

January 17, 1977

Part V: The suppression of the Left in China

The Shanghai Commune and the Lin Piao affair

The suppression of the left in China might never have taken place, certainly not as easily, had it not been for the earlier destruction of Lin Piao and his collaborators. That laid the basis for the ultimate victory of the right.

One of the worst mistakes made by most progressive and leftist forces outside of China who were ardently supporting the Cultural Revolution was to pass over in silence the official Chinese explanation of the so-called Lin Piao plot.

It is hard to know what the left in China could have done under the circumstances in regard to Lin Piao or whether there was any choice in the matter at all.

The collaboration with the right in the State Council and in the Politburo in the years following Lin's death made it quite impossible to distinguish fish from fowl. The obscure character of the campaign to criticize Confucius and Lin made it an extremely in-house struggle which virtually excluded the masses and consequently left them indifferent.

The effort later to oust Teng and set in motion a new Cultural Revolution foundered for the same basic reasons.



Lin Piao greets South Vietnamese liberation fighter. It was Lin Piao who opposed the Chinese policy of rapprochement with the U.S. in 1971 and who had been among the strongest for the Shanghai Commune. His destruction dealt a body blow to the left forces in China.