

Acceptance of such an explanation for an enormous historical event does violence to history itself, especially if one examines the array of leaders involved.

These include: Lin Piao, the Defense Minister, Politburo member and military leader since the early Thirties; Chen Po-ta, a member of the standing committee of the Politburo, a leader of the Cultural Revolution and for many years Mao's personal secretary; Huang Yung-sheng, former chief of the general staff of the armed forces; Wu Fa-hsien, commander of the air force; Li Tso-peng, deputy chief of staff and political commissar of the navy; Chiu Hui-tso, deputy chief of staff of the army and head of the logistics department; Yeh Chun, a member of the party Politburo and director of the administrative office of the party military affairs committee; and Lin Li-kuo, Lin's son who was deputy director of the air force operations department.

Such a conception brings us back to pre-Marxist notions of history where good men and evil fought plots and counter plots and where the reign of the arbitrary was the supreme rule of history.

But Marx's development of the materialist conception of history demonstrates conclusively that all political phenomena have a class base. It is especially true of political events of such enormous historical import as this elimination of an entire stratum of leadership. They not only were most prominent during the Cultural Revolution, but some of them spent their entire lifetime in the midst of the leadership of the CPC throughout the course of the Chinese Revolution.

Lenin wrote on December 24, 1922, in one of his last letters, regarding "grave differences in our party" which might cause a split. He went on to say: "Our party relies on two classes (workers and peasants) and therefore its instability would be possible and its downfall inevitable if there were no agreement between those two classes. In that event this or that measure, and generally all talk about the stability of our C.C., would be futile. No measures of any kind could prevent a split in such a case. But I hope that this is too remote a future and too improbable an event to talk about."

COLLECTIVIZATION IN CHINA AND THE SOVIET UNION

Lenin wrote this, of course, before collectivization in the Soviet Union took place. But even a collectivized peasantry is by no means a proletarian class. Collectivization sets the framework, and the socialist future depends on a multitude of factors in which a thoroughgoing industrialization and rationalization based on the most modern technique is most essential. The gap between rural life and life in the city is a great factor. It cannot be easily overcome even under the best of conditions.

The political denouement of the Lin-Chen grouping is the objective result of the instability of class relations in China, following upon the

heels of the Cultural Revolution. Of course, they are immeasurably more stable than the relations in any of the bourgeois countries. The political crisis resulting in the Lin-Chen ouster reflects the true dimensions of this instability, and of Chairman Mao's quest for a resolution of it by fundamental changes in the foreign policy.

The extraordinary degree to which the Chinese peasantry was receptive to the revolutionary propaganda of the CPC and the PLA is often attributed solely to the tactics and strategy pursued by the leadership. This of course was very important and decisive.

But what is often lost sight of are the objective conditions which enabled the masses to respond to a revolutionary call to arms from a Marxist-Leninist party.

The Chinese peasantry, unlike peasants in Western Europe or in other semicolonial countries, had a great deal more in common with the Chinese proletariat. As Engels says in *The Peasant Wars in Germany*, concerning events more than four hundred years ago, "the German peasant of that time had this in common with the modern proletariat: that his share in products of the work was limited to a subsistence minimum necessary for his maintenance." (International Publishers, 1926).

The protracted character of the Chinese revolution and the ruthless war upon the Chinese people conducted by the Japanese imperialists, which had caused such unspeakable havoc, economic dislocation, ruination and destruction of lives and property, reduced the bulk of the Chinese peasantry, not only to the level of subsistence of the Chinese proletariat, but way below it, making the peasant far more susceptible to the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeois-landlord regime.

The dictatorship of the proletariat has the economic and political problem of how to share, not only the work of socialist construction, but the distribution of the income between the classes, the workers, the peasants and all intermediate strata of the population.

Moreover, there is still the bourgeois intelligentsia, which, although shorn of its power, has not been destroyed but in the process of being re-educated, necessarily plays a key, if not central role in the economic, industrial, scientific and other phases of life.

More than in any other socialist country, the gap between the privileged and the ordinary worker or peasant has been narrowed and material inequality reduced, certainly by comparison with the Soviet Union. But the social contradictions continue, and are exacerbated, among other things, by the ever increasing need of scientific and technological resources diverted for defense needs, which consume no small portion of the fruits of socialist construction.

Collectivization in China has made truly remarkable accomplishments. This is accounted for particularly by the participation of the masses, and the enthusiasm it evoked in the course of such a radical transformation. It took place without pushing, in fact avoiding, the type