

# China Policy Study Group

# BROADSHEET

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

## REAL AND SHAM LEADERS

Leaders, and their election, are always in the news. In Britain Harold Wilson and Margaret Thatcher vie with each other to command the attention of the media, throwing verbal brickbats, shadow-boxing their way through the confusion of public opinion, whilst trying to find issues to promote their 'image'.

In the United States the making of a president is a vast exercise in which the advertising industry enters into a frenzy of campaigning in which truth, genuine politics and people's needs are all casualties.

In bourgeois states, school, university, church, the press, all preach that the bourgeois way of life is hallowed, free and democratic. The rules of the game require that the wisdom of the ballot box shall not be impugned.

But what do the masses really know about those who solicit their support? Candidates are selected, manicured, trimmed and prepared for their role, while the people are told that the democratic process is in train. The truth is that whichever candidate is elected, whichever party secures victory, the principles of bourgeois society are always respected. However the benches of legislative assemblies are filled, it is always the ruling class that determines policy. To preserve the myth of free choice some rebels, some mavericks, some 'populists' are permitted to knock on the doors of power, but no power will be offered them until they have been softened and corrupted by the glitter of office. Those who refuse to surrender to blandishments stay on the sidelines for ever — criticising, exposing, but never permitted to participate in the real decision-making process.

The wielders of power are not the speechmakers — though some are included — but the bankers, the civil servants, the career diplomats, the anonymous figures behind the scenes.

Thus in the capitalist world two types of leaders are required: those who formulate and direct the policy of finance capital, often remote from public eyes; and the mouthpieces, the politicians who fill the public stage, provide the sound and fury of public agitation and dress up as the nation's leaders. This does not mean the leading party politicians are mere cyphers, devoid of power and responsibility. On the contrary, for the deception to work they must be allowed to participate in, but not determine, the decision-making.

All societies require leadership, whether feudal, capitalist or socialist. But the difference between bourgeois and socialist leadership exemplifies the difference between the impulses of the two societies. For socialist society to develop, a fundamentally different kind of leadership is essential if socialism is not to revert quickly to capitalism.

The struggle to overthrow the old society creates proletarian leadership, its continuation depends on the maintenance of revolutionary principle, revolutionary struggle and revolutionary selection.

The strategy and tactics of the seizure of power demand participation and self-discipline of the masses. Without these there can be no people's revolution but only a coup, an

adventurist seizure of power which will surely be temporary.

Nor do the correct tactics to create revolution guarantee that leadership will always remain principled and democratic. Democracy means the conscious, explicit, self-determined expression of the people's will. To carry on the socialist struggle after the overthrow of the rule of the bourgeoisie requires unremitting class struggle and a leadership untouched by ambition, conceit, arrogance or fear of the supervision of the masses. Mao Tse-tung warned the Chinese Communist Party at the moment of triumph in 1949:

**With victory, certain moods may grow within the Party — arrogance, the airs of a self-styled hero, inertia and unwillingness to make progress, love of pleasure and distaste for continued hard living. With victory, the people will be grateful to us and the bourgeoisie will come forward to flatter us. . . . There may be some Communists . . . worthy of the name of heroes . . . who cannot withstand sugar-coated bullets; they will be defeated by sugar-coated bullets.**

How can socialist society guarantee that leaders will not be seduced by power and authority? There can be no absolute guarantee, as Soviet and Chinese experience indisputably shows. In socialist society class struggle not only continues but intensifies as the requirements of the new society collide with the morals, prejudices, values and habits of the old society. This clash exists at all levels, amongst the leaders as amongst the masses; indeed the danger is greater amongst the leaders because the stresses and strains of revolutionising all aspects of the economy and the superstructure encourage lapses into authoritarianism, impatience, arbitrary decisions and power-seeking.

Socialist society requires an unremitting struggle to eliminate subjectivity and personal careerism, and to subordinate everything to serving the interests of the people. Visitors to China — whatever else they may differ about — are unanimous about the Chinese people's dedication to creating a new society, with a new morality and with a new selfless motivation. This cannot be achieved without a leadership that has identified itself with and shares completely the way of life of the Chinese people.

This is no accident, nor is it a particular characteristic arising from Chinese traditions: it is nothing more and nothing less than the correct and thoughtful practice of Marxist leadership. Mao Tse-tung has made the 'mass line' the kernel of his philosophy and methods. Pervading his every thought, action, speech and writing is the need for identification with the masses. Not in a formal or patronising way, not in a demanding way, but with humility, sincerity and devotion.

Five years before Liberation he wrote:

**To link oneself with the masses, one must act in accordance with the needs and wishes of the masses. . . . It often happens that objectively the masses need a certain change, but subjectively they are not yet conscious of the need, not yet willing or determined to make the change. In such**

cases, we should wait patiently. We should not make the change until, through our work, most of the masses have become conscious of the need and are willing and determined to carry it out. . . . There are two principles here: one is the actual needs of the masses rather than what we fancy they need, and the other is the wishes of the masses, who must make up their own minds instead of our making up their minds for them.

It is the application of these principles which has inspired the people of China to heroism and dedication that cause the outside world to wonder.

It would be pure romanticism to believe that no Chinese leader, at any level, has lapses. Nothing could be more harmful than to pretend that disharmony, wrong practices and dishonest leadership do not exist in China. Indeed they do. Criticism of those who slip back is common. Perhaps one of the greatest disservices to the cause of socialism was the consistent attempt by Soviet leaders throughout the years, and Communist Parties elsewhere, to pretend that contradictions in Soviet society were minimal — and generally caused, anyway, by outside interference.

---

## CHINESE WOMEN PRESS FORWARD

We in the developed countries of the West have been 'better off' than others, particularly the workers, peasants, women and children, in the rest of the world. But the advantages we have — even in the working class the high standards of living, the relative abundance of material goods, facilities for universal education, freedom to publish and organise — have not been used to achieve what is essential for further progress, the establishment of political power by the working class and its party. The most stupendous changes which are being made in the world order have been initiated and carried out by those at the bottom of the imperialist order. The women of China provide a lesson in what revolutionaries can achieve if they work on the right lines.

The position and status of women in China today contrast sharply with what they used to be. Not only that. They are radically different from what they are in capitalist and neo-colonial countries (see BROADSHEET, December 1975). All over China today, wherever the construction of socialism is going on with vigour and efficiency, it is often the women who stand out. Their confidence, their masterful handling of the revolutionary business in factory, commune, office or neighbourhood, their initiative and sound leadership in fighting the bourgeoisie and its petty bourgeois allies, command the respect and admiration of those who see them at work or read about them. They are revolutionary comrades we do not think about enough, and it would be good to know more about what they are doing and who they are.

Chinese women had their own revolutionary mass organization, the Women's Federation, after Liberation in 1949. This was shaken up during the Cultural Revolution, has been active at local and provincial level since then, and is due to hold a national congress. It is, however, primarily as workers, peasants, and revolutionary cadres and intellectuals that women now make their remarkable impact. They are concentrating their efforts on doing three things. First, they are deepening their study and practice of Marxism and advancing the proletarian seizure of the remaining strongholds of capitalism in China (e.g., Confucian philosophy and attitudes, revisionist doctrines, ultra-leftist factionalism, bureaucratic tendencies) and imperialism. Secondly, in the context of the still low standard of living in China and of its still limited capacity to make its contribution to the poor and oppressed classes and nations in the world, they are contributing greatly to the development of the productive forces — going out to work, improving their own

During the whole transition from socialism to communism, the Chinese say, class struggle will continue and leaders will err and need to be sharply criticised. If there were no 'clashes', no struggles, no wall posters, no reshuffling of leaders, no fierce argument, then China's friends would have cause to worry. It would show that supervision by the masses had failed, that dull sterility had taken the place of fresh, challenging debate, that the people were not participating in the affairs of the nation, that socialist democracy was on the way out.

Therefore, we are not in the least upset because the China-watchers' confident predictions about the choice of an Acting Prime Minister were not decently respected by the Chinese Communist Party. Nor shall we be alarmed when another Cultural Revolution begins, or if hundreds of wall posters appear in Shanghai or even in the most outlying People's Commune.

Chinese leaders do not need cosmetics, fancy speechwriters, image creators or charisma. They come from the masses and earn respect by the devotion they show to Marxism-Leninism and to the Chinese Revolution.

skills, learning from others, training revolutionary successors, setting up and improving workshops and factories — on a truly massive scale. Thirdly, they have joined with men in the efforts to master nature; they have been carrying out scientific experiments and applying the scientific knowledge acquired to the work of increasing food production, controlling floods, caring for the sick, and so on. In these, which in China they call, following Mao, the three great revolutionary movements', tens of millions of women have been active, increasingly and more effectively so.

### The Difference Made by the Revolution

To say that this phenomenon is amazing is not to exaggerate. Where they have advanced farthest on this road of their liberation from the repression and restrictive conditions of feudal and bourgeois family life women have made possible the great leaps in socialist development for which China is noted. We can look at Tientsin, a municipality of seven million people with the status of a province. In 1949, Tientsin city was the second most important industrial centre in China. Yet only 24,000 women were workers. (It was an unusually low number, as there were more than 400,000 women workers in China at the time of Liberation.) By 1975 there was full employment in Tientsin; with all able-bodied adult women working, there were 530,000 women workers, apart from those who were working in the communes in Tientsin's countryside. Women's leadership in production and in Party work was evidently of considerable value; at the C.P.C.'s 10th National Congress, three of Tientsin's women delegates were elected to the Central Committee. In Shenyang, another 'very advanced' city, out of 600,000 workers, 250,000 are women. In Shanghai, of the three million working in the city itself, nearly half are women. Neither the economy nor politics of these bastions of the revolution would have developed as they have if the women had not entered production and politics. Millions of women have taken part in the construction of major projects like the Red Flag Canal, all over China. China is a developing country. All the working masses are learning how to do new things, even if they are already veterans. In many cases the lead has been given by women. Tibet's rapid progress cannot be appreciated unless we know that often it is women rather than men who have been in the lead.

This is not to say that reactionary attitudes to women, inequality and male domination have been eradicated. They obviously have not, since classes still exist, and some opposition

to the proletarian dictatorship in China still continues. It is in plunging into the fires of fierce revolutionary struggle that women have, not surprisingly, proved their mettle, and also established the conditions essential for the eradication of the oppression of the female by the male, that is, the dictatorship of the proletariat. Under this they have begun to enjoy the first fruits of women's liberation.

### Women in the Revolutionary Leadership

The C.P.C. at its Second Congress in 1922 made the realisation of the demands of women an essential part of its programme. In the corrupt and degenerating conditions of warlord China the old society, including the family, was breaking up. For Chinese girls and women it meant that exploitation was even greater than before. Hsiang Ching-yu (the first woman to be elected to the Central Committee of the C.P.C.) led the move to organise working class women rather than bourgeois feminists. Some veterans of the struggles of those early days are women communists who, unlike Hsiang (who was captured by Chiang's forces after his coup d'état, and executed in 1928), survived, and are now well-known. Teng Ying-chao, for example, has been a revolutionary since her student days in Tientsin in the May Fourth Movement. One of the first members of the C.P.C., she worked underground in Shanghai after 1927, and played a leading role in the trade union movement and the Party Central Committee. Another is Tsai Chang. Both were on the Long March, and are still members of the Central Committee.

But many of the women who, because of the work begun by Hsiang Ching-yu, joined the C.P.C. or in other ways did revolutionary work, have not survived from the 1920s. In the years following Liberation in 1949 there was rapid development of organised activity by women all over the country. In the countryside women secured the first fruits of their victory when their right to own and work land independently of their husbands or fathers was guaranteed by the Land Reform Law. There was next the Marriage Law of 1951. In the cities the inferior status of women workers was abolished. The prejudice against equality and freedom for women was still strong. But women in former 'White' areas began to assume positions of leadership. There was also a minister, Chien Ying, a former guerilla commander. But of the women who emerged to prominence in the 1950s and early 1960s few are in the top leadership today. (There are some, of course, like Chien Chen-ying, a C.C. member and now Minister of Water Conservancy and Power.) It was only with the Cultural Revolution, the breaking of the dam holding back revolutionary development under working class leadership, that a number of great Chinese women have emerged as national leaders.

### Politically reliable workers and peasants

The way in which the struggles of the 1960s and early 1970s have drawn out large numbers of women (as well as girls) and made them take up vitally important tasks of leadership is exemplified by Wang Hsiu-chen, Wu Kuei-Hsien, Lu Yu-lan and Paojihletai. Wang had been a child labourer. After Liberation she was a factory worker in the northeast. A C.P.C. member in 1954, she was transferred to Shanghai, to Cotton Mill No. 30. In 1966, 32 years old, she was already a rebel blacklisted by the leadership. In the hard struggle which began that summer against the powerful and resourceful revisionist leadership in Shanghai she came to head the workers in her factory, and then to be a leading organiser of the Shanghai Workers' Revolutionary Rebel Headquarters — a body which played a key role in uniting a million workers to carry out the January Revolution of 1967. She accepted the call by the other workers in her factory to be head of the new-style Revolutionary Committee, and later in Shanghai to be a Vice-Chairman of the Revolutionary Committee which took over the government of Shanghai; and

then to be a delegate to the C.P.C.'s Ninth Congress (1969), where she was elected a C.C. member. Shanghai's reorganized Party Committee appointed her one of its Secretaries, and its reorganized Trade Union Federation a Vice-Chairman in 1973. She became a member of the 10th C.C., still not cutting off her links with work in the factory. At the Fourth National People's Congress she was elected a member of its Standing Committee, which supervises the work of the government. A staggering burden of responsibility to be put on anyone's shoulders anywhere in the world; but it shows a countrywide confidence in this worker's revolutionary correctness, capacity for hard work, wisdom and modesty.

Wang is not a 'freak'. Wu Kuei-hsien also is a young worker. Her factory, the No. 1 State Textile Mill, is in Hsienyang, just outside Sian. She never went to school. Starting when she was 13, she became a very highly skilled worker, a national 'model', an inventor, and head of a record-breaking workers' team. In 1966 she was 29. Then in the highly complex and fierce struggle which came to a climax in the Cultural Revolution she was outstanding in organizing the exposure and overthrow of the bourgeois authorities, promoting the study of Marxism, overcoming factionalism and uniting the proletarian forces, getting the masses to hold firmly to the Marxist-Leninist line in the face of Liu Shao-chi's and Lin Piao's tactics. So much so that she was called upon to take on an incredible burden of responsibility: in her factory; as Vice-Chairman of the Hsienyang Municipal R.C.; then as a Vice-Chairman of the Shensi Provincial R.C. when this new body was formed; as a member of the Ninth C.C. of the C.P.C.; then, when the provincial C.P.C. Committee was constituted, as Party Secretary. She worked in the factory, when possible. So much was the leadership of this expert and modest textile worker in demand that in 1973 (she was only 36) she was elected to the C.P.C. Political Bureau as an Alternate Member. In 1975 the National People's Congress appointed her to be one of the workers who now direct government work — a Vice-Premier of the State Council.

Wu Kuei-hsien's is the highest government position held by a woman in modern China. But neither she, nor N.P.C. Vice-Chairman Li Su-wen, nor any of the other of the working women who are on the Standing Committee of the N.P.C. or C.P.C. Central Committee, or who are Ministers, Vice-Chairmen of provincial R.C.s or provincial C.P.C. Secretaries, are in these positions because 'token' women are needed. It is clearly not male chivalry or guilty consciences which caused their election or appointment. One can say that they are not there as women but in spite of belonging to the half of mankind which is not taken seriously in all class society. The way things are going, in the provincial bodies, prefectures, counties, municipalities, factories and oilfields, shops, communes and brigades, and P.L.A. units, more and more women of their mettle will be willing to work at the highest levels of Party, state and government. For example, Chen Yung-kuei's place as leader of the Tachai brigade has been taken by a young woman. If women were simply appointed to such positions, regardless of whether they are revisionist or just mediocrities, it would be all wrong. It is in the interests of women (as well as of men and children) that revolutionary leadership and proletarian state power should be in the hands of *reliable* people who are equal to the greatest of all tasks — people who assiduously learn and practise Marxism (as Mao puts it), who are always setting the revolution above all other interests, not opportunists, not sectarians. Chinese women, because of Mao's leadership, have not risen up against the peculiar oppression of women and girls just in order to be spared the discipline and physical hardship of childbearing or some such thing. They have indeed, on a scale which would have been unimaginable at one time, 'stood up'. And all over China they are playing an admirable role as models and pace-setters in the socialist revolution.

## ON CAPITULATION

Most societies which have lived through troubled times have folk heroes like Hereward the Wake and Robin Hood, who took up the cause of the poor and oppressed and whose deeds have become enshrined in folk tales. The success of the present Chinese campaign to study the novel *Water Margin* shows that imaginative literature has a key part to play in the political education of working people, by negative example as well as by positive clarification and enlightenment.

For many centuries, the illiterate labouring people in China have been skilful story-tellers and enthusiastic listeners, and one of their favourite stories relates the beginnings, development and defeat of a peasant revolt towards the end of the Northern Sung dynasty (960-1127), the novel *Shui Hu*. This records the heroic exploits of the Liangshan Marshes rebels under their leader Chao Kai, who died in a suppression campaign in 1121, and was succeeded by the landlord's son Sung Chiang. Many of the original tales were collected in the 14th century, but the novel we know as *Water Margin* is a revision made towards the end of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) by a very conservative Confucian scholar Chin Sheng-t'an, who deleted the last 50 chapters so that the book now ends at the 70th chapter with Sung Chiang receiving a message from heaven to the effect that the rebels will be captured by Imperial troops. Then, even in the hour of victory, he arranges to surrender his army to the enemy. This now appears as the final act of Sung Chiang, who had repeatedly and openly declared his devotion to the Emperor, who he hoped would forgive the rebels and offer them positions in the Imperial army; in the original version, he completes his act of betrayal by actually leading his peasant army in the Emperor's service against other rebel peasants.

Literary critics for over 600 years have regarded this novel as an epic of peasant revolt; Sung Chiang's surrender was excused even by modern progressive critics in China as late as 1972, on the grounds that it proved the class limitations of rebellions made by peasants. In 1930, however, Lu Hsun made a penetrating and principled analysis of this central character, pointing out that he was a willing slave, who, although opposing corrupt officials, was servilely loyal to the Emperor, the supreme representative of the landlords and the whole feudal system, vowing to carry out Confucian principles in obedience to the commands of heaven.

Mao Tse-tung has said: 'This book *Shui Hu* is good because it portrays capitulationism. It is teaching material by negative example, so that people can learn about capitulationists.' Distinguishing between capitulationists and revolutionaries is extremely important for the Chinese people in their mass movements for the study of Marxist-Leninist theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the detection of, and fight against, revisionism.

Looking more deeply into the questions raised by this Chinese debate on capitulationism, we find that there is even more relevance to the struggle in which we are engaged in the imperialist-dominated world, particularly in Europe, where so-called 'leaders of the working class' are everywhere giving up their principles and accepting the political lines and ideas of the bourgeois state and the capitalist system. In the West, which has a long history of struggle in the period of the bourgeois revolutions, and also long acquaintance and even, among some groups of people, sympathy with national liberation struggles in the Third World, it is not only idealised rebel heroes of drama, fiction, opera and film who have become popular idols. It is also many real leaders of movements and struggles, whose lives and deeds have been similarly romanticised so that they have become symbols of progressive struggles: for emancipation, for independence, for socialist

revolution, for national liberation. All too often, at critical moments, they have turned their backs on those who looked up to them, and abandoned the cause.

Capitulation in practice means abandoning a progressive role undertaken during a revolutionary crisis, as the struggle moves into a new phase, either quieter or more acute; it means deserting the exploited classes who form the strength of the revolution, and moving instead towards an understanding with the defeated reactionaries; it means preserving the institutions which served the interests of the bourgeoisie, and failing to develop the new form of state, the dictatorship of the proletariat, which alone is able to consolidate the gains achieved by a socialist revolution. Ever since the Paris Commune, the collapse of the Second International in 1914, the General Strike of 1926, social-democratic leaders have repeatedly lapsed into surrender at the height of the crisis, while continuing to make a pretence of working for socialism.

As Marx pointed out, we can expect this sort of betrayal as an inevitable consequence of social democracy, which has no scientific theory or principles to guide its actions. What is much worse is that 'official' Communist parties now follow the same road of capitulationism, co-operating with the sham of bourgeois parliamentary democracy in the name of 'freedom', spreading confusion and dismay in the ranks of the workers and peasants who are left without principled leadership and guidance. The experience of Chile has proved once again that the bourgeoisie will never allow a revolutionary movement to take the parliamentary road to socialism, and that co-operating with this kind of 'democracy' inevitably entails class betrayal. Yet Western Communist parties now publicly repudiate the dictatorship of the proletariat, protesting that they too want freedom for everyone; they intend to work through parliaments, and have no intention of expropriating the expropriators!

The revisionist plans of the Soviet leaders, which have produced industrial and agricultural stagnation at home, have on the international scene produced social-imperialist expansion, following the characteristic imperialist pursuit of hegemony over other countries in order to exploit them, even suppressing by force any tendency towards independent thought or action. The 19th century saw the big powers dividing the world into 'spheres of influence' as a result of which they hoped to be left alone to exploit their empires in peace; instead, it led inexorably to catastrophic wars. Today, social imperialism urges us to accept the fraud of 'detente'; like its forerunner, this uses a facade of peaceful co-existence to disguise increasing preparation for war. Not a revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of imperialism, but a return to the vicious old ways of battling over the spoils, the fruits of conquest.

Such betrayals of Marxist principles give renewed hope to the forces of dying capitalism that they can continue to stave off their defeat, and lead movements once united in the cause of liberation to disintegrate into tragic conflict. So long as the leaders of these movements reject true proletarian democracy, and persist with bourgeois forms of government, so long shall we see capitulationism in action. The study of historical examples, in life or in fable, reminds us that only by constant vigilance can we detect and defeat them in our own time.

### ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES

	SURFACE MAIL	SEALED	OPEN
U.K.:		£2.00	
U.S., Canada, Europe, China,			
Hong Kong, Japan, Aus., N.Z.:	£2.85 (\$8.60)		£1.80 (\$6.00)
All other countries:	£2.00		£1.25
AIR MAIL			
U.S., Canada, Hong Kong:	£3.85 (\$11.20)		£2.50 (\$7.85)
China, Japan, Aus., N.Z.:	£4.40		£2.85
All other countries:	£2.70		£1.75

No air mail rates to Europe.  
U.K. ISSN 0067-2052.