

of fire will live happily...and continue to contribute to the society". At the same time "golden citations" for "Good Children who Revere the Aged" were also established. To vouchsafe the loyalty of its young people the revolutionary party that took as its cause a total break with the crushing traditions of the Chinese past is in its own old age relying increasingly on "ancestor worship" and filial piety with socialist characteristics.

In the summer of 1988 Zhang Zhenglong, who was writing *White Snow, Red Blood*, was inspired by the news from the Soviet Union that high school history examinations were being cancelled and texts revised. He reflected on the relationship between the makers and inheritors of history in China:

That final war [of 1948] laid waste to the black earth of the

north-east. But since then what has continued to defile it? As it's the grown-ups who've thrown the family chronicle into chaos, how can we ever hope that our children will continue it?...If you expect sincerity from your children, you must be honest yourself.

The dissident historian can thus be as threatening as the political activist or pamphleteer.

GEREMIE BARMÉ is a research scholar at the ANU, Canberra.

1. Zhang Zhenglong, "What is History?" (*Lishi shi shenme?*), the author's introduction to *White Snow, Red Blood—the Liao-Shen Campaign (Xuebai xieshong—Liaoshen zhanyuan)*, Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 1989, p.5.

2. A number of other books in the series have come under a cloud, and it has been reported that other semi-fictionalised accounts of pre-1949 party and army history have been banned

or named during the purge of army publications.

3. "The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China's Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of our Party Since the Founding of the People's Republic of China", adopted by the Sixth Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, 27 June 1981.

4. Some of the most popular writers of this genre of 'history' are the 'entrepreneur writers' Ye Yonglie, Quan Yanchi and Liu Yazhou.

5. Zhang Weiguo, "Cohesion and Confidence are more Crucial than the Economic Situation: Wen Yuankai's Analysis of the Current Situation" (*Ningjuli he xinxin wenti bi jingji xingshi geng yanjun: Wen Yuankai dui dangqian xingshi de fenxi*), World Economic Herald (*Shijie jingji daobao*), 9 January 1989. This translation is from New Ghosts, Old Dreams, edited by G. Barmé and Linda Jaivin, New York: Times Books [in press].

6. The fourth issue of the magazine *Dongfang jishi*, produced in Nanjing, was listed in the Index of Books and Periodicals Banned from Sale (*Jinxi xiaoshou de shukan mulu*) compiled by the national News and Publishing Authority and published in Beijing by the Municipal News and Publishing Bureau in August 1989, p.11.



In the tenth anniversary of the Khmer Rouge accession to power in Cambodia, Deng Xiaoping shocked those who saw China's foreign policy as determined by a fear of Soviet encirclement. He said the USSR may "still retain the bases provided by Vietnam"—the former US military facilities at Cam Ranh Bay—if Moscow stopped supporting Hanoi in Cambodia.

China had outlined its priorities. Beijing's policy was less defensive against the Soviets than forward-looking, aimed at Southeast Asia, and locked in rivalry with Hanoi. Thus, after the Chinese invasion of Vietnam in February-March 1979 (in which Beijing lost 60,000 killed and wounded), Deng proclaimed that "it is wise for China to force the Vietnamese to stay in Cambodia, because that way they will suffer more and more...".

The German China specialist Rudiger Machetzki has pointed out that from 1977 to 1980, only 5% of China's anti-Soviet commentaries appeared in domestic Chinese media. Even in 1980, after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, all but 40 out of 2,400 Chinese condemnations of the USSR were for foreign con-

# Into the wrong hands

Ben Kiernan examines the less than inscrutable motivations behind the latest Australian and Chinese initiatives on Cambodia.

sumption only. By 1982, no more than one-third of the Chinese army was deployed facing the long Soviet border.

China had put three conditions—'obstacles'—on normalisation of its relations with the USSR: Soviet troop reductions along China's northern border, withdrawal from Afghanistan, and an end to support for Hanoi in Cambodia. In 1982, however, China made clear its priority demand: "the first signs of a Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia would be sufficient to facilitate progress in Sino-Soviet talks". On 17 April 1985, Deng again suggested Moscow first remove the Cambodian 'obstacle', the only one of the three not bordering China.

During the October 1985 Sino-Soviet normalisation talks in Beijing, the Soviets proposed to withdraw and demobilise some of their troops on the Chinese border. Beijing was barely interested. "In response the Chinese side said it would like to see some Soviet action in restraining Vietnam in Cambodia," reported the *Far Eastern Economic Review* in 1985. Hanoi's April 1989 pledge to leave Cambodia by September smoothed the way for the May Sino-Soviet summit.

China is preoccupied with Vietnam because it sees Southeast Asia as more vital than West or North Asia. In the South China Sea, for instance, China far extends its claims to the Paracel and Spratley Island groups there. Beijing has described that ocean expanse as its own 'territorial sea', legally equivalent to an inland Chinese lake. This extraordinary claim would enable China to flank the long Vietnamese and Philippine coastlines, even bringing China a 'border' standoff with distant Indonesia.

In 1974 China seized the Paracel Islands from the Saigon regime. By 1988, Beijing was staging military exercises in disputed waters 'with increasing regularity' as far south as an offshore reef claimed by Malaysia. In March 1988, China attacked Vietnamese positions in the Spratleys, sinking three ships and killing nearly 100 troops. But Hanoi held on to most of the islands.

Beijing's attack came a decade after China had ended conflict over its eastern maritime border, agreeing with Japan to shelve the issue of sovereignty over the disputed Diaoyutai islands. There, moreover, China has claimed no vast 'territorial sea'. The contrast with its South China Sea claim is striking.

Only in 1990, after Hanoi had proved difficult to drive out of the Spratleys, and China's international position had been weakened by the Beijing massacre, the Soviet withdrawal from Cam Ranh Bay, and the Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia, did Beijing offer even to negotiate over the Spratleys. It proposed that all parties jointly develop them, ending Hanoi's military dominance there, while maintaining a non-negotiable Chinese monopoly over the Paracels. If published in the domestic Chinese media at the time (it was not), the proposal might have signalled a first step towards abandonment of China's claim to the whole South China Sea. But it would also advance China's current position the most, while requiring the most concessions from Hanoi, to whom it directs claims by the Philippines and Malaysia.

Anthony Barnett has suggested that China has its own Monroe Doctrine. Beijing eyes a Southeast Asian 'backyard' replicating US hegemony in Latin America. Referring to Vietnam as 'The Cuba of the East', China (like the US) is frustrated by a former pet gone feral defending its doorstep.

From early 1977, Khmer Rouge forces attacked undisputed Vietnamese territory, massacring over 10,000 Vietnamese civilians and causing hundreds of thousands to flee their homes. Hanoi's account, corroborated at the time by both US intelligence and Vietnamese refugees fleeing abroad from the war zone, has since been documented from both sides of the border. Before Vietnam had responded to these attacks, China informed both sides that it supported Pol Pot's Cambodia. In 1978, Vietnam offered to negotiate a ceasefire and settlement under international supervision. Pol Pot refused, and the war continued;

his Chinese support continued after Hanoi overthrew his regime in 1979.

"I do not understand why some people want to remove Pol Pot," Deng Xiaoping said in 1984. "It is true that he made some mistakes in the past but now he is leading the fight against the Vietnamese aggressors." A Chinese diplomat concurred: "One should not talk of compromise" on Cambodia. Beijing may see the Khmer Rouge and their two allies (Norodom Sihanouk and Son Sann) replaying China's own World War II anti-Japanese struggle, when the Chinese communist-unioned front tactics also gave bourgeois allies two of 'three-thirds' of coalition posts. Sihanouk himself has attacked China's willingness to "fight to the last Cambodian".

Since the collapse in the 1980s of the pro-Beijing communist insurgencies in Malaysia, Thailand and Burma, the Khmer Rouge is China's last international client force. Beijing will not be enticed to surrender them. Despite a previous undertaking to cut its arms supplies to them in return for Vietnam's withdrawal from Cambodia, Beijing sent the Khmer Rouge a large shipment of weapons in mid-1990. China provides the Khmer Rouge forces with US\$100 million a year, according to American intelligence. When given the choice, China naturally blocks the isolation of the Khmer Rouge. It also resists moves towards regional concord, preferring a balkanised Southeast Asia with 'many roads' to Beijing. Yet any agreement to isolate the Khmer Rouge between Vietnam and Thailand, if backed by ASEAN and the West, would be hard for Beijing to subvert. China would have to accept a bipartisan Southeast Asian settlement.

Precisely such a regional consensus—exclusion of the Khmer Rouge in return for the Vietnamese withdrawal—was shunted aside by the 1990 UN Security Council proposal for Cambodia. That weakened the Southeast Asian nations' 1988 provision against "a recurrence of the genocidal policies and practices of the Pol Pot regime". It now reads blandly: "Necessary measures should be taken in order to observe human rights and ensure the

non-return to the policies and practices of the past." In effect, the UN has condoned genocide.

The UN's Human Rights Sub-commission immediately dropped from its agenda a draft resolution on Cambodia referring to "the atrocities reaching the level of genocide committed in particular during the period of Khmer Rouge rule", and urging all states "to detect, arrest, extradite or bring to trial" and "to prevent the return to government positions of those who were responsible for genocidal actions during the period 1975 to 1978". The sub-commission dropped this text, according to Agence France Presse on 30 August 1990, "after several speakers said it would render a disservice to the United Nations after the five permanent members of the UN Security Council issued a joint plan this week aimed at ending the fighting..."

China dreaded a successful Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia, leaving an independent regime not hostile to Hanoi. But it happened, and the result has been a Chinese demand, with the West willingly cooperating, for a unanimous 'comprehensive settlement' —i.e. subject to the veto of China and the Khmer Rouge. It involves outside constraint of the only Cambodian opponents of the genocide, Hun Sen's Phnom Penh government.

In late November 1989, Australia's Foreign Minister Gareth Evans launched his peace proposal for Cambodia, calling for a UN administration to replace Hun Sen. But Evans refused to take any initiative against the Khmer Rouge, insisting on a solution acceptable to China. The effect of this kowtow has now been revealed by China's ambassador in London: from the beginning of January 1990, Beijing began sending tanks to the Khmer Rouge for the first time in 12 years. A witness reports five Chinese T-59 tanks were handed over to the Khmer Rouge near the Thai province of Trat on 21 June. A total of 24 had arrived in Cambodia by October, according to *Jane's Defence Weekly*, which describes them as "the most significant increase in firepower the resistance to the Vietnamese-installed government has ever received". Gareth Evans has denied

this, claiming "there is no evidence available to the Australian government that the Khmer Rouge has recently received tanks from China. Indeed, the consensus among the experts is to the contrary." No such consensus exists. While some debate whether Thai forces have yet delivered some of the tanks to the Khmer Rouge, the Chinese definitely despatched them in January 1990 and the Khmer Rouge now have at least five and possibly as many as 28 tanks. Evans was played on a break.

In 1990 the *Harvard Human Rights Journal* obtained confidential Pol Pot speeches recorded in briefing notes taken by two Khmer Rouge commanders who defected in 1989. They show Pol Pot's conscious use



of the veto that Evans and the West have given him over the negotiation process, through their push for a 'comprehensive settlement'. In 1988, Pol Pot secretly unfolded his plans to "delay the elections" until his forces "control all the country", when his officials "will lead the balloting work". Khieu Samphan, his delegate to the negotiations, added: "The outside world keeps demanding a political end to the war in Kampuchea. I could end the war now if I wanted, because the outside world is waiting for me, but I am buying time to give you comrades the opportunity to carry out all the tasks... If it doesn't end politically, and ends militarily, that's good for us." Here Pol Pot interrupted, saying that "to end the war politically" would make his movement "fade away". "We must prevent this from happening."

As I write, the Cambodian negotiations remain stalled, and the UN fears to proceed against Khmer Rouge intransigence. Armed with

this veto, the Khmer Rouge have had a year's valuable time to pursue their war aims. In 1990 they seized large areas of northern and western Cambodia. They are in a much better position now than in 1989 both to disguise their military forces and to control the outcome of any elections. There is no assurance that the UN is serious about disarming the Khmer Rouge and ensuring a fair election in Khmer Rouge-controlled villages. As Evans himself puts it: "There can be no guarantee that they will not resume fighting after the transitional period with weapons which have been hidden from the UN monitoring process." But, he claims, "China will have given an international legal undertaking to cease arms supply to the Khmer Rouge, will be under close international legal scrutiny to uphold that undertaking, and can be reasonably expected to honour it." Given China's broken promises in this regard, and the propensity of those promising 'international scrutiny' to cover for Beijing, no confidence is warranted here.

Pol Pot said in 1988 that, in the event of a settlement, "our troops will remain in the jungle for self-defence". They are not prepared to lay down their arms. In the same briefing, Pol Pot defended having massacred the defeated Lon Nol regime's officers, soldiers and officials in 1975: "This strata of the imperialists had to be totally destroyed." The Khmer Rouge predict their return with this slogan: "When the water rises, the fish eat the ants, but when the water recedes, the ants eat the fish."

Wringing Cambodia dry for Pol Pot, the world enforces its economic and diplomatic blockade. In November 1990, Gareth Evans did propose re-establishing an Australian diplomatic presence in Phnom Penh. But like the 1987 proposal to take Pol Pot to the World Court for genocide, this was rejected by Prime Minister Bob Hawke out of deference to China. If the Khmer Rouge returns to power, the Hawke government will share responsibility with China and the US.

**BEN KIERNAN** is Associate Professor of History at Yale University, and author of *How Pol Pot Came to Power*.