

# IN THE WORLD

## WORLD REACTIONS

# European left condemns China for its invasion

By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

**C**HINA'S DESIRE TO PROVE that it is not a "pitiful helpless giant" (as chairman Nixon would say) by invading Vietnam has not aroused widespread sympathy in the world. On an official level, Western Europe largely reproduced Washington's ostensibly neutral tilt toward China, but French Minister of Justice Alain Peyrefitte took the occasion to declare that "the spirit of conquest is contrary to the Chinese soul."

Peyrefitte likened the attack to "the punitive expeditions carried out by Israel" stemming from an uncomfortable feeling of being "surrounded."

And most French newspapers, breaking the news on Monday morning, managed to make China look like the victim with such headlines as "Moscow threatens Peking." Then there was the chorus of pundits whose delight in drawing the dubious conclusion that "ideology is dead" seemed to outweigh their distress that idiocy was very much alive. French business circles seem mesmerized by the Chinese market for military and other advanced technology.

But elsewhere, notably in Japan and West Germany, the business community seemed to be thinking that selling weaponry to China might not be such a great idea after all. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* said West Germany should provide the balance of power, and also, called on the Carter administration to "make a special effort to reassure Moscow" and dispel the impression created by Deng Xiaoping's anti-Soviet remarks during his American trip, that Washington had encouraged the attack by providing "political and strategic backing and cover."

•The *Japan Times* stressed that no one wanted to see China play the role of policeman in Asia, and Japanese business circles were wondering how Sino-Japanese trade might be affected, considering that Japan suspended its aid to Vietnam after Vietnamese intervention in Cambodia last month.

•Britain was going ahead with plans to sell China up to 100 vertical take-off Harrier fighter planes, but Labor Party chairman Frank Aitken called the sale "indefensible" and "dangerous," and any further military contracts could run into trouble. The *Financial Times* said Peking had taken "an enormous gamble" that would "confirm the worst 'Yellow Peril' fears of the Soviet Union," possibly jeopardize plans for purchasing Western technology and give a "hard knock" to China's image as a peaceful neighbor in Southeast Asia.

•China's didactic attack probably seemed most tedious of all to India, whose foreign minister, Ayaz Bhatia Vijayee, was in Shanghai on a visit meant to heal relations embittered by China's 1962 strike into Indian territory. Vijayee punctuated his government's official protest to Peking by going home early.

•Eurocommunists' dreams of harmonious balanced relations with Peking to offset Moscow seemed to go up in smoke. Spanish party leader Santiago Carrillo called China's aggression against Vietnam an "authentic example of hegemonism."

## French Communists imply that U.S. policies encourage Chinese aggression against Vietnam.

We who condemned the invasion of Czechoslovakia and did not approve Vietnamese intervention in Kampuchea, condemn the invasion of one socialist country by another."

•The French Communist party, recalling that it had fought for full diplomatic recognition of China when it was "isolated and attacked by the very ones who today are seeking to use it against the USSR," called the Chinese aggression "unjustifiable, inadmissible, and full of dangers to world peace."

The party newspaper, *L'Humanite*, said it was "no accident" that the aggression came right after Deng visited the U.S. When Deng spoke of "giving a lesson" to the Vietnamese, "not only did the American government make quite sure not to raise the slightest protest but one can legitimately think that it provided underhanded encouragement." The PCF multiplied gestures of solidarity with Vietnam.

•Popular reaction was strongest in Italy, where support for Vietnam was most developed during the war. A Communist party provincial congress in Livorno dropped everything else to discuss the news, and PCI secretary general Enrico

## Lessons

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from Dong Dang to what was formerly known as "Friendship Gate" at the frontier point of Nam Quang was closed with barbed wire barricades. Anti-tank obstacles had been erected on the road leading into Dong Dang from the south and people were building air raid shelters in their villages and in the roadside cuttings.

### Troop trains arrive.

On a hill overlooking Dong Dang, a newly-installed Chinese radar installation scanned the area 24 hours a day. The expelled railway workers spoke of the arrival of troop trains at P'ing Hsiang, including not only heavy artillery but also mule-drawn cannons and mortars, which the Chinese favor for mountain warfare.

The frontier topography in the Langson Pass area is incredibly rugged and, as history has amply demonstrated, favors the defenders. Lieutenant Nguyen Tien Hoa, deputy commander of the Nam Quan border post, a calm, but alert officer, described a systematic pattern of Chinese probing attacks—the latest of which had taken place a few hours before our meeting on Christmas day.

"These are aimed at occupying the high peaks on our side of the frontier and also at capturing 'tongues' from among our armed personnel and civilians," he said. "Our troops have the strictest instructions not to violate an inch of Chinese territory but also to defend our own."



In opposing China's action, PCI secretary-general Enrico Berlinguer stressed the backwardness of China and Vietnam.

Berlinguer changed his speech to address the issue, noting that the attack raised "new and disturbing questions as to the overall orientation of Chinese policy."

"We Italian communists have long since got beyond any mythical view of revolutionary events and of the way problems are solved after victorious revolutions, especially in certain parts of the world," Berlinguer said. He recalled that the Vietnamese traditionally had to fight off Chinese invasion. But the conflict between "two countries which have fought and won great revolutionary battles and turned toward a type of socialist development" could not be explained away just

as the legacy of the past.

"It also had to do with the fact that peasant and especially nationalist factors were strong in recent revolutions in countries where the working class was also very small," he stressed.

"We Italian communists who have always fought to understand the huge problems of a country like China, its justifiable demand for its rightful place in the world, ...who have always refused to go along with excommunication and summary condemnation, nevertheless do not hesitate to express our open disapproval of the Chinese attack on Vietnam," said Berlinguer.

We have had to erect barbed wire fences along our side of the frontier and lay minefields on our side of the fences."

It was obvious that there was an eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation along the frontier. It is significant that Chinese communiques report that about half their casualties from the frontier clashes come from mines, which they claim the Vietnamese have laid on their side of the frontier. If the Vietnamese request to UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim, and to the current president of the UN Security Council on Feb. 10, "to examine the grave situation and take appropriate measures," is acted on promptly, at least international opinion can be informed as to which side is responsible for the terribly explosive situation on Vietnam's northern frontier.

The Vietnamese note to the UN and its Security Council refers to the massing of 20 divisions of Chinese troops and "hundreds of combat planes." Vietnam has also withdrawn its best divisions from construction projects and dispatched them to the frontier areas. As to who will be "taught a lesson" in case the unthinkable worst happens, only time will tell.

### Giap's foresight.

Contrary to reports from the Bangkok "analysts" that the most and best of Vietnamese armed forces are in Cambodia and Laos, my information is that Vo Nguyen Giap had withdrawn his best divisions from construction projects at least three months ago and concentrated them between Hanoi and the northern frontier.

"By preparing for the worst, we may avoid the worst," was how one of Viet-

nam's leaders explained it. It is noteworthy that the Chinese are prudent in preparing their public opinion for reverses by describing the action as a "punitive strike" after which they will return to their own side of the frontier.

If the way to Hanoi had been easy, the "lesson teaching" might go as far as the sacking and burning of the Vietnamese capitol as invaders from the north did so often over the past 2000 years.

What are Peking's overall aims? Norodom Sihanouk revealed in an interview with *New York Times* correspondent Malcolm Brown, published Feb. 9, that—in an unsuccessful effort to get him to throw in his lot with Pol Pot—Deng "predicted to me that the war in Cambodia would continue many years, perhaps 20 years." Also, that at their last meeting on Jan. 31, Sihanouk said Deng "told me he had been assured by Thailand that it will permit use of certain small ports and of overland routes for the transport of Chinese supplies to Kampuchea's guerrillas."

There are an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 "military instructors" still in Kampuchea who will obey orders from Peking to keep fighting "for 20 years" if possible.

Sihanouk in the interview quoted above states, "The Chinese told leaders of the Pol Pot regime 'We are helping you as much as we can. We will be able to do more only after China has completed its modernization...'—that is, in 20 years time. Pol Pot, or a successor, should keep Kampuchea "warm" in the meantime, apparently until China is ready for expansionist moves into Southeast Asia once "modernization" is completed. ■



## GREAT BRITAIN



London shoppers pick their way along sidewalk, Feb. 2, and are dwarfed by huge pile of garbage in a market just off Victoria. Market traders offered to clear it themselves, but were refused permission by garbagemen who had joined the strike of public workers for higher pay.

## Labour's hope for victory dimmed by incomes policy

By Patrick Wintour

L O N D O N

**T**HE SOLE COMFORT FOR THE Labour party at the moment is that things cannot get any worse. The opinion polls taken in the midst of the current industrial unrest, show a 17 percent lead for Tory leader Margaret Thatcher. Labour is inextricably linked with a compromised attitude to the unions.

The government wants to postpone the election until late autumn. By that time, with the main pay battles having been settled in late April, the union-party relationship could be patched up.

Standing in the way, however, is the fact that after the Welsh and Scottish referenda on devolution, the government will probably be without the Nationalist support, which has, with the Liberals, sustained this minority government.

Labour ministers are now anticipating a long election campaign in which Thatcher, her hairstyle, her speaking manner and her opinions receive maximum exposure. It may be that she will be so confident that all her horrific qualities will feel safe enough to creep out. As one Labour minister said in private this week, "If her advisors have an ounce of sense they will keep her on a tight leash. If they have more than an ounce, they will force her to let Edward Heath back into her Cabinet."

If that quarrel is patched up then little will stop the Tories. Moreover, according to detailed research from Oxford University, the left-wing MPs have the most marginal seats. Left-wing leader and Energy Minister Tony Benn, who has rested his whole career on waiting patiently for the leadership, knows these calculations.

This is a fantastically gloomy picture to paint. There are some chinks of hope. It is possible for the government to pay a 10 percent raise to the local authority manual workers who, according to the polls, still have great public support for their

claim, despite a comprehensive anti-union media campaign. The difficulty is what comes afterwards. The teachers want 30 percent, the industrial civil servants 25 percent, the powerful miners 40 percent, the electricians 25 percent. This is known as "going for the going rate."

The Leyland combine, one beast the government thought they had tamed this pay round, are now justifiably saying that they were deceived by the management over their productivity deal. Add it all up and it is a recipe for industrial unrest right through the spring.

Prime Minister James Callaghan is said to be particularly worried by the one dog that has not yet barked, the pound. Through all the hysteria, the sterling speculators have remained calm. But Callaghan privately believes these are only two weeks left before it starts tumbling, and that it will definitely not survive spring.

### New social contract.

On Feb. 21, after over three weeks of consultation between the government and the unions an electoral face-saver, a new social contract, was unveiled. The Trade Union Congress' (TUC) intention is to allow Labour to recapture their strongest electoral card, their almost mystical ability to get on with the unions.

The new voluntary agreement will stress the need to restrict the closed shop, to discipline "secondary pickets." (Even the term "secondary pickets" is totally new to industrial politics; it describes a form of picketing that has existed since the 19th century, the right to picket firms or docks only indirectly involved with the dispute.)

This new social contract is not going to mollify anyone. It is far too tentative. Fed by over a month of anti-union propaganda of both subtle and crude variety, the public doesn't have a stomach for more. Above all, it does not explain what is to be done about this pay round.

Both TUC and the government have abandoned this year's pay round. The best they can do is squeeze the public sector and hold tight to the money supply. The real victim will be the jobless.

The new social contract will not deal with a problem that has been increasingly touted by establishment commentators, the shopfloor's challenge to leadership. The assertion of the shopfloor has been a genuine cause of the disruption.

Since 1966 the number of full-time shop stewards or convenors has more than trebled to over 9,000, as has the total number of shop stewards. Many have their own offices on site, access to telephone and reasonable research facilities. These stewards owe their allegiance less and less to their trade union hierarchy and more to workers in their company regardless of union. Multi-union shop steward committees co-operating across the different plants in one company have mushroomed. Often antagonistic to traditional union structures and their officials, they feel less overawed by the authority of their national union centers.

Some unions, out of genuine desire to increase participation in their union, have consciously handed power over negotiations to the stewards. Jack Jones, the former general secretary of the transport workers, first coined the phrase "all power to the stewards" in the late '60s. It has now been picked up in other unions, particularly the hitherto centrist Municipal Workers' Union and the flourishing National Union of Public Employees. These two unions are at the center of the public sector strikes.

The devolution of power was also felt strongly during the highly organized and disciplined Ford workers' strike that broke the government's pay sanctions policy. For the first time the Ford workers' negotiating committee included a lay steward from every Ford plant in the company.

### Loss of leadership.

The dispersal of power has been strengthened by the loss of two of Britain's most experienced and intelligent leaders this year. Jones retired in the summer and Hugh Scanlon, of the engineers, retired in the autumn. These are the two largest unions in the country: 2 million and 1.8 million strong, respectively. The former "terrible twins" have been replaced by

the verbose if democratic Moss Evans, who was elected in the transport workers on a ticket of free collective bargaining, and the embarrassingly ignorant Terry Duffy of the engineers. Duffy is an instinctive right-winger but an economic illiterate.

Neither of them had the authority at a crucial TUC General Council meeting in November to force through a document that used a form of words to get the TUC out of the difficult fact that their annual conference had voted for a return to free collective bargaining. The demise of that politically skilful document meant the TUC had no written framework within which to deal with the government. Evans sanctioned every strike that came his way, including the road haulers, the one dispute the government had not seen coming.

The final event that turned the TUC into an undirected missile was the loss of the influential chairman of the TUC, Tom Jackson, a bright exponent of incomes policies who had to go into hospital and have an eye removed. In other words, it is not so much that the power relations between unions and the government has shifted radically in favor of the unions but that the power relations within the unions have altered.

### Rich get richer.

No trade union leader, however respected, could have won support for a fourth year of incomes policy. Workers may not know the detailed figures for the last three years, but when they hear counsel about further sacrifice, they have the intelligence to look at what the people issuing this advice are up to.

The whole government strategy has been to clear a hole in the economy to boost private profit and therefore investment and productivity. It is not a policy to please the unions committed to planning. Although real profits overall only rose 7 percent between 1970 and 1976, the profits of the top 25 companies rose over 70 percent. Senior executives have received pay increases in the last year that broke the pay policy by 20 pounds a week (1 pound = \$1.90).

Taxes for the higher paid and taxes on wealth have been relaxed with a reduction in the rate of death duties. And corporation tax, according to Professor Mervyn King, Britain's leading expert, has been effectively abolished.

Doctors in the health service, now ranting about the hospital porters being on selective strike, busted clean through the pay policy two years ago. Judges, the heads of the nationalized industries, and top civil servants won a 30 percent pay increase only six months ago. The council executives who are refusing to grant 500,000 local workers who earn no more than a minimum 42.40 pounds for a full working week an 8 percent raise got 15 percent increase for themselves last year. Many of them earn over 10,000 pounds. Such is the discreet charm of Britain's bourgeoisie.

These figures may represent the much derided politics of envy, but when an incomes policy is sold by the Prime Minister on the basis of self-sacrifice by all, the numbers game does have relevance.

It was plain for all to see that the pay policy was going to finally fall apart this year. (It had already come undone in the private sector last year when wages rose by 17 percent on average.) So it will remain one of the mysteries of British politics why Callaghan at the last minute went against an October election.

The most likely explanation may be vanity.

Callaghan started believing the press when they described him as an avuncular Moses capable of leading Britain to salvation. But the plain fact is that when the government lets down its major constituent as comprehensively as Callaghan has let down the unions in the past four years, it is inevitable that the unions will fight back in the only crude and nasty way it can. Until there is a party worthy of the unions and the working class, it will always be the same, however much the leader promises that a land of milk and honey is around the next bend. ■

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