

CHINA POLICY STUDY GROUP
BROADSHEET

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THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION
and the Question of Capitalist Restoration

IN his article—'The Great Leap Backward'—Charles Bettelheim has argued at length that since the death of Mao Zedong, the new leadership has reversed the gains of the Cultural Revolution by 'substituting the struggle for production for the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat'. He rests his argument on certain facts and pronouncements in the Chinese press, but behind it lies a particular conception of the Cultural Revolution and the period of transition, through which he interprets his information.

Mao Zedong, in his assessment of the Cultural Revolution, said it was 70 per cent good and 30 per cent bad. This might conjure to mind a scoreboard of successes and failures—but that's mechanical. Mao Zedong was a dialectician: in summing up a situation, his concern was to develop conceptual knowledge or theory, and in analysing the positive and negative aspects of the Cultural Revolution, the aim is to gain a deeper understanding of continuing revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat and hence strengthen its practice. Having had the opportunity to discuss some points during a recent visit to China—in particular at a meeting with staff and students from the Department of Political Economy at Wuhan University—I wish to take a critical look at Bettelheim's assumptions about the Cultural Revolution, the continuation of the class struggle and the period of socialist transition, which distort his understanding of the current situation.

The Cultural Revolution

In Bettelheim's view, the Cultural Revolution 'included new revolutionary orientations which implied a radical qualitative change, the transition to a new stage of revolution'. One of its central aims, he said, was a revolutionary change in production relations: 'the struggle waged by workers themselves with a view to transforming the labour process and production and thereby production relations'. But in fact, the Cultural Revolution 'overcame the separation of the immediate producers and the means of production to only a slight degree', and now, the present leadership by 'substituting the struggle for production for the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and calling for the struggle for production to be led by experts and technicians ... can only strengthen the *capitalist division of labour* and those *capitalist production relations* which have not yet been destroyed'.

Mao Zedong said: 'In socialist society, class contradictions still remain and class struggle does not die out after the socialist transformation of the ownership of the means of production'. As one leading cadre told us:

Class struggle continues because after the proletariat has seized power, there remains the problem of how to *keep* power in its hands. Since in a socialist society the Party exercises leadership over everything, enemies of the proletariat seek agents

within the Party and the two-line struggle in the Party is the reflection of the class struggle in society; if the Rightist line gained control, this would lead to capitalist restoration.

Before the Cultural Revolution, acute struggle between two lines existed on all fronts. Mao Zedong wrote *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People* in struggle against Liu Shaoqi, but even this did not solve the problem. With the restoration of capitalism in the USSR, it became even more urgent to struggle against revisionism and in view of this Mao Zedong personally initiated and led the Cultural Revolution. This was his weapon against capitalist restoration. He realised that it wouldn't do for the Party's policies and two-line struggle within it to be known only by the Party—they must be known by the masses, for without mobilising the masses it would be impossible to change the situation—you can only get things done if you involve people in doing them. Stalin failed to get people to grasp Leninist theory and to supervise the leadership, so the leading organs of the Party and state became divorced from the masses, making it easy for a clique at the top to change the Party's line and so restore capitalism.

In the Cultural Revolution, there was a great surge in the political awareness of the people throughout the country. People realised it was everyone's responsibility to be involved in state affairs, because their ability to tell genuine from sham Marxism is crucial to the two-line struggle in the Party and the defeat of revisionism. Through the Cultural Revolution the people developed new forms of democracy, now adopted in the Constitution, like the right to 'speak out freely, air views fully, hold great debates and write big-character posters'. These enabled the people to play a determining role in the struggle against Liu Shaoqi, Lin Biao and the Gang of Four.

What was the target of the Cultural Revolution?

The Chinese view that the Cultural Revolution was essentially a mass movement against the immediate threat of revisionism gaining power in the leading organs of the Party and state, seems to fall short of Bettelheim's requirement that if the Cultural Revolution was the weapon against capitalist restoration, its prime target in continuing the class struggle should have been to eliminate or transform those elements which provide the economic basis for capitalist restoration.

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For the Communists, the crisis lies in a decline of their working-class support (*Sunday Times*, 5 November 78).

Do we also need to be reminded of the bloody suppression of the Allende government in Chile and the worldwide machinations of US imperialism and the CIA?

The Proletarian State

In a bourgeois parliamentary democracy the State has the appearance of being impartial, in the same way as the forces of law are supposed to be. Engels described it as 'a power apparently standing above society... for the purpose of moderating the conflict and keeping it within the bounds of "order"...' (*The Origin of the Family*). The Conservative Party made the slogan of 'law and order' and a policy of restraining trade union activity major features in its election programme. But no-one who has studied their works can doubt that all the great leaders of the working class, from Marx to Mao, believed that any State is a coercive apparatus set up to keep a ruling class in power; they never, hypocritically, suggested that the proletarian State would be any different. But socialism means power in the hands of the working people, who do not exploit or oppress themselves; the State remains necessary to protect them from a resurgence of their former oppressors, in the same way as a bourgeois State tries to prevent the rise of any class that could challenge its power. Class struggle continues so long as imperialism continues, and so long as the remnants of the former capitalist class try to get back to their ruling position. They are a declining minority and in time the whole class will disappear.

In a proletarian State, because sovereignty resides in the masses, it is essential that they become directly involved in the business of government. To do this is no easy matter and it requires prolonged, painstaking work by the Party to encourage the masses to exercise their rights under the Constitution—to speak out, to criticise the leadership, to write big character posters, to take an active part in political affairs. Democratic centralism begins in field, factory and army units and continues through countries, regions and provinces up to the national organs of Party and State. The working class themselves are beginning to exercise control and make decisions in all the processes of production, distribution and administration. They must also exercise control over the enemies of the people who want to restore capitalism.

This is what is meant by 'democratic dictatorship' and by 'uniting all who can be united'. It does not mean abandoning the dictatorship of the proletariat in favour of the bourgeois form of parliamentary democracy. There should be no mistake about this: those who actively uphold bourgeois democracy have neither the will nor the intention to bring about socialism. Eurocommunism actually means putting the strength of the working class movement at the disposal of the enemies of the working class, by collaborating with the class that governs them.

Masses Must be United

Socialism can be achieved only by uniting the broad masses of the people. In China the industrial proletariat made up only a small fraction of the labouring classes, but the CPC was able to unite them with the exploited peasants, patriotic intellectuals and national bourgeoisie to win and retain state power.

In the very different situation in the industrialised West the same principles will have to be applied. In Britain, as the last election showed, the Labour Party is quite unable to win even the intellectuals and petty bourgeoisie, who exploit no-one's labour and to whom only socialism offers a secure future. Its leaders put for-

ward, in an only slightly disguised form, the very ideas the bourgeoisie holds, so it is no wonder the working class does not accept their guidance. The middle class, as always, vacillate and are on the whole inclined to prefer the 'free enterprise' of capitalism to the bureaucratic controls they associate with social democracy.

Only a truly proletarian party can unite the masses and convince them that revolutionary socialism can give them a secure and truly free future—one in which there will be brought about, as Lenin put it, 'such a diffusion of democracy among such an overwhelming majority of the population that the need for a *special machine* of suppression will begin to disappear' (*State and Revolution*).

This cannot happen so long as imperialism and social-imperialism last. We should not allow ourselves to be persuaded into compromise over the necessity for the exploited masses, once they have thrown off their yoke, to make sure that they never let power out of their hands again.

MATERIAL OR MORAL INCENTIVES ?

The Beijing *Workers' Daily* of May 4 carried eight readers' letters on this question, expressing varying views. One writer thought material reward the most important, in that it enabled workers to see clearly that their own interests were involved and that they would benefit if they worked hard. Talk about moral encouragement he considered 'abstract and empty'.

Another writer, from Jiangsu Province, said that in his county those enterprises which had combined political work and economic incentives had raised production. Economic rewards alone, he thought, encouraged workers to think only of personal gain and they would lose sight of their political goal. Relations among them would become strained.

A worker at the Beijing Woollen Blanket Factory explained that in his plant they keep track of the achievements of every comrade and publicise them. They calculate how much their workshop produces above the yearly plan and this surplus can be translated into a certain quantity of workers' housing, schools for children or ammunition to fight the enemy. For the past twelve years they had given no bonuses and had always exceeded their production quotas.

A fourth worker considered the most important factor to be political awareness, which could be enhanced only by ideological work and by combining moral and material encouragement.

Such free airing of views has not been a feature of the Chinese press for a good many years.

MAO'S LAST BATTLE the next stage

by Bruce Smith

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He emphasises the decisive importance of 'the struggle to overcome the contradiction between mental and manual work'. This struggle, he considers, has now been abandoned, as evidenced by the view he says was expressed in the Chinese press: 'In the socialist enterprises, the working class is the master. The basic interests of the workers, cadres and technicians are identical. Their relations are relations of mutual aid and cooperation between comrades. At the same time, owing to the division of labour, differences continue to exist between mental and manual labour and some contradictions survive. These are contradictions among the people'. This, according to Bettelheim, is a denial of class struggle: 'In the Cultural Revolution every enterprise was a place where class struggle went on and production itself was pursued amid definite class relations and class contradictions, whereas, under the new leadership, it is now said that above all an enterprise is a place of production'.

Bettelheim's line of argument has much in common with that of the Gang of Four, who regarded bourgeois right, since it involved inequality in payment, as providing the economic basis for the emergence of a high-salaried new bourgeoisie, and on these grounds made the restriction of bourgeois right the target of the Cultural Revolution.

In analysing the relations of production, Mao distinguished three elements:

ownership of the means of production, the distribution system, and relations among people in the course of production (control). The revolution in the system of ownership is the base. Marx said, in his Critique of the Gotha Programme: 'Distribution in the first place should be distribution of the means of production'. This is the determinative question. Distribution of the means of production is what determines distribution of consumer goods (*A Critique of Soviet Economics*).

The socialist transformation of the ownership of the means of production eliminates exploitation and class antagonism within the process of production itself and hence the other relations of production, that is, the distribution system and relations among people in the course of production. This is because socialist ownership of the means of production enables the proletariat and other labouring people to appropriate the product of their labour, dividing the total social wealth, through an overall plan, between the state, collective and individual—in other words their short-term interests in immediate wages, social improvements in welfare, education, etc., and the long-term benefit of developing production in order to accumulate for expanded production. Although distribution and control play an important role in consolidating the socialist economic base, their character is determined by the system of ownership of the total social product and in themselves they are not a source of exploitation or antagonistic class relations.

It would appear that Bettelheim, in placing decisive importance on the class struggle within enterprises, as the main force in eliminating the division between mental and manual labour, regards this division as a major source of class antagonism, a capitalist relation of production. But he fails to distinguish ownership and control and seems to consider that ownership over the means of production can be effected only by immediate producers through direct control over their enterprises. But socialism is not equivalent to workers' control. It is as if anything that is not directly controlled by workers is capitalist by definition: '... the carrying through of the partial changes in the *immediate production process* imposed by the Cultural Revolution was blocked by the *absence of a fundamental transformation in the process of reproduction*. In its essentials (the fixing of rates of accumulation, an allocation of investments between

sectors, etc.) this continued to take place outside of the control of the immediate producers...' In the above Bettelheim does not use the conception of the proletariat appropriating the proceeds of their labour, as a class, through the planned distribution of the total social product between state, collective and individual, and virtually reduces this, in his confusion, to a question of immediate control by workers over the proceeds of their enterprise. This is in effect a negation of socialist accumulation and the development of the socialist economy. But, of course, Bettelheim is more concerned with the question of 'class struggle'.

At Wuhan University it was explained how the Gang of Four had created confusion over the question of capitalist and socialist relations of production:

When Mao talked about bourgeois right he did not mean that money exchange, commodities and payment according to work were *capitalist* relations. In socialism, the principle of distribution according to work takes labour as the yardstick. As far as labourers are concerned, each person gives his contribution to society and the relation between them is equal. But people vary in ability and strength, so making different contributions and receiving different returns. That is inequality, but in appearance only. Mao said that the principle of payment according to work was the bourgeois right of inequality, but he did not say this inequality was of a class nature. Inequality is inevitable under socialism where the level of productive forces does not provide sufficient wealth to practice distribution according to need. But bourgeois right does not embody a relation of exploitation; on the contrary it is a relation of exchange between labourers.

In failing to distinguish the decisive role of ownership, both Bettelheim and the Gang of Four were led to treat non-antagonistic socialist relations of production as antagonistic capitalist relations. But to regard bourgeois right and the division between mental and manual labour as capitalist relations, providing the basis for the emergence of a new bourgeoisie, is to confuse contradictions among the people with the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. In practice this led to misidentifying the enemy and distorting the aims and target of the Cultural Revolution: in many places, the class struggle to 'hunt out capitalist-roaders' became an attack on all cadres, technicians and administrators, whether good or bad, so restricting management and technical development and disrupting production. This was not what the Cultural Revolution was supposed to be about. In this mass movement the people learned to exercise their right to supervise their country's leadership by exposing and overthrowing the capitalist-roaders in the Party—mass supervision is not to restrict leadership as such but to see to it that correct policies are adopted and put into practice.

Where Does the Danger of Capitalist Restoration Lie?

If bourgeois right and the division between mental and manual labour are socialist relations of production and not the source of new bourgeois elements, there still remain the questions of what is the economic basis of the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and how can capitalist restoration be prevented?

At Wuhan University, they were investigating the social basis for the emergence of the Gang of Four and had made some new progress on the question of preventing capitalist restoration:

Taking into account the existence of many small producers in China, although most of them have been transformed with the setting up of people's communes, the level of development of the productive forces is still very low and commodities under the control of the State are not sufficient. Therefore shortages in supply occur. This makes it easy for capitalist elements and enemies of socialism to exploit the situation and it is important in the Four Modernisations to develop the productive forces and overcome the inadequacies.

Whilst remnants of the bourgeoisie exist and harbour hope of restoration, old bourgeois ideas still exist and affect people's way of thinking. Encroachment on public ownership and violation of the principle of payment according to work can give rise to new bourgeois elements. This principle is a socialist relation of production and it is impossible for newborn bourgeois elements to emerge from the labouring classes if it is applied. Facts have proved that not a single bourgeois element emerged when this principle was in practice. On the contrary, it was where it was not practised, that it became possible for those who didn't like work to live by other means—embezzlement or corruption.

China has been building socialism from what was, thirty years ago, a semi-feudal, semi-colonial base. Far from being a socialist utopia, China is still underdeveloped. Hard work and low living standards mean there is always a temptation for people to seek an easier way of life, living off other's labour. The restriction of bourgeois right and division of labour are not the means of preventing capitalist restoration—on the contrary. Antagonistic class relations and capitalist practices can develop where the socialist mode of production is not adequate or not implemented and in continuing the class struggle it is necessary to distinguish two tasks: the elimination or restriction of those capitalist practices which involve exploitation and undermine socialist ownership and the implementation of those socialist relations of production which, like bourgeois right (that is, payment according to work), in fact guard against the emergence of a high-salaried bureaucratic elite living off the exploitation of labour, and strengthen the system of socialist ownership against capitalist restoration.

The Aims of the Socialist Transition

By confusing socialist relations of production and capitalist relations of production, Bettelheim fails to distinguish these two tasks: the restriction of capitalism and the development of socialism. For him, the end of the Cultural Revolution and the current emphasis on the Four Modernisations are an abandonment of the central task of the revolutionary transformation of production relations; they are a negation of class struggle and mark a return to the 'theory of productive forces'.

Mao Zedong was opposed to this revisionist theory, according to which under socialism relations of production were advanced but productive forces were backward, placing emphasis on heavy industry, technology and material incentives, and relying on cadres and technicians to develop production: 'The basic contradictions in socialist society are still those between the relations of production and the productive forces and between the superstructure and the economic base' (*On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People*).

At the National Conference on Finance and Trade, Hua Guofeng stated:

Fundamentally our socialist political system and economic system are far superior to the capitalist system. . . . But many aspects of our superstructure and relations of production are still not perfect. Ineptitude in management is, in the final analysis, a matter of this nature. To persist in continuing the revolution under dictatorship of the proletariat, we should, . . . transform . . . those aspects of the relations of production that are not in harmony with the economic base.

For Bettelheim, this is still a productivist line: it is necessary to transform the relations of production because they are a source of capitalist restoration; the aim of socialist revolution is ultimately the class struggle to eliminate the bourgeoisie, not to emancipate the productive forces. But what he neglects is the relationship between the relations of production and productive forces. At Wuhan University, this was described as 'a unity of opposites'. The productive forces are the most revolutionary factor and the particular forms of the production relations are determined by the productive

forces. As these develop, they demand change in the production relations. In this sense, the theory of productive forces 'is correct if it refers to the determining role of the productive forces. But we are opposed to the vulgar theory of productive forces which negates the reaction of the relations of production on the productive forces'.

According to Mao Zedong, distribution according to work, commodity production and the law of value are, in socialist society, adapted to the demands of the productive forces. But if bourgeois right and the division of labour are not capitalist relations to be restricted or eliminated under present conditions, their transformation is the long-term target of the transition to communism. This transition involves, with the development of productive forces, an advance from collective to public ownership; equalising living standards between town and country, and distribution according to need.

In the development of the socialist economy, socialist relations of production are therefore not unchangeable—relations that at one time are adapted to the productive forces may after a period of time, hinder them. But their transformation depends on the level of development of the productive forces. The key question is not revolutionising the relations of production but what forms correspond to the particular level of economic development and further promote the productive forces. It is to this problem that Hua Guofeng addressed himself in his speech at the National Conference on Finance and Trade. That is, how, through scientific management and planning, to resolve the contradictions between the definite forms of relations of production and the developing forces of production. To repeat, this is a different task from the elimination of capitalist activities, though failure to resolve these contradictions weakens the socialist mode of production and allows the proliferation of speculation, black marketing, etc.

Whilst the 'theory of productive forces' disregards the reaction of the relations of production on the productive forces, the Gang of Four, like Bettelheim, did the opposite. They assumed that by 'making revolution'—raising people's enthusiasm for socialism and the collective good—production would rise automatically. Both rightist and leftist forces neglect the key relation which unites revolution and production, politics and economics: the plan. While talking a lot about eliminating the social basis of the new bourgeoisie, the Gang of Four in fact did the opposite. Condemning economic accounting and management as practising the 'theory of productive forces', they created precisely those conditions of economic chaos and disruption which are a 'speculators' paradise for breeding newborn bourgeois elements'.

'Putting proletarian politics in command' in the plan is a question of whether or not it reflects the objective laws of economic development, that is, whether it can promote or damage the development of production, strengthen or weaken socialist ownership and unite or disunite the interests of the workers and peasants, different sections of workers within an enterprise, and the interests of the state and the people. In the transformation of relations of production in the countryside, the transition of the basic accounting unit from the production team to the brigade depends on the level of development of the productive forces as much as on the peasants' enthusiasm to continue the revolution—the teams must have an equal level of productivity and a fair degree of mechanisation for this reorganisation to be effective.

The Four Modernisations, the implementation of the principle of payment according to work, and the introduction of methods of scientific management are in fact all methods of strengthening the socialist mode of production and restricting the scope of capitalist activities and methods of exploitation. In adopting this line, the new leadership, far from abandoning class struggle, is

on the contrary, taking new steps to prevent capitalist restoration.

Socialist Legality and Socialist Democracy

Recent articles in the Chinese press have exposed arbitrary actions taken by local authorities and leading cadres, who, in the name of 'politics in command', seized property of production teams, and gave orders regarding the tasks of the labour force, what was to be grown, etc. More stress is laid on this violation of socialist collective ownership and the rights of the peasants to manage their own affairs and organise production to suit their interests, than is laid on revolutionising or advancing the relations of production in the countryside, because ultimately continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, that is, the Four Modernisations and the plan, depends on the masses: the plan must reflect their interests and respect their rights.

The particular forms of relations of production which correspond to and promote economic development, need to be guaranteed by a strong legal system which protects the socialist system of ownership, distribution and exchange corresponding to the given level of development. Through the legal system, the masses can supervise the leadership and guard against violation of property rights, misuse of funds and abuse of the system of distribution according to work. The constitution guarantees the democratic rights of individuals to criticise leaders without fear of reprisal.

At Wuhan University we were told:

One question became very clear after smashing Lin Biao and the Gang of Four, that is, how the revisionists managed to exploit the remnants of the past. These still exist in our society and are expressed in many ways in social life, for example, the feudal and superstitious ideas that exist in the countryside. The Chinese people lack tempering in democratic practice and feudal relations remain an obstacle to their participation in state affairs. We are now studying Mao Zedong's speech made in 1962 emphasising the necessity of developing democracy among the broad masses.

Without mass democracy and mass supervision through a strong socialist legal system, there is no way of assess-

ing which relations of production promote or hinder the development of production and of ensuring that correct policies are being implemented through the plan. Ultimately, there is no other guarantee against arbitrary decisions or subjective mistakes that do not meet the real needs of a situation, or against corruption and capitalist practices.

Summary

Bettelheim's assessment involves numerous confusions: he fails to distinguish ownership of the means of production exercised through the proletarian state from control or democracy within enterprises. He neglects the key question of which class owns the means of production in determining the class character of other relations of production including distribution and division of labour. He regards socialist relations of production as a source of capitalism; so the aim of class struggle—and what he considers was qualitatively new about the Cultural Revolution—is the transformation of the relations of production. Class struggle is the key because these relations of production are capitalist and to be eliminated. For him the end of the Cultural Revolution is an abandonment of this task, a return to the 'theory of productive forces' and a denial of class struggle.

While capitalist practices must be eliminated, in fact, in the transformation of socialist relations of production the level of productive forces is the key and this involves a long period of transition from socialism to communism.

In common with the Gang of Four, Bettelheim fails to take ownership and the productive forces as key elements in the analysis, so he mistakes what the class struggle is, who the enemy is and how to prevent capitalist restoration, and therefore fails to make a correct assessment of the present situation. The leadership is now attempting to consolidate socialist ownership and hence limit the scope of capitalist practices and this task is made the more possible by the success of the Cultural Revolution in bringing the Party and the Chinese people closer together.

JENNY CLEGG

WHOSE POWER GROWS OUT OF THE BARREL OF VIETNAMESE GUNS?

FOR a good many years, as we pointed out in our last issue, the three Indochinese countries shared a common lot. All were oppressed and exploited by imperialism, all worked together in a successful resistance. Even so, there were difficulties.

The three Indochinese peoples had differences. But they cooperated successfully to oppose the force as well as the trickery of French and US imperialism. It was widely expected that after the US was defeated their peoples would practise genuine democracy and set an example in their international relations; and also that, despite the millions of tons of US bombs and herbicides, they would reconstruct their countries.

In doing this they would have benefited by cooperating in peacetime. Such cooperation by its very nature implied observance of the Five Principles, which rule out territorial encroachment and annexations, and relations of domination and subservience. In the event, there was war. The Vietnamese leaders allowed neither their own people nor those of Kampuchea an opportunity to get on peacefully with much-needed reconstruction. The CPK's proposals for friendship and non-aggression having been turned down, the Vietnamese began their military attacks in 1977.

War as the Continuation of Politics

To engage in war is not in itself reactionary or evil, whether for a class or a nation. It would have been right for the Vietnamese people to resort to armed defence of their towns and villages, once all peaceful appeals to an invader or aggressor had proved futile, and in doing so to enter the latter's territory temporarily. It would also have been right for them to declare war in response to a call for help from a beleaguered Third World or socialist country under imperialist attack. Marxists make a distinction between just wars and wars of aggression. But we must consider the principles involved when the military ally of one of the superpowers invades and occupies an independent and non-aligned country, and one under Communist leadership, or indeed any independent country.

The world situation has changed considerably since the First World War. But it is still useful to recall Lenin's teaching. In 1916 there was a fierce controversy among leading Russian Marxists over whether or not all national wars are reactionary in the present epoch. Lenin, in the course of his contribution, pointed out that Marxism requires a concrete assessment of each separate war: 'what issues are at stake in the war,

which classes are waging it, and with *what* political objectives' (*Collected Works*, Vol. 23 p. 33). The US-Vietnam War, the US-Kampuchea War, the Kampuchea-Vietnam war and China's four-week across the border into Vietnamese territory are different, and must be looked at separately.

Why have the Vietnamese leaders launched a hate campaign against neighbouring Kampuchea and attacked it militarily? The CPK leadership neither attacked Vietnam, nor threatened to do so in words or actions. They bear no responsibility for the devastation in Vietnam. Apart from Vietnamese and Soviet hostility to Democratic Kampuchea the only threat of military intervention with a view to overthrowing it was made by certain fractions of the US ruling class not at present in office. Why? It was because the Kampuchean people's victory of 17 April 1975 was a deeply humiliating defeat for US imperialism itself and not just for Nixon's policies. Western, and especially US and French hostility to Democratic Kampuchea, and harassment of it, became intense. And with good reason. For it had become a more dangerous example of anti-imperialist resistance than Vietnam. It had defended its independence, and come under Communist leadership, without being an ally or protege of Moscow, in fact, in spite of Moscow's attempts to prevent it. It would come home to many peoples that this amazing achievement was that of a poor, 'backward' nation with a very small working class, which had had over one-tenth of its population killed or wounded by the US, nearly all its factories destroyed and half the peasantry forced off the land.

The CIA and KGB had left their agents behind, but their counter-revolutionary schemes collapsed when Phnom Penh was evacuated, and the urban population and refugees were dispersed throughout the countryside. Independent Kampuchea would be a growing political danger. Its workers, peasants and revolutionary cadres had already found among themselves the political leadership and organising ability, the courage and military skill needed to accelerate the retreat of US imperialism, defeat Lon Nol and hold off the advance of social imperialism. Now, in 1975, they were going to demonstrate that by relying on themselves, they could go on to restore production, bring the malaria and other disease epidemics under control, modernise Kampuchea, eliminate illiteracy and carry out the socialist revolution.

'Hate Kampuchea' Campaign

It was in view of this 'danger' that the CIA and other agencies of international reaction coordinated a worldwide campaign slandering and vilifying the CPK. The intention obviously was to prevent the working class and oppressed Third World peoples from admiring and supporting the Kampuchean stand. A furore was created over the perfectly sensible, well-organised and on the whole humane evacuation of Phnom Penh. The occasional revenge killings of collaborators, and the sometimes unduly harsh treatment of enemy agents and Lon Nol regime functionaries by some local Khmer Rouge cadres, and the CPK's dogmatism were exaggerated out of all proportion to the facts. It was the elaborate faking of 'news' that was the main thing, and that started, as we know, in April 1975 itself. Malcolm Caldwell, Gareth Porter and Noam Chomsky were among those who exposed the anti-Kampuchea campaign. The serious reporting and analysis, the details about post-war Kampuchea, the rapid restoration of agricultural production and rebuilding, the rural industries, the cooperatives, the educational progress, the role of youth and women, hardly any of this got into the mass media. It would hardly do for imperialism to give publicity to the fact that the Kampuchean had started on an ambitious development programme in which there was no place

for feudal or capitalist exploitation, or neo-colonial dependence.

There were calls for military intervention, to rid the civilised world of such a monstrosity as Democratic Kampuchea! They came from imperialist hawks who thought that the US government was being too 'soft'. There may have been covert calls from Moscow. Whom did they find to act? Only the Vietnamese. They first tried to destabilise the Vietnam-Kampuchea border, to 'soften it up' by adopting guerilla tactics for aggressive purposes, something US imperialism was trying to master and which social imperialism would like to be able to use. An invasion force of over 100,000 soldiers, tanks, bombers, and the rest have, for the second time in a decade, devastated Kampuchea, disrupted production, brought great suffering to the people, and threatened to extinguish the fire of Kampuchean independence.

We cannot be in doubt about the interests of the Vietnamese workers and poor peasants in all this. Their most advanced elements would support their Kampuchean brothers and sisters, even if they may not have agreed with their tactics. But the Vietnamese working class was in no position to determine Vietnamese policies. We might ask if Kampuchea was being intolerably provocative in stressing its independence from and equality to a power like Vietnam. Would it not have been 'proletarian internationalist' for its people to surrender national independence and self-determination of their future, and to be absorbed into a Greater Indochina Federation or a Greater Southeast Asia Federation under Vietnam? Would this not have been more advantageous to the Kampuchean working class, peasantry, youth, women, as they seek to build a prosperous, new Kampuchea? Should the CPK not dissolve itself, as the Vietnamese leaders always wanted, and let an Indo-chinese Communist Party lead them? These notions are being propagated all over the world by the Soviet propaganda machine. The answers are to be found partly in the Vietnamese leadership's policies and practices in Vietnam for many years.

In the circumstances, for the leaders of Democratic Kampuchea to surrender the country's independence would be a serious betrayal of its people as well as the peoples of neighbouring countries and the world. The CPK is leading the labouring masses in applying Marxism-Leninism to Kampuchean's specific conditions. In doing so it is not threatening any other country or any genuine revolution. Evidently, it is the people who lead the development of Kampuchea, not former landowners, rich peasants, generals, bureaucrats, small capitalists or state monopoly capitalists. And as for disbanding the CPK, that is what all imperialists would like.

Social Imperialism in Practice

The internationally recognised territory of Kampuchea after independence was what was left to it after encroachments and annexations by stronger neighbours. In June 1967, in 1970 and other times the Vietnamese solemnly undertook to respect Kampuchea's territorial integrity. Yet they have made claims to areas in which Vietnamese had taken refuge during the war or on which they had settled illegally during French rule. (Similarly, in the course of justifying their attacks on Chinese territory and Chinese peasants they have made territorial claims which have no historical basis.)

We cannot simply conclude from all this that the leaders of these countries are fighting over territory. Hanoi's challenge, backed by formidable military power, goes much further than that. What has happened to Le Duan, Giap, Pham Hung, Le Duc Tho, Pham Van Dong and other leaders of state and Party in Vietnam cannot be accounted for by the refusal of their neighbours to

yield territory. The withdrawal of the US in 1975 brought to the forefront issues, political objectives and class contradictions in Vietnam which had earlier seemed insignificant. Ambitions, resentments and hatreds which had festered for years account for the rabid fantasies of Hanoi's propaganda these days. Vietnamese nationalism has unfortunately come a long way from the time of the August Revolution of 1945, and from Ho Chi Minh's famous **Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom**. Hanoi's chauvinism and hegemonic ambitions are embarrassingly plain. Such features are not unusual among semi-feudal and petty bourgeois post-colonial regimes in nations with a 'glorious' pre-colonial past. In Vietnam this tendency has its distinctive features. The revival in a perverted form, the reliving by Vietnam's rulers in contemporary conditions, of the antagonisms, ambitions and conflicts of the feudal past, the brutal treatment of the ethnic minorities by the majority, the absence of revolutionary class struggle and of socialist democracy—all indicate an ideological degeneration.

Vietnam is ruled by a revisionist political party. Nowadays, when we have been trying to understand what China's degeneration might have been had Lin Piao's gang or the Gang of Four got absolute control of the CPC and the state, and also how the new Tsarist régime is more reactionary than the old Tsarist régime, we can get an idea of what that means in practice. Because of

the conditions in Vietnam from 1945 to 1975, neither the dictatorship of the proletariat nor new democracy and socialist democracy as ways of resolving contradictions among the people could be developed in theory and practice. Full consideration of this would have to take account of the history of the ICP and the Vietnam Workers' Party (VWP), the relative absence both of inner-party struggle and of development towards an authentically Vietnamese form of Marxism-Leninism. So we have a monopoly of economic and political power by a party bureaucracy for whom the pernicious ideology of Soviet revisionism and social imperialism has become the orthodoxy. The awkward truth is that the VWP for years wholeheartedly supported the Soviet rulers' ambitions to compete with US imperialism in order to establish its own world hegemony. And it has now under its control one of the best-equipped and most battle-trained military forces in the world.

The Vietnamese people, especially the working class, who won the admiration of the world, were the first victims of their degenerate leadership. They may yet change the course of events. At present however, it is unfortunately true that Hanoi represents a more reactionary and oppressive future for the people of Southeast Asia and East Asia than does Bangkok, Manila or even Djakarta. It has its supporters in many countries, of course. But Kampuchea is fighting for the interests of the vast majority of the world's peoples, and of the proletariat.

EURO - REVISIONISM

The Pink Path away from Proletarian Democracy

IN its advance towards socialism, the party of the working class has always to seek allies among all exploited groups. It has to convince the masses that freedom from exploitation can come only when the means of production are owned and worked by the producers themselves and no-one lives off the labour of others. Class struggle exists so long as there are classes with conflicting interests and contradictions between town and country, mental and manual labour. In the seventh of the *Ten Major Relationships* Mao Zedong stressed the necessity and the value of uniting all who can be united, of mobilising their enthusiasm for socialism under the leadership of the Communist Party. 'Winning the masses in their millions' was one of his early exhortations to the Chinese party, and the history of the Chinese Revolution shows that, at different stages and for different tactical reasons, the party can and should form a united front with other parties and groups, but should never give up the initiative and the power to make decisions.

A Peaceful Road?

Some might think that the development of 'Eurocommunism' by the largest 'communist' parties in Western Europe, those of France and Italy, is an example of just such flexibility in tactics, of basing their programmes on the concrete conditions in their own countries—a programme in fact for uniting their members with the broad masses in order to achieve socialism along the path most suited to Western Europe. Since the advent of Brezhnev and Co. in the Soviet Union, 'communism' has generally been seen as the system of one of the two superpowers, and the people of Western Europe, including most of the working class, do not want to be in any superpower system.

Much of what Santiago Carillo says in his book, *Eurocommunism and the State*, seems to offer an alternative analysis and programme. Yet we must realise that its

realises that capitalism reduces democracy, Carillo never-conclusions, far from offering a programme for advance, fall into the classic mould of revisionism and will serve only to prop up the ailing capitalist system. While he theless claims that 'developed capitalism', as found in the USA and Western Europe, is itself the 'bearer of socialism' and has superseded the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The very word dictatorship, he says, has a nasty ring in Western ears, bringing memories of Hitler and Stalin. He may have forgotten that Lenin had a rather more precise formulation: 'from the vulgar bourgeois standpoint the terms dictatorship and democracy are mutually exclusive' (*Two Tactics of Social-Democracy*). But the Eurocommunists say their road to socialism will unite the people to achieve a peaceful end to capitalism and a transition without violence which, doubtless, is what people would much prefer.

The Eurocommunists' claim to independence of Moscow has attracted many who want the future of Western Europe to be socialist but free from superpower domination, and they have indeed won some popularity precisely because of the lack of democracy now obvious in the USSR, which they equate with the dictatorship of the proletariat. Similar hostility abounds in the countries of Eastern Europe, and it is a supremely bitter turn of history that 'socialist' governments led by 'communist' parties have to be sustained in power by foreign troops, as in Czechoslovakia. In the German Democratic Republic, the Manifesto of the League of Democratic Communists maintains that it stands by Marxism-Leninism but is 'against the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is a dictatorship of the bureaucracy over the proletariat and against the whole people'. Eurocommunists claim that they alone offer a programme which does include socialism but is free from any superpower hegemony. The falsity of their claim to independence of Moscow was clearly shown at the Congress of

the French Communist Party, just concluded.

What is to be done?

Can we then believe that such an argument opens up a new vista? Can we abandon a transition period of dictatorship of the proletariat? Will this indeed offer Western Europe a socialist future free from Soviet domination? Let us take a look at the practice of Eurocommunists. Carillo regards as a turning point the events of 1968 in Paris, when students and workers joined in massive demonstrations against the government and the capitalist system. Were the Eurocommunists then in the vanguard of the movement? In fact the Government radio broadcast 'communist' party statements intended to keep students and workers apart (see, for instance *Observer*, 19 May 68). A book recently published, *Les Secrets de la Banque Sovietique en France*, reveals that the French Party, faced with dwindling support, has accepted massive and secret financial aid from Moscow. 'In this way, despite some disputes with the French Party over tactics, Moscow ensures complete fidelity to its foreign policy and can rely on *L'Humanité* and other Communist papers' (*Daily Telegraph*, 21 February 79).

Eurocommunism is a system by which the 'communist' parties of Western Europe are trying to modify themselves to suit the present political climate (which comes close to a definition of opportunism!). They claim that they will be able to use bourgeois parliamentary democracy to bring about socialism by peaceful means. And none of them has in reality been weaned away from the CPSU, because they have no firmly based political principles which can provide them with a socialist alternative. Eurocommunism has turned out to be merely a political manoeuvre, as was illustrated very clearly by the pact of Moncloa, between Carillo and Suarez.

On the economic front, Carillo takes a completely rightist stance, ready to collaborate with and even encourage the multinational corporations to invest in Spanish industry; he believes that the Common Market will assist in the realisation of socialism because it is international, that private appropriation of industrial profits and unearned increments is quite acceptable, and that 'the democratic road to socialism presupposes the long-term co-existence of public and private forms of property' (his emphasis). All this is said to mean that reason will prevail and that there will develop an ideological struggle which will lead to the disintegration of capitalism's system of production relations.

Where the Eurocommunists have succeeded in gaining a measure of control of the trade union movement, their activities reveal clearly the class basis of the policies behind them. They serve capitalist industry, as the trade unions have consistently done in Britain, by creating a labour aristocracy which holds positions of power and wealth in capitalist society and whose socialism means mass collaboration and certainly not revolutionary change. Heads of great Italian transnationals, like Agnelli of Fiat, have welcomed this collaboration; he has publicly announced his favourable view of the CPI and its reasonableness. Such revisionism not only means class collaboration at home; it necessarily also conceals imperialism in its most despicable, because most concealed, form: workers in one country reaching a high standard of living by continuing to batten on workers in the former colonies and Third World countries.

Lessons from History

History, however, tells us another story. It tells us that a ruling class will never give up its power voluntarily, even when faced with 'reasonable' arguments. It may make concessions, it may even appear to abdicate; but it will make sure that this is no more than an appear-

ance. Thus feudal landlords turn themselves into joint-stock companies to retain their grip on the land, and capitalist firms try to buy off their workers by selling them shares at low prices, 'giving them a stake in the company'. The means of production, the ultimate source of real power, remain in much the same hands, even though the relations of production seem to have 'progressed'.

Despite the betrayal of the Second International in 1914, by the forerunners of the Eurocommunists, the Social-Democrats, there was an upsurge of genuine revolutionary feeling by the end of World War I, culminating in the brilliant success of Lenin and the Great October Revolution. In 1920 Lenin advised the British Communist Party to participate in bourgeois parliaments only for the purpose of showing the masses that they should be abolished (in which they have not yet succeeded). He correctly diagnosed the nature of the British Labour Party, which had for the first time become a political power, from its leaders: 'the Henderson, the Clynes, the Macdonalds and the Snowdens are hopelessly reactionary. It is also true that they want to take power in their own hands (although they prefer a coalition with the bourgeoisie), that they want to govern according to the old bourgeois rules...' (*Left-wing Communism*).

New Forms of Exploitation

How prophetic this judgement has proved to be! Once again, after World War II, the same Labour Party swept to victory in the election of 1945, and yet were ousted in six years. Nationalisation has been shown up as a chimera; the Conservatives at once took the controls off speculation in land and property development and reintroduced private exploitation of profitable industries like road transport, leaving the State to take care of those, like the railways and mines, which are necessary but no longer yield the expected rate of profit. Far from introducing workers' control, nationalisation everywhere has meant virtually the opposite: a new form of exploitation by an enormous salaried bureaucracy imposed on the workers by the State itself. Unlike the Chinese practice, in which cadres continue to participate actively in productive labour, such bureaucrats have replaced the former capitalist owners; they are no longer subject even to market forces, since the State bears all losses and their salaries are guaranteed. They suffer no financial loss whatever in a strike or a market recession. Charles Bettelheim correctly judged the situation, referring to the early years of the USSR, when he said that nationalisation of the means of production by a proletarian state does no more than create the conditions for the transformation of the relations of production; 'it is not to be identified with this transformation' (*Class Struggles in the USSR*, vol. 1, p. 136).

No matter how hard they try to deceive us with apparent expropriation, social democrats never intend to introduce workers' ownership and control of the means of production, by parliamentary methods. For Engels, this pursuit of bourgeois 'respectability' was a dangerous weakness of the English working class; Bernstein and Kautsky, former Marxists, came to be almost indistinguishable from the English Fabians, whose 'inevitability of gradualism' continues to pass for theoretical principle in the Labour Party to the present day. In Sweden and New Zealand, 'Labour' parties have been voted out of office after being in power for decades. In the recent UK election, as several commentators pointed out, the 'Communist' Party programme differed little from that of the Labour Party. In Italy, things are not going too well for the largest CP in the West. 'Less than 2½ years ago, the Italian CP was in a triumphant mood. ... Now pessimism and self-doubt pervade the party.