

CHINA POLICY STUDY GROUP
BROADSHEET

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LOOK TWICE AT THAT NEWS!

Friends of China in the West seem sincerely concerned whether China, in her drive for modernisation and better material standards of living, may not be deserting the socialist path. They point to revolutionary slogans and radical developments which are now being called disasters, new policies which may be interpreted as elitist, stories that Christian Dior would open a shop in Shanghai (this never materialised) or that Coca-Cola machines would appear (they have—in tourist hotels, along with Western liquors and tobacco, all for foreign exchange: many tourists prefer them to Chinese soft drinks, liquor and tobacco, but Chinese do not!). They also point to the euphoria among Western businessmen about the lush profits they were going to take out of China once they got a contract. But there are several things friends do not realise.

Foreign journalists reporting from in and around China have three guidelines—to produce articles at specified intervals whether anything really newsworthy has occurred or not; to try and report statements, formal or informal, which can give their readership some indication of what is going on, with filler to make the article up to at least four hundred words; and to try and interpret this material, hampered by a long-time cutoff which prevented most people from gaining real insight into China's problems. So they incline to make more than there is out of some material, and interpret according to their own concepts, or even their conscious wishes or fears. The result may contain significant facts, but on the whole be a Western rather than a Chinese scene. This sort of reporting comes from Friendlies as well as Unfriendlies.

But what if you read only the Chinese press, and are never, NEVER influenced by Western reports?

There are a number of persons at highest national levels who can be quoted as reliable sources, or offices qualified to issue policy papers. Major central government papers go through revision by many hands, and represent a consensus rather than the opinions of the person who reads them. One paper read by Lin Biao had been completely changed from his original draft. Such papers represent current majority opinion, with some consideration for minorities. Papers coming out of lesser offices (still at high national level), and interviews or articles written by individuals for newspapers and radio represent more personal opinion. Directives may be issued by qualified persons or offices which higher offices or fuller quorums later recall. Individuals in the central government represent a wide variety of backgrounds and interests which influence their personal outlooks and may be reflected in their statements. It happens elsewhere—why not China?

The national newspaper, *People's Daily*, or the Central People's Broadcasting Station are public forums: where

one day's lead article may express one opinion on specific policies, another day's may differ, or present a different aspect. The inner pages present even more variety, even argument. Other national and local papers have more specific editorial policies. The national *Guangming Daily*, for example, is slanted toward the intellectuals, and *Wenhui Bao*, printed in Shanghai, toward literary and artistic circles. While the *People's Daily* carries more international news, local papers may be stronger on the agricultural side. These biases are reflected not only in what they report beyond the standard daily issue from Xinhua News Agency, but in how they report it.

Little of this appears in the foreign language press. *Beijing Review* selects from the news of the week policy documents, lead articles and a smattering of titbits, and has little room to show the interplay of opinion. Other magazines are more interested in introducing specific aspects of Chinese life and culture.

That leaves the thick daily pads of Xinhua News and the BBC translators. How many readers take one policy and read everything on it for a month?

Newspapers come under the Ministry of Propaganda. Some friends are sincerely disturbed at the way they once praised the Gang of Four and now curse them. Can one believe the accusations of the present press? Fewer ask, could they believe the presentations of the period when Yao Wenyuan, one of the Four, was Minister of Propaganda? If one wished to make a comparative study of the news of the two periods, perhaps picking a major policy such as education or agriculture, one would find now that argument appears. Of course policies are easier to understand when one side is presented as gospel, and the problems of practical application are dismissed as reactionary disruption.

The Chinese papers are for the Chinese people a forum for opinions and source of policy and news, with somewhat less speculation than Western papers. People really wanting to understand China can learn something starting from no knowledge whatever, if they do not station their own preconceptions at the doors of their minds.

SHIRLEY WOOD (*Kaifeng*)

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To our readers

CREATING CHINA'S FUTURE

What role for the people?

There is much questioning nowadays about the direction in which China is moving. The answers can be found only in the actual practice of the Chinese people, and the kind of society to which they are giving shape and substance. The incorrect words or actions of an individual or faction here, or a retrograde step taken by an enterprise or commune there, cannot be characteristic of the whole reality of People's China, unless the people allow these to turn the course of their lives away from the communist future. That *can* happen. Whether it is happening or not only long and careful investigation can show.

The cadres in Beijing, and even the people of Beijing, are by no means the whole of China. Over 900 million people are in the rest of China. One of the things in which they have a stake is the National People's Congress (NPC). Since the activity and powers it represents must be reckoned with in any assessment of China's political well-being, the people's congress system and its wider implications have to be studied. The Fifth NPC, which was elected in early 1978, recently held its third session. That was certainly no routine meeting. Hua Guofeng and his colleagues rendered an account of their work, outlined what they saw as the main problems, and made policy proposals in very specific terms.

The 3,000-odd deputies, the majority of them workers in the cities, communes or the People's Liberation Army, examined current policies and performance in production and distribution, planning, finance and other business. They made their own policy proposals and criticisms as well as decisions on some important matters: plans for economic and social development in the 1980s, new members of the State Council (administration) legislation relating to marriage, Chinese nationality and foreign relations, etc. The day-to-day reports of the way in which they carried out these duties, for which they were elected, and the NPC documents are essential reading for information about what goes on throughout China. Their Standing Committee had been supervising government work since the previous NPC plenary session. They therefore received its annual report (given by one of the vice-chairmen, Peng Zhen) and, in place of those who were retiring owing to old age, elected five vice-chairmen. (Four of them, Peng Chong, Xi Zhongxun, Su Yu and Yang Shangkun, are veteran revolutionaries who had joined the CPC while in their teens and were experienced organisers and administrators, and the fifth was Bainjen Erdini, the Tibetan Panchen Lama.)

In exercising their power to make these and other appointments, the NPC deputies were strictly following constitutional procedures. The CPC Central Committee had proposed the name of Zhao Ziyang, and the NPC after deliberation, appointed him to succeed Hua as Premier (i.e., chairman of the State Council). At its first session it had appointed Hua as premier, even though the CPC's Eleventh National Congress had already elected him as Party Chairman. On Hua's proposal it had appointed the vice-premiers and other ministers. That was in the period just after the deaths of Mao and Zhou, when the mess made by the 'Gang of Four' was still being cleared up. The NPC may not have realised how impractical (and undesirable on other grounds) it was for the same person—however able and popular—to be appointed to the most responsible full-time jobs in both the CPC and the administration of the whole country. In Zhao Ziyang they had one who had distinguished himself at the grassroots level and provincial administration

as a good organiser. The sensible and rational manner in which the CPC and the NPC have carried out the reshuffle is a contrast to the vulgar office-seeking and intrigues that were the tendency at one time.

In what sense 'the self-government of the producers' (Marx)?

The National People's Congress brings together deputies from every part of the country. It has links with the people's congresses of the provinces, autonomous regions and province-level municipalities, and with the people's congresses of the counties, which are elected by universal adult suffrage. They are relatively new kinds of institutions in human experience. They are not parliamentary bodies. At the base are the workers' congresses and the self-administered production teams. As Marx pointed out in *The Civil War in France*, these are *working*, not parliamentary, bodies, 'executive and legislative at the same time'. In China the administration, including the State Council, is not supreme, but accountable to them, subject to their supervision.

What do the NPC and its Standing Committee represent in real terms? When things go wrong, as they inevitably will at times, the people have themselves to investigate the causes and exercise their power to set them right. Otherwise, the consequences of their own past inexperience or imprudence or misjudgements, or of bungling or counter-revolutionary actions by functionaries, will continue to frustrate their efforts as they build the new China they want. Again, without the regular planning and development of the conditions of life and work for her one billion people, People's-China would disappear in chaos and counter-revolution. NPC deputies have to make sure that they are independent, well-informed, well organised and firm. So have the mass of the people, who ultimately have the power of electing or recalling them and state functionaries.

The work undertaken by NPC deputies (especially those who are elected to the Standing Committee) can then be said to be essential for China's progress on the path towards material abundance, the eradication of classes and other Communist goals. However, to what extent, we should still ask, does the NPC express the will, the aspirations, capabilities and developing needs of the Chinese people—their control (or self-management) on a continually extending basis, of the economy, and cultural and state affairs? The answers, which can be got only by patient study of the facts, are perhaps of worldwide significance. The facts of the situation are, however, bound to be very diverse; they vary from Shanghai to the Liangshan-Yi region, and from Liaoning to Tibet. Learning to cooperate on China's vast scale in developing the country as a modern socialist base is going to be a long process.

How do we in capitalist Europe compare with the Chinese in this respect? Ours is a part of the common world economy and society which is obviously much more affluent and educated. Since the bourgeois revolution and the Industrial Revolution, that is, for several centuries, the people have had experience of bourgeois democracy and of modernised industry and technology. Nevertheless, this is a part of the world in which the masses cannot influence, much less control, the capitalist created circumstances of their lives except through intense class struggle. As we know to our cost, when the bourgeoisie steps up its attacks even the most precious gains made by the working class in the past can be lost. That will be the case as long as it, whether its 'right' or

'left' fraction is in office, has the power to lay down what employment and tax policies are in the 'national interest', what laws should be passed, what orders *must* be obeyed and which of its powers, privileges and ideas are ultimately sacrosanct.

For the Chinese working class, on the other hand, there aren't these external constraints; it has state power, capitalist wage-labour doesn't exist, nor do the landlords or capitalists exist as a class. But it has big problems. It has to lead the people in defining the rules and setting the standards for those in positions of public responsibility—those to whom the exercise of essential social functions and powers are delegated; and the people have to exercise this control at a stage of their history when they have just begun to enlarge their very limited experience of democratic processes and modern economic organisation. It has to develop society's productive forces rapidly without the support of the working class in the technologically advanced economies. As in the case of most other Third World countries, there hasn't been a period of rule and development by an indigenous bourgeoisie, to clear away the long-outdated practices and customs, and make the tasks of socialist construction easier for the working class. In other words they have had to start almost from scratch, as the relations of production in the old China had for generations retarded development. Indeed, the greater part of the productive forces in China today are, humanly, materially and technically, 'new'.

The base of monopoly capitalism looks solid and substantial (perhaps more so than it really is). It was built up over hundreds of years, over many countries, with many false starts and dead ends, the bourgeois learning from and robbing one another; its initial, almost free, resources were obtained by massive looting and exploitation of the natural resources, labour and accumulated wealth of Asia, America and Africa, and of their own peasantry. The Chinese have been trying to solve their problems on an entirely different basis for only a generation, and that, too, with the use of models and ideas which often have had negative value. Those who began, some thirty years ago, had largely been formed in an ancient and decaying tradition, or in semi-colonial China. In the PRC some revolutionary veterans who became leaders and administrators tended to act like any other 'establishment', putting an overemphasis on stability and orderliness, and thus retarding the self-learning process, experimentation, revolutionary transformation in which people change themselves in changing circumstances. (Till 1969 there wasn't a single worker or peasant in either the CPC Central Committee or the NPC Standing Committee, and by then Lin Piao's conspiracy was well organised.) Nevertheless there has been a process of intense social experimentation and learning. Mao's leadership of the CPC had much to do with it. The making and re-making of social institutions, of new forms of work organisation and cooperation, new laws, new state constitutions and new leading bodies is a sign not of chaos but of adventurousness and progress. It can be baffling to the distant onlooker. Without all that, however, the Chinese people would not be able to make adequate use of people's congresses, workers' congresses, and powers of supervision over the administration of the state and of enterprises; or of their control and power to appoint and dismiss the State Council and NPC Standing Committee, and even their deputies.

The NPC is elected in order to supervise national planning and administration of an unprecedented development of the productive forces. Except for those who have retired owing to old age, most deputies to the NPC have to tackle in their everyday lives the substance of the novel and complex problems they have to deal with during the NPC sessions. In other words, they are so placed as to be able to judge the efficacy of various experiments in socialist developments and cooperation. They must

know that if the technical and administrative problems are not tackled successfully, China would in fact cease to be *People's* China; their political power, productive powers, freedom and well-being would not increase over time but diminish.

Increases in output and income are one test of the superiority of working class rule over imperialist rule. According to the Report of vice-chairman Yao Yilin, Minister in charge of State Planning Commission, good progress has been made in agricultural and industrial production. For example, the annual increases in grain output in 1978 and 1979 totalled over 49 million tons; and gross output value of light industry in 1979 was 9.6 per cent higher than in 1978, and in the first half of 1980 24.2 per cent more than in the same period of 1979. Between 1978 and 1979 the per capita income from the collective economy of the rural population rose by over 12 per cent and wages in state-run enterprises and establishments in cities and towns by over 9 per cent. These figures represent real progress, especially since China is still a poor country.

Though NPC deputies would obviously have been critical if this progress hadn't been made in meeting the country's material needs, their interest was not likely to have stopped there. The how and why and wherefore were equally important, and were a large part of the business of the last session. The deputies considered reports about the efficacy of readjustments in the relations among different sectors of the economy, as well as information which would help them to decide what should be the correct proportion between accumulation and current consumption, and whether progress towards socialist goals would be surer and faster if enterprises and local communities were given an increased share of responsibility within the national plan for economic decision-making and initiative.

Eradicating Bureaucracy, Old and New

Socialist China naturally encounters strong hostility from imperialist and reactionary forces in the world. Anti-China propaganda, a combination of mischief-making and wishful thinking, regularly asserts that Marxism is being abandoned in favour of bourgeois pragmatism and capitalist values, that Hua has suffered political defeat, and so on. It is not such campaigns which will do China harm. What can harm it is the persistence of obstacles to its rapid social development, and the growth of certain bad tendencies within the country, especially among the families of higher-ranking cadres: bureaucratic styles of administration, over-centralisation of authority, the spread of vulgar, bourgeois values, for example.

Fears that the Chinese people are allowing themselves to be treated merely as bellies to be filled and empty heads to be stuffed with the rhetoric of populist politicians (as in so many other Third World countries) are, we believe, groundless. The NPC session, the most important political work-session this year, was conducted in a strongly Marxist political perspective provided by Hua. His keynote address deserves careful study. Not only the NPC decisions, but the deliberations, conduct and decisions of the provincial, municipal and county people's congresses, with which the NPC deputies are a link, are likely to be carried on in this perspective. The peoples congresses at all levels, and the administrative apparatus they appoint and supervise, are important aspects of the social productive forces which are being developed in China. It

... hampers not only the restructuring of the economic system and the progress of modernisation, but all our other work as well. It has already aroused and continues to arouse strong popular discontent. Unless our administrative structure is thoroughly purged of bureaucracy of all descriptions, the governments at all levels will be unable to build an adminis-

trative system of high efficiency and prestige and give full play to the enthusiasm of their personnel and of the masses and consequently to the superiority of the socialist system.

The points made by Hua call for extended discussion on another occasion. It is evident that he has asked the masses for their opinions, studied the problem for many years, and thought carefully about his proposed measures for eliminating bureaucracy.

Hua drew the NPC's attention also to another bad tendency. It is one that has given much aid and comfort to China's enemies, and been made much of. Some Chinese, especially those from more comfortably off families, have been expressing admiration for the gaudy affluence of the bourgeoisie in the West. It could be that these live and work very much as the petty bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie do in India or Russia or Singapore; and that they have more in common, materially and spiritually, with Western businessmen, tourists, diplomats and correspondents of foreign news agencies and television companies than with Chinese workers in the cities and countryside or with the millions in the capitalist countries who know the iniquitous nature of the system they live under and are struggling in one way or another for a more decent and just society, and sometimes for socialist revolution. The thinking of these people reflects their lives, and focusses on individual self-advancement and capitalist 'freedoms'. There has been discussion of this phenomenon in China, and attempts are being made to educate them and their mentors in the CPC and state leadership.

Hua's comments were to the point:

To ensure the correct and effective implementation of the present reform in our economic and political systems we must strengthen ideological and political work as well as education in the revolutionary traditions, socialist morality, the socialist legal system and the communist attitude towards labour among cadres at all levels and among the broad masses. We must strive to eradicate the influence of the remnant feudal ideology, and of such non-proletarian ideologies as bourgeois and petty bourgeois thinking. It should also be noted that with the expansion of contacts with foreign countries, the corrosive influence of foreign bourgeois ideas is beginning to tell among certain people and such disgraceful behaviour as worshipping and having blind faith in things foreign and forfeiting national dignity are on the increase. We must be on our guard against this tendency. To eradicate the influence of the ideologies of the exploiting classes and other non-proletarian classes is a major task for us, which is indispensable to the development of socialist democracy not only at present but for a fairly long period of time to come.

While there is reason to be anxious about certain trends among some sections of the Chinese people, there is also good reason to be glad about the political awareness of other sections, especially among the workers. There is a great deal of debate that goes on in China. The BBC's *Panorama* programme which suggested that there is virtually one, Party-controlled, newspaper in China must be put beside the fact that there are over 1,000 journals, a number of them dealing with various controversial aspects of politics and economics. (The programme, appropriately, was about truthfulness in the media.) Political awareness in China is evidently much more advanced than that of confused foreigners who condemn China on the basis of bits and pieces of unrelated information. Both in China and abroad this is a time when Marxist political work, theoretical study and practice of high quality is called for. For this, it is not what the cadres think and do that is most important, but what the vast majority, the workers think and do. It is a good thing that Hua Guofeng, who stands out as a great political leader, a practitioner of the mass line, will now have more time to devote to his CPC duties. As recent events have shown, the Communist Party *can* become divorced from the very class whose political Party it is supposed to be.

AFTER THE TUMULT AND THE SHOUTING

At first sight, it is one of the oddities of the US elections that the US people have elected a national leader who is an old man, a tired man near the end of his career, a man who is not especially wise. As the commentators have said, the vote was a vote of frustration, of 'Carter-out', as it has been in so many countries where similar electoral contests have resulted in inadequate or incompetent or tyrannical leaders being thrown out for equally bad replacements.

The single collective gesture allowed the people expresses a protest against those who have been in office—in Britain, India, Sri Lanka, etc.

The people soon realise what they have let themselves in for, as in Britain. But they must live with their new rulers until they are permitted to choose between two or three packages the next time.

The American people have achieved cultural institutions and a quality of life which at its very best is as good as one would expect from its wealth. Among them there are many who have developed leadership talents at grass-roots level, men and women who are sensitive to the plight of their less fortunate fellow-Americans and the miserable victims of US power and greed all over the world. They are concerned about justice and integrity in the best bourgeois sense of these words. But any study of the US electoral system will show that it is the Nixons, Johnsons, Goldwaters, Carters and Reagans they are compelled to vote for. At election time the rhetoric of these ambitious men is designed to play on the frustrations, fears and hopes of the masses, for which their own class is responsible; they play on these, and through persistent commercial and political advertising portray themselves as saviours from on high.

People in the USA, it was said, were anxious about the decline of the USA, about humiliation abroad and inflation and unemployment at home, etc. Reagan has been elected as the current saviour, or so he and his followers believe. How many, in fact, did choose him, in the world's model democracy? (Not the world's largest democracy, for that is India, where Mrs Gandhi has introduced extremely repressive legislation.) To achieve his 'landslide' victory he needed to induce less than 27 out of every 100 Americans of voting age to vote for him as President! With 'free' elections in the USSR even Brezhnev might manage that!

The vote has been taken by some pundits for an affirmation of patriotism. It is good to ask: What brand of patriotism does superpower contention breed? The majority of people, when they see them clearly, will reject with contempt both the pro-American and the anti-American (and pro-Soviet) minority cults.

We don't say that US citizens should not be patriots. But patriotism that is anti-Communist, anti-people, anti-everyone who fights for liberty and peace, is not a patriotism which appeals to the people. Those who are working for a truly socialist USA are patriots about whom the mass media utter not a word. In this connection we recall what Lenin had to say in December 1914 about the national pride of the Great-Russians:

Is a sense of national pride alien to us, Great-Russian class-conscious proletarians? Certainly not! We love our language and our country, and we are doing our very utmost to raise *her* toiling masses (i.e., nine-tenths of *her* population) to the level of a democratic and socialist consciousness. To us it is most painful to see and feel the outrages, the oppression and the humiliation our fair country suffers at the hands of the tsar's butchers, the nobles and the capitalists. We take pride in the resistance to these outrages put up from our midst...

... We are full of national pride because the Great-Russian nation, *too*, has created a revolutionary class, because it, *too*, has proved capable of providing mankind with great models of the struggle for freedom and socialism...

We are full of a sense of national pride and for that very reason we *particularly* hate our slavish past (when the landed nobility led the peasants into war to stifle the freedom of Hungary, Poland, Persia and China), and our slavish present, when these selfsame landed proprietors, aided by the capitalists, are leading us into a war in order to throttle Poland and the Ukraine, crush the democratic movements in Persia and China. . . .

It seems so naive, this, to the experts in radio, television and the newspapers. They talk about more complicated matters. But would not the people unceremoniously repudiate, if they were allowed to, the 'patriotism' and chauvinism of the US ruling class, as represented by Ronald Reagan and his advisers, including Kissinger? Would they not also repudiate the 'proletarian internationalism' of those who promote the interests of the Soviet ruling classes and its satellites?

Reagan, understandably, will be more 'mature' and 'responsible' than his election rhetoric. But his wiles and diplomacy will not be for the benefit of the world's peoples, including those of the USA. If the superpowers come to a 'civilised' understanding with each other, an understanding which will include recognition of each other's 'spheres of influence', or hegemonic interests, it will be only at the expense of the liberties and lives of Third World peoples.

The prudent Reagan will, we are told, include Henry Kissinger in his circle, either inner or outer. Kissinger's record does not get much airing these days. We recall that when he was getting on famously with Le Duc Tho, he and Nixon cold-bloodily decided to launch the savage Christmas 1972 bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong. And, having reached an understanding with Le Duc Tho (now the overlord with headquarters in Ho Chi Minh City, overseeing the Vietnamese conquest and occupation of Kampuchea), he and his colleagues launched the even more savage bombing of Kampuchea, in 1973. (Books re-

viewed in this issue have documented these matters.) Kissinger's role in the deals by which US banks looted Iran's oil wealth is also worth thinking about. Would he have saved US 'honour' over the Teheran hostage-taking by bombing Iran as Kampuchea was bombed and devastated? If not, what would he have done?

Reagan for Carter is not a change we should take seriously, though few tears will be shed over the departure of Brezhnev. The US is declining—indeed, all but taking 2nd place to the USSR militarily and politically, and to Japan economically—because its bourgeois rulers are proving incapable of solving the problems of the country, the problems both of the ruling class and the altogether different problems of the US people. A change in administration and style will, however, pose problems for Third World peoples. Reagan will huff and he will puff harder than Carter. But in the end he will not blow down the barriers which have gone up against domination and bullying by the superpowers and their stooges.

For the US to be No. 1 again, will mean that its interests must over-ride those of rival capitalist countries in the West, and Soviet superpower interests.

If Reagan tries to return to the 60s, as some of his speeches suggest he might, he will find the objective situation now very different. Neither Japan nor West Germany will follow US instructions as they did then and if he tries to put pressure on them the resulting strains in the Western alliance can benefit only the Soviet Union. If, alternatively or even concurrently, he tries to dominate the Third World, as Johnson did, he will find himself blocked and Third World countries will be more receptive to Soviet blandishments. It seems likely that he will come to terms with reality and refrain from thus strengthening the superpower which is (and which he sees as) the greatest threat to his country.

BOOK REVIEW

AFTER THE CATAclySM: Postwar Indochina and the Reconstruction of Imperial Ideology (Volume II of *The Political Economy of Human Rights*) by Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman. Spokesman, 1979 (no price given).

THE KAMPUCHEA CONNECTION, by C. M. Gomes. Grassroots, 1980. Price £2.75.

If Dr. Goebbels could be said to have invented the 'big lie' technique, it has surely been adopted, developed and perfected by a subsequent generation. From Washington and London, Moscow and Hanoi the stories about Democratic Kampuchea grow and are spread on the basis that they are so horrible that they need no documentation—that anybody questioning them or seeking to verify them must be an accomplice in evil, that there is surely no smoke without fire and that even if just 1 per cent is true it is enough to damn the Khmer Rouge for all time. Thus the application of 20th century technology to the purpose of mercilessly pounding out of existence a small and poor Asian peasant people is conveniently forgotten and they are 'set up' for a new and even more terrible aggression from their former ally. The number of honest intellectuals prepared to swim against this tide can almost be counted on the fingers of a hand and one of those, Dr. Malcolm Caldwell, had to pay with his life for his stand in defence of truth. It is this that makes these two books remarkable.

Noam Chomsky has a courageous and proud record of fighting for the truth and against the manipulation by the U.S. government of the mass media in support of imperialist foreign policy. In a predecessor of the volume under review (*The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism*) he and Herman surveyed the violation of human rights, the poverty, starvation, forcible steri-

lisation and other crimes, up to and including genocide, that are perpetrated in those Third World countries under U.S. domination (i.e. 'the free world') such as South Korea, Paraguay and Indonesia. No anguished cry about human rights violations in these countries finds its way to the press because these people have not yet had the temerity to expel their U.S. masters from their country.

Having shown this, Chomsky and Herman move in their second volume to study and dissect the press coverage of post-war Indochina. The book's subtitle gives an insight into their purpose. America's war in Indochina inflicted wounds on its own society. Countless young Americans came to oppose an unjust war and American might was humiliated by Asian peasants. A way had to be found to repair the national soul, win back self-esteem and, most importantly, recreate the ideological ground to justify future imperial adventures to safeguard the 'free world' empire. Thus Chomsky and Herman show how any transgression—real or imagined—by the new rulers of Indochina becomes a 'terrible crime', whilst the terrible crimes of U.S. imperialism become at best 'mistakes' or 'grave blunders'. Chomsky repeatedly mentions how the veritable genocide in East Timor is ignored while any assertions on Kampuchea are given credence.

Relatively brief chapters are given over to Laos and Vietnam and here the book's major limitation comes out. The authors are so concerned and absorbed by the full horror of U.S. aggression that they are unable to grasp that America's adversaries can also be capable of the whole panoply of aggression—and not just because of the wounds of war.

The bulk of the book is given over to Kampuchea. With overwhelming documentation—almost 100 pages of footnotes—Chomsky and Herman survey post-1975 coverage of Kampuchea and systematically expose it. The fake photographs posed in Thailand, the interview—an interview that never took place—in *Famiglia Cristiana*

where Khieu Samphan 'admits' to the killing of one million, the highly selective choice of refugees and the manipulation of their 'evidence', the conversion of aphorisms designed to convey sentiments of revolutionary optimism into official statements in support of genocide, the slander of those—Chomsky included—who dare to question this 'evidence', the snubbing or slandering of some westerners who did witness the evacuation of Phnom Penh and the sly withdrawal of some material proved false from some editions but not from others, all this is documented and refuted in a stunning critique that gradually builds up a picture of the magnitude of the malign slander directed against Kampuchea.

Contrary to the statements of their critics, Chomsky and Herman do not deny that atrocities or excesses were committed during the years of Democratic Kampuchea. What they show is that the real evidence tends to suggest that they were not officially sanctioned strategic policy, that they were worst where imperialism had showered its deadly beneficence for longest and that compared with the process of revenge and retribution that occurs after any war (e.g. post-war France) what happened in Kampuchea was not surprising.

Chomsky and Herman bitterly conclude,

It is an astonishing fact that where evidence is subject to some independent check, it repeatedly and with remarkable consistency turns out to be fabricated, misleading, or dubious. Furthermore, exposure of falsehoods and fabrication is dismissed as insignificant and unimportant or is even condemned as apologetics for terror... Critics are not sent to concentration camps; western societies are indeed free in this respect. Rather, they are permitted to speak to one another, within tiny circles.

C. M. Gomes draws on much of Chomsky and Herman's work in *Kampuchea Connection*, a book whose importance is at least doubled by its explicit orientation towards working class people. The book takes the form of nine letters answering the questions of a young worker—an unusual format although not unique, the *Workshop Talks* of the Irish socialist James Connelly come to mind. Using Kampuchea as an extreme example of what occurs in international politics, Gomes unravels and explains a number of questions—why the revolutionary struggles of various countries are interrelated and interdependent, imperialism, development and underdevelopment, international law, the politics of aid and charity, the new international economic order and the role of the mass media.

The result is not just a work on Kampuchea and its importance to us but a virtual textbook for working people on international politics and its background.

The book has some minor limitations. There are too many typographical errors and some of the more controversial questions are not tackled head on. It is not really good enough to sidestep the question of Pol Pot. Nevertheless, this is a very valuable book, which one hopes that as many working people and trades unionists as possible will read.

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TO OUR READERS

OUR FUTURE

During the 17 years of our existence our aim has been the independent interpretation of political, social and economic events in China, and the analysis of Chinese views from a point of view which supports the revolution and socialism. *BROADSHEET* has never claimed to speak for China but we have sought to interpret her actions and policies for readers outside that country.

For some time we have felt that *BROADSHEET* has not responded adequately to the changes and debates of the last few years and that readers may well have thought our comments colourless and evasive of questions we should have tackled.

Part of the reason for our reserve has been lack of reliable information; we remain unwilling to make statements based on inadequate knowledge. But statements are not what is needed now. Differing views can exist legitimately and we can all gain in understanding by discussing them.

We have therefore decided, as a first step and while keeping the orientation summarised above, to give more space to controversial articles, expressing viewpoints with which we may not agree. This will mean that more articles will be signed. Things have changed greatly since 1964, the main change being that the Third World has come to occupy the front of the political scene in a way that few expected. At the same time the general threat to socialism, from both 'left' and right, has increased. In the light of this we shall broaden our coverage and use the method and standpoint of Marx, Lenin and Mao Zedong to look at the whole world rather than China alone.

To achieve the sort of *BROADSHEET* that is needed now we must rely on the help of readers. We shall welcome all suggestions, including suggestions for subjects that we should be dealing with. We look forward confidently to receiving them.

* * *

We apologise for the non-appearance of the November issue and offer instead this enlarged number.

Donations

Because of pressure on our space we were unable to acknowledge here the donations received from readers during the second quarter of the year. Now we have to thank all those who contributed towards the total of £46 we received during the second and third quarters. We value these donations highly and in these days of rapidly rising costs they are more than ever an essential part of our income. We ask all readers, when they pay their subscription, to think a moment whether they cannot afford to make a small addition to help us along.

Our other publications

Naturally the sales of the paperbacks by George Thomson have fallen off somewhat after their several years of steady sales, but they are by no means out-of-date and are still being used in universities and study groups as well as by individuals. They make useful gifts for Christmas.

FROM MARX TO MAO TSE-TUNG: a study in Revolutionary Dialectics. Price £1.10 by post.

CAPITALISM AND AFTER: the Rise and Fall of Commodity Production. Price £1.00 by post.

THE HUMAN ESSENCE: the Sources of Science and Art. Price 95p by post.

In addition we still have some copies of **MAO'S LAST BATTLE**, by Bruce Smith. Price 55p by post.

All these books give pointers for further reading which is helpful in assessing current events.

THE CHINA POLICY STUDY GROUP