foreign policy after 1970.

### **Why These Issues Matters Today**

The issues raised by Mao's three worlds perspective, and even more so by Zhou's and Deng's pro-U.S. Three Worlds Theory, remain crucial today. Sentiments are heard today about the central importance of struggles for national sovereignty—referring to Venezuela, Bolivia, Brazil, Cuba, Iran, South Africa, Zimbabwe and other countries. They should be defended against attacks by the U.S. or by other imperialist partners, surrogates, or emerging blocs. However, it is important to

understand that these countries are still caught in a web of imperialist economic and political relations.

While some of these countries may make some limited economic concessions to the masses of people—and demonstrate some features of a social welfare state with enough oil revenues—this is not a substitute for the development of a mass-based revolutionary movement, which as history shows, is the only pathway to socialism.

There is also a widely held view that nationalist governments and their leaders, not people's movements, are the most important challenge to imperialism. This is cause for some forces to deny support for people's movements within these countries, such as Brasil, Iran and South Africa (Azania). With the U.S. imperialists and their attack dogs in Zionist Israel still holding the threat of a military attack over the Islamic Republic of Iran, it is essential to extend our solidarity to the Iranian people, not to the reactionary mullahs.

The fixation with great nationalist leaders is, for anti-imperialists, myopic and invites disaster. The way such leaders have been cut down by imperialism in the past does not receive the necessary attention. though such examples are many and the parallels are cogent— Mossadegh in Iran (1953), Arbenz in Guatemala (1954), Lumumba in the Congo (1960), Goulart in Brasil (1964), Bosch in the Dominican Republic (1965), Sukarno in Indonesia (1965), Nkrumah in Ghana (1966), Cabral in Guinea-Bissau (1973), Allende in Chile (1973), Bishop in Grenada (1984) and Aristede in Haiti (1991).

Turning a blind eye to Maoist-led people's wars and national liberation movements denies, or fails to recognize, the very forces that stand the best chance to open a new revolutionary dynamic in the 21st century.

### **Lessons from Maoist Foreign Policy from 1969-1976 and from the Counter-Revolutionary Three Worlds Theory**

There is much from which new generations of activists who have grown to political maturity in the past three decades can learn about the historic achievements of China's foreign policy during the Maoist era:

- China's political and military aid to revolutionary struggles in Vietnam, India, Palestine, Turkey, Iran, the Philippines, and much of Africa and Latin America.
- The millions throughout China who demonstrated in solidarity with the Black liberation struggle in the U.S., with France's May 1968 revolt and the uprising against the Soviet army in Prague.
- The boxes of Red Books and Mao's Selected Works that brought Mao Zedong Thought and living socialism to revolutionaries and anti-imperialists in dozens of countries.

- The Cultural Revolution, the ten-year long revolutionary political movement that Mao Zedong led in order to keep China on the socialist road and promoted support for the world revolution.

These are historic achievements that will provide inspiration and an essential foundation for the revolutionary conduct of foreign policy by socialist states in the future.

The experience of socialism in the 20th century in the Soviet Union and China demonstrates that the internal threat to socialism is as great as—and most of the time is greater than—the external threat from imperialism. The danger of capitalist restoration can only be confronted successfully by the masses of working people, with a communist party that remains revolutionary in the lead. They must embark on and stay on a socialist road that requires intense class struggle against newly arisen bourgeois elements, particularly in the leaderships of the communist party and the armed forces.

This new bourgeoisie and their social base will not only pull a society off the socialist road; they will oppose political support and military assistance to revolutionary movements in other countries as an obstacle to their hopes of reaching understandings with the imperialist powers and the governments of reactionary countries, and as a threat to their plans to overthrow socialism and restore capitalism.

While socialist states must defend themselves against imperialism, they must continue to undergo revolutionary transformations so they stay socialist and maintain an internationalist orientation. If they are able to do so, socialist states can maximize their support for revolutionary struggles around the world.

China's revolutionary international line in the 1960s strengthened the position of the forces led by Mao Zedong in fierce political battles with pro-Soviet revisionists in the CCP over the course of the Chinese revolution.

Conversely, when a revolutionary foreign policy was not followed, it breathed new life into the revisionist forces in China grouped around Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping, whose program for capitalist modernization and restoration led to a strategic alliance with U.S. imperialism and the liquidation of support for revolutionary struggles worldwide. The counter-revolutionary Three Worlds Theory that made up the primary thrust of Chinese foreign policy in the early 1970s must be identified and subjected to criticism so it is not repeated.

In socialist society, the struggle against the capitalist roaders in the communist party and the struggle to bring about “socialist new things” in all areas of society must be linked to support for revolutionary and anti-imperialist movements around the world.

Revolutionary lines on domestic and foreign policy issues reinforced each other during the Maoist era, but they did not automatically converge. Caretaking the needs of state power, defending against outside aggression, continuing to revolutionize and transform all areas of socialist society and developing production on

this basis, are a different process than nurturing and promoting revolutionary struggles throughout the world. How revolutionary leadership in both processes can be developed, and how to handle the contradictions between them, are questions that require deeper summation and analysis than I have been able to do here.

Zhou and Deng's Three Worlds Theory asserted that the West European and Japanese imperialist powers played a progressive role in the world by defending their "national independence" against the Soviet Union, the "most dangerous" superpower. This called on revolutionary and Maoist forces, especially in Western Europe, to support, or stop opposing, their own bourgeoisies and reactionary regimes that opposed the Soviet imperialists.

Why is this issue important now? In today's world, the U.S. is the dominant imperialist power, especially in military terms. However, it is not the only enemy of the world's peoples on a global scale. Today, China, Russia, the European Union, Japan, Israel, Canada, Australia, South Korea and Taiwan are all imperialist powers in their own right.

In recent years, a rising Chinese imperialism has challenged U.S. imperialism, especially in the economic and military arenas.<sup>105</sup> Underestimation of the far-flung imperialist interests and reactionary nature of all of the imperialist powers has in the past, and will again and again, throw revolutionary movements within these countries and around the world off course.

At certain times, socialist states may have to make tactical maneuvers to avoid being crushed by one or more imperialist power or by neighboring reactionary countries. Mao and the Chinese leadership had to do so in the face of the threat of a massive U.S. attack on China during the Korean War from 1950-1953, as well as the serious threat of a Soviet attack on the People's Republic beginning in 1969.

Though defense of socialism may require an "opening" to one imperialist country or countries to avoid fighting against two imperialist blocs at the same time (as when a serious Soviet threat to China arose in 1969), strategically a socialist state must promote and support revolution throughout the world.

One of the most important lessons of the 20th century is that socialism in one or a few states, even the most populous country in the world, cannot survive indefinitely as islands in a sea of capitalism. Only the advance of the world revolution—with socialist countries serving as political, and where possible military, base areas—can forge a path to communism.

Another important lesson from China during the Maoist era (and the Soviet Union when it was socialist) is that revolutionary forces in other countries must not make the same compromises that socialist states may have to make when

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<sup>105</sup>See *Is China an Imperialist Country?* by N.B. Turner et.al. (March 2014) [www.red-path.net](http://www.red-path.net).

threats to their survival arise. In the U.S, lack of clarity on this question undercut the ability of most of the “Maoist” groups of the new communist movement to take a firm stand against U.S. imperialism, the Western imperialists and neo-colonial regimes in the Third World. This was an important cause of their political and organizational demise.

The experiences of socialist China and the Soviet Union demonstrate that support for the world revolution must become a mass question. It cannot be left to foreign affairs experts and official communiqués. This is a particularly important question for revolutionary forces in communist parties and organizations.

Mass campaigns in support of revolutionary struggles in other countries and in opposition to imperialist war and plunder build up a critical social base for the foreign policy of a socialist state in which support for revolution is not subordinated to the needs of state-to-state diplomacy.

This spirit of internationalism must be turned into a powerful material force prior to the seizure of power and establishment of socialism. Only if internationalism is woven into the fabric of revolutionary struggle against imperialist and reactionary regimes on a continuing basis will the working class and oppressed people of all countries be able to fully contribute to the struggle for socialism all over the world and the final achievement of communism.

## References