

# China Policy Study Group

# BROADSHEET

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## A TURNING-POINT TO REMEMBER

Twenty-five years ago when the rest of the world was staggering in the aftermath of the war, the United States was able to flex its muscles and claim the role of overlord. The conception of an 'American century' became so familiar that there seemed little room for argument. U.S. imperialism did not need even to wear its own plumage: it could masquerade in turn as Marshall Aid, NATO, the COCOM embargo committee, or indeed as the United Nations.

It was in this last disguise that it was met, challenged and for the first time defeated by the mobilised force of the people of North Korea, supported by the Chinese People's Volunteers. At a time when even the Soviet Union did not argue the point in the Security Council, North Korea was prepared to tear the U.N. mask from the face of the invader and fight him to a standstill.

Sterile controversy raged so long over the legal niceties of how fighting began that the essential character of the war was lost to view. The massive campaign of lying propaganda which began on that night (in which the British Labour government played a leading part) was part of an imperialist attack on the peoples of the world, and it had to be exposed for what it was. The Rhee regime in Seoul was itself an act of aggression by the U.S. against the

Korean people. For five years the U.S., in collaboration with other powers, including the Japanese, had been doing everything it could to destroy the liberation movement of the Korean people. U.S. imperialism, after the shock of the 'loss' of China to the Chinese, had begun to counterattack, trying to win back its lost paradise. The appointment of Dulles, the reduction of most members of the U.N. to submission, the McCarthyite witchhunts, the systematic falsification of the historic record by the 'scholars', were all part of an attempt to terrorise and confuse the people, who were everywhere an obstacle to the U.S. ruling class dream of world domination.

The Koreans—like the Vietnamese when the same challenge was hurled at them—had no difficulty in recognising the features of imperialism. They knew they must resist the invader whatever banner he bore, and who can deny today that the history of the last quarter-century has fully vindicated them? The Chinese, by refusing to withdraw their volunteers, defied the threat of an American nuclear bomb on their own soil. To fall on their knees after winning independence, they reflected, would condemn them both to remain in that position for years to come. What evidence is there, twenty-five years later, that

imperialism relents when its threats have prevailed?

The first victory against imperialism's bid to subjugate the Far East afresh was not won without heavy cost. Today, however, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and China are not only immeasurably stronger internally but form part of an anti-imperialist chain which stretches from the far north to the South China Sea. To the humiliation of the U.S. imperialists' rout in Vietnam and Cambodia is added the gall of a joint celebration by China and the D.P.R.K. of the opening battles of the struggle in 1950. If there are those who saw the enthusiastic reception accorded to President Kim Il Sung in Peking as merely the trappings of another state visit, now is surely the time for the scales to fall from their eyes.

Imperialism stands bereft of initiative in Eastern Asia today. For imperialism in all its forms, even when presenting itself under a socialist facade, has been seen through and rejected by the people of North Korea and China and many others. 'A great revolutionary transformation has taken place in the East', the Korean leader said in Peking on 18th April, 'and the look of Asia has radically changed since the Second World War. The colonial Asia, the underdeveloped East of yesterday, has disappeared once and for all.'

## U.S. Imperialism's 25-year slide

According to Chou En-lai, 'U.S. imperialism started to go downhill after its defeat in the war of aggression against Korea' (*Documents of the 10th Party Congress, 1973, p. 25*). It is important to understand the significance of this defeat and the process of U.S. decline over the past 25 years as the background to the world situation which faces us today.

Following World War II, the U.S. came into conflict with the colonial and former colonial countries, with the older capitalist states and with progressive people at home. Its strategy of world domination tended to lead to war (as the continuation of imperialist politics) and specifically to bring it up against the U.S.S.R. Anti-communism was the coordinating factor in U.S. policy; still, as Mao Tse-tung showed at the time, the more immediate object of U.S. aggression was the countries and peoples it sought to enslave as part of its anti-Soviet scheme. The contradictions with these countries and peoples were the guarantee of imperialism's weakness: the united resistance of such anti-imperialist forces (which all socialists must unquestionably support) would eventually bring about its defeat.

In relation to China, U.S. policy was really anti-Chinese while at the same time also serving as an excuse to strangle the democratic aspirations of the peoples of East Asia. Hoping to kill two birds with one stone, America has, in general, reserved its most vicious aggression for those democratic revolutions under the leadership of Marxists. In 1950 the United States put its plans into action by making war against Korea under the United Nations banner, occupying Taiwan and stigmatizing China as 'aggressor'. This war was a direct trial of strength between the most powerful imperialist country in history and the workers and peasants of the colonial world; the latter, enjoying the support of the socialist camp and all progressive people, nevertheless relied principally on their own strength. The victory of the Korean people and the Chinese volunteers exposed imperialism's weakness, an example which is now reinforced by the historic victory of Vietnam and Cambodia. These struggles have physically weakened imperialism, and have at the same time provided an important lesson: because of them it has been increasingly possible for other countries,



even though not under proletarian leadership, to stand up against imperialism.

It is right to emphasise these two aspects of imperialist policy, hostility to communism and the domination and exploitation of intermediate countries. But we should also bear in mind a third aspect, namely the competition for spheres of influence between great powers. After the Second World War the U.S. seemed so strong that it couldn't possibly have a rival. But the Korean war showed up its weakness, and from then on it was only superficially on the upgrade (in relation to the older colonialist powers) while at the same time really on the decline (in relation to the people): it was an overvalued imperialism, ripe for a speculative attack. Writing at the time of the Korean war, Stalin acutely pointed out (*Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.*, 1952, parts 5 and 6) that another great power is bound to arise and challenge the monopolistic position of the United States; in practice contention between such powers is likely to be the major source of war. 'To eliminate the inevitability of war, it is necessary to abolish imperialism.'

The abolition of imperialism can only mean a most complex and protracted process, involving military, political and economic forms of struggle. Great imperialist powers come and go, one falls and another rises: this is one aspect of the historical dialectic. The active part in all this is played by the people. The U.S. itself didn't defeat the older imperialisms, the oppressed nations and peoples did this while the Americans waited in the wings to grab the spheres of influence for themselves. The defeat of France in Indochina (1954), Britain and France in the Middle East (1956) were major triumphs. But much more significant still is the fact that the success of the United States in supplanting these powers had been only local and temporary. For a while, the U.S. put on an appearance of anti-colonialism, while waiting for Britain and France to bite the dust. But the oppressed nations and peoples soon identified the U.S. as their main enemy, aided in this by the tireless educational work conducted by the Chinese Communist Party: a vast, united anti-U.S. movement unfolded, international unity of the exploited peoples was promoted. At present the Soviet Union, posing as the people's friend, is hoping to rush into certain positions as the United States is squeezed out: it claims credit for all anti-U.S. successes, presenting these as a 'fruit of the policy of detente'. However, this propaganda, though relatively more subtle than that of the United States, is finding little support.

The mark of the maturity of the people is that they oppose not just one group of exploiters but the whole bunch, and struggle against the system of exploitation itself. This characterises the present period as the era of proletarian revolution. 'All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority.' (*Manifesto of the Communist Party* Ch. 1).

### The three worlds

In recent years, the notion of a division into three 'worlds', and also terms like 'superpower', have been increasingly current. Marxist-Leninists are now pointing out their scientific content. The first world consists of two superpowers, the third world of the developing countries, and the second world of the established capitalist countries. Over the past quarter-century most of the former colonies have won political independence: this is a historic development, and at the same time only a condition for the serious struggles ahead. The U.S.A. was the first superpower, and the beginning of its hegemonism dates back to the end of World War I. Since the Korean war it has taken over the work of the old colonising powers, only it employs more up-to-date dual tactics: most states now possess formal sovereignty and equality, but within this context the hegemonic superpower exploits them by virtue of its monopo-

litic position; on the other hand, the U.S. also exercises a crude and violent repression which has almost no historic parallel in its barbaric methods. In this situation, the people have no way out except to revolutionise the whole world order.

In its heyday, U.S. hegemonism worked not only by controlling each individual country's economy but also dominated the world market as a whole through the special role of the dollar; this has now collapsed, and will surely not be replaced by the ruble! Second-rate capitalist countries were formerly reduced to a position of subservience and obliged to parrot U.S. policy: in exchange for this humiliation they received 'protection', were tossed a few crumbs and enabled to play the bully towards weaker countries. The anti-hegemonic struggle, in which the third-world countries are the main force, has changed this situation. The superpower is seriously battered and bruised and its protection no longer seems worth having; at the same time, second-world countries discover a possible way out (which, under capitalist leadership, they would be incapable of pursuing alone).

### Defeat of U.S. tactics

One characteristic policy of American hegemonism has been its use of *blocs*, particularly military ones, to control its spheres of influence: for example SEATO, the Baghdad Pact, NATO, and other groups such as the Organisation of American States. This policy has been collapsing in an all-round way, and it will be hard for any superpower to rig it up again. Certain reactionary states, which may at one time have aspired to play a big-power role locally under U.S. patronage, are now adopting national-independent positions on some crucial issues. The remarkable development in Japanese policy in recent years has modified the whole situation in East Asia. The U.S. tactic of using Arabs to fight Arabs and Asians to fight Asians, etc. has been another failure. Meanwhile, in South and Central Asia, India is still playing at being a big power, now mainly under Soviet patronage.

United States control over the politics of international relations reflected its economic and military supremacy, and for a time the United Nations was a major instrument of hegemonism. However, the war against Korea was a serious setback to imperialism; attempting the same thing in 1958, the U.S. was eventually obliged to send troops in its own name against the Arab people. The beginning of open superpower military aggression at that time was a turning point, just as the current defeat of this aggression in Indochina is an even more important turning point. In the period of the Congo crisis, the U.N. was a forum for collusion and contention between the superpowers, the apprenticeship of Soviet social-imperialism as it learned the tricks of the trade. At present, however, it is not only impossible for one superpower to dominate the U.N.: it is also very difficult for the two superpowers to use it as a stage for strengthening their own relative positions.

The basis of imperialism in the contemporary world is the economic and social division of production. Unless this is changed, even though U.S. imperialism is defeated, another generation of hegemonists is sure to arise. The Soviet Union is striving energetically to safeguard and even to intensify these divisions. It has pioneered the so-called 'socialist division of labour' in its Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, and is now using this as a blueprint for its relations with third-world countries. In opposition to this, the people of the third world have taken on the revolutionary task of transforming the economic structure of the contemporary world order. Countries are joining in a united struggle to gain control over their natural resources and develop a self-reliant economy; especially since the recent Middle East war, in which the Palestinian people played a leading part, countries are combining to enforce reasonable prices for their raw materials. The demand for a



200-mile definition to territorial waters comes into direct conflict with the economic and military ambitions of the superpowers. The special session of the U.N. General Assembly dealing with the problem of raw materials and the UNIDO conference have been important landmarks. Taken as a whole, this struggle has the effect of narrowing the area available to superpower exploitation, intensifying the capitalist crisis and increasing the contention of the superpowers in the area still available to them.

Close attention must now be paid to recent U.S. statements

that the situation in Portugal is more serious than Vietnam. During the period of the Korean war, when both China and the U.S.S.R. were socialist countries, there was frantic anti-communist propaganda both in East Asia and in Europe. Today, however, there is a fundamental difference between these two cases. If the United States is switching its emphasis from a South-east Asian anti-communism towards a European anti-'communism', this signifies a direct confrontation between the two superpowers. The focus of world contradictions may be moving to Europe: both war and revolution are likely.

## STRIKING WHILE THE IRON IS HOT

Immediately after the first session of the 4th N.P.C., in January 1975, the Chinese people went on to make use of what they had gained politically and ideologically from the Cultural Revolution and the campaign to criticise Lin Piao and Confucius: they took the revolutionary struggle a stage further. From local units in every organisation to the C.P.C. Central Committee they spent five years producing the draft of a new state Constitution, which their delegates at the N.P.C. approved. This was a succinct definition of the principles, tasks and powers of the proletarian state at the present time, and of the rights and duties of the people. It not only consolidated the gains of the past, but also used them as the basis for a fresh advance.

A number of articles on the dictatorship of the proletariat have been published in *Red Flag* and *The People's Daily*, and have been reproduced locally and studied all over China. They include two important theoretical expositions by Party leaders Chang Chun-chiao and Yao Wen-yuan, as well as three-and-a-half pages of excerpts from works by Marx and Lenin which had been widely discussed in the last few years. In accordance with Chinese practice on matters of such great importance to the world revolution, some of these documents have been shared, through *Peking Review*, with Marxists and other friends of the Chinese Revolution abroad. Generally speaking, the aim of the campaign is to make what Marx and Engels defined as the dictatorship of the proletariat an even more living thing than it already is—to enable the millions of workers, poor peasants and cadres, makers of the Revolution, both to get a more extended and firmer grasp of Marxist theory and political economy than they have, and to reach out to the citadels of bourgeois influence and practice still surviving or newly emerging within the socialist state—and thus to accelerate the historic process of transition to the classless society.

Following victory in one revolutionary struggle with a new one is as old as the Chinese Revolution. Mao explained in January 1958, in the course of the Rectification Campaign and Anti-Rightist struggle:

In making revolution, one must strike while the iron is hot—one revolution must follow another, the revolution must continually advance. . . .

The current campaign to transform the remnants of 'bourgeois right' and petty bourgeois tendencies is in line with C.P.C. policies on earlier occasions. A brief reminder of the campaigns of the 1950s is instructive. For the principle of dialectics, that 'one divides into two' has been applied whenever a phase of revolutionary struggle has been completed. Socialist society at any stage is still a unity of opposites: not only of workers by hand and by brain, of cities and countryside and so on, but also, as long as classes exist, of decaying bourgeois and rising proletarian forces.

### THE MASS REVOLUTIONARY CAMPAIGNS OF THE 1950s

In the 1950s the C.P.C. made it clear that, with the New Democratic Revolution in the main completed, China had entered the stage of a struggle between the working class,

together with those who accepted its leadership, and the bourgeoisie. For example, the *San Fan* and *Wu Fan* campaigns were the first great mass movements in the cities and within industrial and commercial enterprises under the People's Democratic Dictatorship. In these, with Party leadership, the workers struggled against those capitalists who had been permitted to continue to run their factories and businesses. The movement against corruption, waste and bureaucracy (*San Fan*) and that against the capitalist abuses of bribery, tax evasion, theft of state property, cheating and stealing economic information (*Wu Fan*) were class struggles. They led to the socialist ownership of industry by 1956. In the countryside, as land reform was completed, the poor peasants began to struggle to break the fetters of individual private production. Thus, even while the 1st N.P.C. and the 1954 Constitution were consolidating the gains of the New Democratic Revolution, the upsurge which led to the high tide of socialism in the late 1950s had begun. Mao's *On the Question of Agricultural Cooperation* (1955) was directed at a wing of the C.P.C. which was rightist, wanting to hold back the movement as too fast and going too far. The cooperative movement, the formation of the communes, the workers' struggle for effective control in industry, and the Great Leap Forward made China a very different country from what it had been around 1952; the liberation achieved by the New Democratic Revolution had itself empowered and enabled the people to take China well beyond the unprecedentedly democratic China in which the deputies to the first N.P.C. had been elected.

### IRRECONCILABLE CONTRADICTIONS

Following Mao, Teng Hsiao-ping, in his September 1957 *Report on the Rectification Campaign* to the 3rd Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee, pointed out:

The change of ownership does not mean the completion of the socialist revolution, nor does it mean the extinction of the class struggle. The political and ideological struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is not ended, and under certain conditions it can become acute again.

He spoke of 'antagonistic, irreconcilable and life and death contradictions' in the period of the socialist revolution; of the fact that 'full and frank discussions by the masses have exposed a large number of shortcomings' in the C.P.C.'s work and working style—shortcomings which were 'serious and (which) it would be dangerous not to correct'; of the need to assign unnecessary functionaries to productive labour and rid the Party of rightists; of 'questions concerning the leading position and responsibility of the working class in the socialist revolution and construction, and questions concerning the political tasks of the workers in the dictatorship of the proletariat'; of the need for the working class 'to have its own force of technicians, its own professors, teachers, scientists, journalists, writers, artists and Marxist theorists'; for Party and government leaders at the top to do production and organisational work 'at the lowest level'.

But whereas some of the leaders of the working class, and a number of rank-and-file veterans of the C.P.C., had a firm grasp



of what the dictatorship of the proletariat meant in practice, there was in 1957 a great deal of work still to be done; working people and revolutionary cadres in their millions had yet to arm themselves with Marxist theory and to raise their cultural level to meet the challenge of bourgeois restoration and resist the growth of revisionism within the Party.

Under Mao's leadership the strengthening and extension of the proletarian dictatorship continued. Immediately after the rectification and anti-rightist campaign there was the Great Leap Forward. As a result, and also because of the experience of the Socialist Education Movement and the Cultural Revolution, the social context in which it was possible for the Party leadership to pose questions of class struggle and rectification with a severity as great as Teng's in 1957 has changed. A new generation of Communist revolutionaries, 'steeped in struggle', is active at base level everywhere in China now. Yao Wen-yuan and Chang Chun-chiao have given expression to thinking which is critical not only generally of some existing tendencies and practices but also of some formerly militant elements within the C.P.C. which are now lagging behind the vanguard. They and other writers in the present campaign have also given publicity to some important statements of Mao which were little known before, and developed them. And from the positions which they have captured in the superstructure, workers and poor peasants have, evidently, identified tasks in regard to property, the mode of production and distribution, on which they must concentrate their attention in order to meet the fresh attacks, unprecedented in nature, of the bourgeoisie.

Whereas 'workers' congresses' were only just then being formed in 1957, at present workers and poor peasants in large numbers are in leading positions in production units, the Party and state; many more kinds of proletarian and mass revolutionary organisations exist and are active. Having reached an understanding in class terms of how the Lin Piao conspiracy could have occurred, and of revisionism and social-imperialism, having been engaged in campaigns against bureaucracy, against the use of material rather than political incentives, and for socialist cooperation, people all over the country have had their attention directed by the study of Marx and Lenin and by Mao and other leaders to social elements which can engender capitalist tendencies and ideas and bring the bourgeoisie back to power; to the contradictions in the wage differentials among workers and between workers and peasants; to the distinction between formal and actual control by the working masses over enterprises; to the dimensions of their own responsibility to transform still elementary forms of socialism in the economy and government into higher forms.

Further socialist development can be achieved only by correct analysis both of the immediate and the overall situation. The self-administered principle of 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his work' has two aspects: the work-point system in the commune is 'just' and prevents exploitation; on the other hand it enshrines (is an embodiment of) bourgeois right, rooted in the system of commodity production and the law of value. Private ownership of 'a small number of livestock' for personal needs is permitted by the Constitution, so are 'non-agricultural individual labour' and 'limited sideline production', provided there is 'no exploitation of others'. These are gains the peasants, under working class leadership, have won for themselves and could not in fact enjoy as a right in any feudal or capitalist society. But in this seemingly negligible and tiny bit of the economy there is, scientifically speaking, the breeding ground of capitalist society and thus of potential bourgeois domination, with all its implications of counter-revolution, expropriation of the producers, wage slavery, social-imperialism. There are thus contradictions in these situations. How they are resolved is a question for peasants to consider in the light of the laws of the historical development of human society—Marxism-Leninism. The vanguard is leading them on to see for themselves what dangers lurk in those small

corners of commodity production and bourgeois right, and how superior in every way communism is.

The present campaign confirms the remarkably prescient teaching of Marx that while the proletariat must seize power from the bourgeoisie, smash the bourgeois state machine and substitute its own dictatorship, it cannot introduce socialism by decree; it has to lead the people step by step out of capitalist society, whose remnants are constantly developing new ways of asserting themselves, to the construction of a classless society.

## BOOK REVIEW

**CHINA'S VOICE IN THE UNITED NATIONS**, by Susan Warren.  
World Winds Press, New York. Price \$1.50.

Not many people have access to the records of debates in the United Nations, and our own media, as was to be expected, have been reticent about the Chinese contribution. The chief protagonists for the formation of the U.N. were the U.S., who hoped to use it to further their aims of world domination, while appearing to continue the hopes of 'collective security' that had centred on the old League of Nations. From the start, the U.N. was an arena of international conflict which reflected the world balance of forces and eventually the struggle between the two superpowers. In recent years, the growth of unity among Third World countries has changed the situation, and culminated in their securing the admission of China in the teeth of U.S. opposition. China's record since admission has been little reported in the capitalist press, so this book is welcome; it is written by an American journalist with first-hand knowledge of China, and gives a clear account of the background, with long verbatim reports, not only of Chinese contributions but also those by other Third World countries and the superpowers. It begins with a general review of trends between the 28th and 29th General Assemblies, showing the U.N.'s true face as an arena of conflict rather than of acquiescence, as the growing strength of developing countries forced the previously dominant imperialists to reveal themselves in their true role. Under their hypocritical talk of 'aid' and promises of equality lay veiled threats.

The six major chapters deal with issues which have been in the forefront: Cambodia, Korea, Middle East, Nuclear Weapons, Law of the Sea, and the Sixth Special Session on Raw Materials and Development. These are followed by a short concluding chapter which asks, and answers, the question, Is China a superpower? The coverage is very up-to-date, bringing reports up to the end of 1974.

The present changes are due to the rise of the Third World, their realisation that they formed an exploited majority which could unite against the exploiters even though their internal systems might differ. This movement was greatly strengthened by the entry of China, and the book ends with a fitting quotation from the speech of Teng Hsiao-ping at the Special Session, declaring that China is not, and never will be, a superpower, and that, if the time should come when she changes into one, it will be the duty of the peoples of the world to expose this, oppose it, and work with the Chinese people themselves to end it.

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