

THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION AND THE FALL OF LIN PIAO

PART 1

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The public confirmation of the tragic end of Lin Piao and some of his collaborators ends a momentous inner struggle over the future course of the Chinese Revolution and in particular of China's foreign policy. The defeat of Lin Piao, Chen Po-ta, Huang Yung-sheng, Wu Fa-hsien and others means that the Chinese Revolution has, to a considerable degree, run its course. From now on, the word is stability at home at the expense of revolutionary policy abroad.

Lin Piao, it will be remembered, was the author of the theory of encircling the imperialist powers — the "cities"—with global guerrilla war. Whether the theory was right or wrong, it had a revolutionary perspective in foreign affairs. As has become evident in the last few years, Chairman Mao and his supporters devised a different foreign policy. Theirs is symbolized by the invitation accorded Nixon to visit Peking and the accommodation which the Chinese leaders have been developing with the U.S.

The Chinese Revolution, however, is by no means finished. It has been the longest, most protracted, and, in many respects, the profoundest social upheaval in history. It spans well over half a century and is full of the most remarkable revolutionary feats. It is no wonder that so many of its leaders have become genuinely legendary figures.

EFFECT OF INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

At each stage of its development the Chinese Revolution was profoundly influenced by the nature of the international situation. The Chinese Revolution caught fire on the basis of the conflagration which

commenced with the October Revolution in 1917. The false policies of Stalin inhibited and protracted the character of the Chinese Revolution. The 1927 defeat of the Revolution and Stalin's promotion of the theory of the block of four classes, which meant subordination to the Kuomintang, retarded the development of the Chinese Revolution.

It was Mao's resistance to Stalin's policies which, in the long run, enabled him to save and fortify the revolution. But again, the attempt of Japanese militarism to colonize China in turn served as a spur to the revolution. The preoccupation of U.S., British, and French imperialism with the struggle against Hitler for a time had a favorable effect on developments for the Chinese Revolution. Finally, the victory of the Soviet Union in the war and the defeat of the Japanese imperialists helped tremendously to pave the way for the victory of the Chinese Revolution in 1949.

Unquestionably China is again being profoundly affected by the international situation. Faced with the threat of U.S. and Japanese imperialism — a threat which daily demonstrates itself in the genocidal aggression against a socialist ally on its very doorstep — and the hostility of the Soviet bureaucracy on the other hand, Chairman Mao and his followers have decided to come to terms, in large measure, with the U.S.

CULTURAL REVOLUTION BLOCKED CAPITALIST RESTORATION

The ouster of the Lin-Chen grouping also signifies the end of that phase of the Chinese Revolution which has become known to the world as the Great Cultural Revolution. The lasting significance of the Cultural Revolution is that it reversed a tidal wave of bourgeois reaction and set back a process of development which would have ended up in capitalist restoration.

The Lin-Chen grouping can, with qualification, be called the radical or left faction which was in alliance with Chairman Mao and his supporters during the Cultural Revolution. Together they led the struggle against Liu Shao-chi, who then represented the neo-bourgeois restorationist movement. The defeat of Liu Shao-chi cleared the road for the commencement in earnest of the socialist transformation of China. Naturally, not all the claims made for the Cultural Revolution are valid. Certainly there has been a great deal of exaggeration. But none can deny that in essence the Cultural Revolution marked a turning point in the historical evolution of China.

It prevented, at its barest minimum, capitalist restoration, and ushered in a new stage in the building of a socialist society in China. Of course, no revolution is ever accomplished without a great deal of excess, without serious setbacks and errors. Once the Cultural Revolution was launched, it involved huge masses of people and set forces in motion which could not be controlled, even under the best of circumstances.

To some observers on this continent, the Cultural Revolution reduced