

NEW SOLIDARITY INTERNATIONAL PRESS SERVICE



CHINA

Did Mao Die In Time For China?

Sept. 25 (NSIPS) — A ghastly era has ended for China's 900 million people with the death of Communist Party Chairman Mao Tse-tung. In death, Mao bequeathed China the live option of a descent into an even worse future of armed rioting, civil war, chaos and disintegration, followed by famine and starvation rivaling the worst pre-1949 breakdown periods. Knowing this reality in their bones, the Chinese people reacted to Mao's death with little show of genuine sorrow or grief, such as accompanied the death of Premier Chou En-lai last January, but rather with pensive foreboding of the dangers looming ahead.

However, Mao's death is also the critical precondition for salvaging China from its inhuman Maoist nightmare and wrecking forever Atlanticist plots to send China against the Soviet Union. Ma's death now permits the emergence of an incipiently pro-development, anti-Maoist leadership which can bring China's population back into the human race.

The question — whose resolution will determine whether chaos or progress will prevail — is whether China's "economists" (the anti-Maoist faction favoring repeal of Mao's policies in favor of economic growth) can assert firm control and restart the economy, or whether the small minority of Maoists still hold enough power to play Samson and bring the country down with them through civil war and anarchy.

Calamity For Kissinger

In either case, the halcyon days of Henry Kissinger's and Mao's U.S.-China anti-Soviet alliance are over. Strategically, Mao's death is a catastrophe, if an anticipated one, for Atlanticism. While most Atlanticist analysts and press outlets have systematically denied the likelihood that China's post-Mao leadership will end the idiotic breach with the Soviet Union, the restrained pessimism of their estimates betrays their unspoken terror of the ultimate calamity — a general Sino-Soviet rapprochement. With Mao gone, no remaining Chinese leader has the stature — without fatally damaging his chances of winning the deadly factional brawl — to make the compromises with the U.S. over the Taiwan question which are necessary for American recognition of Peking. Until a stable leadership emerges in China, which could take a year or more, U.S.-China relations are hopelessly stalemated.

Worse for Atlanticist policy, the only possible victor is the "economist" faction whose anti-Maoist outlook will dictate a certain end to Mao's personal vendetta against the Soviet Union, even if for purely practical reasons alone. Failing an economist victory and opening of the door to Soviet friendship, only chaos and general breakdown can occur, which would invite Soviet intervention and likewise smash all Atlanticist options.

Did Mao Die In Time?

Ever since the leader of the anti-Maoist faction, former Deputy Premier Teng Hsiao-ping, was purged from all party and government posts on Mao's personal decree April 9, China has been treated to a foretaste of the anarchy now looming. Maoists have attacked province party chiefs in wall posters, defied party authority, and stirred up fights and riots. Public morale had sunk so low by late July that when the severe earthquake hit near Peking July 18, looting broke out, continuing for a month. By early September an official warning against engaging in "armed conflict" revealed that armed battles have oc-

curred; the rail system has been badly disrupted by disturbances.

China's predicament was that while Mao lived, the anti-Maoist Teng faction dared not move openly for fear of its leaders being picked off one by one like Teng. The faction waited for Mao to die. At the same time, the cynicism with which the population regarded the Maoist campaign against Teng, correctly seen as an attack on the revered Chou En-lai and his policies, led to a general collapse of morale. The resulting lawlessness was exacerbated by the Maoist faction's attempt to extend the purge. Yet the Maoists are too weak at all Party levels to remove their opponents or intensify the anti-Tengist campaign. A majority of the Central Committee opposes the Maoists, who have not dared call a Central Committee meeting for fear that the purge of Teng might not be ratified.

Mao's death "liberates" hundreds of top leaders and millions of their supporters from their enforced silence. From here on, the anti-Maoists will push more strongly and openly — invoking Mao's name at every turn to attack his policies and faction — to return the nation to the path of economic development.

The Tengist "economist" faction counts as its supporters a large majority of the Communist Party, the scientific elite of the country, and most of the working class and peasantry. This support is based on an opposition to the insane Maoist policies: no material incentives for workers and peasants, slogan-mongering instead of education, destruction of science and sabotage of economic development.

Tengists Lack Leadership

However the anti-Maoists face a severe dilemma: they lack effective leadership, and are handicapped in turning their overwhelming popular support into factional advantage by the risk that any show of mass support, like the 250,000-strong anti-Maoist demonstration in Peking on April 5, will get out of hand. A majority of provincial Party leaders are known to have supported Teng. Seven were appointed by Teng; fifteen have come under Maoist fire in wall posters in the last four months, including the Teng appointees; and several more are known to oppose the Maoists passively, giving the anti-Maoist faction control of twenty or more of China's 29 provinces.

However Teng cannot soon be rehabilitated, if ever, and no remaining supporters of his on the powerful Politburo appear to have the guts, ability or inclination to take responsibility for pulling the disparate anti-Maoist forces together and waging a quick, decisive struggle to eliminate Maoist influence from the Party and Government. In the absence of such a move from the center, many regional anti-Maoist bosses are likely to decide to fend for themselves and take local action to purge the Maoists. The Maoists have already accused several provincial party heads of trying to set up an "independent kingdom," fomenting sectionalism and undermining relations between the central and local governments. Such a process threatens a renewed cycle of local warlordism and national disintegration, the bane of China since 800 B.C.

The Maoists, with few alternatives, may also decide to turn loose their tens of millions of followers to run wild in the streets and fields. Such a course would lead straight to civil war. Several of the provinces under Maoist control sent condolence

messages to Peking in which they called for a heightened campaign against Tengist "rightists," a course that would bring bloody armed confrontation in the streets between the two factions. Alternatively, these Maoist enclaves might militarily assault other provinces, or secede from Peking.

If the Maoists do go for broke, the ultimate engine for stability is the army, which has no use for Mao's quixotic recipe for "People's War" which would effectively pit pikemen against Soviet tanks and nuclear weapons in the event of war. The top military command, most regional commanders, and most officers and men are firm supporters of Teng Hsiao-ping's plans to modernize the army. The army will intervene to smash the Maoists, and most likely take power in a coup, if Maoist-instigated disruption threatens national security. Such solution, however, is neither stable nor long-lasting, and both civilian and military anti-Maoist leaders pray that it won't be necessary.

Dangerous Drift Persists

Hence, two and a half weeks after Mao's death, the utter drift and complete leadership vacuum dangerously persists. At Mao's funeral ceremony on September 18, Premier Hua Kuo-feng intoned a speech so uninspired that its only purpose was clearly to fill space and deliberately say nothing. Party leaders from around the nation gathered, but contrary to the expectations of some, did not stay for the long-overdo Central Committee meeting. Nothing has come out of Peking since Mao died that gives any indication that the country is even being governed.

It is as if, in the United States, the President were to die in office leaving no vice-president and no legal successor or head of state, half the Cabinet posts vacant, and a Congress out of session for a year and a half; then, imagine all the remaining top national leaders congregating in Washington for the President's funeral, and returning home without convening Congress or choosing a head of state, in order to strengthen their local party machines in preparation for do-or-die political battles. And the press says nothing about the situation. A major nation cannot tolerate such a situation for long and survive.

Can China Rejoins The World

The collapse of China will be an unmitigated calamity both for

the Chinese people and for the world. Apart from the direct cost to the Chinese, China would become a world center of ecological holocaust, epidemic disease, and plague, which would take decades to undo. The loss of China will mean the loss to humanity of the productive physical and scientific labor of nearly a billion human being, now intellectually starving, but immediately available and necessary for the reconstruction of the globe under an International Development Bank.

Barring this grim if less likely outcome, can China rejoin the world community by ending the Maoist closing of the country to outside influences and by participating in the New World Economic Order now being formed? With crazy Mao gone, foreign policy questions will loom much larger in the factional debates than heretofore. Under Mao, China became the laughingstock of the world at the United Nations with its irrelevant incessant carping against the Soviets to the exclusion of every other issue including that of Third World development. China's support for the Chilean junta and South Africa, the CIA in Angola, and its opposition to Third World acquisition of advanced western technology for economic development, have earned it well-deserved enmity from even its former friends.

With Mao out of the picture, the foreign policy mess he made becomes a strong factional argument for reversing his policies. At the same time, the "economists" strongly desire to junk Mao's fascist austerity "self-reliance" policy and acquire the foreign technology and capital already sought by the rest of the Third World, and by the COMECON nations. The lure of joining the IDB, and friendly pressure from Third World nations, may increasingly strengthen the hand of the economist faction in consolidating working class, managerial, peasant and intellectual support for their policies as against that of the Maoists, lessening China's self-isolation.

Opening up real ties with the outside world is also key to the long-range psychological therapy required to save the Chinese population from the effects of having lived in a paranoid, stultifying sink-hole for 20 years. In the context of such ties, a China rid of Maoists and Maoism can join the New World Economic Order and start on the path to realizing the country's stupendous potential contribution to the progress of humanity.



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