

constitution) that proclaimed the abolition of classes when in fact the grim reality was that classes were being revived and resuscitated by policies wholly alien to the spirit and teachings of Marxism.

Although the Chinese Revolution is twenty years old — almost as old as the October Revolution was when the Stalin Constitution was written — the draft makes no exaggerated claim to the abolition of social classes in China. On the contrary, the draft stresses the existence of classes and explains in Chapter I as follows:

“In this historical phase, classes, class contradictions and class struggle will exist throughout, as will the struggle between the two roads of socialism and capitalism, the danger of capitalist restoration and the threats of subversion and aggression by imperialism and modern revisionism.”

CHARACTERIZATION OF EPOCH

One of the primary problems facing the framers of the constitution is the characterization of the present era, i.e., how to relate the *general* historic epoch to the more specific and *current* situation. The draft states:

“The thought of Mao Tse-tung is Marxism-Leninism of the era in which imperialism is heading toward total collapse while Socialism is heading toward worldwide victory.”

It is unquestionably correct that on a *general historical scale* “imperialism is heading toward total collapse while Socialism is heading toward worldwide victory.”

Objectively that has been true for a very long time. “Imperialism” has been heading to “a total collapse” ever since the First World War and has been on the verge of actual collapse at least twice in this century: once following the First World War and next following the Second World War.

Hence the characterization does not adequately distinguish the present epoch from the previous one. To do this, it needs further amplification by relating it to such concrete developments as the triumph of revisionism in the Soviet Union and to some of the setbacks of the world revolution such as the counterrevolution in Indonesia and other related events.

CLAUSE ON SUCCESSOR TO CHAIRMAN MAO TSE-TUNG

An extraordinary aspect of the draft is the inclusion of a paragraph in Chapter I entitled the General Program, which reads as follows:

“Comrade Lin Piao has consistently held high the great red banner of the thought of Mao Tse-tung and most loyally and resolutely carried out and defended Comrade Mao Tse-tung’s proletarian revolutionary line. Comrade Lin Piao is Comrade Mao Tse-tung’s close comrade-in-arms and successor.”

Bourgeois commentators have taken great pains to pour abuse on

this aspect of the draft of the constitution.

Unquestionably it is without precedent in the history of the communist movement and does not conform to previous standards of what a constitution generally contains. The framers of this clause are at least equally aware of its novelty as are its critics. It is a frank admission that while the political consolidation of the Cultural Revolution has been advanced, it is by no means fully victorious. On the contrary, the insertion of this extraordinary clause indicates that decisive ideological and political battles may still be ahead. If it will help to win them, the insertion of the clause is entirely justified.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Another clause which has been subjected to criticism is contained in Chapter III, Article 5, dealing with the Organizational Structure of the Party which says:

“Leading organs of the party at all levels shall be produced through democratic consultation and election.”

This is a modification of the clause in the previous constitution which states that:

“The leading bodies of the party at all levels must be elected.”

The modification does not appear to be one of substance but rather of form. It is doubtful whether it narrows the rights of the membership. More likely than not, it merely codifies the common practice under conditions of civil war and continuing internal strife to save and resuscitate a proletarian dictatorship, which is only now barely emerging victorious over an adversary by no means fully vanquished.

The chapter that deals with Membership and Organizational Structure of the Party ought to be regarded as an attempt to give expression to the Leninist principles of democratic centralism under the still difficult conditions of the present stage of development in China.

PROFOUND INTERNATIONALISM

Some of the clauses reflect the profound internationalism of the early communist movement. Article 3, for instance, states that a member of the Communist Party of China must succeed in, among other things, working not only in the interest of China, but “also for the overwhelming majority of the people of the world.”

And earlier in Chapter I, members of the Communist Party are characterized as those:

“... who have vowed to fight for Communism all their lives, must be resolute, fear no sacrifice, and surmount all difficulties to win victory.”

Setting such high standards for membership is not only correct and exemplary but profoundly revolutionary.