

CHINA POLICY STUDY GROUP
BROADSHEET

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RIGHTS TO FIGHT FOR

When the people of a country overthrow the exploiting classes, they take into their hands the power to determine their own 'rights'. By their initiative and labour they can, so long as they prevent a counterrevolution, develop the material assets and culture they wish. They begin with the employment prospects, industries, housing, schools, medical services and consumer goods inherited from the old society and, under the leadership of the working class, overcome limitations and deficiencies step by step. Experience has shown that it can be done.

Throughout the centuries during which the oppressed have risen in rebellion, ideas of the privileges and dignity appropriate to men have evolved in different societies. In 1776 the US Declaration of Independence held 'that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness'.

All such noble phrases disappointed in the end, being limited in practice to the ruling class. Only with the proletarian dictatorship can the great majority work out for themselves the 'rights' which they will claim and fight to defend. The Chinese people would have no rights without the leadership of the working class and its political party, which was founded and led by Mao Zedong.

As one would have expected, in the atmosphere of the great debate on political and economic issues going on in China, there is no popular support for the tiny minority of counterrevolutionaries to be allowed to propagate their views unhindered. The working people will not allow to others the 'right' to advocate the destruction of their state. But they will continue unchecked their own campaign of exposure and criticism of all those who hinder the development of socialism. And they will continue to uncover and rectify the unjust verdicts of the past and the errors due to bureaucracy.

Contradictions among the people, that is, the differences of opinion inevitably occurring during the building of socialism, will be dealt with by reasoned discussion, not by legal sanctions.

VIETNAMESE BETRAY 1970 PLEDGE

The people and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam once again declare recognition of, and pledge respect for, the territorial integrity of Cambodia within its present borders. The Vietnamese people pledge themselves always to side with the fraternal Khmer and Lao peoples, in mutual esteem and support, in cordial solidarity and devoted mutual support in the struggle against the common enemy, and in a long-term cooperation with a view to national construction according to the road and abilities of each people.

Pham Van Dong, Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, at the Indochinese Peoples' Summit Conference, April 1970 (*Giaphong Editions, South Vietnam*).

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CHANG CHUN-CHIAO'S SWAN SONG

CHANG Chun-chiao's article, 'On Exercising All-Round Dictatorship over the Bourgeoisie' (*Peking Review*, No. 14, 1975) represented his bid to be considered a leading and original Marxist-Leninist theorist and to attain even higher office. It has been praised by Bettelheim as 'a frontal attack (even if not always with sufficient clarity) on some of the problems presented by so-called socialist ownership' and, what is more, as an attempt at a class analysis of China (Bettelheim, 'The Great Leap Backward,' *Monthly Review*, July-August 1978, pp. 71 and 93-4). Actually, the article consists, firstly, of errors both theoretical and factual, secondly, of some new information and of some pseudo-analysis of this information, thirdly, of standard quotations from Marx, Lenin and Mao Tsetung and, finally and mostly, of platitudes and claptrap.

Chang's theoretical errors have been dealt with at some length by Wang Hui-teh and by Wang Kuei-hsiu and Chang Hsien-yang, among others, in articles en-

titled 'Why did Chang Chun-chiao Kick up a Fuss over the Question of Ownership?' and 'How did Chang Chun-chiao Tamper with the Theory of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat?' (*PR*, Nos. 1 and 3, 1978). The latter convincingly show that Chang emasculated the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat by confining it to dictatorship over the bourgeoisie—interpreted very dogmatically and misleadingly at that—and by failing to include such essential ingredients as democracy among the people and the worker-peasant alliance or to deal with the necessity for differentially handling the contradictions among the people and the contradictions between the people and the enemy. Chang has a marked tendency to treat all contradictions as contradictions with the enemy and to confuse 'all-round dictatorship over the bourgeoisie' with the Gang of Four's all-round dictatorship over everything. When they exercised dictatorship over education, they made a terrible mess; reading Bettelheim (*op. cit.*, pp. 62-65), one might infer that making this mess was 'revolution' and trying to clear up

this mess is 'counterrevolution'. When they exercised dictatorship over culture, they made it a desert and called it an oasis of 'new socialist things'.

Another theoretical error is Chang's attempt to have it both ways on commodity production. It is a dire necessity for China to increase the production of commodities, including commodity grain (see Mao Tsetung, *Selected Works*, Volume V, p. 381). So Chang has no alternative but to admit the need 'to continue practising commodity production' quite explicitly and the need to expand it not quite so explicitly. At the same time he stresses the need for restricting it and curbing the harm it causes (Chang Chun-chiao, *op. cit.*, pp. 8 and 10). But he doesn't tell us how it can be expanded, and therefore encouraged, and restricted, and therefore discouraged, at one and the same time.

There is a glaring factual error in the very second paragraph of Chang's article where he says 'our socialist cause is thriving'. The accompanying table shows how, so far from thriving, the Chinese economy, the foundation of China's socialist cause, was stagnating and even regressing in 1974-76 while the Gang of Four was running rampant, and how it has recovered since their overthrow.

GROSS VALUE OF INDUSTRIAL OUTPUT AND STATE REVENUES

	Gross Value of Industrial Output		State Revenues
	% Change over Previous Year		
	National	Shanghai	
1974	+0.3	+6.2	-3.3
1975	+15.1	+5.3	+4.2
1976	+1.3	+1.9	-7.8
1977	+14.3	+8.7	+16.4
1978	+12+*	+12.0	+27.5

*estimated

It should be noted that the national recovery in 1975 was due not to the Gang of Four but, on the contrary, to the fierce struggles in the Central Committee in that year during which their power was temporarily and partly neutralised. Hua Kuo-feng stated in his Report to the Fifth National People's Congress that as a result of the Gang's interference and sabotage 'the nation lost about 100 billion yuan in gross value of industrial output, 28 million tons of steel, and 40 billion yuan in state revenues', and this estimate is probably conservative. The miserable record of Shanghai industry from 1974 to 1976 should also be noted. Indeed the percentage increase of 1.9% in 1976 was the lowest since liberation, and the increases in 1974 and 1975 were far below the average for 1949-1973. So much for Bettelheim's claim that 'There has been no long stagnation or regression in the national economy'† and that 'in the municipality of Shanghai, where the revolutionary line was applied most coherently (!!)... the "economic results" appear to have been excellent' (Bettelheim, *op. cit.*, pp. 77 and 93, Bettelheim's italics).

Among many other errors there is Chang's bald assertion that 'in the various spheres of the superstructure, some areas are in fact still controlled by the bourgeoisie, which has the upper hand'. He goes so far as to maintain that the bourgeoisie still holds 'fortified villages', which he compares to a fortified village mentioned by Chairman Mao because it was held by a handful of *armed* counter-revolutionaries and had to be stormed by the Red Army in 1936! And Chang characteristically adds a sinister touch by mentioning that this fortified village was situated 'near the site of the Party Central Committee'. (Chang, *op. cit.*, pp. 8 and 10). Since he cannot be referring to the areas in the superstructure controlled by the Gang of Four and since he in no way specifies the areas and 'fortified villages' held by the bourgeoisie, the only conclusion to be drawn is that he is throwing out wild accusations and

indulging in claptrap. Interestingly enough, Chang makes not a single reference to the incubus of *feudal* survivals in the superstructure. It is not too much to say that awareness of this incubus is indispensable to an understanding of how Lin Piao and the Gang of Four usurped as much power as they did and that, while such feudal survivals are now being combated, they are still fettering people's minds and obstructing the development of the productive forces.

The new information Chang Chun-chiao offers deals with the balance between the state, collective and private sectors in industry, agriculture and commerce in 1973 and with the division of income and ownership in Shanghai's suburban communes in 1973-74. It is hardly news that the state, i.e. the whole people, occupies the dominant position in industry and in retail sales, that the collective does so in agriculture, and that the private sector is very small indeed. Naturally, this is confirmed by Chang's figures and he admits 'the dominant position of ownership by the whole people' (Chang, *op. cit.*, p. 6). Yet he goes on to say that his statistics 'show that private ownership still exists *partially* (our italics), in industry, agriculture and commerce'. The state and collective sectors together accounted for 100% of the gross value of industrial output, but presumably this percentage is rounded and the 0.8% of the people engaged in industry who were individual handicraftsmen produced some small fraction of 1% of industrial output. Thus, as far as industry is concerned, Chang's use of the word 'partially' is sheer pedantry, if not worse.

As for agriculture and commerce, much of the produce of the small private plots is consumed at source, while part of the remainder is sold at rural fairs; in addition there are, first, 'a limited amount of household side-line production' and, second, the negligible 0.2% of total retail sales handled by individual pedlars. All these items together cannot account for more than several per cent of agricultural production or of retail sales. It should be remembered that Article 7 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China stipulates: 'Provided that the absolute predominance of the collective economy of the people's commune is ensured, commune members may farm small plots of land for personal needs' and 'engage in limited household side-line production'. So Wang Hui-teh is being kind when he says: 'We need not discuss whether in social science such small percentages prove anything' (*PR*, No. 1, 1978, pp. 16-17).

Two new lessons are to be learned from Chang's statistics for 1973. First, the fact that as many as 36.2% of the people engaged in industry, work in collective enterprises is in no small part due to the healthy growth of commune industry. Chang doesn't bother to mention this, maybe because he thinks it is so obvious. Second, and no less instructive, it can easily be calculated from Chang's figures on industry that per capita productivity in terms of gross value of industrial output in the state sector is roughly 3½ times that in the collective sector, while fixed assets per capita in the former are roughly 18½ times that in the latter. This enormous discrepancy

† Bettelheim's translator uses 'protracted' for the French 'long'. The problem may be a matter of nuance, but the official English translation of the Chinese uses 'long' (*PR*, No. 1, 1978, p. 7) and Hua Kuo-feng in his Report to the First Session of the Fifth National People's Congress says, 'The economy, once in a state of stagnation or even decline and retrogression...' without any adjective at all. However, it is not the only error in *Monthly Review's* version of Bettelheim's *Questions Sur La Chine après la mort de Mao Tsé-Toung*. For example, 'The Great Leap Backward' is not the title of Bettelheim's work in the original, and the footnote on p. 121 of the French original is simply omitted in the English translation. Perhaps, in contrast to Bettelheim who preferred gallantry, however misplaced, to discretion in withdrawing his reservation about Chiang Ching, the translator thought discretion to be the better part of gallantry.

between per capita fixed assets and per capita productivities cries out for explanation. Chang does not mention this discrepancy, let alone try to explain it, nor does Chang's admirer, Charles Bettelheim. Unquestionably, a major factor here was the gross under-utilisation of capacity in the state sector of industry even in the relatively good year 1973. There is no reason to suppose that there was any perceptible change for the better in 1974-76, if anything the reverse. And while there has been some real progress since 1976, under-utilisation of capacity still remains a problem.

The statistics on communes deal with the distribution of income and of ownership of fixed assets between the commune, the production brigades and the production teams in communes on the outskirts of Shanghai. But Chang Chun-chiao does not deign to mention the general trend for commune and brigade industry to grow and for their income relative to that of the production team to grow with it. Nor does he mention the fact that communes in the suburbs of big cities enjoy the great advantages of immediate access to urban facilities as well as ready markets for vegetables, fruit, meat, dairy products and eggs, and that, while numerically small, they are generally the most advanced of China's 50,000 communes.

So what Chang has to offer is some statistics on ownership in industry, agriculture and commerce confirming what is already well known and accompanied by half-baked comments, some new figures on industry the significance of which he does not realise, and some new figures on income and ownership in unrepresentative communes which are inadequately explained. And this is what Bettelheim, in a burst of generosity, says is an attempt at a class analysis of China! Bettelheim misses the point when he says that the Four have been criticised for wanting to make such an analysis. No, what Chang is criticised for is his pretentiousness in dressing up his ill-assorted and ill-digested data and commentary as a class analysis, and an *original* one at that. It is clear that by exaggerating the extent of private ownership and of bourgeois positions of power in the superstructure and the negative significance of the co-existence of state and collective ownership Chang is deliberately minimising the sturdiness of China's socialist system, a sturdiness confirmed by the overthrow of the Gang of Four, by China's recovery from their ravages and by its embarking on its ambitious modernisation programme.

The low level of development of the productive forces in China is a stark reality which must never be forgotten and in which Chang and Bettelheim with him show little or no interest. When Chang says that 'our economic base is not yet solid' (Chang, *op. cit.*, p. 7), it is not

this stark reality which he has in mind. Yet it is the fundamental factor accounting for the relative weakness of China's industrial base, for the dominant position of collective ownership in agriculture, for the fact that the production team is generally still the basic accounting unit in the commune and for the survival of private plots. The drastic development of the productive forces, the four modernisations, are essential prerequisites for achieving the progressive transformation of the socialist relations of production and a progressive and substantial rise in living standards. According to Bettelheim, to hold this unvarnished truth is a manifestation of vulgar 'economism', but he has not only Marx and Lenin but also Mao Tsetung against him. It was Chairman Mao who wrote, '*The purpose of our revolution is to develop the social forces of production*' (Mao Tsetung, *A Critique of Soviet Economics*, Monthly Review Press, 1977, p. 41, *our italics*).

The third ingredient of Chang Chun-chiao's article is a series of standard quotations from the Marxist classics. Those from Marx and Lenin are interpreted in a dogmatic and obscurantist way. As for citations from Chairman Mao, there is no need to show again how Chang grotesquely misapplied the Chairman's comment on a fortified village.

Platitudes and claptrap are the final and largest ingredient of Chang's article. After stealing the credit for the two documents heralding the 'January Storm' in Shanghai, he and Yao Wen-yuan played the leading role in hastily forming the so-called Shanghai Commune in February 1967. This was an unrepresentative paper outfit, a cheap political stunt, distinguished by claptrap from its start to its early and unlamented demise, and Chang had to make a self-criticism for his blunder soon after. Yet it is this same outfit that Bettelheim, blending invincible ignorance with incurable utopianism in equal proportions, regards as the peak of the Cultural Revolution. Bettelheim made good use of Lenin's 'A Great Beginning' in his *Class Struggles in the USSR*, Volume 1. It is a pity that he has since failed to recall the following passage from the same article (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Volume 29, pp. 431-2) in which Lenin anticipates with deadly accuracy the Shanghai Commune, Chang Chun-chiao and Yao Wen-yuan.

'The word "commune" is being handled much too freely... We must see to it and make sure that in future anyone who calls his enterprise, institution or undertaking a commune *without having proved* this by hard work and *practical success in prolonged efforts* (*italics Lenin's*), by exemplary and truly communist organisation, is mercilessly ridiculed and pilloried as a charlatan or a windbag.'

The Awkward Truth about Vietnam's Leaders

VIETNAM as an aggressor, as an enemy of the peoples fighting against imperialism to win or to defend their independence and their power to determine their own future! Such an idea is highly disturbing, even objectionable, to some long-standing friends and supporters of the anti-imperialist movements in Asia.

Condemnations of the Vietnamese government's recent actions are not convincing if they seem to be merely anti-Vietnamese propaganda. Rightly so. There was a time, starting over thirty years ago, when the French, British and US imperialists backed their military aggression against the Indochinese peoples with vilification of their victims. At that time many of us, and BROADSHEET regularly from the time it began to be published, worked to put the record straight. It was an important part of the struggle against both US imperialism and revisionism and opportunism in the Communist movement, to do everything possible to advance the victory of the Vietnamese. It was a matter of principle. This would

have been so, whatever the political colour of the leaders of Vietnam's national resistance against the worst enemies of the working class and the oppressed nations. The South Vietnamese NLF and the North Vietnamese government, even if they had then been despotic and opposed to socialism, which they were not, were in any case fighting a just war. But the fact is that the Vietnamese, and the Kampuchians and Laotians, received world-wide support and admiration, and exposed, as never before, the moral and political bankruptcy of the crusade led by the mighty United States.

We come now to the present world situation. It is difficult for some to criticise and oppose the recent policies and practice of the Vietnamese government. Why? Is it because to do so is to slander a truly revolutionary leadership? Or is it because in this case, consciousness of events has been lagging behind the actual course of developments—in the world situation, within Indochina, and within Vietnam? The notes that follow

are intended as the first part of a contribution towards a considered answer, taking into account Hanoi's alignment with social imperialism, its attacks on Kampuchea and China, its militarisation of Vietnamese society, etc.

Self-reliance and mutual support in Indochina

The Vietnamese people under Ho Chi Minh owed their victory mainly to their own self-reliant efforts. But they owed something also to the people, and governments, of neighbouring, allied and even some capitalist countries. The Laotians and Kampuchians, (like the Chinese) made most valuable contributions. They allowed their territory to be used, thus inviting on themselves even more interference and massive destruction by the US than ever before. Even earlier, just after the World War, the Vietnamese benefited by the Kampuchean's opposition, under Sihanouk, to French designs. In this, pressure by the Khmer Freedom Front (KFF) played an important part in the 1940s and 1950s. When, after Dien Bien Phu, the US installed Diem in Saigon and rigged up the anti-China SEATO, Sihanouk refused to allow his country to become part of it. Consequently, Dulles & Co., like the French, tried to use Kampuchean traitors against the Kampuchean patriots; the CIA became very active in Kampuchea (as in Laos), and Sihanouk's government was badly harassed. But Kampuchean non-alignment continued to frustrate US policies against North Vietnam. When, from 1965, the US intervened massively against the South Vietnamese NLF, the Kampuchians provided much-needed sanctuary for the latter. In other words, they deliberately allowed part of their territory to be occupied, their sovereignty to be encroached upon, and their resources to supply people who in the pre-colonial past had been national enemies; the US invasion and bombing and the Lon Nol coup were part of the cost.

After March 1970 the Kampuchean revolutionaries who had once formed the KFF and in 1960 the CP of Kampuchea (CPK) became de facto leaders of the National United Front, with Sihanouk as the head. It was no secret then that the people's resistance controlled vast areas of Kampuchea, and that they allowed the SVNLF and North Vietnamese forces to use north-eastern, eastern and southeastern Kampuchea as their rear area. Without this sanctuary and support the latter just could not have out-manoeuvred as they did US imperialism and its puppet régimes. The Kampuchean Communists through practice had gained valuable revolutionary experience and had their roots deep among the people. Because of this the masses willingly bore the heavy cost of what they took to be the friendly foreign presence. The CPK's correct line and leadership also enabled them to lead the Kampuchean workers, peasants and revolutionary intellectuals, through people's war, to inflict on US imperialism a decisive military and political defeat of world-historic importance, thus opening the way for final victory in Vietnam (See BROAD-SHEET, April, May, June 1975).

The Kampuchians' determination to be independent had served the Vietnamese well. The latter also had from the 1930s onwards their own rich political experience, and had cooperated with and helped the Kampuchians. Especially after the intensified US aggression in 1970, the united stand of the peoples of Vietnam, Kampuchea and Laos and of their leaders enabled each to win victories which would have been much more difficult if they had fought in isolation or against one another. The April 1970 three-nation summit meeting drew up a Joint Declaration, signed by the four leaders, Nguyen Huu Tho, Pham Van Dong, Norodom Sihanouk and Souphanouvong. The two Vietnamese leaders very solemnly and explicitly undertook to respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Laos and Kampuchea (See page 1).

Subsequent events and self-revelations have, however, shown that there was a wide gap between what Hanoi

proclaimed and promised in moments of desperate dangers and difficulties, and its actions and true intentions. The Vietnam Workers' Party (VWP) resumed its hostile attitude and actions towards the CPK, even when the CPK's continued leadership and successes in Kampuchea were presenting the US ruling class with one of the biggest problems it had ever faced. This is part of the truth which is proving to be awkward for all those who backed the VWP and SVNLF leadership not only as leaders of a just war but also believing them to be proletarian internationalists, real Marxist-Leninists.

After their final victory on 17 April 1975, the Kampuchean people promptly set about healing the terrible wounds of war. In conditions of immense suffering and devastation, and the hostility of the big powers, they had to rely almost exclusively on their own efforts to do three things: to produce again the basic necessities of life for all; to guard against foreign attempts to reimpose imperialist hegemony over Kampuchea in any form; and to apply Marxism-Leninism to bring about socialist revolution and construction. Despite some leftist errors they strictly observed non-alignment.

For the Vietnamese, in *their* period of post-war reconstruction, a relationship of friendship with Kampuchea on the basis of the Five Principles, would have been most advantageous. If Vietnam wanted to be independent, it needed an independent and non-aligned Kampuchea—which was soon in a position to feed all its once-starving people and also to export rice. But the Vietnamese government did precisely as the French and US had done. They refused to deal with the neighbouring governments on the basis of equality and mutual respect; they intrigued with anti-patriotic elements previously fostered by imperialist and social-imperialist agencies; they tried to eliminate Kampuchean Communist leaders who would not accede to their demands. In addition they joined in the chorus of the most reactionary imperialist fabrications about Democratic Kampuchea; launched a series of attacks leading to a full-scale invasion aimed at over-throwing the legitimate government, their previous 'comrades'; and finally set up in Phnom Penh a puppet régime even less Kampuchean than that of Lon Nol.

All this was strange thanks for the past and virtually a confession of duplicity during the war in dealings with their own people and the forces all over the world rallying to their support.

TO OUR READERS

Donations

During the first three months of this year we have been sent a total of £65 by readers, which included a generous gift from Greece. We are very grateful to all who contributed.

Double issue

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Our office will be closed from June 2 until July 9. Please forgive any delays.

THE CHINA POLICY STUDY GROUP

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