

# *Compradors, Neo-colonialism, and Transnational Class Struggle: PRC relations with Algeria and India, 1953–1965*

ANTON HARDER 

*University of Nottingham*  
Email: [anton.harder@gmail.com](mailto:anton.harder@gmail.com)

## **Abstract**

This study of China's relations with Algeria and India shows that the Mao-era emphasis on the transnational function of class made it fundamentally sceptical of the privileged status of the nation-state and transformed Beijing's posture towards the Third World in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Beijing's sense of a growing matrix of transnational class forces damaged relations with India, a key Third World moderate, and spurred closer ties with non-state, revolutionary movements like the Algerian Front Libération Nationale (FLN). Thus Beijing retreated from the post-Korean War phase of moderate diplomacy during which it had eschewed support for revolution abroad under the rhetoric of the 'Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence'. This article relates Beijing's class analysis of the growing challenges in its relations with India to the arc of interactions between the communist Chinese, the FLN revolutionaries, and the newly post-colonial Algeria. It demonstrates that because of Beijing's understanding of how the domestic class category 'comprador' facilitated 'neo-colonialism' (an emerging Third World concept), China's anti-imperialism must be understood through its perception of the transnational function of class forces. This understanding of the post-colonial dilemma—how far to maintain or sever ties with the West, which grew partly from Chinese perceptions of Indian politics—explains the curious difficulty that Beijing faced in maintaining cooperative relations with many newly independent nations like Algeria. The emphasis on transnational class struggle also provides an interpretation of Beijing's foreign policy which is intimately linked to domestic politics and affirms the contribution of ideology to the Sino-Soviet split.

## **Introduction**

On 8 June 1961, Zhou Enlai, the premier of the People's Republic of China (PRC), met with the recently arrived head of the diplomatic

mission of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Algeria (GPRA) stationed in China. They discussed the ongoing talks between the Algerians and their French colonial rulers, the state of the military conflict between these two, Algeria's relations with its neighbours Tunisia and Morocco, and the approaching inaugural conference of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to be held in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. Zhou warned of France's efforts to use 'neo-colonialism' to sustain its position in Algeria, and he also explained why some Third World states such as India objected to Algerian participation in planning in Cairo for the NAM Conference: 'Because non-aligned countries contain rightist factions, and contain conservative factions, although you have a permanent representative based in Cairo, they oppose your observers participating in the preparatory conference.' Zhou's conclusion was that these divisions within NAM revealed the real allies of 'national liberation' and hinted at the importance Beijing placed on class in explaining foreign affairs.<sup>1</sup> The communist Chinese had had links with the Algerian national liberation organization, the Front Libération Nationale (FLN), since meeting at the famous Asian African Conference at Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955, and China was one of the first of the few states to recognize the GPRA when it declared itself in 1958. To trace the arc of this relationship is to explore an important phase in PRC relations with the Third World. This was a period when Beijing found itself drawn away from a diplomacy based on conventional inter-national relations, and cooperation with states like India, towards a revival of a more revolutionary posture which placed class at the centre of many calculations and asserted the link between revolution at home and abroad.

On 17 October 1962, the Central Military Commission of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) issued an 'Operational Order to Destroy the Invading Indian Army'. The final order to attack Indian military positions along the vast and disputed Himalayan border between the PRC and the Republic of India came three days later, but the earlier instruction made clear to military commanders the purposes of the assault: to stabilize the frontier, to create conditions for negotiations, and to attack 'reactionaries'.<sup>2</sup> The official Chinese account of the

<sup>1</sup> *Zhou enlai zongli yu a'erjiliya zhuhua waijiao shituan tuanzhang de tanhua jilu* [Record of talks between Premier Zhou and Head of Algerian representative delegations in China], 8 June 1961, *Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (CMFA)*, 107-00970-03.

<sup>2</sup> M. T. Fravel, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), pp. 194–96.

Sino-Indian War of 1962 repeatedly mentions ‘Indian reactionaries’ in the chapter dealing with the decision to go to war in October 1962.<sup>3</sup> The point is, although that war obviously had an important security dimension, and was also a refutation of the legacy of imperial intrusions into China (upon which Beijing believed Delhi based its border claims), at least for Chairman Mao himself, the war was also a means of struggling against revolutionary China’s class enemies in India.

A little over a year after the Sino-Indian war’s blow to the solidarity of the Third World, the PRC made an unprecedented attempt to expand its influence in post-colonial Africa, with Premier Zhou Enlai conducting a ten-state tour of the continent over several months. The states included in the tour ranged from the firmly non-communist, such as Egypt, Tunisia, and Ethiopia, to those led by groups deploying Marxist rhetoric and proposing radical agendas, such as Guinea and Algeria. At the start of the tour, in December 1963, Zhou told a press conference in Cairo that he was guided by the central principle of the Bandung Conference, which was ‘to seek common ground and lay aside differences’.<sup>4</sup> However, despite such indications of a broad interpretation of who might be an ally of the PRC in Africa, evidence of a narrower, class-based approach to the continent emerged nonetheless. Zhou told a French journalist that his most profound impression of Algeria was ‘the people’s passion for revolution, they have treated the wounds of war, and are going forward on the revolutionary road’.<sup>5</sup> It was clear that Zhou did not regard the formation of an Algerian nation-state, formally free from colonial France, as complete independence. In a farewell speech to a mass meeting in Mogadishu, Somalia, at the end of his African tour, the Chinese premier emphasized that the PRC would support revolutionary struggles across the region and would oppose not only intrusion by foreign powers but also ‘native reactionaries’.<sup>6</sup> Such statements echoed Mao’s emphasis on striking Indian ‘reactionaries’ in 1962 and Zhou’s talk in 1961 of ‘rightist

<sup>3</sup> Editorial group of the history of the defensive war on the Sino-Indian border, *Zhongyin bianjǐng zǐwèi fānjì zuòzhànshǐ* [History of the defensive war on the Sino-Indian border] (N.p.: Military Science Publishing House, 1993).

<sup>4</sup> ‘20 December 1963’, *Zhou Enlai Nianpǔ 1949–1976* [Chronicle of Zhou Enlai 1949–1976] (hereafter *ZELNP*), (Central Party Documents, 1997 [digital edition]).

<sup>5</sup> ‘26 December 1963’, *ZELNP*.

<sup>6</sup> K. Haddad-Fonda, ‘Zhou Enlai’s “African Safari” (1963–1964)’, 2 August 2017, <https://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/zhou-enlais-african-safari-1963-1964/>, [last accessed 15 June 2020].

factions' sabotaging non-aligned support for the Algerian FLN. This language revealed how class had come to the centre of PRC foreign policy towards both Algeria and India as Beijing rejected the sanctity of the nation-state, asserting a logic that justified intervention in other states' affairs to support its own class allies. Since the late 1950s, the renewed salience of class had intensified both Beijing's suspicion of India and its sense of revolutionary solidarity with Algeria.

Algeria and India are important for the way in which both were intimately linked to profound shifts in early PRC diplomacy and represent an expansion of Beijing's vision from its Asian neighbourhood to Africa and the world. India had been a key channel through which Chinese leaders had engaged non-communist Asia's new nation-states in pursuit of a moderate diplomatic posture following the end of the Korean War in 1953. But from late 1957, the staging of popular events in support of the FLN's struggle against France, including invitations for the Algerians to tour the PRC, revealed a new willingness to shake off the limitations of that moderate diplomacy and engage with violent, non-state actors seeking to disrupt the complacent defence of nation-state privileges by states like India and Ghana. Algeria's fate mattered to Beijing because it promised hope of a more radical Third World as a new wave of decolonization began to break in Africa. Seventeen new countries would be established in Africa in 1960,<sup>7</sup> and some of these seemed intent on taking a more radical post-colonial path than India, represented by severing ties entirely with the former metropole.<sup>8</sup> So opportunities were now appearing for the PRC to overcome American efforts to restrain it in Africa—a new battleground for the Third World.<sup>9</sup> Algeria also mattered because it was situated within the broad region on which American imperialism was now focused, as demonstrated by Eisenhower's military intervention in Lebanon in 1958 to buttress opposition in the Middle East to the recent

<sup>7</sup> J. Y. S. Sun, "'Now the Cry was Communism': The Cold War and Kenya's Relations with China, 1964–70", *Cold War History*, 6 June 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14682745.2019.1602120>, [last accessed 15 June 2020], p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Gregg Brazinsky, 'Showcasing the Chinese Version of Modern-tea in Africa: Tea Plantations and PRC Economic Aid to Guinea and Mali during the 1960s', *Cold War International History Project Working Paper 80*, July 2016.

<sup>9</sup> G. A. Brazinsky, *Winning the Third World: Sino-American Rivalry during the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), pp. 129–30. The United States had been trying to prevent Beijing developing ties with pre-existing states in Africa such as Liberia and Ghana in 1956–57.

Iraqi revolution. It was no doubt true that the Lebanon crisis was an opportunity for Beijing to show solidarity with Arab struggles against the United States greater than that afforded by the Suez crisis of 1956, which had resulted from Anglo-French action.<sup>10</sup> But within the complexities of Middle Eastern regional politics we can follow a more profound shift. Similar to relations with India, PRC ties with Egypt deteriorated sharply in 1958 as Nasser began pressuring local communists and the new revolutionary regime in Iraq, and by 1959 he openly backed New Delhi in its territorial dispute with Beijing.<sup>11</sup> In essence, Beijing had discovered that established states of the Third World like India and Egypt were not reliable allies.

This article argues that from 1953 Beijing downplayed class and revolution in its foreign policy calculus and adapted instead to the conventions of international diplomacy in order to expand relations in the Third World, with India as one key target. Results included the growing global fanfare over the ‘Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence’ and their confirmation of the sovereign sanctity of the nation-state, and Beijing’s warm welcome from many newly independent states at the Asian African Conference in Bandung in 1955. However, this article will demonstrate how, beginning in late 1956, the observation that class enemies were becoming more assertive globally, including in India, but also within the socialist bloc and China itself, led to a rethink in Beijing. The conviction that such enemies were collaborating and operating together transnationally compounded the sense of danger for both world revolution and China’s also, and led Mao to revise PRC diplomacy and respond in kind by seeking class allies abroad to confront these threats. As a result, it will be shown, Beijing turned to violent, non-state revolutionary movements like the FLN, and while the Algerians fought the French, they also developed a close relationship with the Chinese and seemed to embrace the idea of transnational class struggle. Simultaneously, Beijing’s relations grew more difficult with India, which, though endorsing the FLN’s goal of independence, disavowed its bloody means, and also with Moscow, which was uneasy with Chinese activism. However, the article finally argues, the PRC would struggle to maintain stable relations with independent Algeria

<sup>10</sup> Yin Zhiguang, “‘People are God’”. Third World Internationalism and Chinese Muslims in the Making of the National Recognition in the 1950s’, *Istanbul Üniversitesi Sosyoloji Dergisi*, vol. 38, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.26650/SJ.2018.38.2.0026>, [last accessed 10 July 2020], p. 284.

<sup>11</sup> Brazinsky, *Winning the Third World*, pp. 178–80.

because of the way in which Beijing interpreted Third World relations with the West in class terms. Any concessions accorded to the West were suspected of compromising with ‘neo-colonialism’, orchestrated by ‘comprador’ bourgeoisie elites driven by their capitalist interests to transnational collaboration with imperialism, and constituting an overall loss for revolutionary forces worldwide. In other words, Beijing was unsympathetic to the post-colonial dilemma which all newly independent states faced over whether to sever ties, or how far to go, with the former metropole and other centres of capitalist power. As with India, so with Algeria, and Mao elected for a policy tailored to influence the class struggle underway within Third World states in order to tilt the balance in Beijing’s favour at a transnational and global level.

This article’s emphasis on the reintroduction of class to the PRC’s diplomacy challenges major recent interpretations of China’s relations with the Third World in the early Cold War. Jeremy Friedman’s *Shadow Cold War: The Sino-Soviet Competition for the Third World* has stressed the vital difference between Beijing’s prioritization of anti-imperialism over the Soviet Union’s emphasis on anti-capitalism, but this article will argue that Beijing’s return to a posture heavily influenced by class analysis was vital.<sup>12</sup> The PRC often made a rhetorical commitment to broad unity among post-colonial states, but in reality, all were not deemed equal. Those states which were ruled by moderate figures, let alone conservatives, or were simply complacent about the continued power of concentrated private capital and commercial and other class-based links to imperial power centres abroad, were viewed with deep scepticism. The class component of Chinese foreign policy in the Mao era was also a more important factor than the competition with the United States for status in the Third World which scholars like Gregg Brazinsky have argued for.<sup>13</sup>

The return of class as a measure of potential allies did not mean a narrowing of Beijing’s vision. Rather, the interpretation advanced here is that Beijing pursued a big, flexible, and ideologically transnational conception of world politics, which dissolved the barriers between foreign and domestic policy by looking beyond the nation-state to a mode of analysis based on global class forces. Odd Arne Westad has

<sup>12</sup> J. Friedman, *Shadow Cold War: The Sino-Soviet Competition for the Third World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), pp. 1–2.

<sup>13</sup> Brazinsky, *Winning the Third World*, pp. 1–4.

described something like a transnational dilemma for communist leaders caught by the contradiction between their revolutionary ideology of proletarian internationalism and the nationalist zeitgeist of the post-war era. Westad writes, ‘The future, they [communist leaders] said, belonged to the proletarians and the peasants—to classes, not to nation-states.’<sup>14</sup> This vision of the future implied the need for action based on transnational class solidarity across state boundaries. However, under Nikita Khrushchev the Soviet Union seemed, in the mid-to-late 1950s, to be evolving a foreign policy posture described by one historian as, ‘Statism not Revolution’,<sup>15</sup> meaning also more equal and regular relations between the states of the socialist bloc, emphasizing nation not class.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, Beijing’s embrace of the transnational implications of proletarian internationalism in the late 1950s disrupted relations both with the Soviet Union and also with major players in the Third World, such as India, which venerated the nation-state. The transnational perspective has brought a great deal to the international history of the twentieth century. For example, the history of Algerian decolonization is now very much regarded as a transnational process.<sup>17</sup> However, while Jeffrey Byrne’s broad account of the Algerians’ struggle against France and first years of independence has argued that interactions with the Chinese contributed to the FLN’s radicalization, the more focused literature on Sino-Algerian relations has mainly emphasized the symbolic value for Beijing in terms of prestige and domestic mobilization and downplayed the material and ideological content of the relationship.<sup>18</sup> But, in fact, Beijing’s adoption of the Algerian cause was related to a profound understanding of the centrality of transnational class forces to global politics and the symbiotic, unitary relations between revolutionary politics home and abroad.

<sup>14</sup> O. A. Westad, *The Cold War: A Global History* (London: Penguin, 2018), p. 184.

<sup>15</sup> J. Haslam, *Russia’s Cold War: From the October Revolution to the Fall of the Wall* (London: Yale University Press, 2011), p. 151.

<sup>16</sup> Westad, *The Cold War*, p. 196.

<sup>17</sup> M. Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria’s Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); J. Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution: Algeria, Decolonisation, and the Third World Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

<sup>18</sup> Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution*, pp. 51–58, 61–63. Narrower studies include K. Haddad-Fonda, ‘An Illusory Alliance: Revolutionary Legitimacy and Sino-Algerian Relations, 1958–1962’, *Journal of North African Studies*, vol. 19, no. 3, 2014, pp. 338–57; and Liu Xiaohong, *Chinese Ambassadors: The Rise of Diplomatic Professionalism since 1949* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), pp. 76–90.

There is a growing interest in transnational aspects of early PRC history, with, for example, a number of scholars investigating Beijing's relations with the African-American civil rights movement. But these have not fully captured the manner in which Beijing was driven by a transnational vision of class which linked political struggle around the world. Beijing's 8 August 1963 declaration of support for African-American radicals—'Oppose Racial Discrimination by US Imperialism'—appeared consistent with interpretations that emphasize PRC anti-imperialism and prestige-seeking. Beijing offered support for the 'American negroes in their struggle against racial discrimination and for freedom and equal rights'.<sup>19</sup> Matthew Johnson has used the term 'national-transnational nexus' to describe the way in which Beijing adopted this transnational movement for national purposes.<sup>20</sup> And while Li Hongshan notes that Beijing understood racial struggle as, at heart, a question of class, neither of these scholars identifies the way in which Beijing looked at world politics in terms of the global arraignment of class relations.<sup>21</sup> Ruodi Duan has most explicitly emphasized the significance of class to the CCP's discourse around African-American civil rights as an example of how racial oppression was an element of the imperial system produced by global capitalism. But although Duan pointed out that the CCP linked China's own historical subjugation by imperialist forces to the collaboration of the Chinese landlord class, the mechanics of both Beijing's diagnosis of this global web of class oppression, but also the remedy, need better foregrounding.<sup>22</sup> Mao's answer to the plight of African-Americans was transnational class struggle. The Chairman appealed globally to all races but also, critically, to all progressive classes to resist the oppression by one single class in the United States—the 'reactionary ruling clique among the whites'.<sup>23</sup> This enemy of civil rights

<sup>19</sup> 'Oppose Racial Discrimination by US Imperialism', 8 August 1963, *Peking Review*, 33, cited in Matthew Johnson, 'From Peace to the Panthers: PRC Engagement with African-American Transnational Networks, 1949–1979', *Past and Present*, vol. 218, Supplement 8, 2013, p. 243.

<sup>20</sup> Johnson, 'From Peace to the Panthers', p. 257.

<sup>21</sup> Li Hongshan, 'Building a Black Bridge: China's Interaction with African-American Activists during the Cold War', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, vol. 20, no. 3, Summer 2018, pp. 114–52.

<sup>22</sup> R. D. Duan, 'Solidarity in Three Acts: Narrating US Black Freedom Movements in China, 1961–66', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 53, no. 5, 2019, pp. 1351–80, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X1700052X>, [last accessed 10 July 2020].

<sup>23</sup> Johnson, 'From Peace to the Panthers', p. 243.



within the United States was the same opponent seeking to destroy China's own domestic revolution.

This article considers PRC relations with Algeria and India in order to develop Yang Kuisong's argument that because the CCP's theory of class struggle dominated both domestic and foreign policy, Beijing founded its international calculations on an assessment of 'supra-national class relations and benefits'.<sup>24</sup> The perception of a transnational web of class relations was an important determinant in Beijing's classification of potential allies and enemies worldwide, and suggested both risks and opportunities. As Friedman has shown, anti-imperialism was certainly a major factor for the PRC in this period, but we must analyse how imperialism was understood in Beijing. And two vital concepts help us to better grasp the role of class in Beijing's understanding of imperialism. That Zhou used the term 'neo-colonialism' in talks with the Algerians is not surprising, as it was a term prevalent in the Third World from at least the early 1960s. As formally articulated in 1965 by Ghana's first president Kwame Nkrumah, it posited that old or new colonial powers would seek to subjugate newly independent, post-colonial states through disadvantageous economic relations. In other words, as per Lenin, capitalists drive imperialism. However, Nkrumah argued that the solution lay more with pan-Africanism than any sort of class-based solidarity.<sup>25</sup>

By contrast, to a great extent, Beijing understood imperialism and neo-colonialism in terms of transnational class struggle, and the key figure in this view was the 'comprador' (*maiban*, 买办)—a vector linking local and global class relations. The term *compradore* originally designated indigenous staff of Europeans in Southeast Asia and India in the seventeenth century who were responsible for purchasing local goods.<sup>26</sup> Parks Coble has explained that this class emerged in China with the treaty system of the nineteenth century and, as intermediaries for foreign merchants, compradors became dynamic actors within the incipient modern economy.<sup>27</sup> Non-Marxists like Jiang Jieshi were

<sup>24</sup> Yang Kuisong, 'The Theory and Implementation of the People's Republic of China's Revolutionary Diplomacy', *Journal of Modern Chinese History*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2009, p. 135.

<sup>25</sup> K. Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism, The Last Stage of Imperialism* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1965).

<sup>26</sup> *The New Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), s.v. 'comprador'.

<sup>27</sup> P. M. Coble, Jr., *The Shanghai Capitalists and the Nationalist Government, 1927–1937* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 15.

themselves suspicious of the traitorous effect of such capitalists, labelling them ‘running dogs’ of imperialism and extorting money from them in the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>28</sup> But there has long been a debate within Marxism over whether the bourgeois-capitalists of the colonized and post-colonial world have any revolutionary or progressive value. Indeed, does it make sense to speak of a traitorous comprador class distinct from the bourgeoisie as a whole?<sup>29</sup> In 1926 Mao had asked, ‘Who are our enemies? Who are our friends?’ and in answering this, he wrote that ‘...the landlord class and the comprador class are wholly appendages of the international bourgeoisie, depending upon imperialism for their survival and [sic.] growth’.<sup>30</sup> Yet there were times, such as in 1949–50, when the CCP sought to reassure ‘national capitalists’ that they were distinct from the treacherous ‘comprador’ and could prosper in the PRC.<sup>31</sup> There is a question of whether such talk was just a feint to assuage the fears of wider capitalist groups in China as well as non-communist states abroad. However, it is contended here that Mao became increasingly concerned by the risk posed by comprador-type figures. In fact, he appeared to align with Frantz Fanon’s view that all the bourgeoisie were essentially comprador-type traitors: ‘Seen through its [the bourgeoisie’s] eyes, its mission has nothing to do with transforming the nation; it consists, prosaically, of being the transmission line between the nation and a capitalism, rampant though camouflaged, which today puts on the mask of neo-colonialism.’<sup>32</sup> Whether speaking specifically of compradors, or just about the transnational workings of imperialism in the age of decolonization, for Mao it became imperative that the PRC countered in transnational class terms.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 44–46, 62.

<sup>29</sup> For an introduction to this debate, see A. Gordon, ‘The Theory of the “Progressive” National Bourgeoisie’, *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, vol. 10, 1973, pp. 192–203; and Robert Vitalis, ‘On the Theory and Practice of Compradors: The Role of Cabbud Pasha in the Egyptian Political Economy’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 22, no. 3, 1990, pp. 291–315.

<sup>30</sup> Mao Zedong, ‘Analysis of the classes in Chinese society’, March 1926, [https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1\\_1.htm](https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1_1.htm), [last accessed 15 June 2020].

<sup>31</sup> S. Cochran, ‘Capitalists Choosing Communist China: The Liu Family of Shanghai, 1948–56’, in *Dilemmas of Victory: The Early Years of the People’s Republic of China*, (eds) J. Brown and P. Pickowicz (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), pp. 359–60, 370.

<sup>32</sup> F. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963), p. 153.

In the mid-1950s, the PRC demurred from supporting armed struggle by non-state groups like the FLN, and prioritized stable relations with moderate Third World capitals like New Delhi. But a series of developments, including in India, but also spanning Hungary to Tibet, to China's major urban centres, convinced Mao that the transnational danger posed by comprador-type figures was pressing and required a class-based diplomatic response. The preceding years of conventional nation-state diplomacy appeared to have presented an opportunity for the enemies of global revolution to strengthen their position in areas like India. Beijing therefore opted to diverge from such moderate states and embraced radical, non-state actors in the Third World. The PRC now gave public and material support to the FLN and advised it on revolutionary and guerrilla strategy. As scholars have made clear, Mao certainly used support for the FLN and other international causes to mobilize his population for the Great Leap Forward.<sup>33</sup> This was not simply because Mao knew the power of anti-imperial solidarity, but underscored how, at the moment when Mao returned class struggle to the centre of domestic Chinese politics with the anti-Rightist campaign in summer 1957 and launch of the Great Leap Forward in early 1958,<sup>34</sup> the Chairman saw class loyalties as permeating national borders. Mao now saw the world more clearly in transnational class terms, revealing both threats and opportunities; indeed, he believed transnational class struggle to be a political tool of great power.

But Beijing's revived sensitivity to class and comprador-type subversion led to various problems. Relations with Third World moderates like India were severely strained as the idea of transnational class struggle undermined the rhetorical centre of Sino-Indian relations, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, and their emphasis on the

<sup>33</sup> Chen Jian has demonstrated how Mao used international crises for domestic mobilization. See Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), p. 169; Yin, "'People are God'", pp. 286–87; and Yin Zhiguang, '*Guojizhuyi shike: zhongguo geming shiyexia de a'labo minzu dili yu disan shijie zhixuguan de xingcheng*' [The Internationalist Moment: The Chinese Perspective on the National Independence Movements in the Arab World and the Making of the Chinese Third-World Internationalism], *Kaifang shidai*, vol. 4, 2017, p. 14; Haddad-Fonda, 'An Illusory Alliance', pp. 344–345; and Brazinsky, *Winning the Third World*, p. 167.

<sup>34</sup> Zhu Dandan, 'The Hungarian Revolution and the Origins of China's Great Leap Policies, 1956–57', *Cold War History*, vol. 12, no. 3, 2012, p. 464. Andrew Walder discusses the centrality of class to the Anti-Rightist Campaign and the Great Leap Forward in A. Walder, *China under Mao: A Revolution Derailed* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), pp. 164–67.

inviolability of national boundaries. This shift also severely damaged ties with Moscow, which was interpreting proletarian internationalism in the more limited sense of solidarity between socialist states, was firmly committed to stable relations with non-communist states like India, and was keen to use talk of peaceful coexistence to improve relations with the United States. Furthermore, this article will show that, after Algerian independence, Beijing's preoccupation with class analysis and how to influence the class struggle in that country took precedence over straightforward relations with the state itself. Beijing discovered that Algeria, like India and the Third World in general, was confronted with the post-colonial dilemma: to what extent should a new state compromise its independence to gain development assistance from either the old metropole or the new global power of the United States? When the Algerians engaged the West in order to develop their nation, Beijing interpreted such compromise in terms of a comprador-type class oiling the wheels of neo-colonialism and impeding the further development of world revolution. The PRC's consequent adaptation of policy to support class allies in Algeria naturally undermined stable relations with the new state. Beijing under Mao is often described as capable of significant pragmatism, and relations with 'feudal' Pakistan or the later breakthrough with Nixon's United States are certainly evidence of such. But, the fact that relations with independent Algeria suffered, despite being a state without obvious security significance for China, indicates how much ideology counted in Beijing. In another context, Aminda Smith's argument about genuine faith in the potential for 'thought reform' to convert opponents underscores that ideological language was not simply instrumental cover for strategic actions, but had real meaning for the CCP.<sup>35</sup>

This article is mainly based on materials drawn from the Foreign Ministry Archive of the People's Republic of China (CMFA), including records of conversation between Chinese and FLN officials, reports by Chinese diplomats abroad, and analyses of India and Algeria by officials in Beijing, as well as certain published collections of Chinese documents. The result is a study that can make serious claims about Beijing's perceptions of and policies towards India and Algeria. Having written elsewhere specifically about Indian policy towards China, it was not the intention to do so here, nor do the sources used allow for any

<sup>35</sup> A. Smith, *Thought Reform and China's Dangerous Classes: Reeducation, Resistance, and the People* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2012), pp. 13–14.

definitive claims about the FLN's views. However, the sources on Chinese interactions with the FLN do reveal a great deal about the manner in which the Algerians expressed themselves to the Chinese and so might contribute to further research comparing the ways in which the FLN presented itself to different audiences. The first section of the article delineates a period of moderate diplomacy following the Korean War when Beijing dropped its active support for revolution abroad and sought closer diplomatic relations with non-communist Asian states like India. In the second section, the article will show that evidence of the continued pertinence of class politics around the world, including India and within China, convinced Mao that the PRC must be more supportive of non-state revolutionary organizations like the FLN; indeed, the Algerians and Chinese found much common ground. In the final section, it will be seen how this revolutionary perspective made it difficult to manage relations with post-colonial Algeria. The conclusion will confirm that Mao and the CCP's perception of the transnational functioning of class forces contributed significantly to policy in the Third World, which was often crafted to support class allies and confront class enemies, regardless of the sovereignty of the nation-state.

### **An era of conventional inter-national diplomacy**

For its first four or five years the PRC pursued a radical diplomacy. Allied to the Soviet Union, Beijing fought the United States in Korea and gave massive aid to the Vietnamese battling the French in Indochina. In this period diplomacy was conceived of and expressed in terms of class struggle. Analysis of the class factors within states determined policy.<sup>36</sup> At its founding, the PRC's leaders believed they had a mission to inspire and support revolution across Asia. Zhou Enlai said that the machinery of their new state would support international class struggle. Dramatic and material support to comrades in Korea and Vietnam compounded Mao's sense of China being the centre of Asian revolution.<sup>37</sup> Although Beijing did not move to create an Asian Cominform, it did cultivate ties with communists across the region, such

<sup>36</sup> Chen Jian, 'China and the Bandung Conference', in *Bandung Revisited: The Legacy of the 1955 Asian-African Conference for International Order*, (eds) See Seng Tan and Amitav Acharya (Singapore: NUS Press, 2008), p. 133.

<sup>37</sup> Niu Jun, 'Chongjian "zhongjian didai": Zhongguo yazhou zhengce de qi yuan, 1949–1955' [Rebuilding the "intermediate zone": the origins of China's Asia policy, 1949–1955], in

as in Burma and India.<sup>38</sup> This revolutionary commitment implied limited respect for national, sovereign boundaries.

Beijing began edging towards a new approach even before the Korean War ended. In April 1952, Zhou asked: 'Is diplomacy state to state relations, or is it people to people relations?' And he answered: 'As far as diplomatic work is concerned, its object is relations between countries.'<sup>39</sup> So the spring shoots of a new diplomacy based on conventional inter-national relations began to emerge. The end of the war in Korea, the death of Stalin, and a desire to focus on economic development allowed Beijing the means and some motive to more fully develop this new direction.<sup>40</sup> Although in late 1952 Indian diplomacy had been excoriated as tainted by its reactionary providence, in April 1953, Chinese diplomats suddenly sought New Delhi's assistance in concluding the Korean armistice talks.<sup>41</sup> Zhou Enlai told the Foreign Affairs Working Committee that China now followed a peaceful policy based on the ideas of 'peaceful coexistence' and 'peaceful competition' with different systems.<sup>42</sup> In August, Zhou explained to the Indian ambassador that Asian countries must settle their differences in order to collectively resist American intrusion into their region.<sup>43</sup> The possibility of an alliance of Asian nations in face of American imperialism drove Beijing's diplomacy away from an emphasis on class solidarities

The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence were at the heart of this shift from class to a more moderate international diplomacy. On 31 December 1953, Zhou outlined these five tenets to his subordinates

*Lengzhan yu zhongguo waijiao zhengce* [The Cold War and China's Foreign Policy], (ed.) Niu Jun (Beijing: Jiuzhou Publishing, 2012), pp. 238–55.

<sup>38</sup> Shen Zhihua and Xia Yafeng, 'Leadership Transfer in the Asian Revolution: Mao Zedong and the Asian Cominform', *Cold War History*, vol. 14, no. 2, 2014, pp. 195–213.

<sup>39</sup> Niu, 'Chongjian "zhongjian didai"', p. 249.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 254.

<sup>41</sup> 'Cable to V. K. Krishna Menon', 13 April 1953, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series (SWJN-SS)*, Vol. 22, 1 April 1953–30 June 1953, (eds) R. Kumar and H. Y. Sharada Prasad (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1998), pp. 424–26; '15 May 1953', *ZELNP*. For an earlier Chinese attack on India, see 'Note 20', 22 December 1952, *Jawaharlal Nehru: Letters to Chief Ministers*, Vol. 3, 1952–1954, (ed.) G. Parthasarathy (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1987), p. 208, fn.; and 'Diren de shibai yu women de shengli' [The Enemy's Defeat and Our Victory]', 11 December 1952, *Zhou Enlai Junshi Wenxuan* [Selected Military Documents of Zhou Enlai] (Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1997), Vol. 4, p. 292.

<sup>42</sup> '5 June 1953', *ZELNP*.

<sup>43</sup> '25 August 1953', *ZELNP*.

preparing for talks with India regarding Tibet.<sup>44</sup> The principles were: ‘Mutual respect for each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty; mutual non-aggression; mutual non-interference in each other’s internal affairs; equality and cooperation for mutual benefit; and, peaceful co-existence’. Together these constituted a commitment to the conventions of international diplomacy and acceptance of the limitations imposed on diplomatic action by the constraints of sovereignty, and they signalled to potential partners in Asia and beyond Beijing’s disavowal of transnational revolutionary action. China and India included these principles in the agreement they signed regarding Tibet on 29 April 1954.<sup>45</sup> China was sanctifying the principles of national sovereignty and the pre-eminence of the nation-state.

The public commitment to respect national sovereignty was an essential component of the new diplomacy, which sought to rally Asian states to resist American domination. The utility of the Five Principles was shown by China’s diplomacy surrounding the Geneva Conference, which aimed to prevent further conflict in Korea and Indochina, and the 1955 Asian African Conference in Bandung, the unprecedented gathering of newly independent Asian and African states. The 1954 Sino-Indian agreement had been signed just as the Geneva Conference began and Beijing was very clear that this would contribute towards a more moderate international reputation for the PRC.<sup>46</sup> In June, while Geneva was ongoing, China signed bilateral declarations on the Five Principles with India and Burma, reinforcing Beijing’s commitment.<sup>47</sup> To burnish the new moderation, Zhou emphasized to his Asian counterparts that revolution was not for export.<sup>48</sup> The Chinese premier then travelled to Vietnam where he persuaded the Vietminh to compromise their revolutionary ambitions to secure the Geneva peace deal.<sup>49</sup> Beijing’s new moderate, national agenda now took precedence.

<sup>44</sup> Yang Gongsu, *Cangsang jiushinian: yige waijiao teshi de huiyi* [Vicissitudes over Ninety Years: The Memoirs of a Special Diplomatic Envoy] (Hainan: Hainan Publishing House, 1999), pp. 215–16; and ‘31 December 1953’, *ZELNP*.

<sup>45</sup> ‘Agreement between the Republic of India and the People’s Republic of China on Trade and Intercourse between Tibet region of China and India. Signed at Peking, 29 April, 1954’, *United Nations Treaty Series*, vol. 299, issue 6, no. 4307.

<sup>46</sup> Yang, *Cangsang jiushinian*, p. 220.

<sup>47</sup> ‘Panchsheel—A Model Code for Bilateral Relations’, 28 June 1954, *SWJN-SS*, Vol. 26, 1 June 1954–30 September 1954, p. 410.

<sup>48</sup> ‘28 June 1954’, *ZELNP*.

<sup>49</sup> Niu, ‘Chongjian “zhongjian didai”’, p. 251.

Following Geneva, Beijing emphasized that a united front of diverse states was good international policy.<sup>50</sup> In October, preparing for the visit of Indian leaders, Zhou underlined the need for ties with such capitalist, but neutral, Asian countries.<sup>51</sup> One result was Delhi's support for the PRC's participation at Bandung. At this historic convention of Asian and African states, Zhou paraded the PRC's new moderation and repeatedly underlined the identity China shared with other Asian and post-colonial states. Mao and Zhou had agreed beforehand that they would make plain at Bandung that revolution could not be exported.<sup>52</sup> On one occasion in Bandung, Zhou laughingly dismissed the idea that communism could be imposed on Tibet or anywhere else.<sup>53</sup> The tragic terrorist attack on the Chinese chartered aeroplane, *The Kashmir Princess*, originally scheduled to fly Zhou from Hong Kong to Indonesia, allowed Beijing to advance a new identity, insisting that the attack was not just against the PRC, but the entire Afro-Asian movement.<sup>54</sup> Those Chinese who died were celebrated as 'martyrs' for the Afro-Asian cause.<sup>55</sup> The PRC was now asserting that it was an Asian nation-state concerned more with the common cause of Asia's renewal than with transnational class-based revolution. The aim was to build up a united front of states across the 'intermediate zone' between the superpower blocs in order to resist the United States.<sup>56</sup>

The mid-1950s was a period when the PRC embraced a conventional diplomacy which suggested a desire to integrate with the post-war system of nation-states and also reflected a cooling of domestic radicalism. Beijing began talks regarding overseas Chinese populations as it sought to reassure neighbours in Southeast Asia that it accepted

<sup>50</sup> Zhang Shuguang, 'Constructing "Peaceful Coexistence": China's Diplomacy toward the Geneva and Bandung Conferences, 1954-55', *Cold War History*, vol. 7, no. 4, 2007, p. 518.

<sup>51</sup> '8 October 1954', *ZELNP*.

<sup>52</sup> '4-5 April 1955', *ZELNP*.

<sup>53</sup> '28 April 1955', *ZELNP*.

<sup>54</sup> 'Ji Pengfei fubuzhang yu yindu zhuhua dashi laijiawen de tanhua jilu [Record of conversation between Deputy Minister Ji Pengfei and Indian Ambassador to China Raghavan]', 12 April 1955, *CMFA*, 207-00009-01; 'Ji Pengfei fubuzhang yu yindu zhuhua dashi laijiawen de tanhua jilu [Record of conversation between Deputy Minister Ji Pengfei and Indian Ambassador to China Raghavan]', 13 April 1955, *CMFA*, 207-00009-02.

<sup>55</sup> '20 April 1955', *ZELNP*.

<sup>56</sup> Zhang, 'Constructing "Peaceful Coexistence"', p. 524; Niu, 'Chongjian "zhongjian didai"', p. 254.



conventional approaches to citizenship and nationality.<sup>57</sup> In this period, diplomacy in the Islamic world with non-communist states like Egypt appeared linked to a more inclusive nationalism at home, which sought better integration of religious minorities like the restive Muslims of Xinjiang.<sup>58</sup> Beijing's success saw even conservative regimes such as that in Lebanon impressed by the PRC's performance at Bandung.<sup>59</sup> In early 1956, the main newspaper of the party-government, the *People's Daily*, linked the great confidence in economic progress to the success of the international united front which Beijing's diplomacy had been constructing.<sup>60</sup> And, at the Eighth Party Congress in September, confidence was great enough to announce that the transition to socialism meant that the class struggle had now been resolved. The Party was evolving from revolutionary force to conventional government.<sup>61</sup>

### Transnational class struggle

However, even as this moderate shift took hold, Chairman Mao himself was starting to see a pattern in various domestic and international developments which gave him pause. It suggested to him that class remained a critical factor and functioned in a transnational fashion to link political struggles at home and abroad. The figure of the comprador was a key vector for hostile transnational class action in Mao's mind. The crises of communist rule in Poland and, especially, in Hungary in the second half of 1956 were a vital element in the restoration of class to Mao's politics. He was convinced that the challenge to the revolutionary order in Hungary had resulted from a failure to eradicate class enemies, who had then found

<sup>57</sup> I. Abraham, 'Bandung and State Formation in Post Colonial Asia', in *Bandung Revisited*, (eds) Tan and Acharya, pp. 48–67.

<sup>58</sup> Kyle Haddad-Fonda, 'The Domestic Significance of China's Policy toward Egypt, 1955–57', *The Chinese Historical Review*, vol. 21, issue 1, 2014, pp. 45–64.

<sup>59</sup> Brazinsky, *Winning the Third World*, p. 102.

<sup>60</sup> 'Dui "1956–1967 quanguo nongye fazhan gangyao (cao'an)" gao de xiugai he gei Zhou enlai de xin [Revisions to the draft outline document of the national agricultural development plan for 1956–1967 and letter to Zhou Enlai]', 26 January 1956, *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong de wengao* [Collected Documents of Mao Zedong since the Founding of the PRC] (*JGYLMZDWG*), 8 volumes (Beijing: Central Party Documents, Digital Edition), Vol. 6, p. 1; 'Shehui zhuyi geming de mudi shi jiefang shengchanli [The goal of socialism is to liberate production]', *People's Daily*, 26 January 1956, *JGYLMZDWG*, Vol. 6, p. 22.

<sup>61</sup> Shen Zhihua, *Chuzai shizi lukou de xuanze: 1956–1957 nian de zhongguo* [At the Crossroads: China in 1956–57] (Guangdong: People's Publishing, 2013), pp. 3–4.

support from allies overseas. The Chairman concluded that China needed to be more vigilant lest similar dangers emerge in the PRC.<sup>62</sup> Even before the counter-revolutionary explosion in Hungary, Beijing had increasingly diagnosed the widespread instability across Tibetan zones of China as symptomatic of class conflict. In July 1956, Mao debated with Li Weihan, head of the United Front Work Department and a key figure in Beijing's relations with Tibet, whether or not they ought to launch class struggle in Tibet in order to destroy the recalcitrant elites.<sup>63</sup> And by December, Mao and Zhou were linking the trouble to the support given by transnational class allies to reactionary forces across Tibet.<sup>64</sup> Although Beijing resisted the temptation to abandon the united front in Tibet and launch a full-blooded class struggle, one major domestic consequence of events in Hungary and Tibet was the anti-rightist campaign. Mao had decided to experiment by appealing for external criticism of the CCP as a means of defusing social tension and allaying any risk of a counter-revolutionary challenge. But the virulent attacks that the Party and government encountered as a result of this so-called 'Hundred Flowers' campaign served to confirm to Mao that class enemies still existed within China, and so in summer 1957 a violent nationwide purge of 'rightists' was launched.<sup>65</sup> In autumn 1957, the claim of the previous year that class struggle had been finally resolved was rescinded, and class contradictions and rapid development were placed at the centre of PRC policy.<sup>66</sup>

Because Beijing's renewed sensitivity to class resulted also from Chinese observation of trends within India, this new class-based politics was particularly pertinent for attitudes to other key participants in the Third World, like the FLN. Scrutiny of India increasingly demonstrated to

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 277–88. Chen Jian also confirms the radicalizing impact that events in Hungary had on Mao: see Chen, *Mao's China*, Chapter 6; Zhu, 'The Hungarian Revolution', pp. 451–72.

<sup>63</sup> 'Zai tingqu ganzi, liangshan liangge zizhizhou gaige he pingluan wenti huibaoshi de tanhua [Discussion when listening to the report on reforms and pacification in the two autonomous prefectures of Ganzhi and Liangshan]', 22 July 1956, *Mao Zedong Xizang gongzuo wenxuan* [Selected Tibet Work Documents of Mao Zedong] (*MZDXZGZX*) (Beijing: Central Party Documents, 2008), pp. 148–51.

<sup>64</sup> 'Zhongyang fu Lasa dengdi keneng fasheng baoluan shi de zhishi [The centre replies to Lhasa and other places on the possibility of turmoil occurring]', 16 December 1956, *Pingxi Xizang panluan* [Pacifying the Tibet Rebellion] (*PXXZPL*), CCP Tibet Party History Information Series (N.p.: Tibet People's Publishing House, 1995), p. 62; '6 January 1957', *ZELNP*.

<sup>65</sup> Shen, *Chuzai shizi lukou de xuanze*, pp. 1–9.

<sup>66</sup> Zhu, 'The Hungarian Revolution', p. 464.

Chinese analysts and diplomats how comprador-type figures hobbled the independence and economic progress of a post-colonial state. In July 1957, the Central Investigation Department of the CCP circulated a study on India's economic problems which underlined right-wing opposition to land reform and rural cooperatives, and support for deferral of the Second Five Year Plan, the centrepiece of the state's efforts to guide economic development.<sup>67</sup> And in 1958 Chinese analysis began to focus on the individual relations of conservative Indians with the United States. In April, Chinese analysts asserted that the class struggle was intensifying in India and that the right was increasingly coordinating with the United States.<sup>68</sup> Various reports claimed that the United States was courting figures from India's ruling Congress Party's right wing and using aid to benefit Indian capitalists over state industry. In May, the Chinese military attaché in New Delhi noted that India's 'big capitalists ... make use of their newspapers and magazines, and coordinate with the US's efforts to curry favour, doing their utmost to promote the idea of Indo-US amity, and attacking and slandering the USSR and China, in this way seeking to undermine the daily expansion of the socialist countries' influence in India'.<sup>69</sup> In November, the same source said that the chief of Army Staff General Thimayya and the finance minister M. J. Desai were the main targets of American courtship and politically both had 'wild ambitions'.<sup>70</sup> According to Chinese reports, major Indian firms such as Tata and Birla were also cooperating with their American counterparts to seek Desai's support in opening India's defence sector to private investment.<sup>71</sup> To the Chinese,

<sup>67</sup> 'Yindu jingji muqian fasheng yanzhong kunnan de yuanyin he yindu zhengfu de duice [The causes of the serious difficulties currently of the Indian economy and the Indian Government's counter-measures]', CCP Central Investigation Department, 25 July 1957, *CMFA*, 105-00835-01.

<sup>68</sup> 'Muqian yindu guonei zhengzhi douzheng de xingshi jiqi yingxiang [The situation and impact of India's current domestic political struggle]', CCP Central Investigation Department, 26 April 1958, *CMFA*, 105-00891-10.

<sup>69</sup> 'Yinmei guanxi fazhan jinkuang [Recent situation in the development of Indian-US relations]', 19 May 1958, Intelligence Section of the Headquarters of the General Staff, *Yindu meiguo guanxi* [India-US Relations], 31 March–14 November 1958, *CMFA*, 105-00892-02, pp. 7–15.

<sup>70</sup> 'Yindu lujun canmouzhang dimaiya shangjiang fangmei qingkuang xubao [Further report on the Indian Chief of the Army General Staff, General Thimayya's visit to the US]', 14 November 1958, *CMFA*, 105-00892-02, p. 19.

<sup>71</sup> 'Yindu guodadang neibu maodun he douzheng [Indian National Congress Party's internal contradictions and struggles]', 5 November 1958–19 January 1959, *CMFA*, 105-00891-07.

all of this underlined how transnational class alliances functioned in global politics to impede more radical agendas, as demonstrated by Nehru's sense that he had no option but to defer talk of significant land reform.<sup>72</sup>

Given the growing risk of such hostile transnational class alliances, new Soviet ideas about peaceful strategies, which downplayed the centrality of class struggle and the comprador, appeared dangerously naive to Beijing. Along with 'peaceful coexistence' and 'peaceful competition', 'peaceful transition' had been canonized at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in February 1956. 'Peaceful transition' was the idea that communist parties need not engage in armed struggle but might win power and then realize socialism through parliamentary means. While Mao's later public response to events in Hungary had been very supportive of Moscow's intervention there, he was careful to withhold endorsement of this idea of peaceful transition.<sup>73</sup> And, in January 1957, Mao privately intimated to senior colleagues his disdain for an absolute commitment to peaceful means. The Chairman did not agree with the statement in a new edition of a Soviet philosophical dictionary that the categories of 'war and peace, capitalist and proletariat, life and death' need always be mutually exclusive and in opposition to each other. Mao wrote,

War and peace on the one hand exclude each other, and on the other are linked to each other, and under certain conditions, they can transform into one another. If preparation for war does not occur under peace, then why does war suddenly occur? During war if there is no preparation for peace, then why does peace suddenly happen?<sup>74</sup>

For Mao, the evidence he saw of hostile transnational class forces meant that the exclusion of the possibility of conflict and an absolute commitment to peaceful means was a terrible strategic error, and that class struggle must remain a priority in the Third World. Thus, he

<sup>72</sup> 'Cong nihelu muqian de kumen kan yindu zhengju [Observing India's political situation from Nehru's current difficulties]', CCP Central Investigation Department, 9 December 1958, *CMFA*, 105-00891-09.

<sup>73</sup> Shen, *Chuzai shizi lukou de xuanze*, pp. 291-94.

<sup>74</sup> 'Zhanzheng yu heping ji huxiang paichi you huxiang lianjie [War and peace are both mutually exclusive and also mutually related]', 27 January 1957, *Jianguo yilai Mao zedong junshi wengao* [The Collected Military Documents of Mao Zedong since the Founding of the PRC] (*JGJLMZDJSWG*) (Beijing: Central Party Documents, 2010), Vol. 2, p. 338.

would tell visiting Moroccan communists in January 1959 that they must continue the struggle against homegrown capitalists.<sup>75</sup>

A major consequence of this renewed sensitivity to the potential for transnational class conflict was that the PRC began to revive support for revolution abroad, abandoning the commitment to respect sovereign national boundaries. PRC relations with the Algerian FLN was an important example of this shift. The FLN and Chinese leaders had first met at Bandung in 1955, when participants, including the PRC, endorsed the Algerians' demand for independence. Following that conference, the Chinese began establishing more formal relations with states in Africa and the Middle East, with an embassy in Cairo by May 1956 and trade relations developing with Tunisia, Libya, Nigeria, Ghana, and Ethiopia.<sup>76</sup> But, in line with its moderate approach, Beijing adhered to the strictures of the Five Principles by limiting itself to significant diplomatic relations only with other nation-states. In 1956 Zhou Enlai proposed talks between France and the FLN.<sup>77</sup> Hence, Beijing avoided endorsing armed struggle by a non-state group, acknowledging the privileged status of the nation-state in the international order.

However, towards the end of 1957, Beijing and the FLN began to discover a shared frustration that the international system was obstructing their respective ambitions. The FLN's strategy was in chaos. The Battle of Algiers had been lost and the 'Bandung Spirit' had not materialized into concrete support from the Third World. France had even implemented a physical blockade of Algeria's borders. But, Jeffrey Byrne writes, the FLN saw the potential in a 'transnational revolutionary wave' and therefore switched strategies to combine the political and international elements of their struggle and take a more confrontational approach to the West.<sup>78</sup> China's willingness to encourage this wave was clear from the 'national day of solidarity with the Algerian people', convened in Beijing in November 1957.<sup>79</sup> The desire and ability to cultivate the revolutionary potential of such

<sup>75</sup> 'Liangci shibai shi women xuehuile dazhang [Two defeats made us learn how to fight]', 1 February 1959, *JGYLMZDJSWG*, Vol. 3, p. 5.

<sup>76</sup> D. Chau, 'The French-Algeria War, 1954–1964: Communist China's Support for Algerian Independence', in *Military Advising and Assistance: From Mercenaries to Privatisation, 1815–2007*, (ed.) D. Stoker (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 111–15.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>78</sup> Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution*, p. 49.

<sup>79</sup> Chau, 'The French-Algeria War', p. 115.

popular groups was indicated by Beijing's enthusiasm for the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation (AAPSO), the Permanent Secretariat of which was established in Cairo in December, giving Beijing a direct channel to African radicals.<sup>80</sup> And the FLN's challenge to the international system was made clear by its conduct at the Conference of Independent African States in April 1958, where they denounced their host Kwame Nkrumah's moderate approach to decolonization, arguing instead for violent struggle by non-state groups.<sup>81</sup> The fact that the FLN sent its first delegation to Beijing around this time underscored a growing sense of community.<sup>82</sup>

Beijing was reassessing its posture within the whole region and finding more value in non-state organizations like AAPSO or the All-African People's Conference (AAPC) where it could engage with those leading anti-colonial campaigns.<sup>83</sup> Simultaneously, erstwhile state allies were losing their appeal. For example, Egypt under Nasser had begun suppressing communists and was hostile to the revolutionary regime established in Iraq in July 1958.<sup>84</sup> While some have argued that the subsequent American intervention in Lebanon provided an important opportunity for Beijing to foster Arab-Chinese resistance against American imperialism, the key shift was Beijing's dissatisfaction with moderate nationalists like Nasser.<sup>85</sup> Beijing's embrace of the FLN as a radical actor exposed those Third World moderates whose support for the Algerians was only half-hearted. So while Indian prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru explained that he felt unable to pressure France at the UN in Algeria's favour, in September 1958 the Chinese were quick to recognize the newly declared Provisional Government of the Republic of Algeria. In December, as the Algerians again attacked Nkrumah's disavowal of violence, they were welcomed to Beijing for a second time.<sup>86</sup>

Ensuing discussions between the Algerians and Chinese suggested a common view of both the potential of transnational class loyalties and that violence was a welcome political stimulant. The Algerians toured the

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>81</sup> Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution*, pp. 69–71.

<sup>82</sup> Haddad-Fonda, 'An Illusory Alliance', p. 341.

<sup>83</sup> J. Eisenman, 'Comrades-in-Arms: The Chinese Communist Party's Relations with African Political Organisations in the Mao Era, 1949–76', *Cold War History*, vol. 18, no. 4, 2018, pp. 433–34.

<sup>84</sup> Brazinsky, *Winning the Third World*, pp. 178–80.

<sup>85</sup> Yin, "'People are God'", p. 284.

<sup>86</sup> Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution*, pp. 51, 57, 69–71.

heartlands of Asian revolution: China, North Vietnam, and North Korea. They stressed their disappointment with the lack of Arab support. The opportunity to share experiences of revolutionary struggle with comrades in Beijing, Hanoi, and Pyongyang seemed of far more use to the FLN than ethnic or cultural ties in their own region. Films on the Chinese guerrilla war were requested to boost the morale of the Algerian people. The FLN also demonstrated an awareness of the transnational power of their cause by explaining how close they were to the neighbouring Tunisian people: ‘it only needs us to incite them, [and] the Tunisian people will rise up against Bourguiba [the President of Tunisia]’. The Algerians also said they wanted to visit the people’s communes in order to be able to counter French disparagement of these, an additional benefit for Beijing that might be understood in terms of the international and transnational propaganda campaign. In addition, the Algerians talked about violence in Maoist terms: while French atrocities were bad, they said, it was also ‘good, the more cruel they are the more the people want to resist’.<sup>87</sup>

An interpretation of China’s foreign policy that integrates class reveals how the local and international were linked. Vital domestic developments in spring 1959 sharpened Beijing’s commitment to a vision of transnational class struggle. The Tibetan uprising in Lhasa in March, which caused the Dalai Lama to flee to India, was understood by the CCP in similar terms to the Algerian conflict—as one exacerbated by transnational class forces. On the 6 April, the defence minister Peng Dehuai warned the FLN that an American ‘oil and gas king’ was eyeing their country, just as the United States had similarly ‘targeted’ China, having ‘organized the rebellion in Tibet’.<sup>88</sup> One month later, Zhou Enlai explained to the Algerians the class basis of historical British imperialism in Tibet: ‘Britain used the Tibetan upper class to oppress the people, these figures were at the same time compradors, they sold leather goods and minerals etc. to the British’. Zhou linked this history to the current situation, saying that the majority of ‘upper class Tibetans’ opposed the CCP’s ‘reforms’ and that those Indians who sought influence in Tibet should instead support the

<sup>87</sup> ‘*A’erjiliya lishi zhengfu daibiaotuan fanghua jiedai jianbao* [Summary report of the visit to China of the delegation of the Algerian Provisional Government], 5 December 1958, *CMFA*, 107-00165-02.

<sup>88</sup> ‘*Peng Dehuai yuanshuai huijian A’erjiliya junshi daibiaotuan de tanhua jilu* [Record of talks between Marshal Peng Dehuai and the Algerian military delegation], 6 April 1959, *CMFA*, 107-00191-03.

CCP's reform efforts, rather than, Zhou implied, backing the reactionaries in Tibet.<sup>89</sup>

Besides Tibet, another nominally domestic factor behind the recrudescence of the CCP's class politics—the catastrophic famine taking hold in China—was also perceived in transnational terms. Mao interpreted rational responses to shortages such as the hoarding of grain as counter-revolutionary sabotage of his cherished Great Leap Forward, and Peng Dehuai's candid criticism at the Lushan conference in July and August was seen in the same light. Andrew Walder writes that this perception was a legacy of Mao's reading of Stalin's account of Soviet economic development, the *Short Course*, which argued that all disagreement was a consequence of class struggle.<sup>90</sup> Class was now a key variable in Beijing's interpretation of domestic and international events. By November 1959, Chinese analysts were explaining an array of negative developments in India—be that interference in Tibet, escalating border conflicts, or hostility towards both the socialist bloc and the Communist Party of India—as the result of the rising power of Indian 'compradors', which was causing a split in the once progressive 'national bourgeoisie'.<sup>91</sup> This perspective was vital for Beijing's understanding of the Third World. But, the link between the domestic and foreign wound through Moscow also. Mao interpreted Khrushchev's criticism of Polish communes at this time as an attack on his Great Leap Forward, and believed Peng Dehuai, who had been in Moscow just before Lushan, was colluding with the Soviets to undermine the Chairman's revolutionary ambitions.<sup>92</sup> The proliferation of transnational class and comprador threats, coupled with Moscow's apparent attack on Mao's economic ideas, would have been all the more worrying in Beijing due to the additional observation that Soviet theorists were simultaneously toying with dispensing altogether with the vital transnational concept of the comprador.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>89</sup> 'Zhou Enlai zongli huijian A'erjiliya junshi daibiaotuan tanhua jilu [Record of talks at Premier Zhou Enlai's meeting with the Algerian military delegation]', 5 May 1959, *CMFA*, 107-00191-06.

<sup>90</sup> Walder, *China under Mao*, pp. 164–69.

<sup>91</sup> 'Yindu dida zichan jiejī de zhuanhua [The transformation of India's big capitalists]', 27 November 1959, *CMFA*, 105-00998-06.

<sup>92</sup> Niu Jun, '1962: The Eve of the Left Turn in China's Foreign Policy', Cold War International History Project Working Paper 48, Woodrow Wilson Center, October 2005, p. 8; see also Eisenman, 'Comrades-in-Arms', p. 434.

<sup>93</sup> *CMFA*, 105-00998-06.



Part of Mao's irritation with the Soviets was because, for him, a transnational class vision of global politics was not simply about threats but very much also a lens through which to identify opportunities. In the context of Mao's historic decision to align with the Soviet Union in 1949, historian Yang Kuisong used the phrase '*liyingswaihe*' (to coordinate internal and external offensives) to describe the potential danger posed by American coordination with Chinese capitalists.<sup>94</sup> But such transnational logic provided possibilities as well, evinced by the class solidarity underpinning the Sino-Soviet alliance. Frustration with Soviet unwillingness to grasp further opportunities was a major factor behind the Sino-Soviet split. Mao told Ho Chi Minh in 1960 that his differences with Khrushchev were over 'whether the remaining two thirds of the people who are not part of socialist countries desire revolution and about whether the one third of the people living in socialist countries desire to continue revolution'.<sup>95</sup> Mao's desire to act on his belief that these people all wanted revolution, and could rally transnationally to realize it, put him at odds with Moscow where proletarian internationalism increasingly implied less pursuit of global revolution than solidarity among socialist states.

From 1959 Mao was fully determined to embrace these opportunities. So, for example, the rebellion in Lhasa justified Beijing's use of class struggle as a tool of counter-insurgency in Tibet, allowing Mao to set aside the frustrations shared with Li Wei-han back in 1956.<sup>96</sup> And Beijing now sought to coach the Algerians on the possibilities of a class perspective. Military officials of the CCP explained the techniques developed in their revolutionary conflict with the Guomindang nationalist Chinese and Japanese invaders. For example, the CCP seized supplies from 'local tyrants' or forced 'landlords' to sell goods to them. Enemy prisoners, however, were treated well: 'not only are they not killed, they are treated well...when serving as soldiers for the Guomindang army they were scared to death, but following some education after coming over to us, they became brave fighters'.<sup>97</sup> This

<sup>94</sup> Yang Kuisong, *Zhongjian didai de geming: guoji da beijing xia kan zhonggong chenggong zhi dao* [Revolution in the Intermediate Zone: The Victory of the Chinese Communist Party in its International Context] (Taiyuan: Shanxi People's Publishing, 2010), p. 526.

<sup>95</sup> Yang, 'Revolutionary Diplomacy', p. 139.

<sup>96</sup> Chen Jian, 'The Tibetan Rebellion of 1959 and China's Changing Relations with India and the Soviet Union', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, vol. 8, no. 3, 2006, pp. 72–78.

<sup>97</sup> 'Zong houqinbu zhengwei Li Juikui tong A'erjiliya junshi daibiaotuan tanhua jiyao' [Summary of talks between General Logistics Department's Political Commissar Li Jukui and the Algerian Military Delegation], 3 April 1959, *CMFA*, 107-00191-02.

latter point continued to be underlined a year later when Zhou informed the Algerians that the famously experienced revolutionary fighter Ho Chi Minh was keen that the FLN pay attention to the treatment of prisoners of war, pointing out that the Chinese vice premier Marshal Chen Yi had himself developed a programme of prisoner-of-war conversion during the Chinese Civil War.<sup>98</sup> More broadly, while Beijing used social revolution to secure Tibet, Zhou and Mao continued to underline the potential of a transnational class logic for Algeria. The Chinese premier urged the FLN to establish whether there were sympathizers with the Algerian cause among the *pieds noirs* communities of European settlers in North Africa. He explained that in their revolution, the CCP had once thought solely in terms of ‘white’ versus ‘red’ areas, but eventually came to realize that they could find supporters within those ‘white’ zones controlled by the Guomindang.<sup>99</sup> Mao underlined the value of a similar transnational logic in diplomacy, arguing that the Algerians could find allies within both France, and also South Korea and the United States’ ‘reactionary castles’ of Japan and Turkey, where the people were protesting against the ‘running dogs’ of their own countries and their collaboration with American hegemony.<sup>100</sup> The Chairman sought a front based not on oppressed national groups but rather on class allies spanning national entities. Between 1960–1961, the Algerians and Beijing appeared in full agreement about the transnational class context in which they operated. In May 1960, senior FLN figures explained that the United States and France exerted pressure via Tunisia and Morocco because one was ruled by capitalists and the other by a feudal monarch. The Algerians told Chen Yi that they countered this by influencing the ‘people’ of those countries.<sup>101</sup> Just as Zhou Enlai would explain how ‘rightists’ in the Third World had blocked Algerian involvement in NAM, Chinese diplomats in the region shared this scepticism of Morocco and Tunisia. The embassy in

<sup>98</sup> ‘Zhou Enlai zongli huijian A'erjiliya fuzongli Beilekasaimu huitan jilu [Record of talks between Premier Zhou and Algeria's Deputy Premier Belkacem]', 14 May 1960, *CMFA*, 107-00120-05.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> ‘Mao Zedong zhuxi jiejian A'erjiliya fu zongli Beilekasaimu tanhua jilu [Record of talks at Chairman Mao's reception of Algerian Deputy Premier Belkacem]', 17 May 1960, *CMFA*, 107-00120-01.

<sup>101</sup> ‘Chen Yi fuzongli tong A'erjiliya fuzongli Beilekasaimu huitan jilu [Record of talks between Vice Premier Chen Yi and Algeria's Deputy President Belkacem]', 18 May 1960, *CMFA*, 107-00120-06; see also *CMFA*, 107-00120-05.

Morocco described these governments as engaged in ‘shady business’, trying to press Algeria to compromise with France.<sup>102</sup> It was claimed that the Moroccan king and Tunisia’s president, Habib Ben Ali Bourguiba, sought to ‘seduce’ Algeria in cahoots with the United States and France.<sup>103</sup> The Algerians explained their own response to France’s unexpected call for talks in 1960 in terms that emphasized transnational factors. They said that their positive response would maximize sympathy among French unions and the French Communist Party.<sup>104</sup> Knowing the Chinese were happy to support such transnational diplomacy, GPRA president Ferhat Abbas requested that Beijing facilitate secret contacts with the French Communist Party.<sup>105</sup> Positive developments were said to manifest from this transnational logic. So the resumption of talks with France in 1961 was ascribed to popular pressure on all sides.<sup>106</sup> The broad commitment of the Algerians to the pursuit of transnational revolutionary allies was clear from their support for leftist groups in Tunisia and Morocco and radicals throughout Africa.<sup>107</sup> Byrne has underlined that the Algerians adopted more radical domestic policies under Chinese influence, but although the FLN had already identified the potential in the transnational for their struggle, it was the class element of the transnational that was particularly learned from the CCP.

<sup>102</sup> ‘*A gan fa tanpan shi* [Algeria pushes France over negotiations]’, Embassy in Morocco, 19 June 1960, *A’erjiliya yu faguo tanpan ji wo duici tanpan de taidu* [Negotiations between Algeria and France and our attitude to these talks], 19–24 June 1960, *CMFA*, 107-00225-01.

<sup>103</sup> ‘*A’basi zuowan fayan gao a renminshu* [Abbas speech yesterday announcing his letter to the Algerian people]’, Embassy in Morocco, 21 June 1960, *CMFA*, 107-00225-01.

<sup>104</sup> ‘*Beilekasaimu jian chen dashi tan neirong* [Content of talks when Belkacem met Ambassador Chen]’, Embassy in United Arab Republic, 27 June 1960, *A’erjiliya fuzongli beilekasaimu gao wo pai Feiluji wei zhuhua daibiao deng youguan qingkuang* [Situation relating to Algeria’s Deputy President Belkacem announcing that he will send Feiluji as a representative stationed in China and other matters], 27 June 1960, *CMFA*, 107-00225-03.

<sup>105</sup> ‘*Guobin jiedai qingkuang (A’erjiliya daibiaotuan tong wo huitan qingkuang)* [Circumstances surrounding state visitors (Talks with Algeria delegation)]’, 5 October 1960, *CMFA*, 204-00119-12.

<sup>106</sup> ‘*Zeng Yongquan fubuzhang yu A’erjiliya zhuhua waijiaoshituan tuanzhang de tanhua jilu* [Record of talks between Deputy Minister Zeng Yongquan and Algeria’s head of delegation in China]’, 17 May 1961, *CMFA*, 107-00970-01.

<sup>107</sup> Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution*, pp. 79–83.

## The post-colonial dilemma

Despite the shared enthusiasm for transnational struggle, as independent Algeria emerged, Beijing's class analysis of the post-colonial state complicated relations. Beijing saw any compromise with the West as a victory for reactionary forces. All Third World states faced a post-colonial dilemma: what kind of relationship to seek with the former metropole and the West in general. Responses varied: India had joined the British Commonwealth, Burma had not. The dilemma sprang from the threat of neo-colonialism, a live concept in Third World circles and one often used by the Chinese in conversation with the Algerians.<sup>108</sup> The issue was how much interdependence to accept and how much political sovereignty to give up to foster economic development. Post-colonial states often felt obliged to appear aware of the dangers and at least one senior Indian visitor to Beijing in the early 1950s had been tasked with persuading the Chinese that India was purging itself of significant foreign capital in order to resist neo-colonialism.<sup>109</sup> As decolonization spread to Africa in the late 1950s, Beijing seemed keen to expand relations with those new states, like Guinea and Mali, that sought to protect their independence and resolve the post-colonial dilemma with rejecting all ties with France, their erstwhile colonial ruler.<sup>110</sup>

The enthusiasm for those new states which responded to the post-colonial dilemma with devout pursuit of self-reliance arose from the CCP's sense that its own isolation during the years of revolutionary struggle had brought not only political but also material developmental benefits. Algerian visitors to the PRC were often told that they must be '*zili gengsheng* (self-reliant)'.<sup>111</sup> This was partly about applying Mao's theory of guerrilla strategy which, as Zhou explained, advocated that the revolutionary army must rely on the local population like 'fish in water'.<sup>112</sup> While self-reliance had the straightforward political benefit of minimizing the risk of neo-colonialism, it also adhered to certain ideas

<sup>108</sup> For example, see fn. 1 and also *CMFA*, 107-00120-02.

<sup>109</sup> Anton Harder, 'Promoting Development without Struggle: Sino-Indian Relations in the 1950s', in *India and the Cold War*, (ed.) Manu Bhagavan (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2019), p. 160.

<sup>110</sup> See Brazinsky, 'Showcasing the Chinese Version of Modern-tea in Africa'.

<sup>111</sup> For example, see *CMFA*, 107-00120-05.

<sup>112</sup> '*Zhou Enlai zongli tong A'erjiliya fuzongli Beilekasaimu huitan jilu* [Record of talks between Premier Zhou and Algerian Deputy President Beilekasaimu]', 19 May 1960, *CMFA*, 107-00120-07.

about the efficacy of peasant technologies and local knowledge for scientific innovation. One military official explained to FLN guests that, during the CCP's years of warfare on China's margins, self-sufficiency had encouraged the development of peasant techniques adapted to serve acute needs, citing the production of makeshift gunpowder as an example.<sup>113</sup> The point is that for the CCP a class perspective was not just about adhering to Marxist rhetoric but had real practical value. 'Peasant science' or 'mass science' certainly had political benefits because it empowered those once excluded by expert knowledge.<sup>114</sup> But a number of historians are now identifying real scientific advances achieved under the auspices of 'Maoist science'.<sup>115</sup> Just as independent self-reliance had stimulated the creativity of indigenous peasant innovation for the CCP in the 1930s and 1940s, so now Beijing recommended economic autarky so that a new revolutionary state might strangle the comprador threat of collaboration with neo-colonialism.

The CCP placed the comprador at the heart of its understanding of the post-colonial dilemma which Algeria faced. Even in 1960 some Chinese were alert to the possibility of class divisions and that comprador-type elites within the FLN might favour compromise with France, while others, including the military, wanted to continue the struggle.<sup>116</sup> Beijing could not regard formal independence as necessarily equating to absolute independence. In June and July of 1961, as Paris and the FLN approached a final deal, Zhou and Chen Yi both cautioned their Algerian allies about efforts to limit their future independence. Zhou warned that the French president General Charles De Gaulle was using 'neo-colonialism' and 'capital penetration' and that Algeria must persist

<sup>113</sup> *CMFA*, 107-00191-02.

<sup>114</sup> G. Deshingkar, 'Science and Technology in China—A Preliminary Enquiry', *China Report*, vol. 10, no. 5–6, Sep.–Dec. 1974, p. 277.

<sup>115</sup> Two examples are Jiang Lijing, 'Global Epidemiology, Local Message: Sino-American Collaboration on Cancer Research, 1969–1990', in *Global Transformations in the Life Sciences, 1945–1980*, (eds) Patrick Manning and Mat Savelli (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2018); and Jiang Lijing, 'Crafting Socialist Embryology: Dialectics, Aquaculture, and the Diverging Discipline in Maoist China, 1950–1965', *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences*, vol. 40, no. 3, 2018. For a more concise overview of recent literature on science in Mao's China, see Fu Jia-chen, 'Practice and the History of Science in the PRC: A Historiographic Reflection', *East Asian Science, Technology and Society: An International Journal*, vol. 13, no. 3, 2019, pp. 449–63.

<sup>116</sup> 'A'basi zuowan fayan gao a renminshu [Abbas speech yesterday announcing his letter to the Algerian people]', Embassy in Morocco, 21 June 1960, *CMFA*, 107-00225-01.

in a long-term struggle.<sup>117</sup> Chen Yi saw French plots to limit Algeria's future sovereignty, for instance, by maintaining rights over the Sahara region's resources.<sup>118</sup> The danger for future Sino-Algerian relations was that Beijing might perceive a comprador elite willing to trade complete independence for economic benefits.

In March 1962, as independence arrived with the signing of the Evian Accords between France and the Algerians, divisions quickly emerged among the revolutionaries. Even before this date some Algerians had suggested to the Chinese that they did not equate formal independence with complete independence. In 1960, Abbas had hinted that socialism might be the best means of safeguarding independence.<sup>119</sup> And in February 1962, the new president of the GPRA Benyoucef Benkhedda wrote to Zhou that genuine economic independence was needed to consolidate formal liberation.<sup>120</sup> The concessions to France in the Evian Accords in terms of continued military bases, access to resources in the Sahara, and limitations to reform of European land ownership certainly would have confirmed the fears of those sensitive to the risk of neo-colonialism and the post-colonial dilemma.<sup>121</sup> As a result, the Algerian leadership was divided by two very different visions for the country's future. One involved adhering to the moderation and compromises of the Evian Accords, while others had formulated the 'Tripoli programme', a far more revolutionary agenda.<sup>122</sup> Beijing would attempt to interpret all of this in terms of transnational class relations.

Initially, Beijing was cautious about independent Algeria's domestic politics and urged unity. No doubt a general moderation of PRC diplomacy since 1960 (caused by Mao's sidelining in the wake of the

<sup>117</sup> *CMFA*, 107-00970-03.

<sup>118</sup> 'Chen Yi fuzongli jiejian A'erjiliya zhuhua waijiaoshituan tuanzhang Abudule Lakeman Jiwan de tanhua jilu [Record of talks between Vice Premier Chen Yi and the head of Algeria's permanent delegation to China Abderrahmane Kiouane]', 25 July 1961, *CMFA*, 107-00970-04.

<sup>119</sup> 'Guobin jiedai qingkuang (A'basi zongli canguanzhong de fanying) [Circumstances on state visitors (President Abbas's reactions during visit)]', 2 October 1960, *CMFA*, 204-00119-25.

<sup>120</sup> 'A'erjiliya gongheguo linshi zhengfu zongli ben yousufu ben keda zhi zhou enlai zongli de xin [Letter from Benyoucef Benkhedda, President of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Algeria to Premier Zhou Enlai]', 9 February 1962, *Zhou zongli huijian a'erjiliya waijiao shituan tuanzhang jiwan tanhua jilu* [Record of talks between Premier Zhou Enlai and Kiouane, Head of the Algerian diplomatic mission], 20 February 1962, *CMFA*, 107-00991-01.

<sup>121</sup> Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution*, pp. 364–65.

<sup>122</sup> Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution*, pp. 126–29.

horrific famine, and which was reinforced in early 1962) made Beijing less inclined to take sides in others' disputes.<sup>123</sup> But to some extent Algerian conditions were simply hard to fathom. In early July 1962, Chinese diplomats in Cairo seemed unable to determine which of the main contenders for power—Ben Bella or Benkhedda—aligned best with Beijing's interests. Most Algerians appeared unhappy with Evian but expected relations with France to develop more favourably over time. The best policy for China seemed to be to cautiously urge unity.<sup>124</sup> Meanwhile, analysts in Beijing's Foreign Ministry approved of Ben Bella and the military's greater scepticism about the Evian Accords, talk of land and social reform, and even noted discussion of communes and Maoist 'fish-in-water' type language about the relationship between the revolutionary military and the population. By contrast, Benkhedda appeared to be closer to the United States. However, for now, it was said, Beijing ought to work on private contacts to promote unity and continue to refer to the GPRC and Benkhedda as the recognized authorities, while trying to maintain neutrality between the Algerian factions.<sup>125</sup> The following month, Beijing postponed stationing a diplomatic representative in Algeria to avoid the appearance of taking sides.<sup>126</sup>

However, within a few weeks various Chinese sources were more confidently describing Algerian politics in terms of class interests. As Jeffrey Byrne has said, divisions centred around how far to accept the Evian Accords or whether to devise a more radical programme for the country.<sup>127</sup> But the Chinese focused on the class dimension of these differences, even before Chairman Mao reclaimed his control of the

<sup>123</sup> Niu, '1962', pp. 30–36.

<sup>124</sup> 'Wajiaobu shoudian, alian tailai [Embassy in United Arab Republic to Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs]', 2 July 1962, *Dui a'erjiliya neibu fenqi de kanfa he jianyi, zhongguo zhengfu lingdaoren jiejian a zhuhua shituanzhang de qingshi ji zhongyang pishi* [Opinions and suggestions regarding Algeria's internal differences, Chinese Government leaders' instructions to receive Algeria's representative in China and the centre's annotations], 2–16 July 1962, *CMFA*, 107-00994-01.

<sup>125</sup> 'Dui a'erjiliya neibu fenqi de kanfa he jianyi wo zhengfu lingdaoren yuejian a zhuhua shituanzhang deng wenti de qingshi [Instructions on opinions and suggestions related to internal differences in Algeria and the Government's leaders meeting with the head of the Algerian delegation and other issues]', Foreign Ministry, 5 July 1962, *CMFA*, 107-00994-01.

<sup>126</sup> *Zhongguo paizhu a'erjiliya dashiguan linshi daiban de qingshi ji youguan dianbao* [China's request to send an interim chargé d'affaires to the embassy in Algeria and related telegrams], 19 July–11 August 1962, *CMFA*, 107-00995-02.

<sup>127</sup> Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution*, pp. 126–29.

Central Committee's agenda in August and September, declaring 'never forget class struggle' and overturning diplomatic restraint.<sup>128</sup> In other words, Chinese diplomats were not responding to a new emphasis on class struggle at the Party centre. On the 2 August, in a report by the PRC embassy in Switzerland, the departure of France from Algeria was labelled a 'national democratic revolution'. In this view, the Evian Accords were a stage in an ongoing struggle and it was unsurprising if the future direction was disputed. The logic of transnational class struggle revealed various forces seeking to undermine Algerian independence: the fixed interests of capitalists, new and old colonialism, as well as the suspect governments in Tunisia and Morocco. The report withheld a definitive assessment, but Ben Bella's desire to use 'a one party system to build a Nasserite socialist state' was viewed more favourably than Benkhedda's apparent goal of a 'capitalist dictatorship Republic'.<sup>129</sup> China's embassy in Morocco displayed more clear-cut optimism, describing Algeria's three 'good' factors: the 'people', the 'army', and the 'manifesto'. The army had imbibed Marxism and 'Mao Thought' and would guarantee ongoing revolution. The 'manifesto' (Tripoli Programme) of Ben Bella's faction aimed to challenge the GPRA and was 'democratic' and 'revolutionary', advocated support for revolution overseas, and was permeated with the influence of 'Mao Thought'. The report dismissed Benkhedda's GPRA as 'two-faced' due to its 'class essence' and fear of progressives and the military. The GPRA, it was said, was regarded by the people as a potential tool of neo-colonialism, and it had even sought out the *piéd noir* extremists of the Secret Army Organization (OAS) to come to a private agreement. The Chinese diplomats in Morocco concluded that the Algerian 'people' were 'good' and too revolutionary to accept compromise, regarding Evian as a 'neo-colonial' agreement.<sup>130</sup>

In Beijing, late summer 1962 was the high point for revolutionary enthusiasm for Algeria, as the class struggle emerged in clear relief.

<sup>128</sup> Niu, '1962', p. 33; and Chen, *Mao's China*, p. 210.

<sup>129</sup> 'Dui a minzu jiefang chenxian neibu douzheng de kanfa [Opinion on Algerian FLN internal struggle]', Embassy in Switzerland, 2 August 1962, *Zhongguo zhuwaishi dui a'erjiliya xingshi de kanfa* [China's overseas diplomats' views on the situation in Algeria], 5 August–8 September 1962, *CMFA*, 107-00997-01.

<sup>130</sup> 'A'erjiliya qingkuang he shiguan kanfa [Algerian situation and embassy's view]', Embassy in Morocco, 5 August 1962, *CMFA*, 107-00997-01. Connelly describes the OAS as a 'terrorist militia made up of the most diehard settlers': see Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution*, p. 22.



One of Beijing's key governing allies in Africa was Sékou Touré of Guinea, who had steered his country to choose independence and a complete break with France. He urged the Chinese to back Ben Bella as a sincere revolutionary with a realistic view of the continued French threat. Touré added that Tunisia and Morocco feared a genuine revolutionary power on their doorstep.<sup>131</sup> The Chinese diplomats stationed in Morocco had gone further, quickly proposing unequivocal backing for Ben Bella to show clear support for the Algerian people's revolutionary ambition. They recommended sending aid and distributing Mao's writings.<sup>132</sup> Beijing was optimistic because it observed a significant constituency demanding social and economic revolution and a desire for Chinese material support. Talks in Beijing included much discussion of aid.<sup>133</sup> While Beijing was not in a position to satisfy Algeria's material needs, given the debilitating famine in China, it provided unrivalled mentoring.<sup>134</sup> On 21 August, while Chen Yi offered steel, grain, and medicine, he also shared the CCP's experience of managing the post-revolutionary transition of political authority. Chen emphasized the importance of land reform to secure peasant backing. He also warned that the capitalists and the landlords would rise up and that their suppression was vital. Chen remarked, 'We have had three years of continuous famine but why has social order remained peaceful? Because we conducted thorough suppression of counter-revolutionaries.' Regarding the OAS, he advised that there could be no room for 'humanity': the *piéd noir* extremists must be crushed. Chen added that the Algerians should 'not allow the [Evian] agreement to bind your hands...you are the victors'. And he ended

<sup>131</sup> 'Du'er tong ke dashi tanhua neirong [Talks between Touré and Ambassador Ke]', Embassy in Guinea, 8 August 1962, *CMFA*, 107-00997-01.

<sup>132</sup> 'A'erjiliya xingshi ji jidian jianyi [Situation in Algeria and a few suggestions]', Embassy in Morocco, 9 August 1962, *CMFA*, 107-00997-01.

<sup>133</sup> 'Yafeisi he gongkai fusizhang huijian a'erjiliya zhu zhongguo shituan tuanzhang Jiwan tanhua jilu [Record of talks between Asian African Bureau Deputy Director He Gongkai and head of Algeria's delegation to China Abderrahmane Kiouane]', 10 August 1962, *CMFA*, 107-00996-05.

<sup>134</sup> On effects of the famine, see Walder, *China under Mao*, pp. 180–88; K. Ens Manning and F. Wemheuer (eds), *Eating Bitterness: New Perspectives on China's Great Leap Forward and the Famine* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011); Yang Jisheng, *Mubei—Zhongguo liushi niandai de jihuang jishi*, 2 vols, (Hong Kong: Tiandi Tushu, 2008) or the shorter English edition: Yang Jisheng, *Tombstone: The Great Chinese Famine 1958–1962* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012); and F. Dikotter, *Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011).

with the caution that Algeria must beware of American ‘neo-colonialism’.<sup>135</sup>

However, Beijing’s enthusiasm soon tempered when in September its new embassy began reporting on Algerian conditions. Although the military was still seen as a positive revolutionary force and land reform appeared imminent, talk of joint-venture oil enterprises and criticism of strong action against the *pieds noirs* suggested that Ben Bella was compromising with capitalist and imperial interests.<sup>136</sup> In October, the embassy reported that Ben Bella was moving in a moderate direction. While the rhetoric around the Tripoli Programme and support for national liberation overseas remained in place, talk of land reform now included a worrying emphasis on new technologies and accommodating French interests. Furthermore, there was talk of deploying foreign capital to realize industrialization and that the nationalization of industry need not preclude the use of French technology and expertise. Revolutionary language seemed more geared towards revolution against ignorance and corruption, and much was said about the government’s need to be realistic with the people about what could actually be achieved. And while Algeria remained very friendly towards China, it was seeking investment from the West.<sup>137</sup> Chinese officials were not imagining things: independent Algeria was pursuing a cautious, balanced approach to economic diplomacy. This even included contemplating continued integration with France and Europe, indicated by an enquiry to the new European Economic Community regarding the continuation of certain rights granted to Algeria under the Treaty of Rome (1957).<sup>138</sup>

The Algerian appetite for compromise with the West made Beijing hesitate and grow wary of being manipulated. Late in October 1962, an Algerian journalist sought to persuade the Chinese that Ben Bella’s moderation and neutrality was in line with Chinese advice. Khaled

<sup>135</sup> *Chen yi fuzongli huijian a'erjiliya zhuhua zhongguo dashituan tuanzhang jüwan tanhua yaodian* [Summary points of discussion at Vice Premier Chen Yi’s meeting with head of Algeria’s delegation to China Abderrahmane Kiouane], 21–27 August 1962, *CMFA*, 107-00996-02; see *CMFA*, 107-00996-01 for verbatim record.

<sup>136</sup> *A'erjiliya qingkuang* [Algeria situation]?, Embassy in Algeria, 15 September 1962, *CMFA*, 107-00997-01.

<sup>137</sup> *A xin zhengfu zucheng qingkuang jiqi neiwai zhengce* [Composition of Algeria’s new government and its internal and external policies]?, Embassy in Algeria, 9 October 1962, *CMFA*, 107-00997-01.

<sup>138</sup> M. Brown, ‘Drawing Algeria into Europe: Shifting French Policy and the Treaty of Rome (1951–1964)’, *Modern and Contemporary France*, vol. 25, no. 2 (3 April 2017), pp. 199–200.

Safer said neutrality was now imperative, stability was the key, and socialism could come later. He said, ‘this kind of tactic was taught by Chairman Mao’. Having just visited Cuba, Safer reassured the Chinese that Algeria would follow Cuba’s trajectory. Like the Cubans, they would need guidance on their transition to socialism and on issues such as dealing with the ongoing influence of capitalists in the country.<sup>139</sup> But in Beijing the disappointment was clear. In February 1963, Beijing sent instructions to the embassy in Algeria that they must take a cautious approach once again. Significant aid would be delayed while close study of Ben Bella’s policy and diplomacy would continue.<sup>140</sup>

Beijing’s commitment to the logic of transnational class struggle made straightforward state-to-state relations with the new Algerian government impossible, revealing the PRC’s difficulty in engaging with moderate Third World states. Earlier in 1962, Houari Boumedienne, a leading figure in the Algerian military, had reassured his Chinese contacts in Morocco that if the army could not work with the recently released Ben Bella, then they would remove him from power.<sup>141</sup> Beijing sought to bolster this revolutionary backstop. Some in Algeria were fully aware of Beijing’s attitude and couched requests for assistance in revolutionary terms. For instance, in November and December 1962 there were conversations regarding aid for the army’s winter housing and clothing. The Algerians involved in these communications underlined that this was needed to keep the military happy, vital because it was the main revolutionary force in Algeria.<sup>142</sup> And so, in early 1963, the Chinese in Algeria endorsed the idea of aid as a means of steering Algeria onto the correct path. The embassy defined the Algerian government as having a ‘capitalist class character’, but argued that Chinese aid would expose the aid of the imperialists, revisionists, and anti-nationalists. Chinese support would boost the left, encourage the vacillators to take sides, and test the right wing.<sup>143</sup> In other words, China must back its class

<sup>139</sup> ‘*Bao a jizhe long fei tan de yixie qingkuang* [Report on talk with Algerian journalist Khaled Safer]’, Embassy in Algeria, 24 October 1962, *CMFA*, 107-00997-01.

<sup>140</sup> ‘*Guanyu yuan a wenti* [Regarding aid to Algeria]’, Beijing to embassy in Algeria, 21 February 1963, *Zhongguo dui A'erjiliya jingji yuanzhu de taidu* [China’s attitude towards economic aid for Algeria], 20–26 February 1963, *CMFA*, 107-01016-02.

<sup>141</sup> Liu, *Chinese Ambassadors*, p. 85.

<sup>142</sup> ‘*Zhongguo xiang A'erjiliya tigongguo dong yiwu, zhangpeng shi* [China’s provision to Algeria of winter clothing and tents]’, 6 November–1 December 1962, *CMFA*, 107-00996-03.

<sup>143</sup> ‘*Guanyu zhudong dui a'erjiliya jinxing yuanzhu he jinyibu kaizhan gongzuo de qingshi* [Regarding instructions for actively increasing aid to Algeria and further expansion of work]’, Embassy in Algeria, 20 February 1963, *CMFA*, 107-01016-02.

allies within Algeria in line with the logic of transnational class struggle. But Beijing now found it easier to back Third World states like Guinea and Mali whose class credentials were certified by their avoidance of ties with the West.<sup>144</sup> Relations with states like Kenya soured quickly because Beijing backed more radical factions in order to underline the point that right wing elements' fraternization with the West imperilled independence.<sup>145</sup> Beijing's preference was to engage insurgent movements whose reliability was evinced by the embrace of armed struggle. Of course, Vietnam was the most famous recipient of such support,<sup>146</sup> but in 1963–64 Beijing also began looking to foment revolution in the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, and other places in Africa.<sup>147</sup>

### Conclusion

In 1957, the PRC's experiment with more moderate and conventional diplomacy, based on the privileged status of the nation-state within the international system, began to end. In this period, Beijing had curtailed support for overseas revolutionary movements such as those in Indochina; embraced the explicitly neutral, moderate states of the Third World, India chief among these; and, espoused a rhetoric based on an Asian identity and common developmental aspirations. As a result, Beijing was in line with the majority of the Third World in endorsing the FLN's aspirations for independence while declining to endorse its campaign of armed struggle. It was thought this moderate stance would help persuade the world that Beijing did not seek to destabilize other states and also complemented the moderation of domestic agendas to focus on economic development and the integration of ethnic and religious minorities. At the heart of this moderation was a sense that class contradictions had become less intense within the PRC. However, Beijing's understanding of a series of developments led it to reconsider the necessity of vigilance on questions of class, in particular the dangers posed by transnational class formations. Communist rule had almost collapsed in Budapest in autumn 1956 because of apparent collaboration between Hungarian counter-revolutionaries and their

<sup>144</sup> Brazinsky, 'Showcasing the Chinese Version of Modern-tea in Africa'.

<sup>145</sup> Sun, "'Now the Cry was Communism'", pp. 5–10.

<sup>146</sup> Chen, *Mao's China*, pp. 210–11.

<sup>147</sup> Brazinsky, *Winning the Third World*, pp. 260–64; Eisenman, 'Comrades-in-Arms', p. 437.

American allies, saved only by Soviet military intervention. It also appeared that across the Tibetan zones, continued resistance to Beijing's rule was the result of an alliance between Tibetan elites and conservative forces in the United States and India. The virulent criticisms of the CCP that exploded from within the so-called 'Hundred Flowers' movement of 1957 then appeared to reveal to Mao that the Chinese population itself still contained many class enemies, sinister figures who were a potential channel for overseas subversion. The interpretation of Indian political trends as revealing of the damaging effect of a comprador elite, which sought to crush progressive economic plans and tie India into dependent relations with the United States, evolved into a sense of a direct threat against the PRC, following the Lhasa uprising in 1959 and the border clashes later that year. The result was an ever firmer embrace of Third World radicals like the Algerians, deemed as reliable allies in the clash of transnational class forces.

The emphasis on class over nation, however, meant that Beijing under Mao had little sympathy for the post-colonial dilemma and was sceptical of the international system of nation-states. In August 1962, Chen Yi warned the Algerians to beware: 'In future the UN, [and] American neo-colonialism will use this or that guise (including the guise of the UN) to infiltrate your country.'<sup>148</sup> Nonetheless, Algeria promptly joined the UN in October. Jeffrey Byrne writes that independent Algeria's entry to the United Nations vindicated that organization, legitimizing it and showing that anti-colonialists in fact wanted to join the nation-state system.<sup>149</sup> This posed a logical problem for Mao who would have seen the further development of an international system of states jealously guarding their sovereignty as an obstacle to the possibilities of transnational class struggle. Not only did Beijing's disdain for the post-war UN international system put it at odds with many Third World states, but the preoccupation with tailoring foreign policy to the perceived stage of class struggle underway in those states also caused problems. Believing it to be the best hope for continued revolution within Algeria, Beijing maintained close ties with the Algerian military. Despite this, the Chinese were still caught unawares by Boumedienne's

<sup>148</sup> 'Chen Yi fuzongli huijian A'erjiliya zhu zhongguo shituan tuanzhang Jiwan tanhua jilu [Record of talks between Vice Premier Chen Yi and Head of Algeria's delegation in China Abderrahmane Kiouane]', 21 August 1962, *CMFA*, 107-00996-01.

<sup>149</sup> Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution*, pp. 113–15.

eventual putsch, which removed Ben Bella in 1965. Nonetheless, they endorsed the violent takeover, and in doing so angered many African states. But Beijing's confidence in Boumedienne's revolutionary potential quickly deflated when it became clear he was far more sympathetic to the Soviet Union than they had previously thought. The relationship only declined further when post-coup Algiers retreated from the original plan to host the so-called Second Bandung Conference, which Beijing had long desired.<sup>150</sup>

Throughout the 1960s a pattern would be repeated in which Beijing would embrace global radicals and celebrate their revolutionary potential in transnational class terms, but then discover that class was not the unifying factor that they believed it to be. Li Hongshan has shown how, in 1963, Beijing embraced Robert Williams, one of the most radical of African-American dissidents and an advocate of armed struggle. But, while Mao claimed that, at heart, the racial struggle was a class struggle, Williams would not agree. Despite spending a number of years in the hyper-radicalized atmosphere of Cultural Revolution-era Beijing, Williams did not expect solidarity from the American white working class.<sup>151</sup> Mao was right to see the reality and possibilities of transnational politics. But, in the end, when Beijing fixated on class it glossed over the many other fractures of twentieth-century history: tensions and contradictions that revolved around issues of race, of religion, of cultural and linguistic identity, and of gender. The logic of transnational class struggle was hugely powerful to be sure, but ultimately would help to leave the PRC isolated in a complex world.

The transnational turn has successfully decentred the state from the international history of the Cold War and the twentieth century, showing how significant many non-national forces were to historical change. But this article has also reminded us of the profound impact of a transnational conception of politics, not least on China's foreign relations and the Sino-Soviet split. The concept of transnational class struggle helps us to explore how the great Leninist shibboleth of proletarian internationalism came to be a point of dispute within the world revolutionary camp. Proletarian internationalism had long stood for the worldwide solidarity of revolutionary classes in the face of a shared sense of transnational class threat. In late 1948, Mao wrote to Moscow about his plans once the Guomindang was defeated. His description of China's so-called

<sup>150</sup> Liu, *Chinese Ambassadors*, pp. 76–90.

<sup>151</sup> Li, 'Building a Black Bridge', pp. 141–43.

‘democratic’ parties revealed this transnational view of politics: ‘...the majority of these are vacillators, and have intimate relations with the Americans, in future they could easily be used by the Americans to do things for the benefit of the US and Jiang Jieshi’.<sup>152</sup> But, as Westad has pointed out, communist leaders faced a dilemma over how far to adhere to the transnational logic of proletarian internationalism, and indeed the Soviets were moving to a more state-centric approach, evolving, for instance, the term ‘socialist internationalism’ in the late 1950s.<sup>153</sup> But Mao decided that a rigid, state-based response to global imperialism overlooked the transnational class dimension of that pressing threat. And, as a result, the different interpretations of proletarian internationalism became increasingly public. In April 1962, the Communist Party of India’s (CPI) newspaper *New Age* reprinted a Soviet article which said, ‘A proletarian revolution is not a ballistic missile to be shot across an ocean.’ In this view, proletarian internationalism meant less interfering with other governments or calling for their overthrow and more ‘socialist unity’ and defence of established states against ‘counter-revolution’.<sup>154</sup> By contrast, during the Sino-Indian border war, the Chinese *People’s Daily* carried an editorial which claimed that Nehru’s corrupt collaboration with global imperialism against the Indian people and subversion of world revolution justified Beijing’s call for his government’s overthrow. For the CCP, proletarian internationalism involved a transnational imperative and CPI leaders were condemned for ignoring that and supporting Nehru.<sup>155</sup> The CPI’s *New Age* promptly derided the CCP’s doctrinal claims, defended its own policy for combining ‘our best national interests with the best interests of internationalism’, and publicized its efforts to ensure Indian workers’ cooperation with New Delhi’s war effort.<sup>156</sup> Beijing believed all this to be simple capitulation before an enemy whose forces were arraigned in transnational formation and which recognized no limits to its

<sup>152</sup> Yang, *Zhongjian didai de geming*, p. 527.

<sup>153</sup> J. Valdez, *Internationalism and the Ideology of Soviet Influence in Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 47.

<sup>154</sup> ‘Peaceful Coexistence and Revolution: A *Kommunist* Article by G. Starushenko’, *New Age*, 8 April 1962, pp. 6–7.

<sup>155</sup> The Editorial Department of *Renmin Ribao* [*People’s Daily*], ‘More on Nehru’s Philosophy in the Light of the Sino-Indian Boundary Question’, 27 October 1962, Wilson Center Digital Archive, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/175947>, [last accessed 18 June 2020].

<sup>156</sup> Zial-Haq, ‘Glimpses into the Chinese Mind: Perverse Understanding of Indian Situation’, *New Age*, 11 November 1962, p. 5; and ‘Workers, Employers, Government: Jointly Meet to Help Defence’, *New Age*, 11 November 1962, p. 6.

action. The cacophonous discord between Moscow and Beijing on this point would reverberate throughout the communist movement, splintering parties all over the world, including the CPI.

This article does not seek to portray Mao or the CCP under his leadership as blind ideologues driven by the perception of omnipresent class struggle to enter the fray wherever possible. Mao and the CCP were capable of varying strategy when it was pragmatic to do so; as Li Lifeng has shown, this was a feature of the long history of the Party prior to 1949.<sup>157</sup> And such realism also featured in Beijing's Cold War diplomacy, with both 'feudal' Pakistan and the United States engaged sincerely when this served to balance pressing security threats from either India or the Soviet Union respectively. But it is the transnational class component that is absent from important interpretations of PRC diplomacy in the early Cold War. Yes, the PRC was driven by anti-imperialism: after all, the CCP's origins in the 1920s lay in the idea that Marxism-Leninism would deliver China from the depredations of the colonial powers. Friedman certainly recognizes that the CCP judged the potential of anti-imperial movements by their class make-up. But the CCP often interpreted imperialism in terms of transnational class alignments, with the comprador-type figure at the centre of this: the internal ally of the foreign imperialists. Mao feared the comprador within China, telling the FLN in 1960 that CCP policy was to work with the 'national bourgeoisie', and it was 'only that [we] do not want that Jiang Jieshi gang of comprador capitalists, nor the feudal landlords'.<sup>158</sup> Mao saw global risks emerging from such figures. Indian aggression on the border was partly a result, in Mao's mind, of the growing power of the capitalist and reactionary Indian class, and their desire to cement ties to the United States and subvert prospects for revolution both within their own country but also in the PRC. And this means that we must also expand our sense of Mao's use of diplomacy as a tool to mobilize the Chinese people for continuous revolution at home. Mao saw that diplomacy could be an intervention to support revolution both at home and abroad, as well as a response to the global threats China faced—an opportunity to bolster the transnational allies

<sup>157</sup> Li Lifeng, 'Rural Mobilization in the Chinese Communist Revolution: From the Anti-Japanese War to the Chinese Civil War', *Journal of Modern Chinese History*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2015, pp. 95–116.

<sup>158</sup> 'Mao Zedong zhuxi jiejian A'erjiliya fuzongli Beilekamu tanhua jilu [Record of talks at Chairman Mao's reception of Algerian Deputy Premier Belkacem]', 17 May 1960, *CMFA*, 107-00120-01.



of China and world revolution. In April 1958, Zhou Enlai captured the possibilities when he explained that global victory required Beijing to target the populations of the capitalist world, 'inspiring them to move toward socialism and rise for the revolution in their own country'.<sup>159</sup> Mao had partly regarded his 1962 war with India as a strike against class enemies in that country in support of Beijing's class allies. And so, in seeking a more global role suited to his growing ambitions, Mao also saw the Algerian FLN as an ally in the transnational class struggle against global imperialism.

<sup>159</sup> Li, 'Building a Black Bridge', p. 137.