

# China Policy Study Group

# BROADSHEET

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## New Stage of African Struggle: AGAINST SOCIAL IMPERIALISM

So many people have been swept away by the strong current of emotion over the Angolan events flowing to the advantage of the Soviet rulers that it might seem foolhardy for anyone to resist the tide. The lesson seems to be that nothing succeeds like success: that to the superpower victor on the battlefield belong not only the spoils of conquest but also the right to lay down the 'truth' about the causes and course of events and to exercise hegemony over the liberation movements in Southern Africa. All independent and contrary analyses and judgements, this newly created public opinion seems to say, should have perished together with the rights of hundreds of thousands of Angolans who were bombed and shot as they opposed what they saw as foreign aggressors.

However, now more than ever, all over the world, and especially among patriotic Africans, independence of thought, judgement and action are of vital importance. The Soviet military and diplomatic victory in Africa is far from being the final defeat of the inevitably protracted struggle in which the national liberation movements and their revolutionary working class allies are engaged against both superpowers and their respective camp-followers. The Russians were successful because they were fully prepared to take advantage of the difficulties of their superpower rival and of the Angolan people in 1975; they had enormous resources for intrigue, intelligence gathering, 'disinformation' activities and large-scale war operations. Further, their agents in Africa were much more experienced and far better organised at that point than anything that the African anti-imperialist forces had to lead them in the thinking, planning, policy-making and action which the new threats to Angola's independence called for. This unpreparedness is, of course, no reason why they should cease to fight imperialism and its sub-imperialist and local agents, or why Marxist-Leninists should abdicate their duty to give them full support, including the intensification of the struggle in the metropolitan countries against superpower hegemony.

### The African People Make their own History

History has its own laws, regardless of what imperial conquerors have written and disseminated in their own praise as the civilisers and builders. Africa's contribution to the making of the new, post-imperialist society will undoubtedly be made by the African people, the labouring masses of men and women, girls and boys. Foreign interventions, however subtle their disguise, will certainly not stop self-reliant development. An oppressed class or nation or race achieves its emancipation only by its own struggle against the oppressor. The working class and poor peasants of South Africa, Zimbabwe, Angola and other countries will, as in China, Korea, Vietnam and Cambodia, create the necessary alliances against the main enemy. It cannot

be doubted that under its leadership Africa will advance from the condition to which centuries of imperialist and colonialist savagery—the transatlantic slave trade, the destruction of all advanced social organisation and culture, plunder of resources, forced labour, white racism and apartheid—have reduced it to being independent countries with modern industry and agriculture, under the rule of their own workers and peasants. The official Soviet view that even the working class in modern Asia and Africa 'is characterised by a low cultural level and petty bourgeois, tribal, religious and primitive commune prejudices' ('Outline of Strategy and Tactics of International Communist Movement', *Moscow*) only tells us what the ruling class in the Kremlin thinks of the 'lesser breeds'.

In the March 1975 BROADSHEET the victories of the liberation movements and peoples of Southern Africa were celebrated, while attention was drawn to the new dangers, from South Africa and her backers and from both superpowers, which had to be faced and overcome if further development was to be achieved. The quotation from an important speech made in Africa by Chou En-lai in 1964 indicated the perspective in which the revolutionary proletariat viewed the future which was growing out of, and negating, Africa's present. The machinery

### In this Issue

The whole of this number deals with different aspects of revisionism and social-imperialism, an understanding of which, as the Chinese have often pointed out, is essential to a correct assessment of the present world situation. We welcome comments on these articles.

of neocolonialism, superpower hegemony, racist laws, and the reactionary policies, ideas and superstitions of the local ruling cliques, are all real fetters on the mass of the African people. Their united struggle to break these fetters and build a new order is at the heart of the concern of the international working class movement.

In the practice of uniting in armed struggle and trying mainly by their own efforts to achieve national liberation, developing production to meet the needs of the people, and making scientific discoveries and technological advances on their own, the African peoples are transforming their countries as well as themselves. They are thereby destroying the racist pretensions of Europeans and North Americans, and contributing to revolutionary development in the heartlands of imperialism and social imperialism. These racist pretensions are obviously great in South Africa; they are, less obviously, greater in the United States and Russia. Recent weeks have made it clear how even the racism of some well-intentioned leftists has contributed to

the difficulties faced by the peoples of Southern Africa. Europeans and White Americans can hardly understand what it means for poor and uneducated Africans to take their own initiatives, rely primarily on their own efforts and administer and control their own affairs in building an independent post-colonial order. Much less are they qualified to take over this task which Africans alone can perform. Failure to grasp this has blinded many of them to what the Russian expansion into Africa is aimed at preventing.

#### The Russian Drive towards Global Power, Omnipresence

In Southeast Asia Soviet attempts to fill the imaginary power 'vacuum' simply failed. Soviet meddling is still going on there on a massive scale. But the predatory nature of social imperialism is known. What the old Tsars never dreamed of, expansion to the far south, became a possibility when the three Angolan liberation movements were unable to act quickly and decisively in 1975 as the Portuguese regime crumbled.

There was a history of African resistance during the centuries of Portuguese rule in Angola. In the 1950s Angolans in different parts of the vast colony began to organise for struggle, and formed liberation movements. By the time Portugal's colonial problems began to be widely reported, there were three liberation movements: MPLA, FNLA and UNITA. Various social-democratic and revisionist organisations and groups in Europe gave massive publicity and support to MPLA, which thus came to be the best known in left circles in the West. FNLA, known to be led by a man with conservative, even reactionary views, was regarded with hostility by the left in Europe. UNITA relied entirely, according to the few reports by visitors to its liberated areas, on the peasants in East and South Angola. None of the movements was Marxist-Leninist or under working class leadership, but all had Marxist factions or members at one time or another. Evidently, there were reactionary elements in each of them. The fact was that the emergence and development of the national liberation movements in Angola reflected the concrete realities of Angolan society. Each separate movement had a history of successes and failures, weaknesses and problems, in meeting the needs of the local people, organising them in armed struggle against the Portuguese forces, educating cadres, setting up bases, getting weapons, and winning recognition. They all wanted independence from Portuguese rule. But their conceptions of what independence and liberation were going to mean clearly differed. Whatever foreigners might have wanted—and to Western eyes MPLA was the most liberal and the most attractive—it was inevitable that once the Angolan people started managing their affairs independently and democratically *they* would decide which elements, or combination of elements in the movements, they wanted most and trusted and supported most, and which were reactionary.

In January 1975 the three movements took the first big step towards this goal. Their delegates met in Mombasa, got over many of the obstacles which had prevented cooperation, and agreed to negotiate jointly with the Lisbon government for complete independence. They also agreed on a common political platform and administrative arrangements for the formation of a transitional government in which all would take equal part, and the merging of the troops into a common Angolan army. They pledged themselves jointly to build a 'just and democratic society', to eliminate 'ethnic, racial and religious discrimination' and to 'safeguard the territorial integrity of Angola'. Later that month, their negotiations with the Portuguese government resulted in agreement on independence by 11 November, to be preceded by elections for a constituent assembly. Given the bitterness between the leaders of MPLA and FNLA, hostile US intrigues, the Soviet influence at the time in Lisbon, and the political backwardness of colonial Angola, it was a remarkable Angolan achievement. Armed clashes between MPLA and FNLA, and other, foreign-instigated provocations like the circulation of forged documents, did not destroy the

coalition. In June, the three leaders met again, in Nakuru in Kenya, and reached further agreement on some questions, though many problems remained unresolved.

Without doubt, it was not the wish of the politically conscious people in Angola that after the Portuguese withdrawal there should be civil war or any new form of foreign domination. African opinion in the continent was for peaceful resolution of differences within Angola. Those who allowed their personal ambitions or their loyalty to imperialist interests to stand in the way of implementing the Mombasa agreement would have condemned themselves in the eyes of the people. But the massive foreign interventions, triggered off by Moscow's interference, have taken matters out of the hands of the Angolan people, at least for a time. Angolans have now to start again from the new facts of their situation: there is an army of occupation of Cubans, whom the vast majority of Angolans would never even have heard of till their invasion; there are South African troops along the border with Namibia; and there is the firm Soviet grip on Angola.

#### Social Imperialism is a Paper Tiger

It is easy to understand why so many seemingly staunch opponents of imperialism were carried away by the pro-Soviet tide over Angola. The building up of pro-Soviet public opinion has gone on for years. Liberal newspapers and broadcasters whose reactionary line on Indochina had shown where they stood politically, gave the Soviet version of events. Unrelated facts and half-truths about Southern Africa and the superpowers were jumbled together to confuse issues. There are some people who tend to get worked up over radical, seemingly Marxist phrases, and for whom the real wants and needs of people, in this case six million Angolans, do not matter; therefore the people of Angola did not get consideration. Many people responded to ready-made labels ('Marxist', 'pro-Western', 'anti-Communist', 'progressive') inaccurately pasted on to profound and complex realities, instead of examining all the facets and interconnections of a developing and changing situation. To perceive Soviet intervention and ambitions in Southern Africa as a social-imperialist threat, and to be against it, does not make anyone reactionary or 'pro-Western'. Moreover, anyone seriously against imperialism would resist it whether it is American or Russian. It is also true that anti-imperialist forces may for their own purposes get material resources from the USA or USSR without thereby becoming reactionary or pro-imperialist. The Vietnamese, from the time they were fighting Japanese imperialism, have made that clear. In Angola, where the people were already up against French, British, Japanese and, above all, US imperialist interests, which the colonial regime had served, the contradictions among the liberation groups were not antagonistic. Talk of good and bad, progressive and reactionary, regardless of concrete realities, only prevented serious analysis on the basis of class interests.

Further, in early 1975, US imperialism was having a very difficult time. It had been the dominant superpower in Southern Africa; but its defeats in Vietnam and Cambodia, its continual reliance on the most cruel and repulsive policies and regimes to maintain its hegemony, had discredited it. It had been shown to be vulnerable in the face of the most determined resistance by a small nation. The ruling class was deeply divided over foreign interventions. The CIA was under attack by Congress. It was clear that the Angolans, once independent, could, with OAU and worldwide support, have effectively dealt with US imperialism if Kissinger had tried to intervene. South Africa, too, was on the defensive, having been pressured and isolated over many years. Its 'detente', as bogus as the Soviet detente, was still a recognition that the regime would have to be conciliatory. In fact, with the consolidation of Angolan independence, UNITA-SWAPO cooperation would inevitably have been stepped up. And the most important development in Africa, the revolutionary overthrow of the rotten capitalist regime in South

Africa, by proletarian forces over whom Moscow had no control, would then have become a realistic prospect. For the USSR, which has tried through the revisionist South African Communist Party to keep control of the resistance in South Africa, it was the time to act, because of the dangers to be parried and the opportunity to be seized. The crude tactics of the Americans were avoided, Soviet troops were not involved. Though the Angolan leaders were manoeuvred into making serious tactical blunders, 'Angolisation' of the new imperialist offensive was not possible. 'Cubanisation' had to be tried.

By its very nature, imperialism must say 'No' to independence, national liberation, self-reliant development and socialist revolution in the Third World. As the Bangladesh experience, too, has shown, Soviet neocolonialism is in some ways a new social phenomenon. But Soviet hegemony in Africa, however benevolent it may seem to social democrats and revisionists, has in it the seeds of its own destruction. Through its satellites it will increasingly try to prevent African liberation fighters and

revolutionaries from carrying out their necessary and historic tasks, and will thus come to be seen for what it is in fact, a counter-revolutionary power. Its presence, and the activities of the KGB and its agents, both open and secret, in Africa, must put high on the agenda of patriots, both Marxist-Leninist and others, a systematic inquiry into the nature of the Brezhnev regime. Is the 'international dictatorship' which this regime wants to exercise over the workers and peasants in Asia, Africa and Latin America not exercised over the workers and peasants in the Soviet Union, and over the minority peoples there? Is the Soviet Union capitalist or socialist? What is the nature of Soviet 'aid'? Why is this self-appointed model, even more than the other superpower, in a mess economically and socially? The struggle which MPLA will be forced to take up against social imperialism will be part of a wider African struggle, ideological, political, economic and military, to overthrow Soviet hegemony. The tiger that came in through the unguarded back door is a paper tiger.

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## NOTES ON REVISIONISM IN WESTERN EUROPE

As was the old revisionism in the early decades of this century, modern revisionism is an international phenomenon. In most of the West European communist parties a leading group had already begun to betray Marxism before Stalin's death, and Khrushchev would never have found the going so easy in restoring capitalism had he lacked international support.

There is a close connection between the tasks of the proletariat in winning state power and in exercising state power. In both cases the essence is to mobilise the masses and isolate enemies, resolving class struggle in a revolutionary way. If a communist party is at all serious it must follow this road. Right after the 20th Party Congress of the CPSU in 1956, Mao Tse-tung correctly saw that Khrushchev's denial of the revolutionary road in the capitalist countries was a key symptom of his *all-round* betrayal:

I think there are two 'swords': one is Lenin and the other Stalin. The sword of Stalin has now been abandoned by the Russians. . . . As for the sword of Lenin, has it too now been abandoned to a certain extent by some leaders of the Soviet Union? In my view, it has been abandoned to a considerable extent. Is the October Revolution still valid? Can it still be the example for all countries? Khrushchev's report at the 20th Congress of the CPSU says it is possible to gain political power by the parliamentary road, that is to say, it is no longer necessary for all countries to learn from the October Revolution. Once this gate is opened, Leninism by and large is thrown out. (*Speech at the Second Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the CPC*, 15 Nov. 1956).

### The Revisionist International

The abandonment by most parties of the revolutionary road to state power and by Khrushchev's group of the revolutionary way of exercising state power are different aspects of the same whole: they developed through mutual support and cooperation.

There is now an international revisionist movement. The CPSU has degenerated into a fascist party while West European parties are showing a tendency to develop into social-democratic parties. The western world is shaken by a dire economic crisis, bringing political instability and vulnerability. Also rocked by acute crises, the USSR under Brezhnev increasingly turns to external aggression as a way out of its difficulties. As the USSR prepares to push its hegemonistic ambitions in the direction of West Europe, the communist parties in some parts of this area find themselves nearer than ever to power; but this bid for power must be on a nationalist ticket. Between the aims of these parties and the aims of social-imperialism there is both

harmony and contradiction. The main aspect is harmony, because the propaganda of these revisionist parties is bound to favour the Soviet myth of detente, of the relaxation of struggle, of taking things at face value. This will be true even though their members may not consciously desire it.

### Revisionism and the Capitalist Crisis

Following the early lead of the Communist Party of Great Britain, other European parties have now taken steps to repudiate the dictatorship of the proletariat. The French CP has recently done this, and has even gone so far as to forbid its adherents to employ the clenched fist salute, on the grounds that they are a party with the hand outstretched in friendship. Spanish CP leader S. Carillo has described the October Revolution as taking place in 'exceptional historical circumstances', now no longer applicable.

This signifies that such parties have given up working for the seizure of state power as communist parties, i.e. they have given up mobilizing a self-conscious mass movement whereby the direct producers forcibly place themselves at the head of society and prepare for the transition to communism. It does not mean that they have given up the quest for power, on the contrary, these changes are meant to facilitate their access to power as bourgeois parties.

With capitalism in a serious fix, the bourgeoisie in different European countries looks for a way out, and one such solution appears to be a move towards state capitalism similar to that in the USSR, with some attempt at planning, pseudo-representation of workers in management, etc. The abandonment of the notion of the dictatorship of the proletariat is a way of presenting state-capitalism as socialism in order to hoodwink the working people. This follows the old line of Khrushchev in saying: if the state controls the economy, what is this if not socialism? He conveniently swept under the carpet the tricky question of who holds power in the state!

At the same time, without the dictatorship of the proletariat, it is hoped that the prospect will appear sufficiently reassuring to the social-democratic section of the bourgeoisie. Thus the claim to power hinges on a claim to competence in alleviating the capitalist crisis—how different from the attitude of genuine Marxists to whom this crisis is thoroughly welcome!

This revisionist programme presents 'socialism' as an idealised vision of bourgeois society, everything beautiful that established society always claims to be and never can be. This is in no way an advance upon the method of Proudhon as

analysed and criticised by Marx: to assume that contemporary society is eternally necessary, to construct a vision of a society (i.e. bourgeois society) purged of its 'bad side' and preserving its 'good side'.

Thus in a document remarkable for its lack of anything concrete, the French and Italian CPs put forward a joint statement of policy (November 1975): 'Socialism will constitute a higher stage of democracy and liberty, democracy taken "the whole way"'. This is purely designed to swindle people. Nothing remains in it of Lenin's *concrete* conception of socialism as the initial stage of communism. Never forget the class character of democracy, Lenin said; socialism is proletarian as opposed to bourgeois democracy.

This line is presented in such a way as to offend no-one: by turns authoritative, liberal, working-class, patriotic, etc. Indeed this is a marvellous recipe for the jaded palate of capitalism. If Soviet revisionism is aptly characterised as 'goulash', the recipe of these European parties can only be compared to a label on a bottle of sauce: excellent with meat, fish, game, sweets, puddings, and children simply love it on bread for tea!

#### Degeneration of a Communist Party

While appearing meek as lambs when necessary, it is also necessary for these parties to show a tough side. With the capitalist economic and political world in confusion, the possibility of giving a strong lead appears as an important claim to power. Social-democracy has already been noteworthy for its sterling contribution to capitalism by oppressing the workers while pretending that the relation between state and worker is non-antagonistic, hoodwinking them through its ties with the trades union movement, etc. But this trick no longer draws a big audience. The revisionists would hope to go one better.

While the tendency of ex-Marxist parties is to become social-democratic (as with the Second International), the corruption of a *Bolshevik* party offers special characteristics, as we see in the case of the CPSU. The revisionist parties, which were to a certain extent Bolshevised at one time, have shown some of the CPSU's characteristics, viz: plenty of democracy for bourgeois cliques struggling for power, plenty of 'centralism' imposed upon anyone who offers principled criticism. In certain countries where the 'communist' party is sufficiently strong to throw its weight around, Marxist-Leninist militants in the factories have been subject to aggression, betrayal to the authorities and so on.

Particularly noteworthy is the recent statement by French revisionist leader G. Marchais that the proletariat doesn't exist any longer. This brilliant theory is directly derived from the Soviet Union's sinister Party of the Whole People.

#### Moscow's Dictatorship

The first round of Soviet revisionism was the theory of peaceful transition, peaceful road, peaceful everything: imperialism externally and capitalism internally have already given up or soon will give up making trouble, therefore the Russian people and the world's people must above all not struggle against such things as imperialism. At present, however, the Soviet Union is on the offensive. They are talking 'peace' more than ever, summed up in the detente hoax. At the same time, the vocabulary of Soviet propaganda has enlarged somewhat, and some violent notions also find a place. At home, as Chang Ch'un-ch'iao rightly remarked, 'they flaunt the flag of the dictatorship of the proletariat to suppress the masses of the Soviet people who rise against their fascist dictatorship' (*Red Flag*, No 4, 1975).

In these circumstances Moscow will be in favour of its client parties keeping their options open. During last summer the Soviet press published a number of articles casting doubts upon the 'peaceful road', and instructed the propaganda organs of East Europe to grind out a similar refrain. Thus last October the 'theoretical' journal of the Bulgarian revisionists argued that the European and other CPs were not really following the peaceful road but were rather orienting themselves to a 'development of the revolution by stages'.  
(to be concluded)

## BUSINESSMEN MEET

The 25th Congress of the CPSU has met at a time of social-imperialist offensive. Soviet 'successes' in Bangladesh and Angola, and US defeats in Indochina, were seen as justifying the policies which Brezhnev promised to continue 'with renewed vigour'. Yet any independently-minded delegates must have been conscious of serious weaknesses in the Soviet position.

The Soviet economy is in trouble: the current 5-Year Plan was not completely fulfilled and the 1975 harvest was disastrous. Detente is losing its attraction for many Western statesmen, who think it serves the USSR better than it serves them. The countries of the third world, with which the Soviet government claims a special kinship, are increasingly suspicious. The harsh criticisms of Soviet aid by African leaders have since been spectacularly underlined by President Sadat's speech ending the treaty of friendship between the Soviet Union and Egypt.

The most striking feature of the Congress, in the opinion of observers, was the open criticism by fraternal delegates from Western Europe who for half a century had given the Soviet state unswerving support.

For an overall assessment of the Congress it is perhaps best to look at the report given by Brezhnev on behalf of the Central Committee. Throughout, there is little indeed to suggest that it expresses the views of a party claiming to be communist. True, the word 'Leninist' is used frequently, but in a purely mechanical way. For example, the 'guidelines . . . of our Leninist agrarian policy . . . are correct.' A surprising statement, in view of the non-cooperation of the severely exploited farmworkers and the dismissal of the Minister of Agriculture, but typical in that no attempt is made to try to justify the invocation of Lenin's name as a seal of approval.

The speech completely supports the view that the USSR is not socialist but capitalist. It is the speech of a businessman, for whom success is expressed in terms of profits, production, cost and efficiency. 'The success of our efforts', he asserted, 'depends on the correct organisation of production and management.' No 'unrealistic' talk about the importance of ideology; his criteria are economic ones.

It is instructive to compare this report with those by Stalin, which were full of meat, analytical, biting, critical of errors, *political*. Stalin wanted to wake people up, to get them involved. Brezhnev wants to lull them to sleep, to cloud the issues. What are we to make of such a sentence as this: 'In-depth research into questions bearing on the tendencies in the development of our society and its productive forces is highly necessary'? What questions? What tendencies? Brezhnev himself seems to be at a loss, hoping someone's 'in-depth research' will help him out.

Wanting production, he concentrates on the forms and techniques of production and ignores production relations. All his difficulties stem from the fact that Soviet workers and peasants are toiling not for the whole people but to maintain a ruling class of politicians, bureaucrats and managers. Workers' standards can be improved only by overthrowing the ruling class, for it will not step down of its own accord.

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