

itself to a mere factional dispute between Chairman Mao and his supporters, Lin, Chen, and others, against Liu Shao-chi and his formidable rightwing forces. In the view of these observers, such a dispute should have been carried out by literary and polemical methods in the classical style in which Lenin polemicized against his opponents in the Bolshevik party. Of course, winning a revolutionary victory with polemics alone is more desirable than a violent struggle.

But what if the character of the adversary and the historical context in which the struggle is opened up, both at home and abroad, makes this impossible? What if the struggle for a neo-bourgeois restorationist course has already been started and has already taken on flesh and blood in leading cadres of the party and the mass organizations? What if this grouping has in fact already reached such dimensions that practically all the significant political currents of the imperialist bourgeoisie are already aware of it and are, in fact, applauding and egging it on?

What if the weight of the entire Soviet Union, through its leadership, particularly in the case of Kosygin and Brezhnev, are openly supporting the neo-restorationist elements? What, if in the given historical context, there is no other way but to openly appeal to the party and to the masses to commence the struggle against the rightwing restorationists?

CLASS INTERESTS VERSUS LEGAL NORMS

From the point of view of pure formal procedure, the Cultural Revolution may have been a violation of democratic centralist principles, but only if we forget that the party as a whole was already shattered by the course of events; deep incursions had already been made into the body-politic of Chinese society by the Liu Shao-chi forces. Marxism teaches that where fundamental class interests are involved, class interests must not be subordinated to purely formal or legalistic norms. To make the outcome of the class struggle dependent on formal procedures at the expense of class interests is the height of folly.

Certainly it would have been preferable to have a literary and polemical debate end in a victorious decision by a party congress. But in the case of the Cultural Revolution, the struggle had spilled over from the party ranks and from the bourgeois intelligentsia into the general mass of the population before the discussion could get under way — assuming it ever could have been done that way in the first place.

At any rate, once the struggle started, the only correct position for progressive and revolutionary workers throughout the world was to support the proponents of the Cultural Revolution. All the more so because in a revolution, just as in a workers' strike, the first and most important element to consider is the determination of which side to support. In the course of a strike there may be any number of formal violations of the democratic rights of those who promote crossing of the picket line, but as long as the strike is on, every worker is duty bound to

support it.

It was quite clear during the entire course of the Cultural Revolution that the bourgeoisie and the Soviet bureaucracy were openly supporting Liu Shao-chi and the restorationists. There is no question that the Soviet leadership would prefer a bourgeois restorationist regime over a revolutionary socialist regime, especially if the bourgeois restorationists would be on friendly terms with the Soviet bureaucracy and retain the governmental and party facade of "socialism."

BELATED CHARGES

Is the elimination of Lin Piao to be regarded in the same way as the ouster of Liu Shao-chi? By no means.

The neo-restorationist tendency in China has made itself quite evident, so much so that even foreign observers could see its slow but sure development. It was a formidable force. The struggle that was fought by Chairman Mao and his supporters was an open revolutionary struggle. It is an incontestable fact that Chairman Mao openly appealed to the masses to participate in the struggle. Events soon demonstrated that the masses vigorously responded to the call and overwhelmingly supported it. It was particularly evident in the tremendous enthusiasm exhibited by the youth. This had worldwide repercussions in the movement of the youth all over the world.

The recent indictment against Lin Piao charges that he "attempted a coup d'etat and tried to assassinate Mao Tse-tung." After the plot was foiled, it is said, "he fled on September 12 toward the Soviet Union in a plane which crashed over the People's Republic of Mongolia." It is also charged that "he undertook anti-party activities in a planned, premeditated way with a well-determined program with the aim of taking over power, usurping the leadership of the party, the government and the army." But, "Mao Tse-tung unmasked his plot and blocked his maneuver. Mao Tse-tung made efforts to recover him, but Lin Piao did not change his perverse nature one iota."

So reads the first official confirmation from China of the many rumors which have circulated in the imperialist press for many months, rumors which were based on leaks from Chinese officials to the capitalist world.

The dimensions of the "plot" indicate it could scarcely have taken place in secrecy. The very fact that the Chinese leadership waited so long to divulge it lends itself to extreme incredulity. And the fact that so many rumors could be floating in many capitalist countries while the mass of the people at home were not at all informed about the "plot" completely differentiates this type of struggle from that launched in the Cultural Revolution.

During the Cultural Revolution, Chairman Mao and the leadership confined themselves to enlisting the revolutionary support of the masses.