

CHINA POLICY STUDY GROUP  
**BROADSHEET**

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**WELCOME ZIMBABWE !**

**T**HE results of the elections in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia are a triumph for the African peoples and the peoples of the Third World. ZANU won victory with arms in hand, by its own efforts.

The events leading to the election are best understood as part of the contest between the two superpowers, with the US government deciding some time ago that to meet Soviet initiatives in the Third World they would have to change their attitude towards such reactionary regimes as those of South Africa and Rhodesia. They began to oppose them in the United Nations and elsewhere.

Reluctantly the British government followed. After trying their best to avoid the break with Ian Smith, Labour and Tory alike enforced sanctions half-heartedly and deceitfully. The US were the real force behind the 'joint initiative'.

The British Foreign Office believed their stooge Bishop Muzorewa could get enough votes to play a decisive, and divisive, role. His massive failure at the polls dismayed them and Mrs. Thatcher was unable to hide her chagrin in the House of Commons. The US government are not displeased. They prefer an independent Zimbabwe to one dominated by the USSR.

Before the election the white government had brought the country near to ruin. A survey showed one-seventh of workers unemployed; the standard of living was declining and there were no foreign currency reserves. ZANU won because the black electors, showing political maturity, knew it was the only party that could be relied on for peace, reconstruction and independence.

Mr. Mugabe's strategy was successful in the guerilla war; now new methods are needed to raise living standards and forge still stronger unity among the people. His united front policy is the best for going ahead rapidly with land resettlement, education and health and completely reconstructing the civil service and armed forces. He has always made it plain that his main concern is the people's welfare.

Whatever the future may hold—and the difficulties and dangers are many—a great stride forward has been made. Now the only white government in the continent is that of South Africa. We are nearer the day when, as Mao Zedong said, 'The whole world will belong to the people'.

**OLD TSARS—NEW TSARS**

With ironlike powers of endurance, eyes firmly fixed on the goal, no scruples regarding treachery, perfidy, assassination, hypocrisy, extending bribes with full hands, never triumphant in victory nor depressed in defeat, walking across the corpses of millions of soldiers and at least one tsar, this band, ruthless as it is talented, has contributed more than any Russian armies to move the Russian borders onwards... 'Progress' and 'enlightenment' were in the eighteenth century the tsarist passwords in Europe, just as 'The Freedom of the People' was in the nineteenth. There was no conquest, no violence, no oppression by the tsar unless on the pretext of 'enlightenment' and 'progress' and 'liberalism' and 'liberation of the people'.

Engels: *The Foreign Policy of Russian Tsarism* (1890), quoted by J. Myrdal in *The Silk Road*, Gollancz, 1980.

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**CHANGING CHINA**

BY JAN MYRDAL

**T**HERE is rapid change in China. That is evident to anybody who is able to visit China at different times. One does not twice visit the same China or bathe in the same river.

The visitor who travels round the Chinese countryside looking for the city walls and the typical Chinese towns of a quarter of a century ago will have difficulty in finding even one such sample of the old China. The walls have been swept away along with so much else.

But not only the physical scene changes: the society itself is in rapid development. Structures and social institutions that seem stable and continuing one year have dissolved and changed next year.

In itself this continuity of change in China ought not to be surprising. For us who live towards the end of the Twentieth Century it is easy to see that the very idea of an 'unchanging East' was a temporary illusion during the time of western imperial supremacy. Not only China



is changing; social relations in India 1959 and 1979 are not the same. Only the monuments of the past are unchanging.

The idea that the East was unchanging; that the Indian villages were 'timeless' and the Chinese state was the same throughout the centuries and that history repeated itself time upon time again in Asia—this idea was wrong.

The famous statement by Karl Marx in the New York Daily Tribune of 8 August 1853:

Indian society has no history at all, at least no known history. What we call its history, is but the history of the successive intruders that founded their empires on that unresisting and unchanging society . . .

is a misleading and false statement. Karl Marx himself pointed out in that statement that he wrote on the basis of what was 'known'. Therefore to take such a statement as a basis for a marxist analysis would be un-marxist and wrong. Marx and Engels changed their analysis according to known facts. When Friedrich Engels 40 years after the first publication of the Communist Manifesto looked through the galley-proofs he revised the very first sentence in the first chapter of the Manifesto:

'The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle'

by adding a footnote:

'That is, all *written* history. In 1847, the pre-history of society, the social organisation existing previous to recorded history, was all but unknown. . . .

I want to point this out because he who believes in the words of Karl Marx could never have been accepted as a marxist by Karl Marx and he who believes in the unchanging validity of Mao Zedong's words could never have been accepted as following Mao-Zedong Thought by Mao Zedong. If the words of Marx or Mao Zedong were fully correct then Marxism and Mao Zedong Thought would be false and incorrect and just ideology.

### Illusions of history

I want to point out that Karl Marx too shared the ideological illusions of his time. And he would have been the first to point that out when the work of many historians and social scientists began to shatter the illusion of an 'unchanging East'. Today when the age of Western Imperial domination has passed it is a commonplace that Chinese and Indian and Arab societies were in constant change and development throughout the centuries. And if the words by Karl Marx about the lack of history in India are used now they are used not to support what Karl Marx stood for—but against it: as an ideological cover for new forms of Imperial domination.

That contemporary China is changing is thus nothing strange to us today. But already it is becoming strange to us that learned scholars a century ago like Samuel Beal could write about the Chinese:

. . . that such courage, religious devotion, and power of endurance should be exhibited by men so sluggish, as we think, in their very nature as the Chinese, this is very surprising (Introduction to the Buddhist Records of the Western World).

Ideas about the national or racial characteristics of this or that nation or this or that race are ideological expressions historically determined. But when speaking about changing China we ought to remember that a part of the apparent change is just the changing ideologies in our own countries.

The self-evident truths about Chinese national character that Samuel Beal found valid in 1869 have changed many times since then. Those of us who remember the war in Korea also remember the truths about Chinese national character that were considered valid at that time.

But there *are* real national characteristics and traditions that form a true national character. These change slowly. Habits and expressions change and one form of politeness changes into another; but the chineseness of

China has not changed and those who speculate about coca-colonisation see only the most superficial aspects of what is happening.

The Chinese have—whether they want to or not—a long view of history. Mao Zedong discussed this in his talk to music workers on 24 August 1956:

It's always necessary to pay attention to history. A long history has its advantages and disadvantages. The history of the United States is short and perhaps there is some advantage in that, for burdens are lighter and it isn't necessary to remember so many things. We have a long history, which has its advantages too. If we were to throw out our old traditions, people would call it traitorous. You can't chop off history even if you want to. There's no getting round it. And yet it is really rather troublesome to look over such a long history (*Beijing Review*, No. 37, 1979).

Things might look different from the shorter and the longer historical perspective. Take the communiqué announcing the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the United States. All of us and the Chinese agree that it was a momentous event. But I am not really sure that people in the United States understand how momentous. When the communiqué was issued on December 15/16 1978 that communiqué not only marked the end of a post-war conflict and recognised a change in the balance of power in the world; it marked the end of an era.

Neither should seek hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region or in any other region of the world and each is opposed to efforts by any other country or group of countries to establish such hegemony.

That clause of course warned against Soviet ambitions and thus was directed against Soviet interests, as President Brezhnev was quick to point out to TASS on 21 December 1978. But it was a clause of far greater importance than just a warning against the Soviet ambitions of recent years.

It marked the end of the period that had begun with the First Opium War. But the significance of the anti-hegemonic clause goes much further than that. It marked the final abrogation of the treaty of Tordesillas (1494) when the world was divided between Spain and Portugal. As the Western superpower, the successor state to the great Western empires that had tried with some success to rule the world these last five hundred years, the United States gave up the claim to world supremacy. That the treaty abrogated had been signed three years before Giovanni Caboto sighted the North American mainland at Labrador in 1497 just shows the necessity—of which Mao speaks—of paying attention to history and the different perspective on the treaty as viewed from Washington or from Beijing. But the reality of the treaty remains the same. The age has passed when even pretensions of hegemony can be accepted.

The communiqué thus confirmed the great change in the world since the Second World War: the emergence of the Third World and the re-establishment of a multi-form world.

### Re-establishing order

This change is no new order. It is a re-establishment of order. The European traveller a hundred years ago visited strange and exotic lands inhabited by the sluggish or violent or childlike lesser races. Today as in the fifteenth century the European traveller visits foreign countries. But neither China nor India are 'exotic' any longer and Western travellers go around dressed like ordinary people—as they did in the fifteenth century. They no longer go masquerading about in topis and other so-called tropical clothing.

China, as well as other countries of the Third World—Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, just to name a few—is taking her normal place in the world again after this disorderly interlude of Western dominance. The process is a long and difficult one; there have been, there are and there will be violent conflicts and much



suffering—but the direction is clearly to be seen and there is no possibility of there ever being a new hegemonic dominance. The dream of a so-called world socialist camp led by Moscow is as unreal and phantastic as the claim of twelfth century theologians for a Papal world supremacy or the dream of an 'American century' by politicians in Washington after the Second World War.

There will be many sudden changes though the direction is clearly to be seen. Just now Vietnam is trying to extinguish the Kampuchean people as they extinguished the Chams and is trying to swallow the rich Kampuchean rice country for their own settlers as they swallowed Kampuchea Krom.\* The Soviet Union is supporting them and is playing this card in the attempt to gain world supremacy. That this world supremacy is an impossible dream does not mean that a small people like the Kampuchean cannot be extinguished. We small peoples and minor nations like the Kampuchean, the Swedish, the Norwegian, the Thai can be extinguished. That China takes equality between small and large nations and the right of small nations to exist as a cornerstone of her foreign policy is evident, the cornerstone she needs in her struggle against hegemonism and for a multiform world. But what for her is one of the cornerstones is for us in Sweden the whole basis for our existence. Here there is a difference of emphasis that we in smaller nations of four, eight, sixteen, thirty-two million or so have to remember. We can be extinguished.

I have written at length about this because even if we intellectually admit that the world has changed these last decades and even if we in principle hold that China is once more taking her place as one of the major world powers, the ideas and ideological illusion brought along from the period of Western Imperial dominance still cloud our vision.

\* Land in the Mekong delta which once belonged to Cambodia and was taken over by Cambodia in the 17th and 18th centuries.

So does the mass of rather irrelevant information. Much of it is correct. If you want to know the political details of discussions in Peking the chances are that you will be able to get the required information. Much of it will be printed in Hong Kong or will seep out from other places. The very mass of this information filling our newspapers and our media—not to speak of more scholarly publications—often makes us forget that its base is restricted. It is possible to spend a lifetime sifting what a million or so higher cadres and intellectuals are saying: but there are nine hundred and ninety-nine million Chinese hidden behind the wall newspapers and the slogans and the articles being sifted and studied.

What is worse still, much of our information and our discussion on China concerns wholly irrelevant questions like Coca-Cola. To read the intellectual 'left' in Europe one would think that Coca-Cola is—or can be—a major issue in China.

In reality Coca-Cola is not an interesting story in China. The interesting one is another and not so spectacular. That is the story of beer. Grape wine has never become popular in China. Hard liquor is still hedged in by strong popular rules and guidelines for correct behaviour. But beer is beginning to have an impact. Modern breweries were introduced from Germany at the end of last century. Breweries were established in different parts of the country, especially after Liberation. Beer is becoming ever more popular. And—as there are no traditional rules regarding beer—a certain overconsumption of beer, bordering on a beginning of alcoholism among youth, has appeared in cities like Qingdao, Shanghai, Beijing, etc. though the Chinese have apparently not yet taken notice of what is happening.

That problem is one that will grow on the Chinese in the coming decade and they will have to take measures quite soon. Coca-Cola is not a problem for China and will not become one. It is a problem for the intellectual left in our countries.

## CHAMPION OF INDEPENDENCE

AS we write these lines President Tito of Yugoslavia lies on his deathbed. His remarkable resistance can hardly continue much longer. He is probably the last, as he was one of the youngest and the most controversial, of the great leaders of World War II. He was not one of those who, after a brilliant wartime career, retired to enjoy their honours. He continued to guide his country in the very different conditions of peace and gradually became a leader of world stature. Opinions about him are fiercely divided, particularly among the Western left. Remarkably obdurate when necessary, he nevertheless kept abreast of the changing times.

After the German invasion and the collapse of the Yugoslav monarchy, partisan forces under Tito's leadership eventually drove the Nazis from their country. Allied aid, given after much hesitation, was no doubt valuable, but it was the Yugoslav people themselves, arms in hand, who drove out the invaders. They then proceeded to carry out a social revolution, beginning with the nationalisation of the main industries and the partial collectivisation of agriculture.

Of peasant antecedents, Tito became a Communist after World War I, was imprisoned, visited Moscow and attended a political school there. Returning to his country he became General Secretary of the Party and during World War II organised the guerilla army of workers, peasants and intellectuals which was eventually victorious. Aided by the Soviet Union and, eventually, by

Britain, he was subject to pressures from all sides, both from enemies and 'friends'. The struggle was tough and bloody, effectively demonstrating that revolution is not a dinner party.

After the triumph of liberation Tito was considered a reliable ally of Moscow and in 1947 the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform) was set up with headquarters in Belgrade, the Yugoslav capital, to replace the Communist International (Comintern) which had been dissolved in 1943. The Cominform consisted of the Soviet and East European Parties, plus the French, Italian and Yugoslav. Without delay it became apparent that it was no more than a cover for Soviet control of the other Parties and Yugoslavia's membership lasted only until 1948, when it ended in expulsion. Moscow then accused Tito of collaboration with the fascists and urged the Yugoslav people to overthrow him.

Thus isolated from the Communist block, which had been expected to be the principal source of aid for reconstruction, Tito turned to the West. He secured loans from the World Bank, as well as from the US, France and Britain. No doubt he regretted the necessity but this was as nothing to the dismay among the Western left. It is worth remembering that at this time the left got its information mainly from Moscow, either direct or via Western communist parties.

Tito's stubbornness stood him, and the Yugoslav people, in good stead at this testing time. He made no con-



cessions to Soviet pressure, nor did he allow Western aid to dictate his policy, though the US and Britain certainly believed, at times, that they were influencing him. The Yugoslav people had won their independence in battle and did not intend to give it up either to 'Marxist' overlords or across the counters of banks.

Seen in retrospect Tito's firmness is remarkable. He was alternately wooed with gifts and threatened with ostracism and bankruptcy. Stalin's ally during the war, he was soon after called a fascist by the Kremlin. This led the West to court him and at the beginning of 1953 he visited Britain, when Churchill was still Prime Minister.

### Varying assessments

China accepted the Soviet assessment until about 1960, but after the Sino-Soviet rift Chinese statements roundly condemned Khrushchev for trying to effect a rapprochement with Tito, in defiance of the judgement of the 81-Parties meeting in 1960 (see BROADSHEET, Dec. '64). In 1963 the CPC put out the well-known Comment No. 3, *Is Yugoslavia a Socialist Country?*, to which question they returned an unqualified No! Since then the attitude of both China and the Soviet Union has changed again. The Soviet Union, at last realising that Tito would never be induced to give his country into its hands, has maintained a sort of veiled hostility. The current view in China is that they unjustifiably allowed their Comment to be influenced by earlier Soviet information. They now see virtues in the Yugoslav system and are studying it seriously, while praising Yugoslavia's inspiring support for the independence of the Third World countries.

Chinese spokesmen refer to Yugoslavia as a socialist country; in the West the predominating opinion among the left would probably be that it is not. China's view is consistent with her long-held opinion that each country must make its own mistakes and wage its own struggles and that different national conditions will lead to different modes of organisation. Others cannot sit in judgement. To leftist theorists this is quibbling, trying to replace the hallowed criteria of Marxism by new and false doctrine. The weakness of the leftist theorists is that they are theorists quite untainted by the practice of revolution.

We dealt with some of the questions surrounding Yugoslavia in our March 1978 issue, in a way which apparently gave no profound satisfaction to anyone. In spite of the fact that all natural resources and all means of production are social property and in spite of the workers' councils, we remained on the fence on the question of Yugoslav socialism, while emphasising that there could be no doubt about the progressive role Tito had played in the non-aligned movement.

It is difficult to resist the conclusion that Tito has been a monument of consistency while others have offered him alternate blandishments and threats. It is they who have been changeable and capricious, not he.

However, one could not say that his policy has been unchanging. A large part of his success has been due to his ability to learn from mistakes and alter policies which have not produced the desired results. Thus the high degree of governmental centralisation which resulted from wartime experience was abandoned and national and local autonomy was developed in a way which contributed to the solution of the very difficult national problems which had plagued the country under the monarchy. These changes were formalised in the 1953 Constitution.

To correct mistakes and keep abreast of changes, a further Constitution, showing considerable development

in governmental organisation, was promulgated in 1963, to be followed by another in 1974, which is still in force. Throughout, Tito and his colleagues, including the Party's main theorist, E. Kardelj, have always upheld the leading role of the working class and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Tito has often acted against bureaucracy and has always been alert to condemn revisionist tendencies in Party or state.

Foreign trade was developed and from 1961 the country was opened to foreign tourists in a big way, so that tourism is now one of the most important sources of foreign exchange. This too earned black marks in the West, as did the sending abroad of thousands of workers for whom employment could not be found at home. Both these measures indicate economic weakness and increase foreign influence, but Yugoslavia could not in any event hope to avoid foreign influence permanently, any more than she could hope, or would wish, to avoid the development of modern industrial techniques. Socialism has never claimed to protect a country from change, rather that it accomplishes change in accordance with the will of the people and with better results than capitalism.

By 1961 President Tito felt his country strong enough to take a stand against both US and Soviet blocks and hold the first Non-Aligned Conference in Belgrade. From that time on—Cairo in 1964, Lusaka, Algiers, Colombo and then Havana in 1979—Yugoslavia has played an increasingly important part in the movement and has spoken out firmly in support of those countries which find themselves disadvantaged in relation to the developed countries of the Second World and the superpowers. At Havana it was Tito who was the focus of the forces which prevented Castro from dragging the movement into the Soviet orbit.

### Third World protector

Tito's part in nurturing the non-aligned movement was born of his own determination that Yugoslavia should remain independent. As a result he has been a powerful factor in safeguarding world peace. He has never hesitated to condemn aggression, for instance, the Anglo-French intervention in Suez, the US attack on Vietnam and then the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia. This has made almost impossible any close friendship between Tito and the major imperialist powers.

Criticisms have been made of President Tito at a personal level because he lived comfortably and enjoyed hunting. But he was no golf-struck Eisenhower and certainly worked hard and effectively. He did not encourage a personality cult nor was he a megalomaniac. His main desires were to build a strong, people's Yugoslavia which would remain independent, and to encourage and assist the quest for independence among oppressed nations. There is no danger that history will forget his name.

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