

# China Policy Study Group

# BROADSHEET

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## THE EAST STILL RED

Throughout a quarter-century of change without precedent, China's truly revolutionary foreign policy was carefully conceived and, often against opposition, consistently carried out. This was because so well-tested a Marxist-Leninist as Chou En-lai was put in charge of government work and foreign affairs, including many difficult negotiations with other governments. He always worked in accordance with the strategic plan worked out by the CPC under Mao's leadership, and always kept the interests of the people in mind. As a result of his persistent work the world situation was rapidly transformed to the advantage of the genuinely socialist and anti-imperialist forces.

In the past year, however, they have lost both Chou and Mao. Can there be any substance in bourgeois 'reports' implying a change of political colour in China? That imperialism would welcome such a change we cannot doubt. It never ceases to try to win back the ground it has so quickly lost. What can it be said to have achieved? In the course of contending for hegemony the superpowers expose each other's counter-revolutionary tactics. A recent, carefully researched report concluded:

Even a cursory analysis of the KGB presence (in Eastern Asia) provides conclusive proof that its immediate targets today are the nations of Asia and that it is working against China by attempting to surround that country with a ring of states subordinate to, or orientated towards, Moscow. . . . Today the Soviet Union is arguably the only remaining truly imperialist power, reigning over an empire in Eastern

Europe . . . pursuing a foreign policy designed to gain hegemony or at least a preponderant degree of influence over countries, regions and continents.

(*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 31 December 1976)

Of course, those who regret that US imperialism is in disarray and retreat will view with dismay the increase in its rival's espionage, subversion and skulduggery which is going on in many countries. What they will not admit is that it is they who prettified the looting, bribing, trickery, bullying and aggression in which Washington, with its CIA, AID, SEATO, etc., set the example. And, at the end of the past year in which there were the brutal coup in Thailand, the attempt to wipe out the progressives in Lebanon and their Palestinian allies, and the tightening of the US stranglehold on Latin America, the overthrow of proletarian rule in China is as vital for them as ever. Soviet imperialism is, arguably, only the more dangerous superpower. (The power of the KGB and its masters is more absolute and more ruthless at home.) The Third World peoples, critically analysing the trade agreements with Moscow, and its development and military projects, have seen the threat to their independence and non-alignment.

The Kremlin naturally paid close attention to every statement and move made in China during 1976, to detect signs of a weakening in China's resistance to revisionist and social imperialist pressures. Any slackening, or compromise of principle by the Chinese people in regard to the rooting out of imperial-

ism and continuing the revolution under proletarian dictatorship would have been most welcome to them. China did face grave dangers after Mao's death. If the faction of four had not been stopped, they could have seized a monopoly of Party and state power; and that power, achieved by intrigue and factional strife, could, however revolutionary their rhetoric, have meant a radical departure from Mao's revolutionary line, externally as well as internally. The other implications are not difficult to imagine.

China has not, however, changed colour, as any close scrutiny of developments shows. The line she puts into practice in her foreign relations with communist parties, peoples and states is in accordance with that of Mao and Chou. What Hua Kuo-feng said on this in his important speech on 27 December would not have pleased China's enemies: 'The imperialists, and the social imperialists in particular . . . dreamed of the emergence of a certain force that would alter the revolutionary line and orientation Chairman Mao had defined for us . . . We are determined to . . . carry out the revolutionary line, and policies in foreign affairs formulated by Chairman Mao . . . and unite with all countries suffering from imperialist and social imperialist aggression, subversion, intervention, control and bullying, so as to oppose the hegemonism of the two superpowers — the Soviet Union and the United States'. In China the proletariat and the oppressed nations can expect to find, no less than before, an ally they can rely on, teachers and examples they can learn from, and a bold lead they can follow.

## RIGHTING WRONGS

Chairman Mao has constantly taught us: it is imperative to note that one tendency covers another. The opposition to Chen Tu-hsiu's Right opportunism which advocated 'all alliance, no struggle' covered Wang Ming's opportunism which advocated 'all struggle, no alliance'. The rectification of Wang Ming's 'Left' deviation covered Wang Ming's Right deviation. The struggle against Liu Shao-chi's revisionism covered Lin Piao's revisionism.

The above passage from the late Premier Chou En-lai's report to the 10th Congress of the Communist Party of China in

August 1971 seems especially applicable to the present complicated situation, in which the campaign against Teng Hsiao-ping as a Rightist may be said to have covered the ultra-Rightist tendencies of the 'gang of four'.

Chou En-lai's words enable us to place the struggle against the Four in its historical perspective. During the Cultural Revolution, in spite of its overwhelmingly positive character, there were various excesses, on both 'Left' and Right, which had to be corrected. The fight against them helped the 'band of



four' to secure the limelight and at the same time covered their basic opportunism. Thus when the Lin Piao affair became public the opinion of him and of Confucius covered the misdeeds of the Four.

Early in 1976 violent criticism was being directed at Teng. His errors before the Cultural Revolution were recalled, he was said to be seeking to reverse the correct verdicts of that Revolution and he was called an 'unrepentant capitalist-roader'. This phrase (quoted in our last issue) is never used now and all attacks are directed at the 'gang of four' (Wang Hung-wen, Chang Chun-chiao, Chiang Ching and Yao Wen-yuan).

Such errors as Teng may have made recently seem now to be considered the mistakes of a comrade, not the deliberate policies of an enemy. During the Cultural Revolution his name was frequently linked with that of Liu Shao-chi, but while Liu persisted in his capitalist line Teng made what was considered a very complete and satisfactory self-criticism (which has never been published officially). It is noteworthy that so far as is known he has accepted no blame during the recent campaign against him.

The removal of the Four from official positions was received with remarkable demonstrations of popular enthusiasm. There was no doubt about the masses' approval of the decisive action taken by Chairman Hua Kuo-feng and the Central Committee of the CPC.

The Four were generally referred to in the West as 'radicals' and it seems that they themselves wanted to be seen as on the Left. The attack on Teng as a Rightist was largely inspired by them. In speeches and writings they represented themselves as standing for the rapid elimination of bourgeois right, for the rooting out of capitalist-roaders within the Party and for the primacy of politics over production. The workers of Tachai and Taching, national models in agriculture and industry respectively, were accused of following the 'theory of productive forces' rather than the road of revolution. Chiang Ching is said to have described Hua Kuo-feng's speech at the first Learn-from-Tachai Conference (1975), calling for the creation of Tachai-type counties throughout China, as 'a revisionist speech'.

#### 'Leftists' become Rightists

The slogan 'grasp revolution and promote production' indicates that revolution and production go hand-in-hand. In the long run if revolution is to succeed production must increase. Yet the activities of the Four damaged production in very many units and caused serious damage to the national economy, while their control of the news media enabled them to stifle or divert criticism. The New China News Agency has given an account (NCNA, 8 January, 77) of how Yao Wen-yuan sabotaged their plans to write of the national grief after Chou En-lai's death. The actions of the Four, as opposed to their words, put them where so many so-called Leftists have ended up—squarely in the camp of the ultra-Right.

Their exposure is by no means complete. There will have to be much more detailed discussion and study so that the whole Chinese people thoroughly understands their tactics and strategy. Their methods have been sketched above; their ultimate aim was to usurp supreme power in the Party and the state. That they did not come very near to doing this, was due to the warnings of Mao Tse-tung before his death, the distrust of the Chinese people and the prompt action of the Party Central Committee. In future more people will be on the look-out for the possibility that one tendency may cover another. The knowledge gained in this struggle will be invaluable in those still to come and will enable them to be terminated more quickly and with less damage to the economy.

Even in the West the influence of the Four has been felt. At a large meeting in London, within the last few days, to commemorate the first anniversary of the death of Chou En-lai, the spokesman for the Overseas Chinese community said that

after Chou's death they had wanted to hold a memorial meeting but had been prevented from doing so. At the anniversary meeting the splendid film *The East is Red* was shown. This had not been seen in Britain for years and enquiries had been answered by rather vague statements about unspecified political errors in the film. Seeing it now, we in London were able to share to some extent the enthusiasm of the Chinese people at the downfall of the Four.

The Four persistently opposed Premier Chou and attempted to discredit him. Now one can say with certainty that nothing which has been revealed has in any way tarnished either his reputation as one of the very greatest figures of the Chinese revolution or the Chinese people's affection for him. The Tien An Men disorders of April last, which centred around his death, are still not clear to us. The Four were involved and attempts were made to use the occasion to attack the memory of the Premier, but we outside China are not yet in a position to distinguish and separate the different threads.

#### Relying on the people

Facts available to citizens of the People's Republic enable them to express opinions on many matters—which they do strongly, even vehemently. Those who complain about the Chinese style in controversy should remember what Mao Tse-tung, who fought for 50 years against the Confucian Doctrine of the Mean, said in 1927: 'proper limits have to be exceeded in order to right a wrong, or else the wrong cannot be righted' (*Report of an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan*). The pendulum *must* swing widely if it is to drive the clock. These swings are in reality the operation of class struggle, the interaction of opposites which, understood by the Party of the working class, moves history forward. They will certainly continue.

Mao Tse-tung laid down the criteria; practice Marxism, not revisionism; unite and don't split; be open and aboveboard and don't intrigue and conspire. Intrigue and conspiracy are the hall-marks of those who are afraid of the people. If they did not hide their aims the people would repudiate them. Lin Piao and the 'gang of four' did behave as conspirators. To describe them we in the West might have used the biblical phrase: they feared the light because their deeds were evil. Before his death Mao saw the dangers inherent in the factional activities of the Four and his repeated criticisms have been quoted. Revolutionaries at much lower levels were also well aware of their acts, whence the remarkable unanimity of the response when they were removed from office.

Struggle, in China as elsewhere, is unavoidable. Lenin recognised the danger that a bourgeois bureaucracy might seize control of the state but unfortunately did not live long enough to institute effective safeguards. Mao Tse-tung had the good fortune—and it was good fortune for all the people of the world—to live a long time, to point out the danger clearly and to mobilise the Chinese people against it. This preoccupied him for the last 20 years of his life. He knew that the only way was to rely on the people and to lead them to make Marxism their own so that they could use it as a guide. When he died there was anxiety throughout the world: this was the moment when capitalist-roaders might make a bid for power. We here could only wait, putting our trust in the Chinese people. Now the conviction is growing that this last task of Chairman Mao was well accomplished.

We can be quite sure that other enemies will try to make use of the present exposure of the Four and that they, in their turn, will have to be uncovered and corrected. That one tendency is found to have covered another is not a criticism of the style of work of the Party—though with increasing experience one would hope to detect such tendencies sooner. Struggle operates dialectically, so that every current has its counter-current. Knowing this makes it less likely that one will be taken by surprise when new 'ghosts and monsters' appear.



## CHOU EN-LAI SPEAKS

At the 4th National People's Congress, in January 1975, Premier Chou En-lai had this to say on continuing the revolution and the relation between revolution and production:

'Socialist revolution is the powerful engine for developing the social productive forces. We must adhere to the principle of grasping revolution, promoting production and other work and preparedness against war, and with revolution in command, work hard to increase production and speed up socialist construction so that our socialist system will have a more solid material foundation. . . .'

'While tackling economic tasks, our leading comrades at all levels must pay close attention to the socialist revolution in the realm of the superstructure and keep a firm grasp on class struggle and the struggle between the two lines. Only when we do well in revolution is it possible to do well in production.'

## JUDGED BY DEEDS, NOT WORDS — 2

### The Army

At the session of the National People's Congress Standing Committee early in December, one member, Liang Pi-yeh (Deputy Head of the General Political Department of the Army) summarised the charges against the Four concerning the Army.

Behind the backs of the Party Central Committee, Chairman Mao and the leading central comrades in charge of the Army, the 'gang of four' repeatedly conspired to hit at the Army. Disregarding the organisations at various levels of the Army, they, in their own names, meddled in the affairs of Army units everywhere, wrote letters, sent reading material and issued 'directives' to them, labelled people indiscriminately and staged political movements in the army without authorisation. They directed the spearhead of their attacks at Chairman Mao and Premier Chou, at leading comrades of the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee and at high-level leading organs and leading comrades of some Army units, in a vain attempt to paralyse these organs and create chaos in the Army. The 'gang of four' brought false charges against time-tested veteran revolutionaries who had followed Chairman Mao in fighting across the country, in order to strike them down one by one. They incited the masses to fight among themselves, storm military organisations, seize arms and ammunition and engage in armed strife.

(*Hsinhua*, 4 December 1976).

According to the theoretical group of the training group of the General Staff in a *People's Daily* article (*Hsinhua* 7 December), 'having failed to bring the Army to heel' they 'did all they could to disrupt it'.

Chiang Ching had the cheek to say that the Army 'does not carry out my instructions, not one of them' and went so far as to claim that 'not heeding my words means not heeding the Party's words' . . .

At the end of 1974, Wang Hung-wen said at a meeting: 'How shall we do the political work in the Army. For the time being I am afraid that the Military Commission cannot be counted on to work out the methods' . . .

In the spring of 1975, when the whole Party, the whole Army and the people of the whole country started an upsurge in studying the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat in accordance with Chairman Mao's instructions, Chang Chun-chiao in an attempt to suppress the rising mass study movement then openly scolded the Army units for making study plans, saying this was 'formalism' . . .

Yao Wen-yuan made use of mass media to suppress and discredit the Army.

The 'gang of four' walked in the footsteps of Lin Piao. In 1967, Chiang Ching, Chang Chun-chiao and Lin Piao worked together to raise the reactionary slogans 'drag out

We should thoroughly criticise revisionism, criticise capitalist tendencies and criticise such erroneous ideas and style of work as servility to things foreign, the doctrine of trailing behind at a snail's pace, and extravagance and waste.

'Chairman Mao points out, "Rely mainly on our own efforts while making external assistance subsidiary, break down blind faith, go in for industry, agriculture and technical and cultural revolutions independently, do away with slavishness, bury dogmatism, learn from the good experience of other countries conscientiously and be sure to study their bad experience too, so as to draw lessons from it. This is our line." This line has enabled us to break the imperialist blockade and withstand social-imperialist pressure, and the progress of our economy has been sound and vigorous all along, regardless of economic fluctuations and crises in the capitalist world. We must always adhere to this line.'

the small handful in the Army' and 'catch Armymen who follow the Liu-Teng line' . . .

They did what imperialism, revisionism and reaction attempted to do but cannot, and played the role of wreckers that the enemy cannot. They were out-and-out traitors.

These charges are perhaps the gravest so far brought against the Four, and much more is bound to be heard of them.

### Culture

Of all the material so far published in China, the story of a *dazibao* put up as long ago as 8 August 1975 by Li Chun-kuang brings most vividly to life the thousands of words that are being poured out against the Four. At that time he could not criticise them by name; he attacked their followers who controlled the Ministry of Culture. Li, a 35-year-old teacher at the May Seventh Arts University conservatory of music, spoke at three meetings held to discuss Chairman Mao's directive on the film 'The Pioneers':

There is no big error in this film. Suggest that it be approved for distribution. Don't nitpick. And to list as many as ten accusations against it is going too far. It hampers the adjustment of the Party's current policy on literature and art.

The *Hsinhua* report (5 December) on Li's *dazibao* explains that the debate on the film was not a debate on the merits or demerits of a film, but an acute struggle between the two classes.

The masses welcomed the poster with joy and spread it far and wide. But the 'gang of four', wielding the power they had usurped, tried to block the spreading of its contents and in particular forbade its being reported to Chairman Mao and the Party Central Committee. They awaited an opportunity to counter-attack.

After the start of the movement to criticise Teng Hsiao-ping they thought that the time was ripe.

They persecuted Li Chun-kuang and other revolutionary people opposed to them. In June of this year they ordered Li Chun-kuang to be put in custody and investigated, and searched high and low for sympathisers with the poster and 'those manoeuvring behind the scenes'. They threatened to track them down no matter who they are, directing the spearhead of their attacks at the Party Central Committee.

History is inexorable. The Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Hua Kuo-feng smashed the 'gang of four' at one stroke, thus ridding the people of a big evil. Li Chun-kuang, together with his big character poster, has been liberated.

The *dazibao* itself merits extended quotation, but extracts must suffice.

You accused the film of 'glorifying someone'. Let me



ask: whom does it glorify? Is there anyone of all the comrades present here who was not moved when he visited the Taching oilfield? . . . We may well say that the film glorifies the Chinese proletariat, but is this something unjustified or impermissible? . . .

Chairman Mao . . . stressed the need to unite 95 per cent of the cadres. . . . How many veteran cadres under the Ministry of Culture have been put to use? Comrade Ma Ke, for instance, has been subjected to investigation for nine years and no evidence has been found to show that he had been an enemy, special agent or renegade. His case is roughly one of following the erroneous line. . . . He warmly responded to the call Chairman Mao issued in the 'Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art' and composed music for the modern opera 'The White-Haired Girl'. . . . He asked for a tiny bit of work, hoping to make amends for his previous faults (after he had been criticised in the Cultural Revolution—Ed.) . . . It's been nine years and nine years are not short. How many nine years are there in a cadre's life? The masses have long been dissatisfied with such things but dare not speak out. For speaking out is itself a crime.

Studying theory, narrowing the differences and restricting bourgeois right. You keep on lecturing others on this, but how have you acted upon it? . . . Lu Hsun . . . told members of the League of Left-wing Writers in 1930: 'Don't think that after the revolution succeeds the masses of workers and peasants will invite you to ride in special cars and eat special food. It may be hard to have black bread to eat'. How lucky our revolutionary writers and artists are now! Lenin punished the administrative cadre who had raised his salary. Chairman Mao criticised his bodyguard who had caught fish to serve him on the Long March. . . .

But today everything is splendid. After the great victory of the revolution has been won, you have become heroes of a special sort and you are entitled to special food, special clothes and special cars. What a stinking lousy thing. Everyone is dissatisfied, including many members of the model revolutionary theatrical production companies who are 'beneficiaries' of all this. But such things cannot be talked about. . . . When have you ever tolerated a few words of criticism or suggestions? One remark of yours is like an imperial edict and everyone must respond 'Yes' and 'All right' . . .

## TO OUR READERS

'The Human Essence'. We have just placed an order for a second edition of George Thomson's study of the sources of science and art, the steady sales of which have been very gratifying. Owing to the increased costs of everything the price will have to go up but the new edition will not be ready for several months and in the meantime there are still copies of the first edition available at 70p, post free. A German translation has just been published: *Vom Wesen des Menschen*, Verlag Neuer Weg, Stuttgart. We wish it every success; we know that great pains have been taken with the translation and production.

'From Marx to Mao Tse-tung'. This too is being reprinted. It has been necessary to increase the price from 75p to 90p, post free, but there are still some copies available at the old price.

'Capitalism and After'. An unfortunate error has been found in the second (current) edition of this work, the first two lines on page 14 have been transposed. Erratum slips are being put in all books sold henceforth, but those who have already bought copies may care to make a note of the correction.

Donations. We acknowledge with sincere thanks another very good total of donations for the last quarter of last year — £132. Many gifts came from abroad, reminding us that the inflation which causes prices to soar in this country does at least increase

Chairman Mao's directive serves as a flame. The flame of the great truth of Marxism. Whoever wants to put this flame out is bound to fail. It seems that the Ministry of Culture intends first to reduce major issues to minor ones, and then minor ones to naught. I think this won't do. Don't underestimate Chairman Mao's strength. Don't underestimate the people's strength. Don't underestimate the strength of the truth of Marxism.

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Inevitably, this article has only touched on some of the important questions concerning the theory and practice of Marxism which the case of the Four raises. It raises squarely the question of the betrayal that takes the form of preaching revolution but impeding it in practice by frustrating the collective effort of many to achieve the next difficult step towards socialism. There is an old Chinese saying 'the name without the reality'. A Chinese correspondent writes that

the people of China, unlike starry-eyed friends abroad relying solely on our official media, felt Chiang Ching, Chang Chun-chiao and Yao Wen-yuan were a menace. Wang Hung-wen's role wasn't so clear to us.

The present article is also based largely on reports in the official media, and it may be objected that, even if they were until recently controlled by the Four, they are now controlled by others. However, a new openness and new style of argumentation of which there is evidence in some (though by no means all) articles should encourage us to continue to study what China says, and to make our own analyses and assessments, with help from people of experience on whom we can rely. The final word may be left with one such:

Whatever contributions the four made at earlier stages in their lives, I believe that power and promotion went to their heads. All of us have conflicting ideologies in our heads, waging ideological struggle. In China it is recognised that this is a form of class struggle between proletarian and bourgeois ideology. Each of us has some of each. Which is dominant at different stages of our lives? Which finally gains the upper hand? Promotion and power are dangerous to those who have not made proletarian ideology dominant. As these four rose, gained power and accepted privilege, they turned from revolutionaries into careerists. That I believe is the heart of the problem.

the value to us of money from elsewhere.

We have also had a number of letters from readers asking for information about current events in China and help in interpreting them. We shall continue to give this to the best of our ability but in the last analysis everyone must weigh the evidence for themselves, maintain a critical outlook and try to base judgments on Marxism.

Bound Volumes. We remind readers that the bound volume containing the 1974 and 1975 issues, with indices, is still available at £4.00, post free.

THE CHINA POLICY STUDY GROUP

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