

# “Upside Down” Philosophy and Capitalist Restoration

— Criticizing Lin Piao’s bourgeois idealism

by Hsin Feng

THE Communist Party of China has gone through ten major struggles between the two lines in the last fifty years, each of them also a struggle between the two world outlooks and between the two lines in philosophy. Ideologically, all chieftains of the opportunist lines invariably based their erroneous lines and policies on bourgeois idealism in opposing Chairman Mao’s Marxist-Leninist line. This was so with Chen Tu-hsiu, Wang Ming and Liu Shao-chi as well as with Lin Piao. Since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution began, Chairman Mao has led the whole Party, army and people in first smashing the Liu Shao-chi renegade clique and then the Lin Piao anti-Party clique and in criticizing their revisionist lines and bourgeois idealism. This was a great victory for Chairman Mao’s proletarian revolutionary line and for dialectical and historical materialism.

## Knowledge Is Not Endowed by Nature

Without exception, idealism of all descriptions reverses the relations between consciousness and matter and between knowledge and practice. Marx and Engels time and again exposed religion and idealism as “an inverted world consciousness” and a philosophy which “turns everything upside down.” What the bourgeois careerist and conspirator Lin Piao consistently adhered to was exactly this kind of reactionary philosophy. While completely denying that knowledge is the reflection in the mind of the external world and that it comes from social practice, Lin Piao advertised wherever and whenever he could that a person was born with “natural ability” and “special endowments” or was born “a genius” and alleged that knowledge and talent were “innate in the womb.” This idealist apriorism constituted the core of Lin Piao’s bourgeois world outlook and the theoretical programme of his anti-Party activities.

Knowledge or talent is not *a priori* but *a posteriori*. This is a question which was solved long ago in the struggle between Marxism and idealism of all descriptions. In his *Theses on Feuerbach* written more than a century ago, Marx for the first time introduced “**revolutionary practice**” into the theory of knowledge and set forth the fundamental principles for the dynamic and revolutionary theory of reflection. Pinpointing the idealist theory of “genius” which then had been prevalent for some time, Marx said that spreading such a reactionary fallacy was aimed at making people knuckle under “born worthies and sages.” In opposing revision-

ism in the field of philosophy, Lenin also time and again made it clear that sensations and ideas are only reflections of the external world while stressing that “**the standpoint of life, of practice, should be first and fundamental in the theory of knowledge.**” (*Materialism and Empirio-Criticism.*)

Upholding the principles of the materialist theory of reflection, Lenin scientifically explained where a proletarian revolutionary’s talent came from and how it developed. Speaking of Y.M. Sverdlov, for instance, Lenin pointed out that “**his wonderful organizing talents developed in the course of long struggle**” and that he “**cultivated every one of his wonderful gifts as a great revolutionary who had passed through and experienced different epochs in the severest conditions of revolutionary activity.**” (*Speech in Memory of Y.M. Sverdlov.*)

In his struggle against opportunism and revisionism, Chairman Mao, with a view to exposing their mistakes from the viewpoint of the Marxist theory of knowledge, specifically wrote *On Practice, Where Do Correct Ideas Come From?* and other important works systematically criticizing the bourgeois idealism of Wang Ming, Liu Shao-chi and their like and profoundly expounding the Marxist viewpoint that “**they [correct ideas] come from social practice, and from it alone; they come from three kinds of social practice, the struggle for production, the class struggle and scientific experiment.**” Explaining why Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin could work out their theories, Chairman Mao put special emphasis on the fact that “**they personally took part in the practice of the class struggle and the scientific experimentation of their time**” and that lacking this condition “**no genius could have succeeded.**”

That correct ideas come only from social practice is a truth which has been proved by the history of mankind’s social practice—the history of the struggle for production, the history of class struggle and the history of the development of science. All the achievements gained by mankind in the struggle to transform the objective world result from our ideas being in conformity with the law of the objective external world. At a time when the materialist theory of reflection has increasingly become a powerful ideological weapon for the broad masses of the people to transform society and nature, Lin Piao, however, went out of his way to trumpet idealist apriorism and oppose dialectical materialism. This only served to reveal him as a shameless

renegade to Marxism and a sworn enemy of the proletariat and other revolutionary people.

### The Process Leading From the Subjective To the Objective Is No Use in Doing Things

Knowledge of objective things is invariably arrived at after many repetitions of the process leading from matter to consciousness and then back to matter, that is, leading from practice to knowledge and then back to practice. This is the law governing the development of knowledge. The idealist apriorism propagated by Lin Piao, however, ran counter to this law and stood the relationship between the subjective and the objective on its head. He babbled: "So far as the process of forming ideas is concerned, it is one leading from the objective to the subjective, from reality to ideas. But as regards the process of doing things, it is just the other way round—a process leading from the subjective to the objective, from ideas to reality." Bravo! What is wonderful here is "the other way round." Of his own accord, Lin Piao confessed to the idealist essence of his bourgeois world outlook.

Whether, in doing things, it is a process leading from the objective to the subjective or "from the subjective to the objective" marks the basic difference between the materialist and the idealist lines in cognition—two lines which are diametrically opposed to each other. Chairman Mao has pointed out: "The most fundamental method of work which all Communists must firmly bear in mind is to determine our working policies according to actual conditions. When we study the causes of the mistakes we have made, we find that they all arose because we departed from the actual situation at a given time and place and were subjective in our working policies." (*Speech at a Conference of Cadres in the Shansi-Suiyuan Liberated Area.*) In these words, he makes it clear that, in doing things, we must never go "from the subjective to the objective" but must uphold the materialist line of going from the objective to the subjective. "The process of doing things" is closely linked with "the process of forming ideas." Before doing something, we must have an idea or plan in mind, and if this idea or plan is to be relatively correct, it can only come from practice and the masses instead of being conjured up subjectively. Whether this idea or plan conforms with the objective reality must be tested in practice by the masses. This is why in the course of doing things knowledge and practice, knowing and transforming the world are interdependent and interpenetrating. Does a worker not become skilled only after acquainting himself with the performance of machines in the course of using them? Does a peasant not gradually learn how to grow crops in the course of farming? The same is true of making revolution. No one has made revolution after learning it first; instead, a person learns it in the course of making revolution. The world can only be known in the process of transforming it. What we must strive to achieve in this process is to continuously bring the subjective into correspondence with the objective and ideas with reality on the basis of practice, there-

by attaining the aim of correctly transforming the objective world. We must never act "the other way round" or "turn things upside down" and make the subjective contravene the objective and ideas divorced from reality.

By "turning things upside down," Lin Piao completely severed knowledge from practice and knowing the world from transforming it. Actually, he wanted to use his gang's reactionary bourgeois "subjective ideas" to check the advance of objective history. Lenin criticized Mach and Avenarius' solipsism characterized by the nonsense that the whole world is only one's idea. Doing things in the reverse order, one is bound to slip into the quagmire of reactionary solipsism. Objective reality is independent of man's will and objective laws cannot be violated. Anyone who wants to do things in the reverse order will never get off without due punishment.

### Remoulding World Outlook Cannot Be Detached From Revolutionary Practice

Lin Piao also ranted that "if problems are to be solved, it is necessary to set off a revolution in the depth of one's soul." This is yet another manifestation of "upside down" philosophy. It inverted the relationship between remoulding the subjective world and transforming the objective world. Chairman Mao teaches us: "The working class remoulds the whole of society in class struggle and in the struggle against nature, and at the same time remoulds itself." (*On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People.*) Remoulding the subjective world means a struggle in our minds, a struggle waged by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and by Marxism against revisionism; it means the most radical rupture with all traditional ideas. Only by taking part in the three great revolutionary movements—class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment—and tempering himself in the great storms of mass struggles can a revolutionary constantly clear his mind of erroneous ideas and increase his cognitive ability. "Setting off a revolution in the depth of one's soul," like Liu Shao-chi's "self-cultivation," was also aimed at enticing people away from revolutionary practice and actual class struggle so as to turn them into tools for restoring capitalism.

Standing the fundamental question of the theory of knowledge on its head inevitably leads to turning the relationship between the masses of the people and individuals upside down and reversing the history of social development. This is because knowledge comes from practice and from the social practice of tens of millions of people. Without recognizing that practice decides knowledge, it is impossible to recognize the great role played by the masses of the people in making world history. Basing himself precisely on idealist apriorism, Lin Piao denied that the masses are the masters of history and that "the people, and the people alone, are the motive force in the making of world history." (Mao Tsetung, *On Coalition Government.*) Lin Piao slandered the "common people" as knowing only how to "make money" and "amass fortunes." In his

eyes, the masses of the people were no more than a "mob," utterly ignorant and unable to do anything about the development of history. In his eyes, the masses have no place whatsoever in the long course of historical development. What is even more absurd is that Lin Piao considered the history of thousands of years of class struggle as a history of "coups" by the exploiting classes. This is an outright distortion of the course of historical development.

It thus can be clearly seen that Lin Piao turned the major issues in philosophy upside down, thereby fully revealing his bourgeois idealist world outlook. Why did Lin Piao go in for "upside down" philosophy? The correct answer to this question can be obtained only by employing the Marxist class viewpoint and method of class analysis to find out which class interests Lin Piao represented and which class will and desire he expressed.

### **"Upside Down" Philosophy Is Designed to Restore Capitalism**

Throughout history, all reactionary classes have gone in for "upside down" philosophy because they were all decadent and moribund social forces hostile to the people. Unreconciled to their doom, they moved against the tide of history and viewed all things in the world from an "inverted" world outlook, doing everything they could to cover up the true features of things. In the last several thousand years, all sorts of reactionary philosophical thought made their appearance to meet the needs of the reactionary classes for deceiving and numbing the people. While in power, the reactionary classes resorted to "upside down" philosophy in an effort to maintain their reactionary rule; when they were overthrown by the people, they still clung to it in a vain attempt to stage a counter-revolutionary comeback and regain their lost "paradise."

Lin Piao was a bourgeois careerist, conspirator and double-dealer. On his part there was a process of development and self-exposure, while on the part of the Party and the people there was also a process of getting to know him. Over a long period of time, Chairman Mao and the Party Central Committee patiently tried to educate him and waged a serious struggle against him. However, this renegade invariably played double-faced tricks, putting up a false front to deceive the Party and the people and disguising himself in different ways to cover up his counter-revolutionary features.

Born in a landlord-bourgeois family, Lin Piao, whose bourgeois world outlook was not at all remoulded after he had sneaked into the revolutionary ranks, always sought to transform the Party and the world according to his "inverted" world outlook. Therefore, at important junctures of the revolution, he invariably committed Right opportunist errors.

As far back as in the 1920s when the struggle was being waged in the revolutionary base area of the Ching-kang Mountains, Lin Piao overestimated the enemy's strength while underestimating the people's strength, did not believe that a single spark could start

a prairie fire and was pessimistic about the future of the Chinese revolution. During the War of Resistance Against Japan (1937-45), he did his utmost to lavish praise on the strength of Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang, negated the people's forces led by our Party and worked overtime to peddle Wang Ming's Right capitulationist line. In 1948 when strategically decisive campaigns were being fought in the War of Liberation, afraid of the enemy and difficulties, he failed to see the imminent doom of the Chiang Kai-shek dynasty and did not dare to seize country-wide victory.

In the period of socialist revolution, class struggle has become more and more thoroughgoing and is aimed at the complete overthrow of the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in place of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the triumph of socialism over capitalism. Under such circumstances, Lin Piao's bourgeois idealist world outlook was further exposed. Proceeding from his "inverted" world outlook, he not only sized up the situation in the reverse order, but looked at all things under socialism in the same manner.

At every important juncture of the socialist revolution, this double-dealer always pitted himself against the revolution, opposing Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and socialism, opposing what the people supported and supporting what the people opposed, in a futile attempt to hold back the wheel of history. At the time when our Party was going to carry out the socialist transformation of agriculture, handicraft and capitalist industry and commerce, he tailed after Liu Shao-chi in making a fanfare about the "four freedoms" (meaning freedom to practise usury, hire labour, buy and sell land and engage in private enterprises) in a vain bid to develop capitalism. When our Party led the people throughout the nation in beating back the frenzied attacks of the bourgeois Rightists and winning great victories in the socialist revolution on the political and ideological fronts, he euphemistically attacked the dictatorship of the proletariat and took up the cudgels for the bourgeois Rightists. When our national economy met with temporary difficulties, he surreptitiously coordinated with Liu Shao-chi's activities of restoring capitalism by viciously attacking the Party and the dictatorship of the proletariat and opposing the socialist system.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution initiated and led personally by Chairman Mao has won great victories. But the class enemies will never act like "the butcher who lays down his knife and at once becomes a Buddha" simply because of the victory of the revolution. After the bourgeois headquarters with Liu Shao-chi as its ringleader had been smashed, Lin Piao took over its counter-revolutionary undertakings and vainly tried to negate the great victories of the Cultural Revolution, thus becoming the ringleader of another bourgeois headquarters. Out of his class instincts, he always thought that the people were good for nothing and his handful of counter-revolutionaries smart and mighty. So after the downfall of the Liu Shao-chi

renegade clique, he hastily jumped out and continued to engage in a life-and-death struggle against the proletariat. "Outline of Project '571,'" the plan for a counter-revolutionary armed coup worked out by Lin Piao and his gang, was precisely a product of his "upside down" philosophy and a concentrated expression of this reactionary philosophy. The criminal aim of their counter-revolutionary machinations was to usurp the supreme power of the Party and the state, fundamentally change the Party's basic line and policies for the historical period of socialism, turn the Marxist-Leninist Chinese Communist Party into a revisionist, fascist party, subvert the dictatorship of the proletariat and restore capitalism. Inside China, they wanted to reinstate the landlord and capitalist classes, which our Party, army and people had overthrown with their own hands under the leadership of Chairman Mao, and to institute a feudal-comprador-fascist dictatorship. Internationally, they wanted to capitulate to Soviet revisionist social-imperialism and ally themselves with imperialism, revisionism and reaction to oppose China, communism and revolution. In a word, they wanted to turn back the wheel of history and pull our country under the dictatorship of the proletariat which was established more than two decades ago back to the dark old days.

Historical experience has proved that, in the inner-Party two-line struggle, which political line is to be supported and implemented is determined by world outlook. One who persists in the bourgeois idealist world outlook is bound to practise revisionism and capitalism. Lin Piao's "upside down" philosophy was a counter-revolutionary philosophy for restoring capitalism. And the revisionist line and the plan for a

counter-revolutionary armed coup he worked out in line with this reactionary philosophy were doomed to fail because they went against the law of social development and against the will and aspirations of our people. Lin Piao and the others in his anti-Party clique who represented the decadent and moribund forces were extremely isolated. For all their perverse actions, they could never go beyond the logic to **"make trouble, fail, make trouble again, fail again . . . till their doom"** (Mao Tsetung, *Cast Away Illusions, Prepare for Struggle*) and they eventually ended up in total ruination and self-destruction.

With Lin Piao done for, the revisionist line he pushed went bankrupt together with his bourgeois idealist world outlook. But the struggle has not ended. Throughout the entire historical period of socialism, there are still classes, class contradictions and class struggle; the inner-Party two-line struggle reflecting these contradictions and the struggle between the proletarian and bourgeois world outlooks will exist for a long time to come. This is independent of man's will. It is therefore necessary to conscientiously study Marxist philosophy, distinguish between materialism and idealism and learn to use the dialectical and historical materialist viewpoints and methods to analyse and solve problems that come up in class struggle and the two-line struggle, so as to thoroughly get rid of revisionism in our world outlook. This remains an important fighting task of the Chinese people during the period of socialist revolution.

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