Communist Federation of Britain (ML)

Letter: What happened to Lin Piao?

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LETTER

CHINA

Dear Comrades,

In a letter published in last month's *Struggle*, and with which I partly agree, M.M. made some criticisms of the article I wrote for the October issue on the 10th Congress of the Communist Party of China. For example, he questioned the degree of mass participation in China in the debate on Lin Piao.

While the Chinese show self-discipline in not discussing certain internal questions with foreigners, the limited evidence available indicates that extensive discussions do take place internally on such subjects, and certainly within the party (see for example Jack Smith's article on Lin Piao in *China Now*, March 1973). If M.M. knows any evidence to the contrary, I hope he will bring it forward.

The second criticism is that the *Struggle* article glossed over the denunciation by the CPC of Lin Piao as a 'bourgeois careerist, conspirator, double-dealer, renegate and traitor'. In my view it was impossible to deal fully with this aspect of the subject within the limits of an article in *Struggle*, and, as I said in the piece, 'Without being involved in the long internal discussion that took place in the CPC, it is of course not easy for us to grasp fully the ideas behind particular phrases in the report.'

While we should not rush unthinkingly to copy every formula of the Chinese, it would also be rash and dogmatic to assert without thorough investigation that on a particular subject they are unquestionably in the wrong. If M.M. does believe he has adequate information about Lin Piao to write more than was in the article he criticised, he does not make clear what he thinks should in fact have been stated.

Is it quite impossible for the CPC to be right in calling Lin Piao a renegate and traitor? We probably all know of one or two former political colleagues who for a time have played a valuable part in our own struggles, and then subsequently dropped out or even played a harmful role. Later, in retrospect, it is possible to see their weak points much more clearly than we did at the time. In the international communist movement, Kautsky once held a leading position but was later rightly denounced by Lenin as a 'renegate' to the working class.

D.B. (London)