

China Policy Study Group

BROADSHEET

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EASTERN EUROPE REACTS TO CHINA

As Eastern Europe celebrates the fifty-seventh anniversary of the October Revolution its eyes are directed outward as well as within. For the Comecon countries there must still be hesitation about closer links with China, yet several are finding Chinese co-operation distinctly welcome.

In the same week as the Polish mining, electricity, automotive and electronics exhibition and accompanying lecture programme ended in Tientsin, a new protocol was signed on Chinese industrial and technical assistance to Romania, while a Czech deputy premier received the Chinese delegation to talks on technical co-operation. The Romanian agreement is the most significant of these events, as it could never have been arrived at without an exceptional measure of political agreement, foreshadowed by Chou En-lai's visit to Bucharest in the 'sixties and the visits to China by President Ceausescu and others since the beginning of the 'seventies.

For five years the official voice of Moscow has maintained that in economic matters China is committed to 'the conservation of backwardness' (*Pravda's* phrase, May 1970). The contributions made in the meantime by Chinese technicians and equipment to industrial development in Romania give the lie to this.

Such co-operation imposes no obligations. China defends aid on the ground that it can assist countries towards self-reliance. Eastern Europe has an example of this in its midst in Albania. Chinese aid has played a crucial role in developing several branches of Albanian industry, notably petroleum, copper, electric power and textiles, and there is no doubt that the Chinese have regarded assistance to Albania as an unequivocal duty, never as part of a deal. Coinciding again with the East European anniversary, the recent speech by the Albanian party leader, Enver Hoxha, paid tribute

to the 'moral, political and economic aid given by China'.

More will be heard of Chinese aid to other countries in the years ahead. At present it is a subject about which there is considerable confusion. People do not yet understand that in international relations China sees two sides—those who accept the domination of the world by the superpowers, and those who fight against it and therefore deserve all the aid possible.

On this point the distinction drawn by Enver Hoxha between the Chinese and Soviet Parties could not have been sharper. The Soviet leaders betrayed socialism by trying to subject others to their own wishes: 'we shall always be their enemies', he said. China, on the other hand, was a revolutionary country following a different approach which depended not on pressure or fear but on agreement about political objectives.

THE PATHS OF TWO REVOLUTIONS

The twentieth century has produced turbulence, violence, resistance as no other; empires have crumbled, wars have taken incalculable human toll, and new political and economic systems have arisen to make a massive imprint on the construction of tomorrow's world.

Arguably, the four decisive great shifts of power in this century are: first, the end of European imperialist hegemony; second, the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution that tore one huge hole in the fabric of world capitalism; third, the thrust of U.S. imperialism to achieve world domination; fourth, the Chinese socialist revolution that took a quarter of mankind from destitution and indignity to the stage of emancipation and hope unpredictable a decade earlier.

The Bolshevik Revolution ruptured the imperialist canvas; in the midst of the slaughter and impoverishment produced by the struggle of rival imperialisms in Europe the chain broke at its weakest link and the tottering Tsarist Empire was smashed to give birth to a new social system whose form and characteristics could be sketched only in outline by those whose theories and actions had predicted the inevitable replacement of capitalism by the Workers' State.

As the Bolshevik Revolution was sparked off by the contradictions between the rival European imperialisms, so the Chinese struggle was decisively fanned by the conflict between Japanese

and United States imperialism. The condition for revolution, in both cases, was fundamental internal class contradiction. External contradictions precipitated it and influenced its timing.

No one can doubt that the Chinese socialist revolution was immensely stimulated by the Bolshevik Revolution. It gave impetus, shape, confidence and perspective to incipient Chinese revolutionary forces then struggling to clarify their role. The bourgeois revolt of 1911 was incapable of mounting the centralised strength to defeat both the foreign exploiters and their domestic henchmen.

It was the Bolshevik Revolution that taught the great lesson, that only the masses could make a decisive revolution, and that for its achievement Marxism and Marxist leadership were a fundamental prerequisite.

The small Communist Party in China was the offspring of the October Revolution.

The creation of the Communist International, like all phenomena, had both positive and negative aspects. It encouraged the formation of disciplined parties and groups that gave leadership, cohesion and purpose to the revolutionary struggle. It also opened the way to sophistry and mechanical application of alien experience; it failed to emphasise self-reliance, independence and the need for specific analysis of class divisions in each country.

Too many Communist Parties became wedded to the notion that their prime function in those early days was to win support for the new, young Soviet State, encircled by enemies resolved to strangle it in infancy. It is undeniable that the role of Communist parties in mobilising millions in their own countries to defeat aggression by their capitalist governments was vital and productive. But it also created a syndrome where every twist and turn of Soviet policy had to command immediate, uncritical and often unthinking support. Observance of Moscow's fiat became obligatory. It set off a two-line struggle in every Communist Party that continues to this very day.

In certain specific respects the seizure of power in the two revolutions followed different roads. The Bolshevik Party had been a comparatively small illegal party with many of its leaders exiled or imprisoned. Its mass base was essentially among sections of workers and soldiers and only to a lesser extent among the peasantry. This is no criticism; it is a recognition of the tremendous difficulties the Russian revolutionaries, led by Lenin, faced. The onset of the First World War and the havoc wreaked upon the Czarist armies and the Russian people provided the basis for revolution. From Switzerland Lenin and his colleagues worked out the tactics of insurrection. In April, 1917, Lenin sounded the call and within a few months the old order was smashed.

There was no sudden signal for revolt in the Chinese revolution. The struggle in China was waged over a period of more than twenty years. For years before the People's Republic of China was proclaimed 100 million Chinese were already living, working and fighting under the Red Flag. The Chinese revolution was not a comparatively swift insurrection, brilliantly organised and led by a small group of people, but a tidal advance involving hundreds of millions, trained, mobilised and ideologically aroused. It was no '10 days that shook the world'; rather was it a long-drawn-out and bitter struggle, tactically pieced together over wide territory, involving peasants, workers, intellectuals and sections of the national bourgeoisie. The People's Liberation Army was not a professionally trained army fighting for the people—it was the masses themselves carrying out their total revolutionary responsibilities, growing food, making arms, fighting and dying.

Here lay the crucial difference between the Bolshevik and Chinese revolutions, and the subsequent development of each was stamped with its own distinguishing features. Revolution in China was a mass process; the building of socialist society in China is a mass process; without the enthusiasm and selfless devotion of the masses no socialist society can be sustained. This is the message to the world of the Chinese revolution. The mass line is the essence of Mao Tse-tung Thought.

The role of the peasantry

From the outset in one major respect the two revolutions diverged. In both countries the peasants represented the majority of people—in China over 80%. The handling of the peasant question was to prove the decisive political element in both countries. In Tsarist Russia the peasants, oppressed as they were, formed a reserve force for the bourgeoisie. Dominated by feudalism, anaesthetised by the powerful Russian Orthodox Church, they provided support to the Peasant Party which repeatedly lined up with the Mensheviks and their petty-bourgeois allies in challenging and contesting the initiatives of the Bolsheviks led by Lenin. For years after 1917, in the struggles around line and policy, the leaders of the Peasant Party maintained their support for the anti-Marxists and revisionists.

In China, from his early emergence in the leadership of the party, Mao Tse-tung made the winning of the peasantry the focal point of his policy. For years he led a minority which opposed the Party leadership, then following the 'left' line of concentrating on the towns. It was not until 1935, during the Long March, that his leadership was recognised.

In the Soviet Union, during the hard, tough years that followed the Wars of Intervention by the capitalist powers, the Soviet leaders, now deprived of the guiding hand of Lenin, wrestled with the problem of building up their country's economic strength. Encircled by a hostile world, they chose the priority of creating heavy industry, to which everything else had to be sacrificed. It was the peasantry who had to shoulder the burden because they were seen as the only element able to produce the necessary accumulation to finance the huge industrial base that needed to be created quickly from practically nothing. This policy decision, some would say, was the source of the political, economic and social strife that has never been allayed—the peasants were never won wholeheartedly for the revolution.

Light industry, the principal means of raising living standards, never got under way, was never allowed to make its proper contribution to easing the burden of both the peasantry and the working-class.

In China after 1949 Mao Tse-tung led his Party on an entirely different road in spite of much opposition from the Soviet leaders and their supporters inside the Chinese leadership. 'Agriculture', he declared, 'is the foundation, industry the leading factor'. So, whilst agricultural development became the priority, light industry was expanded rapidly to provide both the consumer goods for raising the living standards of all the people and the accumulation of funds to finance heavy industry.

Thus in the Soviet Union the peasantry—the majority of the people—has remained a sullen disenchanted force, while in China their revolutionary impulse has been seized, harnessed and transformed into a mighty ideological force.

History may judge that the failure of Soviet leadership after Lenin to produce a new 'Soviet Man' springs from two fatal errors: wrong policy towards the peasantry and the absence of the mass line.

It would be over-simplifying to assert that these two cardinal errors are alone responsible for the prostitution of the Bolshevik revolution which the world is witnessing today. The tremendous sacrifice of the Soviet people in transforming their country from beggary to an industrial society, their heroism in defeating Nazi Fascism, their gigantic contribution in achieving the breakthrough to a Workers' State—all this is undeniable—but it is also true that the present leaders have betrayed not only them but the hopes of millions for whom the Soviet Union was—but no longer is—the beacon of hope. Much still remains to be unfolded before it can be seen why the first Socialist State transformed itself into its opposite—the first Social-Imperialist State with a new ruling managerial class. The role of Stalin needs clarification and assessment—much remains shrouded by misrepresentation, untruth and conjecture. No Marxist-Leninist can feel that the full truth has yet been told.

Certainly Stalin, as the titular leader of the C.P.S.U., must shoulder responsibility for the errors, weaknesses and distortions which fertilised the soil for present social-imperialist policies. Certainly big-power chauvinism will figure as one of the charges, beginning with the post-war policy of annexing parts of Eastern Europe and refusing to permit independence or self-reliance to the young socialist states. None of this started with Khrushchev, but since Stalin's death his successors have attached themselves to policies which, behind the jargon and double-talk, try to smother revolution everywhere, treat neighbours as colonies to be exploited, practise neo-colonialism on a gigantic scale and at home have sabotaged socialism. For 20 years the regime of Khrushchev and Brezhnev has sought to share world domination with the U.S. ruling class, thereby burying the ethic and purpose of the October Revolution.

The Chinese revolution continues to demonstrate its Marxist-Leninist dynamism, resolutely persevering in the transformation of society and strengthening working-class leadership. It is throwing new light on the processes of socialism and providing signposts for the emancipation of the Third World, which is now on the agenda of history.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE DIFFERENCES

In *The Origin and Development of the Differences between the Leadership of the C.P.S.U. and Ourselves*, published in 1963, the C.P.C. said that 1956 was the year in which the C.P.S.U. made its first stride along the path of revisionism. This is not to imply that prior to that date the policies of the Soviet Union were always true illustrations of a correct Marxist-Leninist line. On the contrary, the seeds of revisionism had been sown many years earlier at the height of the Soviet Union's struggle to secure both for herself and for the world revolutionary movement the success of the world's first socialist state. During this very same period it was the failure to deepen political knowledge and education among the people and the Party, and the inattentiveness towards the ideas and attitudes of the people that led after 1945 towards the crystallisation of a new ruling class. Why then do the Chinese mark 1956 as a decisive turning point? What is so significant about that particular year, when it is remembered that the Chinese Party had been so critical of some of Stalin's attitudes and actions? Theoretically, in 1936 he had argued that class antagonisms had been eliminated; in the 1920's he had politically intervened in the internal affairs of the Chinese Party through the Comintern. Moreover, the Soviet Union had been very reluctant to sever diplomatic ties with Chiang Kai-shek and had concluded new treaties with him just before his fall, for joint rights in Sinkiang.

The year 1956 marks the point at which the Soviet Union publicly tampered with the basic revolutionary heritage of Marxism-Leninism. Whereas before, despite indications of lessening revolutionary enthusiasm, the Soviet Union had stood in the forefront of the anti-imperialist struggle, now in 1956 signs were pointing towards a change of emphasis in Soviet policies towards the prime imperialist power, the U.S., that subsequently revealed a departure from the line of uncompromising struggle. The publicity given both within and outside the world Communist movement to Khrushchev's so-called 'secret' speech has to some extent blurred the real issue of the 20th Congress. He made his all-embracing attack on Stalin to conceal his own departure from the Marxist-Leninist positions that had been associated so closely with Stalin. Khrushchev rejected the principles of class struggle and opposition to imperialism and replaced them with peaceful transition, peaceful competition and peaceful co-existence. By discarding the very essence of Leninist revolutionary theory Khrushchev and the C.P.S.U. forced upon the world revolutionary movement a split between Marxism-Leninism and revisionism. This, and not the question of whether Khrushchev should have consulted the world communist parties before delivering the speech, was the true significance of the 20th Congress.

Handling the differences

In determining the correct manner in which to treat the Soviet Union, now qualitatively so very different from that of a few years previously, the C.P.C. had to consider the situation within China and within the world communist movement. It may well have been apparent to Mao Tse-tung and his supporters on the Central Committee that a reconciliation of the differences between Marxism-Leninism and revisionism was not possible, but at the very same time, within the People's Republic of China and her Communist Party, the battle lines were being drawn for the struggle that was to find such strong expression during the Cultural Revolution. No mention had been made in the Chinese press, save for references to the support given by Khrushchev to Peng Te-huai, but it would have been entirely consistent for China's revisionists to work against a rupture of relations with the C.P.S.U. for fear that it would deprive them of theoretical justification for their own revisionist policies.

Within the world movement China eschewed any attempts to deal publicly with the differences, preferring to confine argument and debate to party-to-party contacts. China developed criticism of the Soviet positions in such articles as the *Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, *Outline of Views on the Question of Peaceful Transition*, and *Long Live Leninism*. In this way China presented to the world movement a Marxist-Leninist analysis of Chinese points of dispute with Khrushchev and the C.P.S.U.

The year 1956 was notable for the eruption of the two-line struggle within the international communist movement following the C.P.S.U. 20th Congress; and, by 1963, Soviet revisionism had markedly demonstrated its development. The Soviet stand in the Middle East 1958 crisis, Khrushchev's muted support for China in the Quemoy-Matsu island conflict with Chiang Kai-shek's Taiwan regime, Khrushchev's support for India in the Sino-Indian border war, the sudden withdrawal of Soviet experts from China in 1960, are all examples of the rapid degeneration of the Soviet Union within the anti-imperialist movement.

Collaboration with imperialism

The solicitous words of the Soviet Union in warning national liberation movements of the dangers of confronting imperialism soon came to be seen as evidence of her desire to head off the threat to the capitalist world order of the world revolutionary movement; it was impossible for the S.U. not to do so. But it was not possible to maintain the deception for long, and gradually the Soviet role as an apologist for imperialism changed to that of an accomplice of imperialism. Whereas before, the Soviet Union had been cowed by the might of U.S. imperialism, years later, with the signing of the Test Ban Treaty in 1963, the S.U. connived with U.S. exploitation of weaker countries. In the midst of much fanfare and the clinking of glasses, what was portrayed as a major breakthrough in world relations, the ending of the cold war, and the opening of detente was, in fact, the most damning evidence of revisionist collaboration.

The role of the Soviet Union now qualitatively changed again. Whereas in the years immediately following the 20th Congress the C.P.C. had pointed to the dangers of revisionism and had criticised its basic tenets, now the Chinese Party highlighted the threat posed to the anti-imperialist movement by the Soviet Union's increasingly close relationship with the U.S. With Soviet opposition to the advance of the anti-imperialist struggle, revisionism had become a matter of life and death.

At the same time as the signing of the Test Ban Treaty, the differences within the world communist movement escalated into public expression of opinions, before firmly confined to the floor of the Party Congress. The Soviet Union now attacked China where before she had referred to Albania. China set out her position in the series of nine Comments and carried their arguments into the World Peace Council, the World Federation of Trade Unions and the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Council. The dispute now involved all communist parties in the world and differences between Marxism-Leninism and revisionism crystallised into splits and the formation of new groupings.

The new role of the Soviet Union was given full expression during the war in Vietnam. During the years when U.S. imperialism brought its most brutal pressure to bear on the heroic Vietnamese people, the Soviet Government scurried hither and thither trying to compel both the N.L.F. and the D.R.V. to modify their pre-conditions for peace talks with the U.S. It urged the D.R.V. to cease supplying arms to the South and to call on the N.L.F. to end its attacks on cities. For the Soviet Union interest in the fortunes of the anti-imperialist movement was secondary to the desire to seek accommodation and agreement with imperialism for purely national ends.

By remaining true to the revolutionary principles of Marxism-Leninism and by urging thorough and persistent struggle against Soviet tampering with the revolutionary heritage, China inevitably became an object of abuse and derision. To weaken her standing with the militant Vietnamese the Soviet Union accused China of interfering with shipments of aid to Vietnam. Much publicity was given to these accusations, which were repudiated by the D.R.V. But the virulence of Soviet anti-China propaganda betrayed revisionist anxieties about China's principled stand.

Revisionism became a cancer eating away at the body of the first socialist state. It was not a dogma that merely dominated the political thinking of the Party but a rapidly developing all-embracing disease that spread into the heart and soul of the state that revolutionaries had once turned to for inspiration and example. The process continued unabated. The Soviet Union now moved from being an accomplice to being a partner of imperialism, from her apologist and chief steward to her rival and fellow conspirator. The power and influence of the Soviet Union were such as to assure her of a role equal to that of the U.S., as both now assumed the mantle of superpowers. The invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 was a turning point as important as the signing of the Test Ban Treaty in 1963. Whereas the earlier event crowned the common efforts of the U.S. and U.S.S.R. to restrict nuclear power to themselves, the later proclaimed the dominance of a Soviet Union determined to enforce control even beyond the boundaries of her empire. No interference would be tolerated within her own sphere of influence. The theory of limited sovereignty, used to justify the invasion, served warning on other erring states of the penalty to be paid if moves towards independence from the Soviet Union continued. The socialist had degenerated into an imperialist.

The development of Soviet social-imperialism coincided with changes in the balance of world forces. The victory of the Vietnamese people and the spreading war in Indochina, together with the growing economic power and independent aspirations of Western Europe, had weakened U.S. imperialism. The faltering steps of Eastern Europe (e.g. Czechoslovakia and Romania) towards a measure of independence of the Soviet Union showed the strains within the Soviet-dominated Eastern European bloc. The growing power and unity of the Third World countries further weakened the grip of the two superpowers.

Realignment of world forces

The U.S. defeat in Vietnam does not signify the end of her role as international gendarme; the wide interests of U.S. multinationals do not permit her to give up sovereign bases and withdraw troops. The defeat has merely led to a redeployment of forces. The Soviet Union has matched her changing political colour with the dispatch of military forces in strength to the Middle East, the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe. She stood behind India's carefully conceived break-up of Pakistan and interfered in the internal affairs of the Sudan in an attempt to install a friendly government available to Soviet manipulation. More recently, at the Third World Conference in Algiers and the Law of the Sea Conference in Caracas, the S.U. has been singled out for criticism and ridicule by countries that now form the anti-imperialist movement.

From the very beginning of the Sino-Soviet dispute China has stressed the international implications of modern revisionism. China has been quick to refute criticisms, but has never allowed the dispute to develop into national rivalry. On the contrary, the dispute is between revisionism and Marxism-Leninism; between, on the one hand, the line of concessions to imperialism followed by alliance with imperialism, and on the other hand, the line of protracted struggle against imperialism. Having regard to the political situation within the international Communist movement and within China, the latter has played a leading role in both criticising and exposing the theory and practice of revisionism, and in applying and developing Marxism-Leninism.

The significance of the Sino-Soviet dispute lies, firstly, in the exposure of the true nature of revisionism and the dangers of capitalist restoration wherever the dictatorship of the proletariat exists and, secondly, in the exposure of social-imperialism in an era of rapid development of the anti-imperialist forces.

THE SEVENTH ASIAN GAMES

The 7th Asian Games took place in Teheran during September, with China taking part for the first time. The Games were an outstanding success both as regards athletic standards and for the development of friendship between competitors from different countries.

It will be ironical if the elements of comradeship and physical well-being held to have been characteristic of sport in its earlier, uncommercial days, are restored to it by countries which a century ago were thought beneath consideration. The slogan 'friendship first, competition second', however cynically it may have been repeated by some Western journalists, made a real impact at the Asian Games, where it was not only Chinese athletes who put it into practice.

Asian countries are only now emerging from centuries of oppression by more 'advanced' nations, which not only sapped their confidence in their own abilities but fostered mutual distrust and disunity. Now, when the peoples of the Third World are making their voices heard in the United Nations, are demanding equality of treatment and coming to recognise that they can stand on their own feet and better their conditions, sport can help to unite them and develop fellow-feeling.

International sports competitions have for too long been the preserve of the white races. In modern times there have been 17 Olympic Games, of which 15 have been held in countries whose native population is white. Furthermore, the regulation of amateur sport has been largely in the hands of the 'ruling class' of the white races who, ceaselessly urging that sport should be kept free of politics, have in fact ensured that it serves the oppressors and exploiters and helps to maintain the status quo. The Roman emperors, who provided bread and circuses to keep the people docile, have their counterparts today.

Those who proclaim the ideals of amateurism are steadily losing ground to commercialism, so that in sport the 'cash nexus' is almost all-powerful. To see a reversal of this trend by action of the Third World is perhaps to look into the future, but what is already certain is that the Asian Games helped to unite countries and develop friendship among their peoples. The widespread development of sports makes for healthy young people and the 'star' system is less likely to develop.

Next year an athletics team representing Asia as a whole is to tour Africa and South America, thus extending to other continents the experience of Teheran. Growing unity in political action is leading to unity in other fields, which in turn further advances political unity. That is why China encourages it.

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