

China Policy Study Group

BROADSHEET

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TWENTY YEARS OF REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE

In 1849 Metternich described Italy as simply 'a geographical expression'. A century later the description was still true of China, in name a republic but in reality an endless battlefield disputed by marauding armies, feudal warlords and opposing social systems.

The only existence known to the majority of Chinese under the feudal exploitation which continued unbridled until 1949, was one of submission and suffering. Fear and grim recollection of the reprisals practised by landlords, moneylenders and Kuomintang officials banished thoughts of concerted action. The very lack of a common will, or common purpose, among the peasantry presented the communists with their biggest problem. Overcoming it was their biggest victory. Example, persuasion and organisation welded a collection of people into a nation. A new social and political consciousness was born and in the space of two decades generated the biggest revolutionary force ever known.

Europe had had great revolutions, but in China the canvas is larger and the impli-

cations in world terms more fundamental. The Chinese people, under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung, not only expelled the foreign invaders in league with quisling warlords and an American-financed landlord and comprador government, but turned a big area that was until then essentially colonial, into an independent and self-reliant state.

The most genuine tribute paid to the Chinese by their detractors is, in fact, paid unconsciously. China is invariably spoken of today as a unified country, and the strictures levelled at her apply to an efficiently governed state, not an underdeveloped area. Even when hostile observers seize on some passing evidence that all is not easy in China's effort to develop socialism from below instead of having collectivism imposed from above, they unwittingly cede the main point. Thus, *The Times*, commenting without enthusiasm on the new Chinese military aid and trade agreement with North Vietnam says:

'However, the Chinese leadership is still obsessed with in-

ternal problems. The official Peking *People's Daily* today featured an analysis of the difficulties of ensuring that the new revolutionary committees set up to run China during the cultural revolution retain close contact with the masses, and do not become an élite set of mandarins.' (*The Times* (London), 25th August, 1969).

A leadership obsessed with this sort of problem would be welcomed by ordinary people in any land — nowhere more than in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe..

Ten years ago the Russians were already extremely sensitive on the subject of China. Today, with the much clearer movement away from Leninism by the upper strata of the Soviet Union, this attitude has developed into one of scorn and hostility. It takes such extreme forms that it seems to defy rational explanation. China's achievements are studiously disregarded or denounced as non-achievements. It is as if sensitivity had developed into an inferiority complex. The U.S.S.R., coming up against the problem of changing man's motiva-

tion in society, convinced themselves it could not be changed and concluded that efforts to change it were misdirected anyway. Thus the younger generation in these countries do not realise that the many problems in their society spring from this fundamental failure.

Admittedly it isn't easy to pave the way to socialism by drawing everybody into politics. It isn't easy to develop the economy fully (or for that matter the superstructure) without the lure of privilege and steep income differentials, or without over-riding the interests of a few other countries. How could the Chinese get round complex social problems like this? They *can't*, say the critics, be advancing towards socialism by getting people to sink their private interests in the collective, for experience has shown that this leads to lethargy, loss of initiative and stagnation. The socialist state must adopt all the modern management techniques, including a steep career pyramid leading to a social élite of decision-takers. Any other ideas

SALUTE TO CHINA

October 1st is a special anniversary, not only for China but for the people of all lands. It marks the establishment in 1949 of a People's Republic in a great country ruthlessly despoiled by feudal overlords and foreign capitalists. On this twentieth anniversary, the Chinese people justifiably celebrate the most remarkable catalogue of human achievement ever packed into two decades. In these years the Chinese People's Republic has taken essential steps towards a socialist society that others have shirked.

In two articles in this special double issue we look back over the panorama of these achievements. China's further development of the ideas and practice of Marx and Lenin is assessed by George Thomson; another article traces the emphasis laid on the leading role of the working-class in China.

BROADSHEET joins countless millions of people throughout the world in celebrating with the Chinese people their historic anniversary.

are held to be petty-bourgeois egalitarianism, unscientific and anti-Leninist. Socialism does not mean equality, and all the Chinese are doing to bring top people down to the level of the workers is infantile and wrong.

The parody of socialism that produces this attitude leads straight to intercommunication with the U.S. and other western powers, even to co-operation to 'contain' the Chinese revolution and its influence. It finds a ready response in the East European regimes where Marxism is only skin-deep; though when it extends to subordinating weaker countries to the will of the stronger it begins to feel like imperialism to those who have experienced imperialism before (e.g. the Czechs).

It is still not very relevant to compare material conditions in China, which emerged twenty years ago from the nightmare of Western imperialism superimposed on an Asiatic feudalism, with those in Soviet Eastern Europe, where communist-led regimes had supplanted reactionary national governments some years before. China started in 1949 from a much lower level even than the Soviet Union in 1917. Today there are fewer motor cars in China than in Eastern Europe, but more goods in the shops and just as many people buying them. The visitor to Eastern Europe is immediately struck by the high prices everywhere; in China, where they have remained constant since 1949, he is astonished to find how low they are. In China all forms of fresh food are plentiful; in Eastern Europe they are not. Low prices and good harvests have brought China to standards which twenty years ago were thought quite unattainable by the mass populations of South-east Asia. New investment in both large and small industrial plant goes on all the time, notably in fertiliser, steel and consumer goods production.

None of this is at all surprising, given the impetus of the Chinese Revolution. It is simply that it is completely unknown in Western or Eastern Europe except to an insignificant minority of specialists.

Leadership is still a key factor in human development, as it has been throughout history. Without bold and clear-headed leadership China could have sunk again into a position of subordination to a better-equipped and determined foreign power. Without the vision and strategy of Mao Tse-tung, absorbing Marx and Lenin would not of itself have brought emancipation. Those who deride Mao would do well to ask themselves, on this 20th anniversary of the Chinese People's Republic, whether China's impact in the world today would have been as great under more pedestrian and foreign-orientated leadership. It might seem more convenient to the shortsighted regimes of Europe and North America that China should once again become compliant and conformist, but it would not make sense to the Chinese people or those who now seek to follow their example.

CHINA'S CHALLENGE

China is today a force to be reckoned with, not only economically but in world politics. It is People's China that stands in the way of the complete subordination of lesser nations to one or the other of the two super-states, and of men's minds to the super-state philosophy. The Chinese Revolution taught other struggling people the meaning of self-reliance, and China's application of socialism for the first time in the field of international aid has now opened up the prospect of self-reliance for developing countries in Africa and elsewhere. 'The Chinese are on the right track' was the conclusion drawn in a recent series of articles on this subject in *The Guardian*, pointing out that in the opinion of Africans Chinese aid solves the problems it sets out to solve without setting new ones and 'does not lead a government or an African nationalist movement into a client role' (Patrick Keatley, *The Battle for Africa*, 16th-21st July, 1969).

No less important in the eyes of many people is China's continued reaffirmation of the right to challenge entrenched

authority, to reject the prescribed ways of doing things and to resist any pressures except those of the people. From 1958 onwards she openly challenged the Soviet Union in both the economic and political spheres, transforming not only the existing power relations but the future political landscape for socialists as well. In 1964 and 1967 respectively she deprived the Euro-American community of their exclusive prerogative of exploiting atomic and hydrogen bombs on the earth as a means of guaranteeing their supremacy.

CHINA'S INFLUENCE

There is no place in the imperialist or the Soviet scheme of things for such defiance from the Chinese communists. So China is declared an outlaw and pronounced 'isolated'. But such verdicts have long lost any meaning. Today every move by Peking has repercussions in Europe, Africa, the Americas and above all Asia. Agronomists follow the phases of China's agricultural revolution and draw conclusions for application in other quarters of the globe; merchants consult daily reports of Chinese moves in world commodity markets before buying or selling; young technologists are taught Chinese so that they may study Chinese technical literature. This year the Yuan became the first currency of a planned-economy country to be used in international trade.

The teachings of Mao Tse-tung are rapidly becoming part of the mental equipment of the younger generation, while their elders are still mainly preoccupied with the problem of 'containing' China.

Can it be that those who cry 'isolation' are themselves becoming isolated?

On this 20th anniversary of the People's Republic it is clear that China neither can be isolated nor her influence contained. Every day brings fresh proof that the world's oldest civilisation is today making her greatest contribution yet to the development of human society.

From the slogans issued for the Twentieth Anniversary:

7. Carry out the tasks of struggle-criticism-transformation conscientiously! Further consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat!
11. Be prepared against war, be prepared against natural disasters, and do everything for the people!
18. Firmly support the heroic Vietnamese people in carrying their war against U.S. aggression and for national salvation through to the end!
20. Firmly support the Asian, African and Latin American peoples in their struggle for liberation! Firmly support the revolutionary struggles of the peoples of Western Europe, North America, Oceania and other parts of the world!
21. Salute to the genuine Marxist-Leninist fraternal parties and organizations of various countries!
22. People of all countries, unite and oppose any war of aggression launched by imperialism or social-imperialism, especially one in which atom bombs are used as weapons! If such a war breaks out, the people of the world should use revolutionary war to eliminate the war of aggression, and preparations should be made right now!
28. Long live invincible Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought!
29. Long live our great leader Chairman Mao! A long, long life to Chairman Mao!

On the Theoretical Basis of THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

The Cultural Revolution in China is the greatest historical event since the Russian Revolution of 1917. It was led by the Communist Party and by Mao Tse-tung with the aim of 'consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat, preventing capitalist restoration, and building socialism'. It is based upon Mao's theory of 'continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat'. The purpose of this article is to show briefly how his theory is based in its turn on the Marxist theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat as developed and applied by Lenin during and after the Revolution of 1917. He wrote:

Those who recognise *only* the class struggle are not yet Marxists. . . . Only he is a Marxist who *extends* recognition of the class struggle to recognition of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. . . . This is the touchstone on which the *real* understanding and recognition of Marxism should be tested.
(*The State and Revolution*).

THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE BOURGEOISIE

Class society rests on exploitation. The exploiters form the ruling class, the exploited the subject class or classes. The ruling class enforces its rule by means of the state, which is an organ for the forcible repression of one class by another. Its chief instruments are the army and police.

Thus, every form of class society — slave-owning, feudal, capitalist — is a dictatorship of the ruling class. The form of the state varies. In capitalist — that is bourgeois — society, it may be more or less democratic; it may allow for parliamentary elections based on universal suffrage; but it is still a dictatorship. 'It always remains democracy for the rich and a swindle for the poor' (Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*) — that is, 'a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie masked by parliamentary forms' (*Collected Works*, vol. 30 p. 100.)

Accordingly, while urging the workers to make full use of bourgeois democratic rights in the spirit of the most consistent and resolutely revolutionary democracy,¹ Lenin warned them that it was an illusion to suppose that they could win power by parliamentary means.² 'One of the basic conditions for the victory of socialism', he wrote, is 'the arming of the workers and the disarming of the bourgeoisie'.³ That is what Chairman Mao meant when he said that 'political power grows out of the barrel of a gun'.

THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

Having seized power, the proletariat abolishes bourgeois democracy and replaces it with socialist democracy:

The proletariat takes power, becomes the ruling class, smashes bourgeois parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy, suppresses the bourgeoisie, suppresses *all* the attempts of *all* other classes to return to capitalism, gives *real* freedom and democracy to the working people (which is practicable only when private ownership of the means of production has been *abolished*) and gives them, not just the 'right to', but the *real* use of, what *has been taken* from the bourgeoisie. (vol. 29, p. 511).

In this way democracy becomes for the first time 'democracy for the poor, democracy for the people, and not democracy for the money-bags' (vol. 25, pp. 461-2).

The class struggle does not cease with the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, but on the contrary in many respects it becomes fiercer:

The dictatorship of the proletariat means a most determined and ruthless war waged by the new class against a *more powerful* enemy, the bourgeoisie, whose resistance is increased *tenfold* by their overthrow (even if only in a single country) and whose power lies, not only in the strength of international capital, the strength and durability of their international connections, but also in the *force of habit*, in the strength of *small-scale production*. Unfortunately, small-scale production is still wide-spread in the world, and small-scale production *engenders* capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, on a mass scale (vol. 31, pp. 23-4, cf. vol. 29, pp. 189, 356; vol. 30, p. 115).

The bourgeoisie in our country has been conquered, but it has not yet been uprooted, not yet destroyed, and not even utterly broken. That is why we are faced with a new and higher form of struggle against the bourgeoisie, the transition from the very simple task of further expropriating the capitalists to the much more complicated and difficult task of creating conditions in which it will be impossible for the bourgeoisie to exist or for a new bourgeoisie to arise (vol. 27, pp. 244-5).

This dictatorship presupposes the ruthlessly severe, swift and resolute use of *force* to crush the resistance of the exploiters, the capitalists, landowners and their underlings. . . . But the essence of proletariat dictatorship is not in force alone, or even mainly in force. Its chief feature is the organisation and discipline of the advanced contingent of the working people, of their vanguard, of their sole leader, the proletariat, whose object is to build socialism, abolish the division of society into classes, make all members of society into working people, and remove the basis for all exploitation of man by man (vol. 29, p. 388).

The abolition of classes requires a long, difficult and stubborn *class struggle*, which *after* the overthrow of capitalist rule, *after* the destruction of the bourgeois state, *after* the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, *does not disappear* . . . but merely changes its forms and in many respects becomes fiercer (vol. 29, p. 389).

The dictatorship of the proletariat does not signify a cessation of the class struggle, but its continuation in a new form and with new weapons. This dictatorship is essential so long as classes exist, so long as the bourgeoisie, overthrown in one country, intensifies tenfold its attacks on socialism on an international scale (vol. 32, p. 460).

Thus, according to Lenin, the proletariat must maintain its dictatorship for a lengthy period after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie in order to establish conditions 'in which it will be impossible for the bourgeoisie to exist or for a new bourgeoisie to arise'. Only then will the class struggle be brought to an end.

Lenin's position has been reaffirmed by Chairman Mao:

Socialist society covers a fairly long historical period. In the historical period of socialism, there are still classes, class contradictions and class struggle; there is the struggle between the socialist road and the capitalist road, and there is the danger of capitalist restoration. We must recognise the protracted and complex nature of this struggle. We must heighten our vigilance. We must conduct

¹ See *Collected Works* vol. 21, p. 409.

² See *Collected Works* vol. 25, pp. 388, 400-4; vol. 29 p. 510; vol. 30 pp. 263-4.

³ See *Collected Works* vol. 29, p. 108, cf. vol. 23, pp. 325-6.

socialist education. We must correctly understand and handle class contradictions and class struggle, distinguish the contradictions between ourselves and the enemy from those among the people, and handle them correctly. Otherwise a socialist country like ours will turn into its opposite and degenerate, and a capitalist restoration will take place.

THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

Speaking at the eighth Party Congress (1919) Lenin said:

We can fight bureaucracy to the bitter end, to complete victory, only when the whole population participates in the work of government. In the bourgeois republics not only is this impossible, *but the law itself prevents it*. The best of the bourgeois republics, no matter how democratic they may be, have thousands of legal hindrances which prevent the working people from participating in the work of government. What we have done is to remove these hindrances, but so far we have not reached the stage at which the working people could participate in government. Apart from the law, there is still the level of culture, which you cannot subject to any law. The result of this low cultural level is that the Soviets, which by virtue of their programme are organs of government *by* the working people, are in fact organs of government *for* the working people by the most advanced section of the proletariat, but not yet by the working people as a whole (vol. 29, p. 183).

Lenin returned to this theme at the eleventh Congress (vol. 33, pp. 287-95) and put forward a slogan calling for a 'cultural revolution'. The meaning of this slogan was subsequently explained by Stalin as follows:

The surest remedy for bureaucracy is raising the cultural level of the workers and peasants. One can curse and denounce bureaucracy in the state apparatus, one can stigmatise and pillory bureaucracy in our practical work: but unless the masses of the workers reach a certain level of culture which will create the possibility, the desire, the ability to control the state apparatus from below, by the masses of the workers themselves, bureaucracy will continue to exist in spite of everything. . . . This is the sense and significance of Lenin's slogan about the cultural revolution. (Stalin, *Collected Works*, vol. 10, pp. 330-1).

Lastly, our economic organisations. . . . How are we to put an end to bureaucracy in all these organisations? There is only one sole way of doing this, and that is to organise control from below, to organise criticism of the bureaucracy in our institutions, of their shortcomings and their mistakes, by the vast masses of the working class. (Stalin, vol. 11, p. 77).

Looking still further ahead to the beginnings of communism, Lenin explained that, in order to raise the productivity of labour through the development of large-scale socialist production, it was necessary for the proletariat to fulfil two tasks — to carry through to the end the struggle against the bourgeoisie, and to create 'a new and higher social bond, a social discipline, the discipline of class-conscious and united working people'. He added:

The second task is more difficult than the first, for it cannot possibly be fulfilled by single acts of heroic fervour; it requires the most prolonged, most persistent, most difficult mass heroism in *plain, everyday* work. (Vol. 29, p. 423).

Referring to the new communist subbotniks, he wrote:

Evidently this is only a beginning, but it is a beginning of exceptionally great importance. It is the beginning of a revolution which is more difficult, more tangible, more radical and more decisive than the overthrow of the bourgeoisie; for it is a victory over our own conservatism, in-

discipline, petty-bourgeois egotism, a victory over the habits left as a heritage to the worker and peasant by accursed capitalism. Only when *this* victory is consolidated will the new social discipline, socialist discipline, be created; then, and only then, will a reversion to capitalism become impossible and communism become really invincible. (Vol. 29, pp. 411-12).

The Cultural Revolution which has been carried through in China during the past three to four years is in all essential respects a realisation of that which Lenin envisaged for the Soviet Union in the years following 1917. It was prompted by the same needs, designed to avert the same dangers, and based on the same theoretical foundation. In addition, through the leadership of Mao Tse-tung, it has been reinforced and enriched by all the historical experience, positive and negative, which has been accumulated both by the Soviet people and by the Chinese people during the past fifty years. Above all, it is in China, under his leadership, that the masses of the workers have mobilised themselves to engage in continuous, collective criticism and self-criticism, analysing their experiences at each stage of the struggle, and so raising their cultural level to the point at which 'the working class exercises leadership in everything'. But the struggle is not over. As Chairman Mao has said:

We have won great victory. But the defeated class will still struggle. These people are still around and this class still exists. Therefore we cannot speak of final victory. Not even for decades. We must not lose our vigilance. According to the Leninist viewpoint, the final victory of a socialist country not only requires the efforts of the proletariat and the broad masses of the people at home, but also involves the victory of the world revolution and the abolition of the system of exploitation of man by man on the whole globe, upon which all mankind will be emancipated. Therefore, it is wrong to speak lightly of the final victory of the revolution in our country; it runs counter to Leninism and does not conform to facts.

In acting resolutely on these precepts the Chinese have set an example to the world.

GEORGE THOMSON

* * *

PERSONAL NOTE

China to me, is preeminently a country of friendly people, who, though modestly admitting they may be prone to human error, seek the friendship of all the rational working people of the world, actively; and upon a purely equal footing. And even when they resolutely refuse to barter one jot of what they deem to be their Marxist-Leninist principles, they will never deny you your right to criticize them or reason with them; nor insult you with the expediency of false flattery.

A Reader in Ceylon

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ON THE SOCIALIST ROAD

In the short span of twenty years, China has broken out of the semi-colonial and semi-feudal fetters that bound her and has set herself firmly on the road to a socialist society. For her enemies her new-found strength is something to be feared; for her friends, especially the oppressed and the exploited the world over, it is a source of strength to themselves.

Mao Tse-tung said that the Chinese people were poor and blank, but upon a blank page the most beautiful characters could be written. In the past twenty years, many of these characters have been written, recording advance towards socialism. In 1949 the Chinese people were warned that 'after the enemies with guns have been wiped out, there will still be enemies without guns; they are bound to struggle desperately against us, and we must never regard these enemies lightly'. Some who had stood heroically in battle might now succumb to a new enemy:

We must guard against such a situation. To win country-wide victory is only the first step in a long march of ten thousand *li*. . . The revolution is great, but the road after the revolution will be longer, the work greater and more arduous.

(Report to 7th Central Committee of C.P.C.,
Mao Tse-tung, March 5, 1949)

The 1949 *Report*, made by Mao on the eve of nation-wide liberation, outlined clearly and simply the current economic and political situation, analysing the right and wrong attitudes towards problems. The new state would be led by the proletariat, working in close alliance with the peasantry, and in unity with revolutionary intellectuals and as many of the bourgeoisie as could be won over. Pointing out that from 1927 to 1949 the centre of gravity of the Party's work had been in the villages, Mao said that it had now shifted to the cities, where they would have to wage new political, economic and cultural struggles. There, 'some muddle-headed comrades think we should rely not on the working class but on the masses of the poor. Some comrades who are even more muddle-headed think we should rely on the bourgeoisie'. Mao showed that there were both right and left deviations, and that in seeking unity with the people, the Party must guard against either accommodating to errors and shortcomings or adopting a 'closed-door and perfunctory' attitude.

FIRST STEPS

Despite the chaotic state of China's economy in 1949 after many decades of strife — civil wars and anti-imperialist war — Mao saw no ground for pessimism. The fact that modern industry constituted 10% of the national economy was a progressive aspect: there existed a proletariat and a bourgeoisie — and their political parties. 'The proletariat and its party, because they have been oppressed by manifold enemies, have become steeled and are qualified to lead the Chinese people's revolution.' Failure to recognise this would lead to Right opportunist mistakes.

Agriculture and handicrafts still accounted for about 90% of all production, a situation not very different from ancient times; failure to recognise this would lead to Left opportunist mistakes.

Industry owned by bureaucratic capitalists would be taken over by the state and become the socialist sector. That part privately owned by Chinese capitalists would be flexibly controlled so that production could continue and expand to meet the people's needs; it would at the same time be subjected to regulation by taxation, prices and labour conditions. Mao warned that 'restriction versus opposition to restriction' would be the main form of class struggle in this period.

A key problem facing the People's Government was the creation of confidence in the new currency after many years of demoralizing inflation under the regime of Chiang Kai-shek. A system of parity units, based on essential commodities, was introduced. Wages, bank deposits, interest on savings bonds were all calculated and paid in terms of these units, thus stabilising the purchasing power of the people. To combat speculation, especially in staple foods such as rice and wheat, the Government built up large stocks, putting them on the market whenever necessary, at controlled prices. These measures were of decisive importance in winning enthusiastic support from the people.

In the countryside land reform was completed, except in the minority areas where the people were left to take their own time. The peasants themselves were encouraged and helped to carry through the reforms, the essential feature of which was the confiscation of landlord holdings and their distribution to poor and lower-middle peasants, so that every individual received his or her share.

CO-OP TO COMMUNE

While the people were learning, under the guidance of the Communist Party, to run their own affairs, other problems demanded attention. Many traditional bad practices had to be dealt with, and opposition to restriction had to be curbed. The *San Fan* movement ('anti-three evils') was launched against corruption, waste and bureaucracy among government employees. A second movement, the *Wu Fan* ('anti-five evils'), was directed primarily at business men, struck at bribery of government personnel, tax evasion, theft of state property, cheating on government contracts, stealing economic information.

During the 1950's the face of China changed. In 1954 the first bridge over the Yangtze River was completed at Wuhan, linking the north and south of the country. Railway lines were extended into distant regions of the northwest and southwest, and into the southeast. Highways were constructed into Tibet. The building of vast hydro-electric projects on the Yellow and other rivers was well under way. Step by step industry and agriculture were put on a socialist basis.

In 1949, except in the old liberated areas where land reform had taken place earlier, China's agricultural production and handicrafts had been 'scattered and individual, somewhat as they were in ancient times' (Mao: *Report*). After 1949 advance came by stages: 1) mutual aid teams which worked on the land of each member in turn; 2) co-operatives, first lower then higher; 3) communes. By 1955-56 the limitations imposed by small-scale private ownership had led to rapid spread of a movement towards collective land ownership and the greater efficiency this made possible. This was most evident in irrigation, road work and other projects affecting whole areas. By June 1956, over 90% of all peasant households were in producers' co-operatives, and over 60% had formed higher co-operatives.

With capital investment and mechanisation necessarily very limited, the co-operatives found their resources insufficient to cover all their needs for such things as seeds, implements and consumer goods, as well as in health services and education. It was also found that even when they joined forces they could not cope adequately with major problems, e.g. water conservancy and transport, if they remained independent units. In an effort to solve this problem, in 1958 a number of co-operatives in one district of Honan Province joined to form a '*da she*' (big co-operative). This was the first commune. Mao saw its significant

ance and hailed it as the form of the future. The movement to form communes spread like wildfire throughout the country.

The commune became the basic political unit in the countryside, responsible for agriculture, industry, transport, trade health, education, and its own security. Communes are divided into brigades and subdivided into production teams based on villages. They are an entirely new socialist form, combining centralised planning and administration of collective resources with maximum democracy at the base.

A major contribution of the communes to socialist transformation has been country-wide development of industry through local initiative using local resources. Industry in the communes is at both brigade and commune level. The brigades have small workshops to grind corn, husk rice, mend tools. As a peasant remarked, 'Now you can husk enough rice to feed the whole family in the time it takes to boil a pot of water'. The communes run industries too large for the brigades to handle. Some peasants have become full-time workers, so that in the countryside a new proletariat has emerged. Gradually the difference between peasant and worker is being narrowed.

FORWARD LEAP

After the period of reconstruction new industries grew rapidly, aided by the Soviet Union until their abrupt withdrawal of technicians in 1960. By 1956 the transformation of private enterprises into joint state-private ownership had been virtually accomplished. The former owners received compensation in the form of bonds and often remained as managers.

At the time the communes were establishing themselves in the countryside there was a tremendous spurt of energy in the Great Leap Forward, when many thousands of small industries were started throughout the country. Some of these were found to be ill-conceived and were abandoned later, many took root and grew. In the process the mystique that only the highly qualified and educated could carry out effectively scientific and technical experiments, was disproved as many gained self-confidence and skill, and the positive gains far outweighed losses. The rapid expansion received a sharp set-back when in three successive years (1959-1961) disastrous floods and drought gravely damaged agriculture. At the height of these disasters, the Soviet leadership in the summer of 1960 suddenly broke hundreds of agreements for industrial projects, withdrew technicians, stopped supplies and parts needed to complete construction under way. China's strength was demonstrated by the remarkable calm and efficiency with which her people weathered the storm and started to forge ahead again, more experienced, self-reliant, and determined. Some of the results are to be seen today in China's highly-developed oil industry, nuclear technology and her ability to export complete industrial plant to less developed countries.

Mao had always warned that, as socialism advances, the opposition of the bourgeoisie becomes more fierce. From the time of the civil and anti-Japanese wars he had also stressed the constant need for ideological work to precede and accompany all revolutionary work, for 'all ideas are ideas of a class' and 'all sectarian ideas are subjectivist and are incompatible with the real needs of revolution' (*Rectify the Party's Style of Work*, 1942). In 1957, the year after the Soviet 20th Congress and subsequent to the events in Poland and Hungary, he issued his analysis *On The Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People*. In it he commented that in China in 1956 there had been some disturbances in a few co-operatives and small numbers of workers and students had gone on strike. While disturbances should not be condoned, their underlying causes must receive attention. He attributed the troubles to bureaucracy among the leadership and inadequate political education of the people. Only if these defects were remedied could there be

'democracy for the people and dictatorship over the reactionaries', and unity be brought about.

'In building a socialist society, all need remoulding, the exploiters as well as the working people. Who says the working class doesn't need it? Of course, the remoulding of the exploiters and that of the working people are two different types of remoulding. The two must not be confused. In the class struggle and the struggle against nature, the working class remoulds the whole of society, and at the same time remoulds itself. It must continue to learn in the process of its work and step by step overcome its shortcomings. It must never stop doing so.'

CLASS STRUGGLE

In *On the Correct Handling* Mao distinguishes and deals with the two main types of contradiction — those between friends, and those between the people and the enemy. The urgent importance of this distinction became clear at Lushan in 1959 when, at the Party Conference, a sharp confrontation took place on the subject of the army between the Soviet-style professionals led by Peng Teh-huai and the revolutionaries led by Lin Piao. Peng was removed from his post as head of the P.L.A. and Lin appointed in his place. The style of work and traditions which had won the revolutionary war were restored, and the P.L.A. thus prepared for the role which it was to play later in the Cultural Revolution.

Every new step towards socialism since the establishment of the People's Republic has met with some resistance, reflecting class struggle within the country and within the Party. Over the years this division has expressed itself as two distinct lines — one led by Mao Tse-tung, the other by Liu Shao-chi. Campaign after campaign was undertaken to correct wrong tendencies but they could not be decisive because they did not fully engage the masses.

It was only in 1966 that a form was found to inspire and enlist the masses of revolutionary people to attack the reactionaries — the Cultural Revolution, an ideological and institutional revolution unique in history. It was not the purpose that was new but the method. Millions have taken part in the movement to wipe out old customs, habits and ideas which impeded the forward progress of socialism or would lead away from it. Those in authority at every level have had to account to the people for their actions and ideas, both inside and outside the Party. There has been a process of correcting errors and removing only die-hard capitalist-roaders, carried out by those at the base — the working class, former poor and lower middle peasants, with the help of the politically educated P.L.A. Had the removals been carried out from the top, the ideological revolution could not have taken place. One essential feature of this ideological revolution is that the individual must also transform himself. The socialist transformation of the economic base took place in the 1950's; the transformation of the ideological superstructure has been well launched in the 1960's and will continue.

WORKING CLASS LEADERSHIP

The wide participation of the masses in these great struggles has led to another innovation born of their experience — the Revolutionary Committees, composed of representatives of the leading forces in the Cultural Revolution — representatives of mass organizations, revolutionary cadres and the P.L.A. or militia. These Committees are now the governing bodies of every province, in the communes, and in institutions of every kind.

As a result of the Cultural Revolution the proletarian dictatorship embraces every aspect of life; it means wide democracy for hundreds of millions, dictatorship over reactionaries.

China's experience has demonstrated the reality of Lenin's thesis that classes, class contradictions and class struggle will continue under socialism. The internal class struggle in China is part of the wider international struggle. Mao's fearless attack on revisionism is one of the Chinese Communist Party's greatest contributions to the socialist movement and to liberation struggles everywhere. Just as Lenin had to fight the revisionists of the Second International in defence of socialism, so Mao has had to fight the revisionists led by Khrushchev and his successors. They have shown how in the land of Lenin the Khrushchev theories of 'party of the whole people', 'state of the whole people', 'peaceful competition' have led to the growth of a new bourgeoisie and a trend toward restoration of capitalism. By contrast, in China, socialist gains and the leader-

ship of the working class are being consolidated. The Soviet theory of 'peaceful co-existence' has led to collaboration with reactionaries, especially the U.S. imperialists, everywhere, betrayal of liberation struggles, division of the world into spheres of influence and imperialist-style aggression such as the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Soviet fear of China as a revolutionary example has led her to engage in military provocations and even nuclear threats.

China's fights against revisionism at home and in the international field has preserved the gains of the October and Chinese Revolutions and advanced the theory and practice of socialism. The achievements of the Chinese people under Mao's leadership show mankind how socialist society can be realised.

THE LEADING FORCE

The notion is often propounded that because of the low level of industrialisation and the nature of the proletariat in China before 1949, the Chinese Revolution was not in fact a true socialist revolution. Until the polemic in the international communist movement began, the Soviet leaders and other revisionists accepted that China's Liberation was a great socialist revolution, second in importance only to the October Revolution. In recent years, however, they have adopted what amounts to a Trotskyist line of argument. Thus:

The Mao group has no exact or definite class mainstay, it does not express or reflect the interests of the working class or other working sections of the population.

(N. Kapchenko, *Foreign Affairs*, Moscow, February 1968).

We have already seen the potential weaknesses which lay in the class background of the Revolution. . . . There was the predominance of the peasantry and the petty bourgeois elements in the composition of the population.

(*Whither China?* R. Palme Dutt, C.P.G.B., March 1967)

This is also the Trotskyist position.

If Stalin retained some identification with the industrial working class, Mao has none.

(*International Socialism*, Autumn 1966)

In a nutshell, the premise of this theory is that a socialist revolution cannot succeed and certainly cannot develop towards communism except in advanced industrialised countries with a large proletariat.

CONDITIONS FOR SOCIALISM

The argument is not a new one. It was advanced to cast doubt on the October Revolution and brought forth a typical rebuff from Lenin:

Infinitely stereotyped, for instance, is the argument they learned by rote during the development of the West-European Social Democracy, namely that we are not ripe for socialism, that, as certain 'learned' gentlemen among them put it, the objective economic premises for socialism do not exist in our country. It does not occur to any of them to ask: but what about a people that found itself in a revolutionary situation such as that created during the first imperialist war? . . .

'The development of the productive forces of Russia has not attained the level that makes socialism possible.' All the heroes of the Second International . . . keep harping on this incontrovertible proposition in a thousand different keys, and think that it is the decisive criterion of our revolution. . . .

If a definite level of culture is required for the building of socialism (although nobody can say just what that definite 'level of culture' is, for it differs in every West-

European country), why cannot we begin by first achieving the prerequisites for that definite level of culture in a revolutionary way, and then, with the aid of the workers' and peasants' government and the Soviet system, proceed to overtake the other nations?

(*Our Revolution*, June 1923)

This theory has had its protagonists in China too. In a speech to the First National Congress of Youth (12th May, 1949) Liu Shao-chi gave his perspective for socialism in China:

When in the future, industrialisation is realised and there are more factories and more products, that is when socialism should be embarked upon.

Liu opposed the seizure of power by the working class, alleging that it was insufficiently mature and industrially backward. According to C. P. Fitzgerald writing in 1952 (*Revolution in China*, p. 103) Liu Shao-chi in July 1948, recently returned from Moscow, urged that the Chinese Communists refrain from pushing the victories already won to a decisive conclusion. This would be in keeping with his view that the seizure of power by the proletariat 'is a thing of the far future' (quoted in *People's Daily*, 18th August, 1969).

Lenin not only attacked those who criticised the Bolsheviks for being 'rash in undertaking to implant socialism in an insufficiently cultured country' but foresaw that revolutions in Asia would not necessarily follow the 1917 pattern:

Our European philistines never even dream that the subsequent revolution in Oriental countries, which possess much vaster populations and a much vaster diversity of social conditions, will undoubtedly display even greater distinctions than the Russian revolution (*Our Revolution*).

The attitude of Mao Tse-tung to the role of the proletariat in the Chinese Revolution is and always has been crystal clear. While acknowledging the low level of industrialisation and resulting smallness of the proletariat in China, he maintained from the start that 'the leading force in our revolution is the industrial proletariat' (*Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society*, March, 1926).

OUTSTANDING QUALITIES

In 1939, Mao Tse-tung made an important and more detailed analysis of the role of the working class. He then stated that, in addition to its association with the advanced form of economy, its strong sense of organisation and discipline and its lack of private means of production — qualities shared with the proletariat everywhere — the Chinese working class had other outstanding qualities:

1. The Chinese proletariat is more resolute and thoroughgoing in revolutionary struggle than any other class because it is subjected to a threefold oppression (imperialist, bour-

geos and feudal) which is marked by a severity and cruelty seldom found in other countries. Since there is no economic basis for social reformism in colonial and semi-colonial China as there is in Europe, the whole proletariat, with the exception of a few scabs, is most revolutionary.

2. From the moment it came on the revolutionary scene, the Chinese proletariat came under the leadership of its own revolutionary party — the Communist Party of China, and became the most politically conscious class in Chinese society.

3. It has natural ties with the peasant masses which facilitates its forming a close alliance with them.

Mao concludes:

'Therefore, in spite of certain unfavourable weaknesses, for instance, its smallness (as compared with the peasantry), its youth (as compared with the proletariat in the capitalist countries) and its low educational level (as compared with the bourgeoisie), the Chinese proletariat is nonetheless the basic motive force of the Chinese revolution. Unless it is led by the proletariat, the Chinese revolution cannot possibly succeed.'

(The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party, December, 1939)

Mao took the view that, after the 4th May Movement of 1919, China's bourgeois-democratic revolution was led no longer by the bourgeoisie but by the proletariat. The Chinese bourgeoisie, he said, were incapable of leading the people to drive out Japanese imperialism and introduce democratic government. This task inevitably fell to the proletariat. *(New Democracy, January, 1940)*

The victory over Japan brought about a new situation and Mao asked, 'What sort of country should be built?'

'To build a new-democratic country of the broad masses of the people under the leadership of the proletariat? Or to build a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country under the dictatorship of the big landlords and big bourgeoisie?'

(The Situation and Our Policy after the Victory in the War of Resistance against Japan, August, 1945)

RELiance ON WHOM?

In March, 1949 with the main force of the Kuomintang Army destroyed and nationwide victory in sight, Mao again came into conflict with Liu Shao-chi and others, some of whom argued for reliance on the masses of the poor, and others for reliance on the bourgeoisie. Mao maintained that

... we must wholeheartedly rely on the working class, unite with the rest of the labouring masses, win over the intellectuals and win over to our side as many as possible of the national bourgeois elements.

(Report to Central Committee, 5th March 1949)

Three months before the establishment of the People's Republic Mao again dealt with the question of which political force should lead in the transition from New Democracy to socialism.

The people's democratic dictatorship needs the leadership of the working class. For it is only the working class that is most far-sighted, most selfless and most thoroughly revolutionary. The entire history of revolution proves that without the leadership of the working class revolution fails and that with the leadership of the working class revolution triumphs. In the epoch of imperialism, in no country can any other class lead any genuine revolution to victory. This is clearly proved by the fact that the many revolutions led by China's petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie all failed.

(On the People's Democratic Dictatorship, July, 1949)

Eight years later, after the socialist economic base had been established, Mao reaffirmed this, describing the Chinese state as a people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on the worker-peasant alliance *(On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People, 1957)*.

Thus Mao Tse-tung has consistently seen the proletariat as playing a distinctive and leading role in the Chinese Revolution. In the Cultural Revolution his proletarian policy has been further developed, taking working class power to a height hitherto unknown and generating what Marx described as

'the universal character and the energy of the proletariat, without which the revolution cannot be accomplished; and in which, further, the proletariat rids itself of everything that still clings to it from its previous position in society.'

(The German Ideology)

On this twentieth anniversary of Liberation when working-class power — betrayed in Europe — has been consolidated in China, revolutionaries throughout the world rejoice with the Chinese people.

TO THE FRIENDS OF BROADSHEET

On this anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China we are forcibly reminded that whatever BROADSHEET has achieved in explaining China's policies does not match up to what is needed. Nevertheless, we have been much encouraged by letters received recently from different parts of the world.

From Australia an old subscriber sends thanks for 'shrewd and informed recommendations' which have aided him in his work. He has taken out subscriptions for several friends.

A subscriber in Japan says: 'I have used the reports in BROADSHEET several times in 'Letters to the Editor' when I found inaccurate or slanderous articles about China. Please keep up your good work to help all of us who are trying to correct mistaken beliefs and make people aware of the world-shaking events taking place in China.'

From Denmark has come a request for permission to reprint articles from BROADSHEET in a fortnightly journal, two issues of which have already been published.

Our circulation in India, a country where interest in China's policies is especially high, is rising despite the fact, as we mentioned in an earlier issue, that each issue is now being translated and published in Bengali.

A U.S. subscriber says: 'In the February issue you invite comments on 'I was there' coverage. Here in the U.S. we are flooded with expert reports by China-watchers who have never set foot in China — in the bars of Hong Kong you can get confirmation of almost any opinion on China . . . I trust there will be no change in your editorial policy.' He sent a donation.

Speaking of donations, we wish to thank all who in the past three months have joined to send us a total of £36, and assure them we shall use the money thriftily.

The Hinton pamphlet, CHINA'S CONTINUING REVOLUTION, is still selling well, both here and in the U.S. Quite a number of copies have recently gone to India and Scandinavia. For the benefit of those who have not yet read it — it costs 2s. by post.

Finally, a London subscriber writes: 'My wife and I want to thank you for the wonderful job you are doing with BROADSHEET. We look forward to each issue and find it an inspiration. It, perhaps more than anything, prevented us, a year or so back, from "becoming enmeshed in a web of lies".'

These and other comments strengthen our determination to continue our task despite difficulties caused by rising costs. We need all the help and support you can give.

CHINA POLICY STUDY GROUP.