

Chenpao Island: History on China's side

THE CLASH OF March 2 between Soviet and Chinese forces on Chenpao Island and subsequent events are both a manifestation of the Sino-Soviet dispute as a whole and the direct result of a difference over the exact alignment of the frontier. But whereas there is now in Britain at least some degree of understanding of the

Chinese point of view in general, knowledge of the frontier dispute is very limited and (as usual for the past ten years) the press has tended to accept the well-publicised Soviet version of events and ignore the Chinese. In these circumstances, the Society is publishing this summary of the essential facts.

River and east of the Ussuri; she consolidated her gains in the Treaties of Aigun and Peking, forced on China in 1858 and 1860 (the latter immediately after Anglo-French forces had entered Peking and destroyed the imperial Summer Palace).

5. Under these two treaties, as unequal as any ever imposed on China, Tsarist Russia acquired huge regions totalling between 300,000 and 400,000 square miles—as big as France and Germany combined. In 1920 the young Soviet government declared, through its Deputy-Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Karakhan, that:

all the treaties concluded by the previous Russian governments with China are null and void, and it renounces all the seized Chinese territory and all Russian concessions in China and returns to China gratis and for ever everything the Tsarist government and the Russian bourgeoisie seized rapaciously from her.

6. The Information Department of the Chinese Foreign Ministry explains, in its important statement of March 12, 1969, that:

This great testament of Lenin's failed to come true because China was then ruled by a reactionary government.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the boundary question between China and the Soviet Union could have been reasonably settled. The Chinese Government consistently holds that boundary questions left over by history should be settled through negotiations and that, pending a settlement, the status quo of the boundary should be maintained . . .

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1. Although there have, since 1960, been many incidents on the 4,000-mile long Sino-Soviet frontier, none has been publicised in this way before by either side. The Soviet version, the first to be released, claims that a Chinese detachment 'crossed the Soviet State frontier', proceeded towards Damansky (Chenpao) Island, and opened fire on Soviet frontier guards. The Chinese version claims that Soviet troops with armoured cars crossed the ice onto the island 'which is Chinese territory beyond dispute' and opened fire on Chinese patrols. Both sides suffered killed and wounded.

2. After March 2, Soviet forces increased the frequency of their armoured car visits to Chenpao Island, and, despite a renewed Chinese protest on March 13, a much more serious armed clash, with correspondingly bigger casualties on both sides, took place on March 15. The Chinese account of this battle, in which probably 2,000 to 3,000 men took part on each side, again states that Soviet troops fired first; the Soviet account does not deny this.

3. Ever since March 2, Chinese reports on the incidents and their background have been more detailed and

circumstantial than those emanating from Moscow, which has concentrated on a massive and extremely chauvinistic propaganda campaign, including the crudest atrocity-mongering.

Expansion

4. Thanks to Tsarist Russia's eastwards expansion between the 17th and 19th centuries, Soviet frontiers do indeed extend as far as the Pacific: the Russian port of Vladivostok (Lord of the East) was until 1860 the Chinese port of Haishenwei. Under the Sino-Russian Treaty of Nerchinsk (Nipchu) of 1689, Russia acquired north-eastern Siberia, but the vast regions north of the Heilungkiang (Amur River) and east of the Ussuri River remained part of the Manchu Empire of China. This treaty, the first ever signed between China and a European power, was freely negotiated, and so was the subsequent Sino-Russian Treaty of Kyakhta (1727) which fixed the boundary between Outer Mongolia (then part of the Chinese Empire) and Siberia. But from 1840 onwards, when China was invaded by Britain and other European powers, Russia seized the opportunity to advance further down the Amur

View from the Antipodes

IN FEAR OF CHINA, Gregory Clark. Barrie & Rockliff. The Cresset Press, London, 1968. 30s.

IT IS DIFFICULT to retain faith in a book on modern China which sadly and unfavourably misquotes Mao's famous 'barrel of a gun' statement within the first half-dozen pages. But it is worth the effort, especially for the last long chapter on Australia's attitude to China, by far the most rewarding part of the book.

The early chapters on China's foreign relations cover a wide range, and can do little more than scratch the surface of the problems they tackle. The chapter on Sino-American relations, for example, deals only with friction caused by Taiwan, and fails to mention events of the 19th and early 20th centuries, which still influence China's attitude to the US. Likewise, the 'Sino-Soviet Dispute' is presented as a direct choice for Russia between China and the US; apart from an interesting comparison between Soviet and Chinese statements on People's War, little more than passing reference is made to

ideological disputes. Brevity also leads to the omission of the most potent arguments for China in the chapters on Tibet and Korea, which consequently assume a rather negative, defensive attitude.

In spite of its limitations, however, 'In Fear of China' makes good reading. The constant defensiveness of the author—perhaps due to the fact that the book was written for a hostile Australian readership, rather than a more tolerant English one—leads him to examine both sides of the coin fastidiously. And he is still able to come down firmly on the side of China.

The treatment of 'China in Asia' demonstrates forcibly the insignificant 'claim' of Australia to intervene in Asian affairs, compared with China's large and long-term involvement there. 'Yet the West, and Australia in particular, view with the gravest concern any Chinese involvement in Asian affairs', and label it domination, subversion, or aggression. Gregory Clark goes on to cite instances which show

that Chinese intervention in Asian countries has been undertaken only after US interference, and that national interest has so far led China into peaceful agreements between China and Cambodia, and China and Burma.

In face of the strongest contradictory evidence, however, Australia still lives in fear of China and, according to Mr Clark, does little to ascertain the truth of the matter. The author supports his accusation that the Australian Government are biased with factual evidence and personal experience. He examines in some detail the Australian policy towards China during the 1950s—a delicately-balanced mixture of close collaboration with the US and personal gain, with unqualified support of the 'Two Chinas' policy, and non-recognition of Peking—and traces its hardening early in the 1960s, when Indonesian, Sino-Indian, and Vietnamese considerations led Australia to suppose China a bigger threat than she had hitherto thought. 'In Fear of China' examines what justification there is for adopting this line, and attempts to explain the change from a policy of 'not prodding the ant-heap' to one of active antagonism.

Australian shortsightedness in viewing Hanoi as a 'satellite of China' is traced to the belief that China is ex-

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A stir among the people'

CHINA told us a long while ago that every place in the country was self-sufficient; travelling around and finding local staples in all hotels I took this message for granted. Now, involuntary investigation has brought it home to me all the more.

Because of the dislocation of traffic during the Cultural Revolution, many things — cigarettes, matches, soap, toilet paper — became scarce. There was no rush to hoard, perhaps because scarcity was sudden, announced and rationed at the same time, so that everyone had an equal share. Stimulated by these shortages and by Mao's directives on promoting production and becoming self-sufficient, creativeness surged in Kaifeng.

Not only did quantity increase, but quality as well. Kaifeng cigarettes became more abundant, and reached export quality. Soap, at first black and very soft, became lighter and harder. Toilet paper was first offered in sheets of rough brown, dried on household walls; now it is good quality, and neatly packaged. And many rations have been lifted.

There is a stir among the people. Not only have scarce products become common; new ones have been developed by inventive hands. Badges of Chairman Mao were brought out some months ago, and as their quality rose, orders increased; from the college, the Revolutionary Committees, and various factories with something to commemorate, so that now it is a thriving business, and anywhere in town one sees stores, where badges with new facings are displayed, swamped with customers. Many of the workers are becoming artists.

Others too have found a new ability. Some months ago a couple of Mohammedans experimented with a small bust of Chairman Mao. Soon they were producing them, and they were to be seen in many Kaifeng houses. The Mosque lent its outside courtyard, where we discovered them three months ago. There were twenty people at work, smoothing the gypsum at the

crevices of the mould, and working on larger busts as well, for again artists had appeared, and their moulds of concrete and gypsum were increasing.

Many groups of Red Guards visiting Kaifeng were given a bust, and carried it away. Now the factory has about one hundred workers. They have two courtyards and a few small rooms; outside the Mosque is a grassy spot filled with large baskets in which their wares are packed, for they receive orders from other provinces even up to a thousand miles away. Hans have joined Mohammedans, though it is probably only the latter who stack the moulds neatly inside the Mosque. When we asked if we might enter we were told: certainly, if we took a bath in the bath house, an adjunct of every mosque.

The erasing of lines where the moulds meet is now outside work, done by dozens of families living nearby, who also dry the busts and figures, standing them in the sun.

We asked if they did any educational work, and were told that at the end of the day and in the mornings, something of Chairman Mao's is read, mostly by the children aloud to the others. Many of the outside workers deliver their goods or call for more at these times, to take part in the readings and the



discussion which follows.

The outside work is simple but must be done carefully; it is delightful to see children, and old people too, erasing with care and placing the finished statuette in the sun. Youngsters grew careless during the Cultural Revolution; this, and multiple other work is training them into the old habits of China, where agile fingers and care for detail are coming up again, old habits in new work.

Doris Dawson, Kaifeng

THE SOCIETY'S AGM

The **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** will be held on **MAY 17** at **DEVONSHIRE STREET HOUSE, (National Association of Youth Clubs) 30 DEVONSHIRE STREET, W1. (Just off Marylebone High Street.)**

PROGRAMME:

- 2 30 pm — Arrive for checking of credentials, etc
- 3 00 — **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**
- 5 30 — Tea
- 6 30 — **SALE OF CHINESE GOODS** — open to members and friends
- 7 00 — **FILM SHOW** — open to members and friends.

Each member should receive with this copy of **SACU News** a notice and credential together with all the appropriate documents for the AGM. These

will include details about nominations for the Council of Management.

SALE OF CHINESE GOODS. Please send to **SACU** office anything you can spare that comes from China. Look through your souvenirs and gifts and donate something to **SACU**. Everything will be sold at the AGM and the proceeds will be used to further the work of the Society. **DON'T DELAY! SEND TODAY!**

FILM SHOW. The two films to be shown will be: Edgar Snow's Documentary **'ONE FOURTH OF HUMANITY'** and **'A CASE TO ANSWER'** a Granada TV **'World in Action'** film about **HONGKONG.**

A discussion on the films will follow their showing. Please tell your friends about the Sale of Chinese Goods and the Film Show and invite them to join us for the evening.

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I talked to the people of Chenpao

WE PRINT BELOW a despatch by a Japanese journalist who visited the scene of the recent Sino-Soviet border fighting on Chenpao Island the day after the first clash. Except for a brief item in the Daily Mirror of 24 March, this remarkable report appears to have been virtually ignored by the British press.

Keito Tokuga, East Asian correspondent of the West German Social Democratic Party weekly Vorwaerts, on a tour of China, heard the news of the incident on Sunday, 2 March, the day it occurred, when he was in Harbin, the big industrial city and railway junction of N-E China. We continue the story in his own words, translated from the Frankfurt paper Bild Am Sonntag (Sunday Illustrated), 23 March, 1969.

I applied for permission the very same evening to visit the frontier district of Lung-kiang. As expected, the military headquarters refused this next day, on the grounds that there might be further armed clashes and thus my safety could not be guaranteed. I was all the more surprised to be invited to the military headquarters a few hours later and told that the situation had quietened down and I could after all travel to the frontier.

I received a permit stamped by the army as well as by the (civil) administration for the following day. But in order to avoid any special preparation for my visit—it was possible that the frontier inhabitants might be instructed for my benefit—I travelled the same evening.

I arrived in Fuchin by the late train

and was lucky to find a lorry carrying supplies to the commune of Wei-lung. Their land is situated inside the frontier-*elbow* formed by the Amur and Ussuri, and reaches to a little north of the 'Holy Island' Chenpao.

On Tuesday morning, at daybreak, the leader of the commune took me himself in his official car to Paiwan, a village on the Ussuri. I was introduced to the local party leader and the oldest man in the village and then they gave me a free hand to question the inhabitants. . . .

Missing people

Many of the inhabitants of Paiwan are fishermen. They fish even in winter, hacking holes into the ice of the river. One especially fruitful place is below Chenpao Island (in Russian, Damansky). There the fishermen hang lamps onto the hacked-up ice to attract the fish.

In the night from Saturday to Sunday (1st to 2nd March) old Liu-Chang had been on the ice with his son. They intended to be back soon after midnight. When they had not returned by daybreak it was feared that something had happened to them and a search party was organised. By midday more than 100 people as well as a detachment of the near-by frontier garrison had joined in the search for the missing.

The search party approached Chenpao Island where Russian frontier guards had been recognised, waving their hands. The so-called white camouflage suits, of which the Russians speak in their reports, were actually the light furs of the fishermen. I was shown such furs, blood-soaked and riddled with bullet-holes.

Suddenly the Russians opened fire.

The Chinese, taken completely by surprise, tore their caps off and waved them. The distance is said to have been about 300 metres (according to other statements even less). Near the Russians were only unarmed civilians; only two or three young people were carrying old fowling-pieces, hoping perhaps to shoot some game-bird. The (Chinese) soldiers kept in the background at about twice the distance.

Under the first salvoes from the Russians, who kept on firing, about two dozen villagers fell. Then they retreated over the ice which offered only scanty cover of hummocks. They threw themselves down, slid like seals and crawled under the hail of Russian bullets.

Older people who had not had any military training could not move so expertly and continued to fall victims to the bullets. In the meantime the Chinese soldiers had advanced and opened fire to give cover to the fleeing villagers. But now the Russians started to use grenade-throwers and secured further victims. The group of frontier guards too had serious losses, but at last replacements arrived with four armoured scout-cars from the nearby garrison.

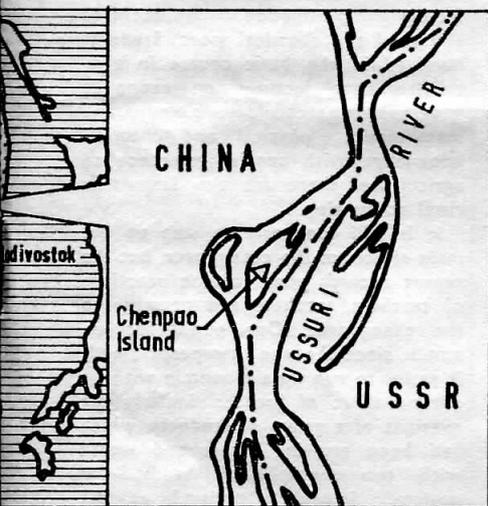
The Russians retired to fortified positions and used field-howitzers, grenade-throwers and machine-guns.

After three hours' fighting, in the course of which a Chinese armoured vehicle was destroyed, Chinese artillery finally arrived and silenced the Russian fire. More than four hours after the first fisherman had fallen in the snow under Russian fire, the last grenade howled over the ice. The sad result of this incident: 27 villagers and 11 frontier guards killed, and 63 wounded, half of them seriously. The Russians say they had 31 dead, which, according to Chinese observations, may well be true.

I spoke with numerous relatives of the dead. They are embittered and full of hatred, whereas previously the anti-Russian utterances from Peking had made little impression on them.

All eye-witnesses completely exclude the possibility of a mistake by the Russians. They say it would have been impossible for anyone to have mistaken them for aggressors or even for ill-intentioned violators of the frontier.

I had conversations with some 30 to 40 people who were entirely independent of each other. Although certainly not rehearsed, they all said essentially the same. Thus for me it is beyond doubt that the statements of the villagers conform with the actual happenings.



A school in Lanchow managed by workers

REFORM OF THE educational system has been one of the main preoccupations of the cultural revolution in China. Starting in Peking University, and gradually filtering down to secondary and primary school levels, the desire for reform has certainly swept away many old demons, but has created its own problems.

While most students and teachers are now agreed that the old system was bad, the construction of a new one has caused more problems than could have been dreamed of in 1966. And this is possibly a good thing. There has been a noticeable absence of detailed instruction from the top: most pronouncements on education (either quotations from Mao Tse-tung or laconic statements in the press) have in no way been designed—or taken—as rigid rules. They are guidelines, and have been accepted as such.

This could be interpreted as an invitation to anarchy, since Mao says only that 'it is essential to shorten the length of schooling, revolutionise education, put proletarian politics in command and take the road of the Shanghai Machine Tool Plant' or 'In the countryside schools and colleges should be managed by the poor and lower-middle peasants—the most reliable ally of the working class.' Does it not follow that there will be as many systems of education in China as there are schools and colleges?

This doesn't seem to be happening.

Antipodean view

continued from page 2

ansionist, therefore Hanoi must be subservient to China, and consequently Australia has no option but to be on her guard. Similar shortsightedness leads her to 'an unqualified endorsement of Soviet anti-Chinese propaganda', although China's own statements refuting such claims are freely available in Australia.

Such refusal to examine objectively the background to any dispute involving China is typical of a country blinded by fear, and results in Australia taking an active anti-China stand. If China, whose attitude has so far been one of dignified neutrality, should one day emerge in vocal opposition to Australia, it would not be without provocation.

M J Leonard

And the reasons could be either that the working class 'work teams' sent into the schools and colleges since the middle of last year are independently interpreting these general instructions in similar ways, or that the fairly well documented experiences of the early experimenters in educational revolution have been used as blueprints by the rest of the country, or that secret—and detailed—instructions have been issued from the Central Committee.

The last possibility can safely be discounted as being totally opposed to the Chinese style of work, but it is difficult to decide between the other two. In the first place, the experiment has not been going on all that long; secondly, the majority of articles appearing in the press have been concerned with Shanghai and Peking.

This makes a recent article in the Peking Review important, since it gives details of a school in Lanchow, now managed by workers, which is linked up with a PLA unit and a people's commune.

The May 7 Middle School, Lanchow, Kansu Province, Northwest China, has more than 1,600 students. A thought propaganda team went to the school in October last year to reorganise the educational policy there and take it out of the hands of the bourgeois elements. Teachers and students began working at the Lanchow Casting Plant, which, with the PLA and a local commune, took over the running of the school. By drawing on these sources for members of the school's committee, a new kind of unified leadership has been set up. The system of personal responsibility by the teacher has been abolished, and an army-type formation set up in the school, with squads, platoons and companies. Weekly and monthly checks are carried out by the plant's revolutionary committee.

By linking up with both a commune and an industrial enterprise, the school is obviously in a position to have the best of three worlds (including the PLA). The teachers and students studying in the plant are divided into two classes—one does manual labour in the morning and studies in the afternoon, and the other the reverse. The two classes each do manual labour for four half-days and study four days (two whole days and four half-days) every week. Of the 24 hours a week devoted to study, 12 are set aside for study of Mao's work, four for the

basic course in industry, four for revolutionary literature and art, two for military and physical training, and the remaining two are used 'flexibly'.

Teachers and students doing manual work in the factories are assigned to a definite group and a definite shift, with a particular worker to instruct them in operating machines, and the method of integrating on-the-spot teaching with classroom teaching is used.

In the countryside, manual work and studies are arranged according to the needs of farm work. In the busy season, teachers and students do manual work the whole day. The curriculum is largely the same as that for the plant-based students and teachers except that there is a basic course in agriculture rather than one in industry.

So, a section of the students work in the factory and a section in agriculture for a year, after which the two groups change round for a further year.

Four veteran workers in the plant have been selected as full-time teachers; 23 workers, 19 poor and lower middle peasants, two armymen and a technician teach part-time. Of the original 59 teachers in the school, 24 are in the new set-up; the other 35 have for the most part been sent to the countryside or factories for reeducation.

The schooling period has come down from six years to four.

The sort of things which the students study during the basic course in industry are listed as: lectures on elementary mathematics, physics and chemistry, technological processes, and factory production, mechanical, electrical and chemical work. Students involved in the basic course in agriculture have lectures on economic geography, meteorology, biology, and mathematical, physical and chemical knowledge with special reference to agriculture; there are also lessons in rural accounting.

It is still too early to sum up the main effects of the changeover, but the report records some of the reactions of teachers, workers and peasants to the changeover. One pupil, for example, since she was 'tempered', finds it easier to run up a mountain without getting short of breath: similarly the eyesight of a group of students, which had been growing worse and worse with too much book study, has noticeably improved. It must be at least another year before any extended experiences are forthcoming, but my impression is that they will be good.

P D

NOTEBOOK

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* * *

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SACU DIARY

May

1 **Study Group.** 'The Communist Manifesto.' 24 Warren Street, W1. 7.30 pm. (See below for details of this series.)

2 **Camden Branch.** 'Rebellion is Justified—Chinese and British Student Movements.' Holborn Central Library, Theobalds Road, WC1. 7.30 pm.

6 **Discussion Meeting.** 'The Sino-Soviet Border Dispute.' Introduced by: Derek Bryan. 24 Warren Street, W1. 7.30 pm.

8 **Study Group.** Continuation of May 1 meeting. 24 Warren Street, W1. 7.30 pm.

9 **Barnet Branch.** Film Show and Discussion. Chinese Folk Arts, Theatre, Songs and Dances. Hendon Town Hall, the Burroughs, NW4. 7.45 pm.

15 **Study Group.** Engels: 'Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.' Lenin: 'On the State.' 24 Warren Street, W1. 7.30 pm.

17 **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.** Devonshire Street House, 30

Devonshire Street, W1. (Just off Marylebone High Street.) 2.30 for 3 pm. Followed by Tea and Films. (See page 3.)

20 **Discussion Meeting.** Follow up of 'Rebellion is Justified' meeting of May 2. 24 Warren Street, W1. 7.30 pm.

22 **Study Group.** Continuation of May 15 meeting. 24 Warren Street, W1. 7.30 pm.

29 **Study Group.** Continuation of May 15 meeting. 24 Warren Street, W1. 7.30 pm.

June

3 **Discussion Meeting.** 'China in May 1969.' Report from Roland Berger. 24 Warren Street, W1. 7.30 pm.

5 **Study Group.** Mandel: 'Introduction to Marxist Economics.' 24 Warren Street, W1. 7.30 pm.

6 **Barnet Branch.** Films and Discussion. 'One Fourth of Humanity' and a film about Hongkong. Hendon Town Hall, the Burroughs, NW4. 7.45 pm.

12 **Study Group.** Continuation of June 5 meeting. 24 Warren Street, W1. 7.30 pm.

Study group

The Intellectual Foundations of the Thought of Mao Tse-tung.

The group will trace the intellectual background to the Thought of Mao Tse-tung, investigating both its Marxist and non-Marxist roots, as well as examining its contributions to political science in an attempt to arrive at a fuller understanding of what has been described as 'an inexhaustible source of strength and a spiritual atom bomb of infinite power'.

Specific texts will be used, which the group will examine in their historical context and in the light of subsequent and contemporary events. The classical works will be supplemented by modern analyses. The group will also compile a reading list and notes on its meetings.

First Session — May to July, 1969. The early Marxist heritage. The nature of reality, of history—dialectical materialism—the nature of the state—class struggle—early Marxist economics.

Second Session — September to December, 1969. The Chinese Heritage. The destruction of Imperial China by foreign imperialism—the nature of pre-Liberation society—the Confucian tradition—the rebel tradition.

Third Session — January to July, 1970.

Mao and contemporary Developments in Marxist Thought. Imperialism—dictatorship of the proletariat—revolutionary strategies—revisionism—the nature of the socialist state—the Party, its necessity and style of work—the mass line—class struggle in socialist society.

The first session will start on May 1—see Diary.

Books received

The inclusion of a book under this heading does not preclude a review at a later date.

CHINA IN MAPS. Edited by Harold Fullard MSc. George Philip and Son Limited, 1968. 8/6.

RED STAR OVER CHINA. First revised and enlarged edition, by Edgar Snow. Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1969. 70/-.

ECONOMIC TRENDS IN COMMUNIST CHINA. Edited by Eckstein, Galenson and Liu. Edinburgh University Press, 1968. 120/-.

SURVEY OF THE SINO-SOVIET DISPUTE: A Commentary and Extracts from the Recent Polemics, 1963-1967, by John Gittings. Oxford University Press, 1968. 84/-.

CHINA: EMPIRE TO PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC, by John Moseley. B T Batsford Ltd, 1968. 25/-.

THE EAST IS RED, by George Bales. C A Watts & Co Ltd, 1969. 45/-.



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