

# China Policy Study Group BROADSHEET

Sponsors: Dr Joseph Needham FRS, Prof Cyril Offord FRS, Prof Joan Robinson, Prof George Thomson

## WHO'S FOR HUMAN RIGHTS?

Whenever the imperialists raise an outcry about human rights you can be sure they are using it as a cover for a new attack on the real rights of the people. Most vulnerable of all is the right to work and the attack on that is already well advanced. But along with the loss of the right to work invariably goes intimidation, taking a variety of forms and adding up to a big attack on freedom.

May Day, when the call is most clearly heard to respect the rights of the working class, has a special significance in 1977. Leaders of imperialist states, foremost among the suppressors of liberty in the past, are now trying to place themselves at the head of the human rights movement. At the same time as they attack the Soviet government for its treatment of dissident intellectuals they show unusual tenderness for disaffected elements in various part of the Third World. They hint that the affronts to liberty in these countries are so serious that they may be compelled to consider intervention to free the people from oppression.

If this strikes a less discordant note than it would have done a few years back it is partly because India has provided a revealing example of how rebellion against exploitation can start as a protest against curtailment of human rights. Even in countries hitherto dismissed as completely totalitarian, like Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union itself, the civil rights issue has become a rallying point for resistance.

Beginning with the earliest challenge by the industrial working class to curbs on free expression more than a century and a half ago, the battle for elementary rights has always been the threshold of the struggle to change the social system itself. The ruling classes were under no illusion about this, repeatedly taking refuge in new forms of absolutist government, of which fascism between the wars and the total suppression of political dissent in many East and West European countries since the war are only the most infamous examples.

It is by no means only the working class and its allies in the ranks of the intellectuals whose rights are torn from them at such times. The middle class, even some capitalists, have occasion to make common cause with the workers on this issue. In such an alliance lies one of the greatest dangers to the supremacy of monopoly capitalism and the hegemony of the superpowers. It explains their unwanted display of solicitude for victims of persecution in other lands.

The 1975 Helsinki agreement cynically guaranteed "respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms" which "derive from the dignity of the human person and are essential to his full and free development." No doubt it gave the US ruling class their opportunity to sweep Nixonism under the carpet. The British labour leaders also cannot be anxious to keep alive the memory of their support for Mrs. Gandhi's almost total suppression of human rights in India.

There is nothing new in the US pose as the universal godfather, but by an adroit manoeuvre its leaders have taken advantage of the undoubted revulsion against the Soviet Union's brutal thought-control strategy, now extending far beyond Eastern Europe. Carter has stuck to his guns, even at the apparent risk of halting the US-Soviet arms bargaining, in order to prove US "integrity". While the intended victim of this gamesmanship is the Soviet Union, another chief aim is to rehabilitate the US in the eyes of other nations, especially in the Third World.

But important as the civil rights issue undoubtedly is—not only in India and Southern Africa—it is only a part of the wider struggle to end external control and domestic exploitation. Neither superpower offers any example here, and their hypocritical charade betrays the fear that the oppressed peoples will look neither towards Europe nor the US but elsewhere for their inspiration.

## MAO TSE-TUNG'S STRATEGIC PLAN

*Because of the great importance of Mao Tse-tung's speech On the Ten Major Relationships we propose to consider it in some detail. We publish below an introductory article which we shall follow with others examining some of the relationships more thoroughly.*

At an enlarged meeting of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party on 25 April, 1956, Mao Tse-tung presented this concise, comprehensive and penetrating report, which was not published officially until late 1976. The title itself is significant: the ten relationships indicate the *main* headings under which the problems besetting a county in the throes of revolutionary transformation in fact fall. It is also a series of opposites whose interaction, under correct guidance,

can spur socialist development.

Basing himself on previous experience of both the Chinese and Soviet revolutions, Mao dealt with contradictions within the economic base, focusing primarily on how to structure the economy. He then dealt with human relations and ideology. The statement is not only of historic interest, as an analysis of the mid-1956 situation, but reveals socialist construction as a continuing movement, from the past to the present to the future. Mao made clear his purpose:

It is to focus on one basic policy that these ten problems are being raised, the basic policy of mobilising all positive factors, internal and external, to serve the cause of socialism. In the past we followed this policy of mobilising all positive factors in order to put an end to the rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism and to win victory for

the people's democratic revolution. We are now following the same policy in order to carry on the socialist revolution.

This mobilisation was the central feature of the strategy in the continuing class struggle, for, as Lenin said in *Economics and Politics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*.

Classes cannot be abolished at one stroke. . . . Classes have remained, but in the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat every class has undergone a change, and the relation between classes has also changed. The class struggle does not disappear under the dictatorship of the proletariat; it merely assumes different forms.

These forms are explored in the ten relationships.

Reports had been heard by the Central Committee from 34 industrial, agricultural, transport, commercial, financial and other departments under the central authority, from which the ten major problems concerning socialist construction and socialist transformation had been identified. They are expressed as relationships: between heavy industry on one hand, and light industry and agriculture on the other; industry in coastal regions and in the interior; economic and defence construction; the state, production units and producers; central and local authorities; the Han and minority nationalities; Party and non-Party; revolution and counter-revolution; right and wrong and how to deal with people who have made mistakes; China and other countries.

#### Continuing struggle

In a totally different situation, in March 1949, Mao had taken up questions of relationships which were then basic in the concluding stages of the mainland war against Chiang Kai-shek, problems arising out of China's backward semi-colonial economy, and human relations. This was in his report to the Second Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee of the CPC. There he had also stressed the vital need to restructure China's economy, after complete destruction of imperialist domination, and urged the importance of making use of all positive factors, while criticising "right" and "left" errors. The contents of the report and a glimpse, however cursory, of changes between 1949 and 1956 help to show the direction and speed of economic and social development and to place the 1956 document in its historical perspective, as it is not an isolated document.

The 1950's were a decade of unprecedented change in industry and agriculture. By the middle of the decade the worst effects of war and inflation had been overcome; industry had largely come under state or state-private ownership in the course of the first Five-year Plan (1953-57); agriculture had moved through the stage of mutual-aid teams to cooperatives, surging forward in late 1955 and 1956 after set-backs in 1954. A serious error of judgment in that year resulted in the state buying 7,000 million catties of grain, more than before, despite losses caused by floods, and resulting in peasant resentment, thus reducing supplies in the countryside. After intervention by Mao this was rectified a year or so later when that amount less was purchased. Also, orders from a "high level", later identified as coming from Liu Shao-chi, brought about the disbandment of many young co-operatives, 15,000 out of 63,000 in one province alone. To general peasant disenchantment was added resistance from ex-landlords and formerly rich peasants. The situation in 1956 was extremely complicated, the positive feature then being the irresistible impulse of the poor and lower-middle peasants to move into co-operatives, as described in the publication *The Socialist Upsurge in China's Countryside*, a series of reports from rural cadres and poor peasants with notes by Mao, published in 1955. His understanding of such conflicts and contradictions, as well as of the needs and aspirations of the workers and peasants, enabled him to identify the ten major relationships and within them the positive factors.

Mao had also learned from negative aspects of the Soviet

example of economic and other changes in the structure of Russian society, just as he had learned from wrong Soviet advice in the course of the civil war against Chiang Kai-shek. The polemic with the Soviet Union broke into the open only in 1963 after the withdrawal of their experts and supplies and breaking of agreements, but Mao referred to some of their weaknesses and errors in his report to the Chinese Party in 1956:

Particularly worthy of attention is the fact that in the Soviet Union certain defects and errors that occurred in the course of their building socialism have lately come to light. Do you want to follow the detours they have made? It was by drawing lessons from their experience that we were able to avoid certain detours in the past, and there is all the more reason for us to do so now.

He was referring primarily to "their lopsided stress on heavy industry to the neglect of agriculture and light industry", resulting in "a shortage of goods on the market and an unstable currency". Their policy of accumulation for the rapid expansion of heavy industry had had bad effects because of

measures which squeezed the peasants very hard. It takes too much from the peasants at too low a price through its system of so-called obligatory sales and other measures. This method of capital accumulation has seriously dampened the peasants' enthusiasm for production. You want the hen to lay more eggs and yet you don't feed it, you want the horse to run fast and yet you don't let it graze. What kind of logic is that?

Mao was equally concerned about the treatment of minority peoples.

In the Soviet Union the relationship between the Russian nationality and the minority nationalities is very abnormal; we should draw a lesson from this.

Khrushchev's February 1956 speech against Stalin had made more important a critical look at the Soviet Union in general. Dubious trends in the Chinese army must already have been seen by Mao, for it was only three years later that the show-down came with Peng Tehuai, who followed the Soviet army model.

#### From practice to analysis to practice

Mao had always implemented the injunction of Marx that it is our duty not only to analyse the world, but to change it. His report *On the Ten Major Relationships* arose out of careful investigation, as he had said many times—"no investigation, no right to speak". Thirty years before he had made his *Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society* and in 1927 his *Report on an investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan*, both essential at the time to counter a tendency to ignore the peasants in the rising revolutionary movement. The 1949 Report referred to above outlined basic principles based on the existing situation in the final stages of the anti-Kuomintang war and in China's backward economy. Only by making use of all positive factors could the workers and peasants undertake the tremendous task of restoration after years of war and commence socialist construction. The 1956 Report arose out of the concrete experience of transforming industry, agriculture, and the state and of factual information from basic units.

Mao's declared purpose, "to serve the cause of socialism", was implemented by first focusing on the restructuring of the economic base, the productive forces. He saw the need to spread industrial development throughout the whole country to alter the former pattern of heavy concentration in coastal regions and the north-east. When dealing with contradictions among the people he was concerned to deal in a principled Marxist way with questions of right and wrong, in the interest of the majority who wanted to build socialism. When considering the economic and the administrative structure he identified the contradictions in order to mobilise the positive factors. As he said:

In short, consideration must be given to both sides, not to

just one, whether they are the state and the factory, the state and the worker, the factory and the worker, the state and the co-operative, the state and the peasant, or the co-operative and the peasant. To give consideration to only one side, whichever it may be, is harmful to socialism and to the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is a big question which concerns 600 million people, and it calls for repeated education in the whole Party and the whole nation.

In the same spirit he called on the people to learn from other countries what is useful for China.

#### And now

In the *Ten Major Relationships* it is clear that the application of revolutionary principles to solve current problems is basic.

Although the first four sections concern the economy in one way or another, they are handled as political questions and not purely as matters of production. The objective is to raise consciousness in such a way that the economic structure and production will benefit. The document strongly reinforces in all its arguments the belief that the way to advance the class struggle is to grasp revolutionary principle, and on this basis to promote production. Many recent conferences stressing the need to learn from Tachai and Taching in various industrial sectors have shown the relevance today of the 1956 statement. China has entered a new phase of socialist development and is turning again to the Ten Major Relationships, with its probing analysis of divergent factors and its explanation of how to harness them to increase the momentum of social advance.

## REVISIONISM UNREPENTANT

### How to Side-step Revolution

In view of the first publication in 1951 of *The British Road to Socialism*, the Communist Party of Great Britain can perhaps claim to have been responsible for the first open manifestation of modern revisionism on the part of a West European "communist" party (Browderism in the US of course preceded it by several years). Its central thesis, reiterated in all subsequent revisions, was that in the special conditions of Britain, with its exceptionally large and experienced working class, and because of the existence of the socialist Soviet Union, socialism could be attained by parliamentary means, without violent revolution.

Since then many Western "communist" parties have decided that their conditions too are special and that for them too, a peaceful transition to socialism is possible. This theory was generalised by Khrushchev, who held that the Soviet Union was so powerful that under its protection any state might become socialist without violence and capitalist intervention from outside would not be ventured.

#### A negative example

Now the latest revision of the revisionist *British Road* has been submitted for discussion by the Party and "others in the labour and progressive movement". Its importance to revolutionaries is only as an example of the revisionism which has crippled all parties in which Soviet influence has been paramount.

This version of the programme does not differ in essence from previous ones. It has been "brought up to date" by references to the EEC, Britain's economic troubles, the social contract, Women's Liberation, etc., but basically it is what it always was. It states that:

... socialist revolution can be carried through in Britain in conditions in which world war can be prevented, and without civil war, by a combination of mass struggles outside Parliament, and the election of a parliamentary majority and government determined to implement a socialist programme.

... the next important stage (i.e., the immediate task—*Ed.*) is the winning of a Labour Government which will carry out a left policy to tackle the crisis and bring about far-reaching democratic changes in society, opening up the road to socialism.

It further calls for:

... recognition of the elected Parliament as the sovereign body in the land, freedom for all democratic parties, including those hostile to socialism. ...

This is a liquidationist programme. Nowhere is there any suggestion that only the Communist Party can lead the British working class to socialism. It says instead:

The Communist Party does not seek to replace the Labour Party as a federal party of the working class. Rather, we see a much more influential mass Communist Party as crucial to the future of the Labour Party itself.

Either this is intended to deceive Labour Party members, or it cheerfully forsees the dissolution of the CPGB.

#### Chinese warning

The Communist Party of China, in a letter to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in 1963, gave their outline of the way a revolutionary party should work:

While actively leading immediate struggles, Communists in the capitalist countries should link them with the struggle for long-range and general interests, educate the masses in a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary spirit, ceaselessly raise their political consciousness and undertake the historical task of the proletarian revolution. If they fail to do so, if they regard the immediate movement as everything, determine their conduct from case to case, adapt themselves to the events of the day and sacrifice the basic interests of the proletariat, that is out-and-out social democracy.

Social democracy is a bourgeois political trend. Lenin pointed out long ago that the social democratic parties are political detachments of the bourgeoisie, its agents in the working class movement and its principal social prop.

(*A Proposal concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement.*)

Revisionists dare not admit that they have anything to learn from the CPC, or they might have learned from this. Everything that it says Communists should do, the CPGB does not do. As a result of insistence on building a "mass" party without requiring of new members any kind of theoretical study, a large proportion of the membership has never studied Marxism, and drifts out of the party as easily as it drifted in.

Many, no longer young, will remember when the party used to assert proudly that its policies were "based on the theory of scientific socialism first elaborated by Marx and Engels and developed in the course of revolutionary practice by Lenin". The first part of this phrase is a quotation from the new draft, but nothing like the second part, in italics, occurs anywhere. A significant omission! Indeed, in this document of some 25,000 words the name of Lenin, the great founder of the first socialist state, is mentioned only twice, both times in a purely formal way in the phrase "Marxism-Leninism".

#### Burying Lenin

In fact the leaders of the CPGB believe that Lenin is outmoded, that this giant of socialist theory did not foresee what has happened since his day. But they dare neither to voice this belief nor to urge their members to study his works.

History has made the most damning comment on this CPGB programme: *nothing* that has happened since 1951 gives any support to the belief that peaceful transition to socialism is possible. Korea, Cuba, Indochina, India, many African states,

Chile, Spain, Portugal—all suggest that it isn't. Any real opposition to bourgeois rulers anywhere is enough to bring accusations of communism and to call forth armed repression from the capitalist class.

The programme's declared aim of winning "a Labour Government which will carry out a left policy" is no nearer realisation than it was in 1951. Now the Labour Party as a whole is much more openly bourgeois than it was then and the CPGB's attempts to ingratiate itself have failed miserably.

The programme does everything to try to convince the reader that the CPGB is as "democratic" (by which is meant bourgeois) as anybody—so democratic that it promises several times to allow free rein to opponents of socialism. This is in direct and total contradiction of Lenin, who said:

Only scoundrels or simpletons can think that the proletariat must win the majority in elections carried out *under the yoke of the bourgeoisie*, under *the yoke of wage-slavery*, and that only after this must it win power. This is the height of folly or hypocrisy; it is substituting voting, under the old system and with the old power, for class struggle and revolution.

(Greetings to Italian, French and German Communists, 1919).

A couple of years earlier he had said, in a passage now well known:

To decide every few years which member of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through parliament—such is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism, not only in parliamentary constitutional monarchies, but also in the most democratic republics.

(The State and Revolution, 1917.)

Basing himself on Marx, Lenin speaks many times of the need to "smash" the old state machine. The CPGB says:

left governments can and must change the composition and structure of the state machine by democratising it . . . the nature of the British constitution, under which Parliament has supreme authority, gives a left government the democratic right . . . to carry through drastic and necessary reforms in the state apparatus. . . .

Those who can believe this have learned nothing from recent history.

#### Why?

Why does the CPGB persist with this programme? Since it was first published the influence of the party has declined continuously. The votes its candidates get in parliamentary elections are fewer and fewer, so that deposits are normally lost even in areas where workers' support might be expected. Many workers will back a 'communist' as a shop steward while not wanting him as an MP. A few have attained national fame because of their leadership in industrial disputes but with recognition they have lost their militancy, not so much because of personal weakness as because the policies of the CPGB lead inevitably to class collaboration.

Party membership has been declining for years and so has the circulation of the daily paper, the *Morning Star*. The core of the party consists of members who have given a large part of their life to it and who now never consider alternative policies and close their ears to all news and opinions unfavourable to the Soviet Union. Eventually some of them may return to Marxism-Leninism.

As for the CPGB's leaders, their much-publicised disagreements with Soviet policies are trivial, sops to public opinion and rebellious members. Their compliance with Soviet policies is basic, a condition of their very existence and the real reason for the Party's continuance. Many strands bind them to the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and countries throughout the world which have accepted Soviet tutelage. These ties are maintained by a constant round of delegations, visits, 'consultations' and receptions which it would require exceptional strength of mind to renounce. And in spite of the party's poverty it still pays its bureaucrats.

Moreover these leaders have before them the example of the French and Italian 'communist' parties, for whom some kind of share in bourgeois power is possible, and they long to emu-

late them in a modest way. They hope that the Labour leaders, in growing difficulties with militant workers, will come to see Communist Party support as a possible kiss of life for them, bringing restive trade unionists to heel for another period of class collaboration. If they could win some trivial office in a Labour Government they could be expected to use it to assist Soviet social imperialist aims in Europe and throughout the world.

## TO OUR READERS

A delegation of four members of our Group is at present in China, at the invitation of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries. We see from the *Hsinhua News Bulletin* that they have had interviews with Tan Chen-lin, Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, and Yu Chan, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs. Such interviews, and the visits the delegation is making to various parts of China, will help our work and enable us to publish more useful articles.

We receive many letters from readers, to which we do our best to reply, asking for information and views about the present exceptionally complex situation in China. The death of three great leaders last year, the continuing effects of the earthquake in the north-east and the worst drought since the foundation of the People's Republic in some provinces of central China, continue to pose great problems. The influence of the 'gang for four' persists in some places and the full extent of the action which must be taken is still not known.

#### Donations

In the first quarter of 1977 we received gifts to the tune of £56, for which we express our warm thanks. This is a somewhat lower total than usual but we have benefited considerably from the help of friends who travel widely and introduce new subscribers from places where we have not circulated before. At present we have readers in 48 different countries.

With the present turbulent political situation throughout the world we find that our readership fluctuates a good deal. Bans in one country may make our distribution impossible, but then an improved situation elsewhere will result in renewed contacts with friends from whom we had been temporarily parted. This is particularly noticeable at present, when every day brings pleasant surprises.

Introductions to new readers are very valuable to us and we are always ready to send sample copies to potential subscribers.

#### Paperbacks

The three paperbacks by George Thomson continue to sell all over the world. Present prices:

*From Marx to Mao Tse-tung*, 90p. A very few copies of the previous printing are still available at 75p.

*Capitalism and After*, 80p.

*The Human Essence*, 70p. Not very many of the first edition are left; the second edition will be 75p. Prices include postage.

All in all, and looking at prices of other books in our field, we feel we compare very favourably with most publishers.

THE CHINA POLICY STUDY GROUP

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