



CHINA

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CLASS STRUGGLE COMMENT... COMMENT... CO

The last issue of 'Class Struggle' went to press just before the tragic events of the weekend of 3rd and 4th June, in Beijing.

On the Saturday night of that weekend, sections of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) were ordered to crush the democracy movement, still occupying Tiananmen Square, with force where necessary. Through the night and the following day, the PLA used tanks, armoured cars and guns against the student demonstrators and other people in Beijing who supported the students.

During the following days, mass protests took place in most other major cities in China and were also met with force.

Hundreds of arrests have been made. Some people have been tried and shot, and others imprisoned. Some have gone underground and are being hunted.

Within the Chinese Communist Party, it seems that the struggle over how to deal with the democracy movement has been resolved in favour of a view which treats it as a counter-revolutionary movement aimed at overthrowing the Chinese party and state. Zhao Ziyang, who was reported to have opposed the imposition of martial law and wanted a dialogue with the student movement, has been sacked from his post as party leader.

In the short-term, it is clear that the democracy movement has been suppressed. The official justification by the CPC of the violence used is that the party and state were faced with a counter-revolutionary attempt to overthrow socialism in China, instigated by foreign agents.

But outside mainland China, this version of events is not widely believed.

There are, of course, those who have been only too happy to broadcast, and no doubt, exaggerate, the numbers killed, arrested and shot. The spokespeople of American and British imperialism are only too happy to condemn Chinese socialism in the name of freedom, democracy and human rights. Yet it is the imperialist system that underpins the denial of these same rights to millions of people around the world.

Similarly, the Trotskyist 'left' in Britain is using recent events to "prove" that they have been right all along. They do not believe that any revolution whose main support came from the peasants can be progressive and have always denied the great achievements of socialist China, under the leadership of the CPC.

But among Chinese people in Hong Kong, in Britain and in other parts of the world, there has been a great sadness about recent events and grief for their country as well as anger against those responsible.

These feelings are shared by genuine Marxist-Leninists and progressive people around the world.

We do not at this time have a detailed analysis of recent events and their significance. Because of their importance, however, we have produced this supplement to 'Class Struggle' containing differing views on what has taken place. The extracts and articles we print here share, however, a history of long support for the struggle to build socialism in China and concern over the direction the CPC is taking.

There are many facts that are disputed about what happened, in particular how many died on the weekend of June 3rd and 4th and who started the violence. More important is an analysis of the democracy movement itself, the different elements within it and the role and extent of elements within it who were consciously anti-socialist.

These factors also have to be analysed in the context of the policies of the last ten years in China, the changing economic structure of society and the effects of this on people's lives. In particular, we need to study the effect of the "open door" policy and the extent to which the international imperialist system has gained a foothold.

We are not in a position to make a quick judgement on these issues. We have to make it a high priority to study and understand the issues better in the forthcoming period.

However, some points should be made now:

1. The democracy movement attracted broad support, not only among students but among working people in the cities of China. Support was particularly strong among workers in cultural circles, including the media. There was also support for the movement in the CPC itself and in the PLA.

Support for the democracy movement was strong among Chinese students abroad, including students from the mainland. Progressive organisations in Hong Kong, who have for many years defended socialist China, including trade unions and newspapers, gave their full support and have condemned the violent suppression of the movement.

Such support was based on the two central demands of the movement: for more democracy and against corruption. These were not essentially anti-socialist and reflected a desire for better socialist democracy and an end to the 'Get Rich Quick' for the few practices.

2. There were clearly anti-socialist forces within the democracy movement. These were probably of two kinds. Firstly, those who consciously plan to disrupt socialist China. And secondly, those who have illusions about democracy in the West.

However, the broad support for the democracy movement meant that the contradiction could not be handled simply as one with "the enemy". The implementation of martial law and violent suppression of the movement cannot resolve these contradictions. It can only turn the many genuine forces within the movement away from the party and the state.

We join with all other progressive forces in condemning the use of force against unarmed civilians in Beijing and other cities of China.

3. The CPC will only be able to resolve the present crisis if it makes a serious reappraisal of recent events, its economic policies and in particular 'open door' policy to imperialism. This must be done in a way that links between the party and the masses are built again and the party practices a genuine mass line, opening itself up for mass criticism.

We are confident that the Chinese people will, in the long term, overcome any setbacks and continue along the road to a socialist society.

LETTERS CHINA 40 Years of Socialism



On 1st October 1949, Chairman Mao Zedong stated: "The Chinese people have triumphed over their enemies, changed the face of their country and founded the People's Republic of China. We the 475 million Chinese people have now stood up..."



Dear Editor,

When we are trying to work out what has been going on in China, I think we should not jump to any quick conclusions.

Studying what the Western media has been saying, I think there is something in the Chinese claim that there was an attempt by outsiders to use the student demonstrations as a cover to disrupt the Chinese state.

It was clear from a recent BBC2 'Newsnight' feature that there is a group based in Hong Kong that had organisational links with certain leaders in the square. That members of that group went up to Beijing with one million dollars to help organise anti-government demonstrations.

Both the ITV and BBC news showed the occupants of Tiananmen Square displaying significant amounts of guns taken from the PLA, days before the alleged massacre of unarmed students.

On the evening of the alleged massacre those same news programmes clearly showed the occupants of the square attacking an army vehicle, dragging the soldiers out and beating them. Some were rescued by others in the crowd. Others did not look as though they would leave the square alive. This was before the army is supposed to have opened fire on peaceful demonstrators.

On two separate occasions, the 'Daily Telegraph' has commented that the Chinese were strictly correct in saying that no-one was shot in Tiananmen Square.

The Western media regularly reported individual Chinese claiming that the PLA was shooting down unarmed students. If there really was a plot, how many of these individuals were plotters deliberately seeking out Western reporters to spread lies and confusion?

How were the reporters to judge?

How are we to judge?

A Birmingham reader



Dear Editor,

Regarding the events in China recently, my opinion is that like all previous revolutions and counter-revolutions, they have been seen to follow no set form, rule book fashion - witness Russian, French, American, Chinese, Vietnamese, Iranian, ad infinitum. What I have seen on TV were the Communist Party leaders being very patient and when the PLA were sent in (unarmed at first) - a lone armoured troop carrier was sent in to Tiananmen square to test the mood of the demonstrators, it would seem. It turned around and departed. The second one was trapped on a barricade and attacked.

Revolutions are not tea parties nor are counter ones.

No doubt some good Marxist-Leninists were enmeshed on the side of the students in the confrontation. But there has also been a lot of meddling from foreign students on the campuses as reported by them after they had flown out, also from Hong Kong business circles.

I have studied the Chinese constitution as laid out in documentary form in an old issue of Beijing Review and I think that it isn't so democratic as it ought to be. But - and this is a big but: the Chinese society is a socialist one. The state (socialist) has yet to wither away. It isn't yet communist. But I would have thought that the machinery for change was better set up there than it is here, for instance, in a bourgeois democracy as opposed to a socialist democracy.

Perhaps 'Class Struggle' can publish a leader on these two forms of democracy since no other press will do so.

A North Wales reader



Dear Editor,

Last month's editorial touched on the normalisation of Sino-Soviet relations. This has happened on two distinct levels: that of state-to-state and party-to-party relations. Deng shaking hands with Gorbachev on May 16th marked the end of the 30-year rift between the two governments and signalled an end to the strains in the ideological relations of the past.

The success of the struggle against Soviet aggression has improved state relations and normalised relations are to be applauded. However, there was an evasion in the editorial on the matter of the recognition of the Soviet Union as a socialist society.

At the time of the polemic, criticism of the Soviet Union involved considerations of policies and ideological statements. Today's rapprochement evades any critical evaluation of that challenge to revisionism in the international communist movement.

Gorbachev admitted that the Soviet Union made mistakes with regard to the deterioration of the bilateral relations in the past, but that the Soviet Union still had some different views on the matter.

The Chinese leadership was less forthcoming and Deng restricted himself to saying: "End the past and open up the future."

This reflects a general stance whereby the Communist Party of China's former negative evaluation and denunciation of other communist parties as "revisionist" are to be treated as historical issues, magnanimously dealt with in a forward-looking manner by disregarding trifling details.

The CPC no longer upholds the criticism it produced during the 1960's on the danger of revisionism within the communist movement. But any self-criticism is evaded. That can only serve the deeper theoretical confusion on the nature and manifestation of revisionism. To simply state the position in June's editorial that the CPC now holds with regard to the Soviet Union does not make it clear whether the League agrees or disagrees with that evaluation. If Soviet hegemonism is regarded as a "policy" then it implies it can be corrected by circumstances, a change in the persons in charge, and through debates or criticism abroad and at home.

However what relation then does this hegemonic policy have to the political economy of the Soviet Union? Obviously on the ideological plane, the CPC is saying that Soviet hegemony is a mistaken policy of a socialist country, rooted in the historical fact that it was the first socialist state that took on a "big brother" stance. As Gorbachev is in the process of correcting this, Sino-Soviet conciliation precedes by avoiding any assessment of the ideological issues involved in their past strained relations.

The lesson is drawn out in the editorial "that no organisation can dogmatically follow the line of another". But is it a lesson that the League is going to practice, or is it going to publically defer any comments on the complexity of changing reality?

North London reader

Last month's editorial intended to make a distinction between the two kinds of relations mentioned in this letter. While welcoming improved state-to-state relations between the Soviet Union and China, it made it clear that the League still considers the Soviet Union to be a superpower, not a socialist country. We have still to study what these changes mean. - Ed.



Dear Editor,

"The world is yours, as well as ours. But in the last analysis, it is yours. You young people, full of vigour and vitality, are in the bloom of life, like the sun at eight or nine in the morning. Our hope is placed on you... the world belongs to you." China's future belongs to you." Mao Zedong, November 1957.

For the past weeks, those famous words of Mao have been ringing in my ears. And particularly since the June 4th massacre of students and workers in Tiananmen Square and surroundings ordered by the so-called government of China. No echoes of those famous words were remembered by those murderers of the Chinese youth and I weep.

As a communist, words cannot express my anger and frustration as our hopes for a successful socialist system in China ebb away with the barbarity of the government's action continuing now with false arrests, so-called trials and executions.

Of course, eventually the forces for sanity and progress will re-emerge and then China will once again "stand up" as Mao put it on October 1st, 1949. This October, which is the 40th Anniversary of the People's Republic of China, will no doubt be celebrated. But it will have a bitter ring for the Chinese people and sincere socialists and communists the world over.

West Country reader



What the Socialist Papers Say...

Unity

from 'Unity', paper of the League of Revolutionary Struggle USA:

In Commentary, in the issue of 20th June, 1989, 'Unity' reported:

On June 4th, troops of the 27th Army of China entered Beijing, on orders of the Chinese government to clear Tiananmen Square of demonstrators. In the course of this action, at least hundreds of innocent students and other civilians as well as People's Liberation Army soldiers were killed. This is a great tragedy for China, and has provoked widespread revulsion throughout China and among overseas Chinese.

In the two weeks following the massacre, over a thousand students, workers and unemployed have been arrested on government charges of counter-revolutionary activities, murder, arson and sabotage. As of this writing, 11 young workers and unemployed in Beijing and Shanghai have been tried and sentenced to death. On June 21st, three were executed in Shanghai.....

...While it is apparent that right-wing forces in Taiwan and the West have deliberately spread wild stories of cold-blooded mass murder to fan up anti-communist hysteria, there is near unanimity that at least hundreds of people were killed on the avenues leading to Tiananmen Square, including unarmed civilians.

And while it is not clear exactly who are being arrested, tried and executed, the current repression reaches beyond those accused of specific acts of arson, sabotage and killing, and includes student leaders (and workers) who have raised legitimate concerns and criticisms about the government and party. This will have the effect of suppressing student participation in politics and society, intimidating the masses and further widening the gulf between the government and party leadership and the people.

The questions therefore remain: why did a socialist government resort to armed force and violence against students and other civilians? If it was a "counterrevolutionary rebellion", why couldn't the government and the party rally the masses to defend the government from being overthrown? And if, as the government had earlier stated, the student movement was patriotic and raised legitimate criticisms, why couldn't the government come to an accommodation with them? And lastly, what is the impact of the Tiananmen tragedy for socialism in China?

('Unity' commentary then goes on to outline the course of events leading up to the tragedy of 3rd/4th June. The commentary continues:)

The events which unfolded in Beijing from April to early June reflect complex problems

in Chinese society which the army attack has only worsened, and which still must be confronted by the Chinese leadership and the people in order to move socialism in China forward.

While some students may have been anti-socialist and thugs, criminals and foreign agents may have become involved, the vast majority of the students are patriotic, and wanted socialist democracy, and what is best for their country. Because of this, the student movement won broad mass support, for it tapped the frustrations and criticisms widespread among the people, which stem from some of the problems arising from the economic reforms of the recent period. While the economic reforms raised the standard of living, they also brought with them serious problems of inflation, growing inequities in income and official corruption.

The intention of the economic reforms was to help China become a modern, prosperous socialist society. This has been the aim of the Chinese people since the 1949 revolution, but it has not been an easy goal to achieve. Old China was an economically backward semi-feudal society, oppressed by foreign powers, and beset with monumental economic problems, punctuated by mass famines every few years during which millions of Chinese people died. Socialism overcame many of the old abuses, eliminated poverty and famine, and brought many advances to the Chinese people. But there have been twists and turns in trying to solve China's economic problems and modernise and industrialise China.

The problems brought about by the recent rapid economic changes were compounded by the inability of the Chinese Communist Party to deal correctly and adequately with these problems. There is a serious alienation between the top gov-

ernment and party leaders and the people, including many of the middle level and younger people within the party. The top leaders did not understand the depth of anger with the corruption and other problems, and they were out of touch with the desire of many people in Chinese society for more openness, leadership accountability and mass democratic participation in all spheres of society. These democratic sentiments are not in contradiction to socialism, but should be part of socialism.

The Communist Party of China and the Chinese government are a people's party and government. They came into power in China because they represented and were supported by the vast majority of the Chinese people. It is in this light that we have to judge even more harshly their actions and policies. Even in times of social turmoil, the Communist Party and the People's Liberation Army had never used armed force against the people. But now the events of June 3-4 have seriously tarnished the hard-earned reputation and tradition of the PLA and the party.

And more importantly, the current course of the Chinese leadership fails to make central the correction of the many errors in government and party policy which produced such a catastrophic dissatisfaction with the government in the first place. A new authoritarianism is not what is needed. What is needed is socialist democracy rooted in the widespread and open participation of the people in all the processes of government.

These new authoritarian policies will be unable to win support among the Chinese people. There is widespread sentiment for socialist democracy even among the leadership and certainly within the broad ranks of the party. While temporarily a policy of a new authoritarianism may have won out, it cannot be for long. The Chinese people will not stand for it. And it is to them that China belongs. China's friends around the world should be confident that the Chinese people and the Chinese Communist Party, with their long revolutionary and socialist tradition, will be able to summarise and correct whatever mistakes have been made, further develop socialism, continue to strengthen and modernise China's economy and widen the people's participation in all areas of society.

solidaire

The following passages are taken from the editorial in 'Solidaire', paper of the Party of Labour, of Belgium:

Progressive people have followed with sadness the dramatic events in China, that giant country where one quarter of the world's population is building socialism. For six weeks, including the time of Gorbachev's historic visit, mass demonstrations paralysed the centres of power in Beijing. For six weeks, firstly the police, then the army, let themselves be pushed around: the government wanted to reach an understanding and a compromise with the students. All this would have been unthinkable in any other country. In the end, the hard core of the movement erected a "statue of Liberty", the symbol of American imperialism in the centre of Beijing. Slogans were raised "China will have its 1789" and they called for a revolution to overturn socialism, which they saw as a new form of feudalism.

Progressive people can only regret and condemn the methods used by the army to put an end of the agitation.

Imperialist propaganda would have us believe that the mass movements in China aimed to instal "Western democracy". In fact, the movement was organised around two distinct problems. The first is posed by the entry into China of American, Japanese and European multi-nationals and the emergence of Chinese capitalist forces. A minority in China, represented by Fang Lizhi, want more freedom for private enterprise and foreign capital. But some of the workers are already unhappy about the new class divisions and want a return to socialism, and a socialist modernisation adapted to the reality of China.

The second problem is posed by the corruption and bureaucracy at the centre of the party and government. A minority is taking advantage of it, to express its hatred for socialism and to demand its overthrow. The majority want a radical purification of the party and administration. They want the party to rediscover its revolutionary strength and re-establish its close links with the people.

Since 1973, imperialism is in crisis. It is in urgent need of new markets for its surplus production... It has made great advances in the field of technology and has become more aggressive in the economic field. While proclaiming slogans about liberty and freedom, it is making great strides into the markets of China and other socialist countries.

President Bush has reacted cautiously to the dramatic events in Beijing, saying he needs to "protect the strategic interests of the US". The Americans want to keep the ground they have already gained in China. They probably also wish to keep their contacts with the corrupt elements in the party, partners in a strategic alliance with American imperialism. They also fear a reversal in Chinese politics: if China turns again towards a strategic alliance with the USSR or with the countries of the Third World, the long-term consequences for imperialism would be incalculable. Any conflict would take on a global aspect. Reactions to the events in Beijing remind us: either we fight for socialism or we fight in defence of imperialism. Certainly questions are raised when a socialist army comes to the point of intervening against a section of its people. Progressive people must reflect on the mistakes made and how to improve socialist power... Only socialism and the communist party can save China.

If the party fails in its duty and degenerates, we will see the rise of an opposition party controlled by pro-American elements and reactionaries from Taiwan. China divided, split and paralysed would experience civil war, famines and epidemics on a scale never previously seen in history. It is clear that draconian measures are necessary within the party, to attack corruption, privilege, illegal "get rich quick" practices, nepotism and bureaucracy. The party will have to re-establish its contacts with the masses and rediscover its revolutionary spirit. This means frank and open political debate, clarity in the socialist press and a strong development of socialist democracy.

Beijing Review

A CHINESE JOURNAL OF NEWS AND VIEWS

北京周报

Beijing Review, Vol.32, No.26 carries detailed analysis of events in Beijing. Articles in the journal challenge many of the facts as reported in the Western media. The essence of the official view is carried in an article 'One The Events in Beijing', from which we print extracts:

The situation in Beijing in the past two months kept developing from campus upheaval to turmoil and finally to a counter-revolutionary revolt: disturbances of various degrees also occurred in some other cities. After the Chinese government took drastic measures, the revolt was quickly put down, social order was restored and the political situation is now stable.....

The disturbance would have come sooner or later. It was determined by the macro-international climate and by China's own micro climate. Its coming was inevitable and independent of man's will. This became clear as soon as the incident broke out. They (referring to the creators of the incident - Ed.) raised two basic slogans: one was to overthrow the Communist Party, and the other was to topple the socialist system. Their aim was to establish a completely Westernised bourgeois republic.

The plotters and organisers of the counter-revolutionary rebellion are mainly a handful

of people who have for a long time obstinately advocated bourgeois liberalisation, opposed Party leadership and socialism and harboured political schemes, who have collaborated with hostile overseas forces, and who have provided illegal organisations with the top secrets of the Party and state. Those who committed the atrocities of beating, smashing, grabbing and burning are mainly unreformed elements released after serving a sentence, a horde of political rascals, the remnants and evil elements of the "gang of four" and the dross and dregs of society.

Taking advantage of students' patriotic feelings and certain shortcomings and mistakes in government work, this handful of people with evil motives, stirred up trouble.

.....In the course of putting down the revolt, under circumstances when innocent people and bad elements were mixed together, some students and onlookers were accidentally injured. This is something which nobody wants to see.

The outbreak of this incident requires soul-searching, prompting a sober-minded consideration of the past as well as the future.

Does the turmoil indicate that there is something wrong with

the Party's line, principles and policies? The answer is no.

At its 13th National Congress the Party's line was summed up as "one centre (that is, economic construction) and two basic points (One basic point is to persist in the four cardinal principles, that is, adherence to the leadership of the Communist Party, to the socialist road, to the people's democratic dictatorship and to Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought; and the other is to persist in economic reform and opening up to the outside world)". Is there anything wrong with this line? The answer is in the negative. If it can be said that there is something wrong in connection with this line, it is lack of continuing adherence to the four cardinal principles and a lack of consistent effort to educate the people, the students, all the cadres and Communist Party members in the four cardinal principles.....

.....In recent years when there has been a slight improvement in living standards, there has appeared a deliberate advocacy of high consumption, resulting in widespread waste in all fields. This has been made worse by deficient political and ideological work, lack of a complete legal system and abuse of power and corruption. Given this, it is necessary in the future to pay close attention to education in plain living and hard struggle.

WE STAND BY THE CHINESE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTION

Contributed

CORRUPTION

The popular movement called for an end to corruption. Most people in China can only compare today's officials' lifestyles unfavourably to those of party and state leaders and officials of the past. It is well remembered how Zhou Enlai dedicated his entire life to the service of the people and though ample opportunities existed for him to enrich himself and promote his friends to positions of influence, he never did so. When he died, it was found that he had kept one good suit for official occasions. But that his other clothes were old and had been patched and repaired repeatedly.

In Mao's day, members of the League who visited China as guests of the Communist Party of China (CPC) remember being invited as guests to banquets with party officials, but they noted as the meal went on that the Chinese hosts ate sparingly and mostly from the plainer dishes on the table. These are small, but significant examples of the standards which existed ten and more years ago.

Today, corruption is widespread. Children of officials have been able to set up their own companies and make a lot of personal wealth from the "open door" policy. Many officials themselves have an unsavoury reputation among the population at large for feathering their own nests. Corruption under socialism is a worse crime than it is under capitalism, as office-holders are meant to labour hard for the common good and encourage social solidarity. They are not meant to be just doing a job.

A group at the head of the Communist Party and state chose not to listen to the demands of the popular movement. When it became evident that the protest movement would not simply fade away if ignored, and after the opposition of leaders who advocated dialogue with the protestors had been swept aside, a clique headed by Deng Xiaoping directed units of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to crush the mass protest. As many as 7,000 people may have been slaughtered in the massacre of June 4th. Soldiers shot and ran over protestors and bystanders pitilessly. In the days that followed, a wave of state terror swept China. Pro-reform activists were rounded up by the police. Some were forced to confess to being "counter-revolutionaries" on television. Many faced long terms of imprisonment and others were sentenced to death. Meanwhile, Deng and his clique congratulated the soldiers who had done their dirty work on their "triumph".

The Deng clique claims that the popular movement for democracy was counter-revolutionary, and aimed at restoring capitalism. It stands the truth on its head. Who was responsible for massively expanding the role of market forces in the Chinese economy, ending job security for workers and cutting subsidies on basic items needed by the people? Who abandoned the promotion of socialist ideas of self-sacrifice for the welfare of society at large and of serving the people, and encouraged people to seek to "Get Rich" (which only those with advantages in capital and access to resources in markets could do)? Who has opened China up to exploitation by international imperialism by encouraging a massive influx of western capital? It was not the pro-democracy movement which did such things but the Chinese government itself and it has been Communist Party intellectuals who have written articles praising the success of modern capitalism in developing

production. They have ignored the destitution of much of the Third World in the process, or the exploitation of workers internally.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

After the end of the Cultural Revolution, many in the party and state leadership surveyed China's economic progress during the previous thirty years and concluded that it had been too slow. They believed that it had to be speeded up, using material incentives and foreign capital. But in practice, this involved a development strategy of integrating China into the international capitalist economic order. The leadership intended that they should control the process as a whole and maintain China's political independence through the strongly centralised party and state apparatus. But while political independence has indeed been maintained, the values of feudalism and capitalism have permeated large areas of society. The CPC admitted that capitalist values were influencing China, but maintained that their influence came from abroad, not spontaneously from the growth of capitalist relations within China. In the campaign against "spiritual pollution" from abroad, a streak of great nation (Han) chauvinism, which has been a long-standing problem in China, came to the surface. It was hardly surprising when, in 1988, there were clashes at Chinese universities between Chinese and African students, because (among other things) the Chinese did not like Africans going out with Chinese women and also accused the Africans of molesting women. The response of the party to this was sluggish and inadequate: a concession to Han chauvinism which further tarnished the good reputation China once had in Africa. A party and government trapped in the logic of the capitalist system simply cannot diagnose accurately the character of such problems, let alone resolve them. The party and state leadership could not implement the mass line in its dealings with the democracy movement, and tackle the issues it raised by political means; so it turned tanks and guns on the people.

All progressive people must condemn unreservedly the action instigated by the Deng clique against the democracy movement. It has no justification whatsoever. It simply compounds its crimes by lying about them, framing up movement activists as "counter-revolutionaries", denying that a massacre took place and trying to hide from criticism behind the principle of non-interference in a country's internal affairs.

ANTI-COMMUNISTS

All sorts of characters have seized upon the bloody events in China to attack communism and to attack the entire record of the Communist Party of China (CPC). Mainstream bourgeois commentators couple the events in China with the unrest in Eastern Europe, to portray the socialist system as a failure, and a very unpopular one at that. The Trotskyists maintain that the CPC has been a reactionary "Stalinist" one for most of its existence, one which never relied upon the working class, but suppressed it.

Such attacks cannot go unanswered. It is China's current leadership which bears the responsibility for the June 4th massacre and the repression which followed, not the revolutionaries who went before them. Millions of communists and those under their leadership gave their lives in the fight to liberate China from imperialist domination and rule by the exploiting



Students and soldiers outside the Communist Party Headquarters in Beijing. The writing on the wall means: 'Serve the people'.

Classes. They fought for the welfare and freedom of the mass of the people, not for personal gain. Their sacrifices and those made by the communists who survived over two decades of warfare with warlords, Japan and the Guomindang, were not in vain. A new China emerged, in which the workers and peasants gained much more power over their lives than they had had before.

China was still poor, but mass starvation came to be a thing of the past. Education was opened up to the great majority of the people. In the field of health, many serious illnesses, such as schistosomiasis, cholera and syphilis were either totally eliminated or their incidence was reduced to very low levels. A socialist collective and state-managed economy grew up.

Under Mao's leadership, the CPC did make some serious mistakes. But they were the mistakes of revolutionaries seeking the best way forward for the people. In particular, Mao launched the Cultural Revolution with the intention of arousing a conscious, popular revolutionary movement to prevent the CPC degenerating into a bureaucratic, self-serving and parasitic outfit such as the upper reaches of the Soviet party had become. He believed that the Cultural Revolution would prevent the establishment of a capitalist order in China. In fact, it proved to be a blunt instrument for the achievement of this goal, for it caused strains and divisions among the people by sowing suspicion, bringing about the persecution of innocent people voicing dissenting views and trying to rush China towards communism when the material basis for socialism was still weak. The Deng clique was able to capitalise on popular dissatisfaction with much of the Cultural Revolution after Mao's death to gain a tight grip on the party leadership in 1978, and dismantle or discredit achieve-

ments made in the years before, even while bringing in some necessary reforms.

Socialism is a relatively young social, economic and political phenomenon, in the world. Setbacks such as those which have occurred in China do not show that it is a bankrupt system, but rather, that it is one that needs perfecting. Its achievements in this century - the modernisation and large-scale transformation for the better of China, the Soviet Union and other countries (notwithstanding later setbacks), assistance to the national liberation movements in their struggles against colonialism, which have won great successes, the defeat of the fascist powers during the Second World War - have been enormous. The successes should inspire and encourage communists and progressives over the years to come to continue the fight for the liberation of the whole of humanity.

At the same time, we must learn from the negative experiences of the communist movement. A vanguard communist party is essential for the carrying through of a socialist revolution. But its leading role must not only be won, but re-won repeatedly, by example and argument under conditions of socialist democracy. The adverse international and internal conditions under which socialist revolutions have occurred in the past have tended to produce a communist monopoly of positions of power. But the short term benefits of this, in terms of the ability to organise and use resources on the widest possible scale, can now be seen to be outweighed by the dangers involved in the party becoming institutionalised and bureaucratized. The party has to stay open to challenge, criticism and, if necessary, condemnation and that can only happen if popular democracy, including the right to establish new parties and a free press, becomes an entrenched and central part of socialist society.



Chinese in Britain

Chinese students and the Chinese communities in Britain have been unanimous in their condemnation of the June 4th massacre. A continuous picket was organised outside the embassy in the days following the attack on the democracy movement. Protests were made by Chinese people who have firmly supported the People's Republic over the years and they were among those who joined thousands of others in a protest march in London on June 11th.

The great majority of that march of around 10,000 people were Chinese. There was quite a contrast between most of the British left marchers, who came from Trotskyist groups, and the Chinese. The former chanted slogans about "Stalinism" and some called for "Workers' Soviets Now" and other such kinds of silliness. Most of the Chinese slogans expressed sorrow for those killed and support for their demands.

One British protestor interviewed on television (no doubt for his anti-communist views), said: "There are Communist Party members here. But they have come to spy." In fact, there were members of the Communist Party of China there who had come to protest.

One party supporter said bitterly: "We have to forget that this is the country we loved. Deng Xiaoping has changed it all for us." Another told 'Class Struggle' simply: "The Communist Party is no longer a communist party."

4th JUNE CHINA SUPPORT

Are you shocked and outraged by recent events in China? Do you want to help provide support and humanitarian aid to the victims of the violent repression of the people's movement for democracy in China?

JUNE 4TH CHINA SUPPORT is a new group of organisations and individuals who are closely linked with China through their work, study, trade and friendship. It is urgently seeking funds in order to:

- send medical aid to China through channels which can best guarantee its most effective use to relieve the suffering of the injured and bereaved.
- provide financial assistance to Chinese people who may need to extend their stay in Britain.

JUNE 4TH CHINA SUPPORT welcomes the support of other concerned organisations and individuals. For more information contact: JUNE 4TH CHINA SUPPORT, C/O SACU 152 Camden High Street, London NW1 ONE. Tel: 01-485 8236



Photo: Associated Press

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