

China Policy Study Group

BROADSHEET

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

CLASS STRUGGLE AND PRODUCTION

Mao Tse-tung recognised that the transformation to socialism from feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism necessitated the maximum use of all positive factors; and that this could be done only under the dictatorship of the proletariat and through class struggle.

Declining Capitalism, Advancing Socialism

The fruits of the victory of China's working class and its allies in the New Democratic Revolution before 1949 had led to the founding of the People's Republic of China, when, for the first time in China, all but counter-revolutionary reactionaries and saboteurs enjoyed democratic rights under their own government. In 1949 the Common Programme, drawn up by representatives from the whole nation at the People's Political Consultative Conference, proclaimed the people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class, based on the worker-peasant alliance and uniting all democratic people and all nationalities. It provided for a system of people's congresses at national and local levels. In 1953-54 after tremendous activity in which all localities elected representatives, the first National Congress met in 1954, to be followed by local congresses.

At the same time preliminary steps were being taken to tackle the socialist transformation of the economic base. Land reform, already begun in pre-1949 liberated areas, early eliminated landlordism and the cooperative movement swept across the countryside. By 1955-56 it was well advanced to the stage of collective ownership. In industry the first major step was the taking into state ownership of enterprises owned by foreigners or by their Chinese counterparts, the compradors. Enterprises owned by the national bourgeoisie were turned into joint state-private concerns, where previous owners often became managers, obliged to observe the new state regulations. Step by step, agriculture, industry and commerce were brought into state or collective ownership.

Nationalisation is a step towards socialism only when the proletariat is in power. Social democracy has misled many into believing that the nationalisation of transport, communications, coal, electricity, etc. are in themselves 'socialist' measures. It presents state capitalism as socialism, although these nationalised industries and organisations are the collective property of the ruling class, which they use to maintain the capitalist state and exploit the people. In the Soviet Union today monopoly capitalism exists, with state power in the hands of a managerial bourgeoisie. It has meant that workers no longer control or own the means of production and distribution (see BROADSHEET, February and September 1976).

In China the transition to socialism has been a very complex process—a change to a system where the producers own and run their enterprises, are genuine masters of the means of production. Mao recognised that such transformation could not be accomplished by decree, nor at one leap. Four years after the setting up of the People's Republic he stressed that the basic task of the transition period was 'the socialist transformation of agriculture, handicrafts, and capitalist industry and commerce' (*Refute Right Deviationist Views that Depart from the*

General Line, 1953), and he elaborated this in comments on a document of the National Conference on Financial and Economic Work in July, 1953:

The present-day capitalist economy in China is a capitalist economy which for the most part is under the control of the ~~People's Government~~ and which is linked with the state-owned socialist economy in various forms and is supervised by the workers. It is not an ordinary but a particular kind of capitalist economy, namely a state-capitalist economy of a new type. It exists not chiefly to make profits for the capitalists but to meet the needs of the people and the state . . . (*On State Capitalism*).

Remnants of dying capitalism are taking long to eradicate: joint state-private ownership lasted up to the Cultural Revolution in the 1960's when compensation to former owners ceased. Gradually, also, the old system of individual managers of enterprises has been modified or changed as elected committees of workers, technicians and cadres have become the management. Even so, in the superstructure tendencies towards commandism, bureaucracy and elitism remain despite the very considerable gains of the Cultural Revolution. In the economic base, also, it was recognised in the 1975 Constitution of the People's Republic that further advance must be made. Article 5 states:

. . . there are mainly two kinds of ownership of the means of production at the present stage: socialist ownership by the whole people and socialist collective ownership by working people.

The state may allow non-agricultural individual labourers to engage in individual labour involving no exploitation of others, within the limits permitted by law and under unified arrangement by neighbourhood organisations in cities and towns or by production teams in rural people's communes. At the same time, these individual labourers should be guided onto the road of socialist collectivisation step by step.

The 1975 Constitution accurately described China as 'a socialist state of the dictatorship of the proletariat', a significant advance from the 1954 Constitution which defined China as 'a people's democratic state' led by the working class and based on the worker-peasant alliance. The present struggle to expose the Gang of Four and their remaining followers and to win back those misled, is not only to rectify the material damage they caused and to increase production, but—even more important—to advance socialist consciousness and understanding.

On independence and unified leadership

The Chinese proletariat took power from the bourgeoisie after long years of liberation and civil wars, in a country deeply divided by warlords, wide economic and cultural variations,

CONTENTS :

Socialist transition
Problems of Education and
research
The Three Worlds

poor communications, feuding among nationalities, etc. Daunting problems faced the Party and state leadership, then inexperienced in their handling, concerning the correct way to achieve national unity while at the same time encouraging initiative for construction and enthusiasm for the building of socialism. Such matters as the drawing up and implementation of the state plan, the correct allocation of surplus to the state and to the local investment fund after fulfilling individual needs, the application of labour and other regulations, the use of the resources of one plant or agricultural unit to aid others in need, all require local initiative under central leadership. Regular exchange and consultation between upper and lower levels is essential. Mao looked at all sides of the problem:

The relationships between the state on the one hand, and factories and agricultural co-operatives on the other, should both be handled well. To this end we should consider not just one side, but must consider all three, the state, the collective and the individual . . . take into consideration both the public and the private interest. . . . To give consideration to only one side, whichever it may be, is harmful to socialism and to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Over-centralisation and bureaucracy stifle local and individual initiative, and can damage production. On the other hand, ultra-democracy leads to anarchy and concentration on local or personal interests at the expense of other units or the state.

On public and private interests

Mao frequently stressed that it is the people themselves, the workers, peasants and their allies, who will 'build China into a powerful socialist country', the goal restated by Hua Kuo-feng at the 11th Party Congress. In his 1956 speech Mao pointed out that 'under the regime of the proletariat our workers have unfailingly displayed high political consciousness and enthusiasm for labour.' The leadership, on their part, 'must strive to encourage this zeal for hard work and at the same time pay still greater attention to solving the pressing problems in their work and everyday life.' As labour productivity rises there

should be gradual improvement in living and working conditions and in collective welfare. Shortly after the 1956 speech wages at lower levels were increased to narrow the gap between lower and upper levels.

The same principles Mao applied to the needs of the peasants: 'Our policies towards the peasants . . . take into account the interests of both the state and the peasants.' For instance, the agricultural tax was kept low. In 1952 it was about 12 per cent of the peasant income. As production rose the gross quantity of grain to be paid to the state remained the same, the percentage rapidly dropping so that by 1970 it amounted to only about 6 per cent. Also, prices paid for produce sold to the state rose while those of industrial goods dropped.

Mao asked that lessons be learned from previous errors made in China, as in 1954 after disastrous floods when the state made drastic over-purchase of grain, causing distress and resentment among the peasants. This was later compensated by a corresponding under-purchase which encouraged them and raised their determination to produce more. Policies, he said, concerning the peasants must 'differ from those of the Soviet Union', for 'the Soviet Union has taken measures which squeeze 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.'

Class struggle, the key link

The whole history of China's continuing transition to socialism has shown that correct handling of class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat is essential to promote advance in both the productive base and the ideological superstructure. Mistakes by the leadership and deviations, as in the eleven major struggles, have caused twists and turns but all have been overcome. Without class struggle, under Marxist-Leninist leadership, production in the interest of the great majority of the people cannot be promoted, and without the promotion of production the material base of socialism cannot be laid.

CHINA REASSESSES EDUCATION

Throughout the Chinese revolution, Mao Tse-tung constantly laid stress on the three great struggles: class struggle, the struggle for production, and scientific experiment. With the overthrow of the 'Gang of Four', the Western Press is almost unanimous in presenting the new leadership as 'moderates' who are forsaking the revolutionary road charted by Mao. In education, it is said, the policy of open-door schooling is being abandoned, while in scientific research the course has been changed to lay stress on pure research to the detriment of practical application in industry and agriculture.

The facts show the contrary. Chairman Hua Kuo-feng, in his speech to the 11th National Congress of the CPC, set out eight 'musts' for the Party: two of them concern the correct course for education and science. He reminded the Congress that Mao always urged that the purpose of education was to enable everyone to 'become a worker with both socialist consciousness and culture'. In his speech *On the Ten Major Relationships*, Mao also said that the Party's policy should be to 'learn all that is genuinely good in the political, economic, scientific and technological fields and in literature and art' from other countries in order to remedy weaknesses in one's own.

There are two main aspects to be considered here. First, the nature of education itself as a process for preparing young people for life, so that they not only have knowledge of facts, but are also inspired with the ideals for which their parents struggled; so that they will not only benefit from the achievements of those who went before them, but will accept the tasks

and responsibility for making still further progress. Second, scientific research and experiment is a system for advancing knowledge about the world, so that each generation has more to build on. Socialist countries are always face to face with the need to strengthen the productive base by advancing technology, as a weapon in the political struggle. Marx, Engels and Lenin all in their turn emphasised the necessity for reaching a scientific understanding of the laws of nature and of human society. By working within those laws we can exercise some control over our destiny and can change the world, as well as understanding it.

To be a successful revolutionary, one has to know and understand which features of society have to be changed first. Education and scientific research are two of the weapons we have to help us achieve this.

An education system consists of several different but interlocking aspects, each of which, like everything else in this world, exhibits contradictions: in the physical facilities, the class background and personalities of the students and teachers, the relations between students and teachers, between school and society, the contents of courses. In the early days of the Chinese Revolution, the main thrust of education was to achieve universal literacy and primary education. Then, Mao said that young people were courageous and enthusiastic but lacked knowledge. The ideal should be to be both red and expert, in order to catch up and surpass the capitalist countries by the end of the century. This was repeated by Chou En-lai in his

famous speech on the four modernisations. Nevertheless in education changes were slow; many of the teachers and professors found it hard to adjust to the new ideas. Some advances were made: more workers' children were admitted to universities, more links made with local factories, some political education introduced. But course contents remained on the whole traditional: the old maxim, 'study well to become an official' continued to linger in some minds. So there was need for change, and it came in the Cultural Revolution.

Many successes were scored. In particular, students and teachers were encouraged to question more, to forge more links between workers and intellectuals in order to begin abolishing the distinction between mental and manual work. The Gang seized on features which were progressive, but by giving them false emphasis turned them into reaction. It is progressive for students to criticise bad teaching, but it is sterile to turn this into antagonism between students and teachers. It is progressive to place less emphasis on memory tests in exams, but it is sterile to abandon all methods of measuring achievement in school work. The Gang used commonplace errors made by teachers and exaggerated them, claiming that the teachers were setting up fascist dictatorship in the schools. One of the Gang's followers, the student Chang Tieh-sheng, who became notorious for turning in a blank paper as a protest against examinations, was sent into many schools and colleges with instructions to rouse the students to 'transform' only, without attending to learning. He set up rival unions to the students', created factions and hostility between those who should be comrades. The contradictions often became antagonistic, to the extent that all study virtually ceased.

In science, Chou En-lai gave direct encouragement to fundamental research. After discussions with both Mao and Chou, Professor Chou Pei-yuan of Peking University set out a programme to meet the needs of socialist construction and the future development of basic research in China. He was also invited to write an article for *Renmin Ribao* showing how this would raise the level of science in the university and support the four modernisations. Yao Wen-yuan tried unsuccessfully to prevent its publication. Chang Chun-chiao said it should be criticised and that it had 'big backing'—an indirect attack on Chou En-lai. He also made the statement that there was no basic science except Marxism-Leninism, thus denying the value of all work now and before Marx and Engels.

Now, things are getting back to reality. The Chinese Academy of Sciences has held an important conference on the role of basic research in the continuing revolution, and a series of meetings on specialist subjects is being planned.

Culture and elitism

One of the false but seemingly revolutionary slogans raised by the Gang was that they would rather have workers without culture than an elite with culture. This put socialist consciousness in opposition to culture, as if the two could not co-exist and is a thoroughly metaphysical approach. It means that one cannot be both red and expert, and is obviously contrary to everything that Mao taught about education, about abolishing the distinction between mental and manual labour, which is an important fundamental principle of Marxism, but one of the most difficult to put into practice. When the Gang set out to create disunity, antagonisms, enmity between students and teachers, between intellectuals and workers, they were far from being radical, though they made great play with revolutionary-sounding slogans. Their fall does not mean a return to the old ways that were criticised in the Cultural Revolution, and which are still being struggled against. What we now see is a determined, all-out effort to speed up the process of making education and science serve the continuing revolution.

The measures just announced show that the situation had become very serious indeed. China needs educated youth to prepare for the socialist future, and advanced scientific re-

search to modernise industry and the defence of the country. How could these be achieved if school-leavers lacked knowledge, and scientific institutes were being closed on the false charge of being revisionist? If the schools and colleges were setting out to produce a privileged elite, as in Western countries, such a charge would surely be justified. But in China they are not. The selection system has to be based on levels of knowledge sufficient for building advanced work, but not on that alone. Socialist consciousness is also necessary. People from worker and peasant families find it easier to achieve, because of their experience of life; other educated youth have been sent to factories and to the countryside to acquire it.

Hastening the process

Back in 1972, Chou En-lai stressed the need for accelerated training programmes for scientific research workers, and suggested that some middle school leavers might earn direct entry to college courses. This was not carried out then, but a recent national conference on college enrolment has renewed the proposal. The vast majority of new entrants will still be drawn from the families of workers and peasants, from armymen and from educated youth in the countryside; advanced courses are to be provided for those whose previous training consisted of a 'crash course'.

These measures too are being presented by critics as a retreat from Maoist principles. Those who make this assertion would no doubt be glad to see China remain at a low or so-called 'intermediate' level of technology. But anyone who has had the opportunity to discuss these questions with the present leaders knows that the future is charted in the light of Mao Tse-tung Thought. As always in China, progress will be carefully studied to watch for the emergence of errors and wrong tendencies. Workers, peasants, teachers and scientists will all be directly involved in discussions that will take place continuously; they will control the course of development and change it again when it becomes necessary. No-one should imagine that this is a short-term programme. The road will be long and there will be other struggles to be faced, but we can be certain that the new Chinese leadership has no desire or intention to turn back the educational and scientific clock.

COMPREHENSIVE STATEMENT ON THREE WORLDS THESIS

'Chairman Mao's Theory of the Differentiation of the Three Worlds is a Major Contribution to Marxism-Leninism' is the title of a closely-argued article published on November 1st in the *People's Daily*. The article is copiously annotated, with no fewer than 90 references to sources.

This subject is now being debated internationally and we hope subscribers will read the original article (see *Peking Review*, No. 45). Clearly our summary which follows can do no more than indicate its scope.

* * *

The differentiation of the Three Worlds is a scientific Marxist assessment of present world realities

Mao first put forward his thesis on the Three Worlds in February 1974. It may seem to be about relations between nations but essentially it is about world class struggle. When assessing international politics one must start from the international class struggle.

The situation is 'intricate and volatile'. The world bourgeoisie has never been united and cannot be, while the working class has been split again and again. '... the proletariat must unite with all those who can be united in the light of what is imperative and feasible'.

The transition from capitalism to socialism is long and complicated and inevitably there will be different alignments at

different times. Examples show how Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao differentiated world forces in their day.

Both Lenin and Stalin pointed out that after the October Revolution 'every national liberation movement formed part of the proletarian-socialist world revolution'. Mao developed this theory, saying that all who join the revolution in an oppressed nation become part of the world revolution, even if unwittingly.

The imperialist camp and the socialist camp do not now form the world's principal contradiction. A new classification of world political forces is necessary and the thesis of the Three Worlds meets this need.

The countries of the Second World have contradictions with both the other worlds, but they can be won over by the Third World to fight against hegemonism.

The USSR and the US are the common enemies of the people of the world, the USSR the most dangerous source of world war.

The US was the world's gendarme for many years, until it suffered severe blows from the people of Asia. Western Europe and Japan recovered from the war and began to compete with it. It could no longer have its own way everywhere.

As it declined the Soviet Union advanced, becoming 'a formidable and intractable adversary'. The Soviet economy is now a state monopoly capitalist economy far more centralised than that of the US. Both powers seek world domination and the opposition between them is intense. Both have a war machine of unprecedented size.

The US exploits other countries mainly by exporting capital; the Soviet Union by military and economic 'aid'. The US is the world's biggest arms merchant; the USSR is the second. The USSR is the more dangerous imperialist superpower.

Because the USSR follows behind the US it is more aggressive and adventurous. Because its economic strength is inferior it must rely mainly on military power. Because it is now a fascist dictatorship it is easier to militarise the economy and state. Because it was once socialist it can exploit Lenin's prestige and use the mask of socialism to deceive. Great efforts are needed to help people recognise its true features. To fail to point out that the USSR is the more dangerous source of war would blunt the revolutionary vigilance of the people.

The Third World is the main force combating imperialism, colonialism and hegemonism

Since World War II the revolutionary people of the Third World have won armed struggles that have changed the face of the world. China, Korea, Egypt, Cuba, Chile, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Sudan, Zaire, the Arab countries, the Palestinian people, the African people, all show how the colonial system has fallen apart. US imperialism suffered a historic setback and the USSR is getting into a similar position.

Some 3,000 million people have freed or are freeing themselves from colonial fetters, making a radical change in the balance of forces. They will be the main force against imperialism for 'a fairly long historical period'.

The imperialists' capacity for suppression is limited and their interests often clash, so the anti-imperialist forces have favourable conditions in which to grow.

The workers' movement in the First and Second Worlds and the struggles of the Third World support each other. The workers' movements have won many victories but at present, as a result of revisionism and splits, there is a stage of 're-grouping and accumulating strength', during which the Third World will give them support and impetus. The fact that the Third World is the main force does not reduce the importance of the part played by the international proletariat. They should study Marxism-Leninism and become an exemplary vanguard, as in the Russian and Chinese revolutions.

The countries of the Third world contain revolutionaries, middle-of-the-roaders, reactionaries, even agents of imperialism, but this cannot change the fundamental contradiction between the Third World and imperialism.

The Second World is a force that can be united with in the struggle against hegemonism

The former imperialist camp headed by the US has disintegrated; social-imperialism is now the gravest danger to West Europe. West European imperialists are no longer the main threat to the Third World and have even, sometimes, supported its struggle. It will be difficult for the Third World to establish relations of equality and mutual benefit with the Second World, but it is possible and necessary.

Engels and Lenin showed that it is correct to defend national independence in developed countries, particularly in Europe. Wars defending national independence can be revolutionary.

Unity between the Second and Third Worlds can be achieved only through struggle. The Second World countries, threatened by the superpowers, must strengthen their own unity and their unity with the Third World. This is the only way, even though it is a difficult one, to defend their independence.

Build the broadest international united front and smash super-power hegemonism and war policies

China, like most countries, is against war. We (*the Chinese —Ed.*) believe that man will eliminate war. Our tasks are:

1. To warn the people of the danger. Until a revolution in the superpowers' homelands makes them socialist, as will happen sooner or later, vigilance must not be relaxed.

2. Step up the struggle against hegemonism. 'The key to putting off war lies not in holding talks and concluding agreements . . . but in the united struggle of the people of all countries against hegemonism.' Thus it will be possible to put off a world war and the people of the world will be in a better position should it break out.

3. Still more strongly oppose appeasement, which can only bring war nearer, as history has shown. The more talk of detente the greater the danger of war. As Lenin said, the proletariat must take every opportunity of gaining mass allies.

Mao's theory on the Three Worlds gives confidence to the international proletariat and the masses and countries of the Third World, gives hope to the people of the First and Second Worlds and shows the way ahead for the Second World striving to defend itself against the superpowers. The theory is powerful because it accords with reality.

BELATED SCRUPLES

In connection with recent press reports of executions in China, the following, from the *International Herald Tribune* of November 9, is of interest. It is printed below a picture.

SIGN ABOUT 'EDUCATION', NOT EXECUTION

The caption that ran under the above picture in the Nov. 5-6 editions of the IHT stated that the men with signs around their necks were convicted criminals being taken away for execution in Changsha, China. A translation of the sign worn by the prisoner at the left, however, indicates that he has been sentenced to 'three years of education through labor.' . . . Recent reports of executions for political crimes in China have been denied by the Chinese.

A retraction also appeared in *The Times* of November 5.

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