

China Policy Study Group

BROADSHEET

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LEARN FROM CHOU EN-LAI!

Wherever there is struggle there is sacrifice, and death is a common occurrence. But we have the interests of the people and the sufferings of the great majority at heart, and when we die for the people it is a worthy death. Mao Tse-tung: 'Serve the People'.

Once he joins its fighting ranks, a man or woman unreservedly puts his or her health, safety, prestige, happiness and personal survival at the disposal of the revolution. He or she relies, like the masses who are thereby served, on the strength and the victory of the proletarian forces. Thus it was with Chou En-lai. Judged by the standard of 'ordinary' mortals, there were many occasions throughout the last 52 years when his revolutionary duties took Chou close to death. He defied it for so long that many comrades counted on him to remain—to go on serving the working class and peasants in China and the other socialist countries, and in the Third World and capitalist countries where imperialism has to be finally defeated and the socialist revolution has yet to take place. Chou so richly personified the best proletarian qualities that millions—workers, peasants and revolutionary fighters—outside China mourn the loss of a great and wise friend and comrade.

As a matter of fact, unlike all the bourgeois heads of governments of the last 100 years, Chou will never be forgotten. Even the propaganda establishment in the mass media and universities, characteristically out of touch with reality, is carried away by admiration of this formidable class enemy. Men and women worth writing about are not thrown up by the decaying and corrupt ruling classes in the imperialist and social imperialist countries. The excuse is that he was unusual. ('You must not think that Communists are normally like that. They are fanatical, vicious, impractical . . .') But his qualities were not uniquely personal. They are those of the Chinese Revolution, of the rising class which is going to end all class exploitation, fearless, tough and determined, but also patient, considerate, believing in curing the sickness and saving the patient. Chou was supremely the proletarian pioneering in the building and development of the socialist economic and political order, learning through practice of the method and teaching of Marx, Lenin and Mao the objective laws of social development. We can think of how much poorer the world will be, how much farther back the advance of the revolutionary movement, if he had not joined it, grown with it, and given back to it the immensely valuable things he had gained. He will live on also as a model. The socialist revolution will not lack able organisers and leaders. Others will come, in China and elsewhere, out of the struggles waged by workers, peasants and revolutionary intellectuals. They will find in the 56 years of Chou's political career much to learn about how to be a good Marxist-Leninist.

Chou was known abroad mostly as Prime Minister of China, rather than as a leading member of the Communist Party of China. Most workers in Europe, North America and the neo-colonial countries would not have realised that to be Chairman of the State Council in the People's Republic of China (from 1949 to 1976) was not the same as being Prime Minister or

President of any bourgeois state. The Revolution which led to victory in 1949 was not merely for the purpose of replacing Chiang Kai-shek's government with a more efficient one. The soil and the seeds of imperialist and capitalist domination and exploitation had to be got rid of. The economic basis and the political, legal and other structures holding together the old China had to be smashed, and replaced with a government, organisations, laws, a working philosophy, which would enable the dictatorship of the proletariat to be exercised, and socialist construction to begin. There were no good precedents. Political work, the ability to learn from the masses, investigation and intelligent experimentation, diplomacy, skill in negotiation, administration which does not become bureaucratic, were all vital. To avoid the dangers of slipping back into accustomed practices and procedures, or of following the bias of 'modern' expertise, the working class needed cadres it could rely on and trust.

The bourgeois scholars and journalists have not been able to hide the solid achievements of the government led by Chou. They have, however, been baffled. They cannot admit that only a collective leadership directed by a great Marxist-Leninist like Chou, relying on the mass of the working people to continue the revolution, could have administered China so efficiently and built a socialist order. They have written of Chou as a 'pragmatist', and 'moderate', who packed Party and state leadership positions with the disgraced revisionist followers of Liu Shao-chi—as though he were a half-hearted, half-convinced Marxist, and represented the bourgeois standpoint. It is, of course, the usual nonsensical gossip of the China 'experts'. In the life-and-death struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat a 'moderate' Party Vice-Chairman and Prime Minister would betray the revolution. The defeat of imperialism, planned and scientific development of industry and agriculture through mass initiatives and socialist cooperation, stable prices, self-sufficiency in food etc., could never have been achieved if the C.P.C. had for 26 years relied on a 'moderate' to take charge of building the foundations of China's socialist economy.

The readiness to abandon a personal career in order to take on revolutionary work began much earlier, even before Chou accepted the assignment in 1924 at the Whampoa Military Academy in Canton set up by Sun Yat-sen—in his political activities as a student (1919-1920) which landed him in prison. The political work he directed at Whampoa under the nose of its commandant Chiang Kai-shek, was designed to build up the forces—Communist cadres with military training, armed units—which the working class and its Party still lacked. This was one of Chou's main aims, during the rest of the 1920s and the early 1930s, when he was already one of the 'top' leaders of the C.P.C. So also was that of uniting with groups and people fighting the same enemy, winning them over to the Communist

ranks, and building up a C.P.C. which could carry out the revolution and bring the working class to power. Chou, assisted by Kang Sheng (another great proletarian revolutionary and a Marxist-Leninist theoretician who will be missed) led the workers of Shanghai in the revolutionary uprisings which resulted in the seizing of that city in 1927. After Chiang's coup d'état and the massacres which followed, he returned to Shanghai to rebuild the C.P.C. and continue the struggle there, before teaming up with Mao. Later, still as a man with a high price on his head, he went as the Party directed into territory controlled by Chiang's fascist police, to press the C.P.C.'s demands for a united front against fascist Japan.

The utmost boldness with the greatest soberness! Chou was certainly not a moderate. He was always in the forefront of the revolutionary left. His coolheadedness in action came out of long testing in the midst of storms. In facing the most fearful dangers the Chinese revolutionaries came to fear neither hardship nor death in the course of making revolution. The cowardly and self-seeking die many times because they live in fear of death. Chou served the revolution in the unprecedented way he did because he was willing to give everything he had in order to overthrow the landlords, imperialists and capitalists, establish and extend the dictatorship of the proletariat, and help the masses to hasten the development of socialism. He did not shut himself in offices, or allow his onerous duties to cut him off from the people—workers, peasants, youth, foreign friends of China. In the capitalist world, too, people drive themselves hard, to enjoy more wealth, influence and power than they already have. They have to use wealth and power ruthlessly, corruptly. Chou neither sought nor had *personal* power, and did not tolerate factions. The enormous responsibilities and authority of the team he trained and led were given by the working class. He was as much subject to proletarian revolutionary discipline as anyone else. Up to the end of his life, until the very last stage of his fatal illness, Chou, at an age when men and women need rest more than ever, drove himself very hard and happily in the cause of the working class, as though his own health and life were of account only for fighting imperialism, reaction and superpower hegemony. He like Mao had 'the sufferings of the great majority at heart'. The self-effacing modesty, the conscientious labour, where but in socialist China would they be taken for granted in a man of such supreme greatness, and one so much loved and admired?

Just after the first 'ten great years' there began a period when a number of major crises threatened the achievements of the C.P.C. and the Chinese people: the three years of unprecedented natural disasters; Soviet pressures, leading to Khrushchev's attempt to sabotage China's industrial construction; the revolt

of the Khambas in Tibet, aided by the C.I.A. and the Indian government; Nheru's provocations on the Sino-Indian border, arrogant rejection of pleas for peaceful negotiation, and the Indian aggression; serious resurgence of bourgeois forces in China, especially in the countryside, and within the C.P.C. intensification of Western propaganda and military threats; the crisis in the international Communist movement. The 2nd Five Year Plan was in difficulties. It was a time of severe testing for the new proletarian state. Could the forces opposed to left and right opportunism 'deliver the goods'? There were hardships, but no famine. War with India was quickly contained. Industrial production was reorganized. The communes produced in 1963 the first of a series of bumper harvests. For China already had a socialist base and superstructure able to stand up to the challenge, and give support to Mao Tse-tung in his fight against revisionism. The anti-imperialist struggle was stepped up: unstinting political and material support was given to the Vietnamese; and at the end of 1963 Chou was able to begin an anti-imperialist tour of ten African and three Asian countries lasting over 10 weeks. There was no capitulation, no retreat, no compromise on what was essential for socialist advance. As Chou's 1964 Report to the Third National People's Congress made clear, even before the Cultural Revolution, it was only by stepping up class struggle that the government could continue its work and improve on it.

That Chou was first of all and fundamentally a revolutionary leader alongside Mao was evident during the Cultural Revolution, which he helped to initiate and carry out. Many of those active in supporting Mao were hot-headed, inexperienced and immature, even confused about politics. They could have become (and did sometimes become) dupes of cleverer bourgeois forces who saw the Cultural Revolution as an opportunity to destroy rather than cleanse the C.P.C., to divide the working class and prevent it from taking power, and to overthrow Mao. By his day-to-day involvement in the revolution—going to the aroused masses, listening to them, advising, encouraging, criticizing—Chou helped tremendously in keeping it on course. First Liu Shao-chi, then Chen Po-ta and Lin Piao were forced into the open. The Cultural Revolution gave a tremendous boost to China's economic development on socialist lines and to the political understanding of the mass of the working people. In his last important public appearance Chou was able to put before the Fourth N.P.C. practical proposals for China's planned development which would have been unthinkable but for the tremendous success of the work he and his colleagues began in 1949. We can go on learning from Chou En-lai, and become more serious Marxist-Leninists.

20 YEARS OF REVISIONISM

The 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party convened in February, 1956.

The first since Stalin's death in 1953, it followed familiar patterns; a major opening speech by the new General Secretary Khrushchev, reports by leading Party figures and wide-ranging discussions covering foreign policy, the serious agriculture situation, general economic questions and the health and role of the Communist Party. At least, so it appeared to the outside world when suddenly a thunderbolt struck. British, United States and West German newspapers published a long and sensational report of an alleged secret speech by Khrushchev attacking the dead Josef Stalin as an enemy of the Soviet people.

The world was shocked and bewildered; Communist Party leaders vehemently denied the reports' authenticity and commentators everywhere could not believe that Khrushchev, one of Stalin's chief lieutenants and long a public worshipper of his

every thought and action, should now assume the role of the great denunciator. But true it was—though Moscow remained silent, it became crystal clear that not only were the reports accurate but they had been deliberately leaked from Moscow to maximise their effects. To this day, this seven-hour secret speech has never been published in the Soviet Union.

Khrushchev vilified the reputation of the man who had headed the Soviet people for 30 years, and all this in the presence of Stalin's closest colleagues, Molotov, Malenkov, Voroshilov, Bulganin and Mikoyan without, as it then appeared, a word of disagreement.

At Stalin's feet was laid the responsibility for a category of crimes, misdeeds, misjudgments and duplicity that warmed the hearts of every hater of socialism. For 30 years Stalin had been the hero of the international communist movement, revered, trusted, idolised; to criticise Stalin was a heinous political crime

with expulsion from the Party inevitable. Now all the past condemnation of his opponents all over the world was confirmed and hallowed out of the mouth of his closest lieutenant, and apparently endorsed by all his erstwhile colleagues. The catalogue of the indictment was long and terrible—he murdered opponents, terrorised all opposition, destroyed internal Party democracy. Ideologically unsound, he ruined agriculture, initiated futile industrial policies, crucified the peasantry, exploited the workers, ridiculed the intelligentsia, decimated the armed forces. A complete dictator, he had run the war with megalomaniac idiocy, encouraging toadies and sycophants. Indeed, in his last few years Khrushchev confided, Stalin was criminally insane. Wrapping it all up in one parcel, Stalin's worst crime was said to be the creation of 'the cult of personality'.

The theories tossed around to account for this great turnabout are as numerous as Khrushchev's catalogue of Stalin's crimes—yet, in the final analysis, only two alternatives can exist. Was the secret speech designed as a cleanser of Soviet morality, a turn towards socialist legality, a clarion call for socialist democracy, an inspiration to ignite in the minds of a down-trodden population the determination to create the new Soviet 'Socialist Man'? Or was it a huge confidence trick by Khrushchev?

Either Khrushchev showed remarkable courage, integrity and principle, or he stage-managed the greatest political switch of all time.

False Promises

He announced that new pages of Soviet experience would henceforth be written. The labour camps would be closed, all leadership would now be collective, calling upon Lenin's name to sanctify this new look. Socialist legality would be the touchstone of Soviet society; no citizen need fear any more the nocturnal knock on the door. Industry would be regenerated, agriculture given a new clean sweep, intellectuals would be given new freedoms, bureaucracy challenged, and decentralisation and democracy would be the twin engines for political and ideological emancipation. Living standards would be transformed and the new Soviet Man would soon arise. Above all, the ashes of the 'cult of personality' would be interred. On international policy, peaceful co-existence was to be the keynote, a world without war the prime objective.

If history is to provide its own verdict then a glance at the last 20 years provides the evidence. Now even leaders of foreign Communist Parties are forced by their own members to articulate increasingly stringent criticisms of the domestic state of the Soviet nation—once the hope of millions outside, now a dreadful example not to be emulated or followed. If Khrushchev and his henchmen denounced Stalin to open the road to classless Communism then nothing indicts them more than the present state of Soviet society with its privileged class, its managerial autocracy, its technocratic incompetence, the increasing disparity of living standards and the growing despondency and dispiritedness of Soviet life.

What forces did Khrushchev represent and why? There can be no doubt that the forces that produced Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Kosygin, and the whole apparatus of Soviet leadership emerging in this generation were not born in Moscow during the 20th Congress. The international communist movement has only itself to blame for its stupefaction when Khrushchev read his denunciation. From the beginnings of the Soviet State had emerged the concept that hardened into an iron rule, that developments in Soviet Russia could only be in a progressive direction, that criticism would aid its imperialist enemy, that doubts or reservations about policy and practice were treachery. Without doubt Stalin contributed to this. He failed to understand, despite various remarks by Lenin, that class struggle, far from disappearing, intensifies in the period of socialism. This error gave Khrushchev the chance to fabricate his whole system of 'the state of the whole people'. At Stalin's door must be laid the responsibility for many weaknesses in prevailing Soviet theory.

He failed to understand, as Chairman Mao was to remind the whole world—and Khrushchev refused to accept—that in the course of building socialism class struggle not merely continues but intensifies. Mao Tse-tung has shown that the class struggle influences every difference of opinion, but one must distinguish antagonistic clashes against the class enemy from conflicts among comrades sincerely devoted to the Communist cause. Missing this distinction, Stalin often treated friends as enemies and enemies as friends.

Throughout the whole period of Stalin's and Lenin's leadership a continuous struggle was being waged to determine the strategy and tactics of building socialism. At every stage and on every main issue controversy and differences were rife. Internal class enemies were around to take advantage of such differences, working to create splits and subversion. Foreign intelligence services were also involved. In this complex situation clear criteria were lacking to sort out the main lines of the struggle. In the conditions of the 20s and 30s, when leadership and the cadre force were seen to be the focus for advance, the role of the masses, their initiative, enthusiasm was not seen as the main ingredient for success. Many speeches and statements by Lenin and Stalin are on record calling for the maximising of encouragement of the masses—and abundant evidence exists that this policy was constantly being pressed and encouraged. Yet the verdict must be that the 'mass line' was honoured more in the breach than in the observance. Its neglect meant the growth of bureaucracy and the creation of an ever-growing economic and political class concerned with its own power and its own rivalries. Khrushchev was a product of this new class, ambitious and unscrupulous. It is this class that was scheming and worming its way into power, partly by paying lip service to Stalin and his policies but always biding its time, waiting for the appropriate occasion to seize overall power. Stalin's death provided the opportunity and from that moment—even before—Khrushchev plotted to split Stalin's colleagues and destroy them one by one, inserted his own favourite henchmen and reached power and control. Nine thousand Party secretaries were changed in the period before the secret speech.

The destruction of Stalin was not just a power play by those anxious to share the glories of power. It was nothing less than a fundamental revolution in Soviet strategy and tactics. Stalin, for all his weaknesses and mistakes—and the full truth and estimation have yet to emerge—stood resolutely for the building of socialism as a stage towards the creation of classless society, implacably opposed to imperialism in all its forms—resolute in his determination to contest all forms of revisionism and a firm ally for the world liberation movement.

Non-socialist policies

Out of the 20th Congress, careful though Khrushchev was to make the right-sounding noises of devotion to Marxism and the principles of Lenin, came the beginnings of the policies that were calculated to de-politicise the Soviet people, espouse bourgeois pacifism and start the process of international bargaining with the United States that was to become a contest for superpower status, the abandonment of the liberation movements in the rest of the world, except where they could be suborned and turned into puppets, the deletion of revolutionary content from the policies of the Western Communist Parties, and the manipulation of Marxist theory and practice to strengthen the multiplying bureaucratic and technocratic class. From the 20th Congress and onwards policies were to be trumpeted that turned Lenin's Soviet Union to superpowerism, social imperialism and the beginnings of a fascist state.

The 20th Congress took place nearly 11 years after the defeat of Nazi Germany, a defeat in which the U.S.S.R. played the major part. The Soviet people, at tremendous cost to themselves, had written a new page in world history. For the third time in 40 years the workers and peasants in the Soviet Union, under C.P.S.U. leadership, had worked incredibly hard to lay

the foundations of the socialist order after the utter devastation and disruption caused by war and foreign invasion and the death of millions. Even in favourable conditions the most difficult theoretical and practical tasks of socialist construction are those of the pioneers. The people of the U.S.S.R. had to accomplish them in a vast, largely peasant and culturally backward land, in the teeth of the vicious opposition of the encircling imperialist regimes, in spite of the early death of Lenin and with a divided Party. Autocratic and bureaucratic tendencies were very strong. Yet by the mid-1950s conditions for socialist advance and for a worldwide united front against imperialism were as good as ever. Following the upsurge of industrial production during the war, Soviet workers responded to Stalin's call for a leap forward in heavy industry. They overfulfilled the targets—steel from 12.25 to 65m. tons, oil from 19.4 to 148m. tons and coal from 149.3 to 513m. tons between 1945 and 1960. In Eastern Europe Communist Parties, even though weak politically, were in power. The peoples of the East were continuing to struggle for independence and national liberation; in North Vietnam and above all in China, under Mao's leadership, there were new socialist bastions. Since then peoples of the Third World have increasingly attacked and defeated U.S. imperialism and its satellites, forcing them to retreat. Has the C.P.S.U., following Marx and Lenin, corrected past mistakes, strengthened the dictatorship of the proletariat by more effective working class leadership of the state, Party and in production, intensified the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggle, served the Soviet peoples, and moved nearer what Marx called 'production by freely associated men'?

Khrushchev and his successors took control of the C.P.S.U. and the U.S.S.R. when the superiority of Marxism-Leninism was being demonstrated. What have they done?

That in the last 20 years there are many things wrong in the U.S.S.R. is plain. They have to be investigated and analysed at greater length than is possible here, and Marxist-Leninists must decide what to make of them from their own standpoint in the class struggle. Both Khrushchev and Brezhnev have given priority to the problems of Soviet agriculture—increasing investment, bringing great areas of virgin lands into cultivation, stepping up production of farm machinery and fertiliser, etc.—but after the disastrous results of 1975 the failure cannot be hidden. The deteriorating quality of products in the civilian economy is becoming plain, and the inability of the leadership to cope with it. At the same time, the fantastic growth of the Soviet military machine, absorbing an ever-increasing share of the economic resources of the nation, is evident; together with this goes the rapid growth of the powers, influence and operations of the K.G.B. both within Russia and throughout the world. Dissenters are sent to labour camps or to psychiatric hospitals for 'treatment', and the strict censorship has not prevented reports being published of protests and strikes by workers and ordinary citizens against the rulers which are put down by shooting, harassment, and other violent means. The privileged and luxurious living of high state, Party and military officials, based on a special 'economy' of exceptional allowances, private shops, private cars, servants, holiday resorts, and the like, has been another marked development of the last 20 years. It has been accompanied by the growth of black markets, nepotism, misappropriation of public funds, hooliganism, prostitution.

These are not leftovers from the old Russia. They have emerged and grown. Are they the marginal effects of 'progress' even in the bourgeois sense?

In 1965 Brezhnev, reporting on the 'substantial work to develop agriculture', admitted: 'According to the control figures, the gross output of agriculture during the Seven Year Plan (1959-65) should have risen by 70 per cent; in fact, during the first six years the increase came to only 10 per cent. Whereas the gross output of agriculture grew by an average of 7.6 per cent a year during the period 1955-59, in the past five years its average annual rise has been only 1.9 per cent. The growth in the yields of basic crops has slowed down. . . .' Brezhnev started

his period of rule with vast undertakings and investments in land reclamation, mechanisation and other aspects of rural development. Last year the per capita agricultural production was less than that in 1913. If we look into the details we find that because of the 'reforms' it has become impossible, with research and invention, and the production and supply of farm machinery, fertiliser and transport and marketing facilities, to match the needs of the farms.

It would just be carping and opportunist to seize on shortcomings, mistakes, even serious blunders. With a third of the population of China, and double the area of land under crops, the Soviet Union should be able to solve its problems. However, it is not shortcomings that are at issue. On all fronts, as investigation shows, Khrushchev's and Brezhnev's policies, confused and chaotic though they are, have been in essence a *change of line*, a change in the kind of social order being built. Under cover of the attacks on Stalin and the frequent invocation of Lenin's name and phrases and sentences from his works, *development* has taken place which has changed decisively the nature of the Soviet state and the C.P.S.U., the ruling party. Beginning by closing down the machine tractor stations in 1958 Khrushchev dismantled what was positively socialist in the U.S.S.R. Far from the working class advancing to more actual and effective leadership of the state and Party, the ownership of the means of production has passed out of its hands; workers have become wage labourers. Khrushchev, a plausible time server and bureaucrat who believed, as Kennedy and Eisenhower did, in the greater 'rationality' of the capitalist system, did not know what to put in place of what he destroyed. Under Brezhnev and Kosygin there have been positive steps taken. The independently profit-seeking enterprises—the vast industrial and other economic 'associations'—are the basis of a new bourgeois dictatorship which needs to be analysed. It is urgent to make a serious Marxist analysis of it, to know what class it serves, and what the C.P.S.U. is. This is a task which Marxist-Leninists must not delay undertaking.

What we know is that the 25th Congress of the C.P.S.U. is not a part of the Communist movement. In 20 years, under a government unchallenged by any effective opposition, the U.S.S.R. has moved far away from socialism. It is bourgeois politics which is in command of its economy, law, nationalities policy, culture, science and international relations. We see a society based on self-interest and greed, a society in which the workers and peasants serve a ruling class which has quite different conditions of life, a society ruled by a self-perpetuating elite. A society, in a word, just like that of the capitalist West. A bourgeois society masquerading under the name of socialism.

TO OUR READERS

Donations in the last quarter of 1975 continued, and in fact steepened, their upward trend. The total was £108, including generous gifts from Britain, the U.S.A., Canada, West Germany and Hong Kong and many smaller sums, for all of which we are most grateful.

We have just received a donation of £10 'in memory of Comrade Chou En-lai and in the hope that others will think that support of BROADSHEET is a fitting tribute to him.'

THE CHINA POLICY STUDY GROUP

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U.K. ISSN 0067-2052.