

fierce factional struggle against the left invest them with exceptional significance. They were clearly intended as a thrust at the revolutionary innovations of the Cultural Revolution and as an attempt to turn the clock of history back, to reinvigorate the chase after material incentives, sanctify the growth of bureaucratic privilege, heighten the standing of the managerial elite, and enliven the growth of neo-bourgeois elements.

It is not to be forgotten that this period marked not merely the reemergence of Teng Hsiao-ping, but his virtual assumption of the powers normally exercised by Chou En-lai, who unquestionably pushed Teng forward as his own health began to fade rapidly.

It is precisely for the above reasons that Mao demonstratively stayed away from the January 1975 meetings of the Central Committee and the Fourth National People's Congress.

In retrospect his de facto boycott of these meetings was indicative of the fact that the Maoist supporters were clearly in the minority and that the rightists were in fact trying to reverse earlier "correct verdicts."

MAO AND THE LEFTISTS

If there is any grain of truth at all in the report that Chairman Mao had warned his grouping of Chiang, Wang, Yao, and Chang against forming a faction, as is alleged in an editorial in the People's Daily of Oct. 25, it could only be because he felt that the left was vastly outnumbered and weakened. There had been all the "rehabilitations" of right-wing figures and their reemergence under the aegis of Teng's leadership as well as the campaign of "rectifications" which was directed against the left and inspired by Teng.

Nevertheless, the struggle that was finally launched against Teng was clearly led by Mao and carried out by his close supporters—Chiang, Wang, Yao, and Chang. It is they who, unquestionably under Mao's direction, initiated the campaign to "beat back the right deviationist wind which," as they said, "seeks to reverse correct verdicts."

It was they who were responsible for a highly authoritative article reflecting their, and of course Mao's, view in the Peking Review of March 1976.

"Around last summer," it said, referring to 1975, "a right-deviationist wind trying to reverse previous correct verdicts was whipped up in society at large. Its aim was to negate the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution personally initiated and led by Chairman Mao

ten years ago and the socialist new things that have emerged during the Cultural Revolution, to reverse the correct appraisal of the Cultural Revolution and practice revisionism. . . . The bourgeois representatives who whipped up the right-deviationist wind to reverse correct verdicts were mainly those capitalist-roaders who were exposed and criticized during the Cultural Revolution but refused to mend their ways."

It can now clearly be seen against whom it was directed: Teng and his "rehabilitated" supporters as well as the whole right-wing.

The only question that remains to be answered apropos the victory of the rightists at the Central Committee session and the NPC is how and why Mao had tolerated, if not acquiesced, in the rehabilitation and the reemergence with such vast political authority of Teng, admittedly an "unrepentant capitalist roader," as he had been called. Here again, it can only be explained by the erosion of revolutionary left support and the waning of Cultural Revolution enthusiasm in the popular masses. To this must be added, of course, the intractability and stubborn persistence of those social trends based on pre-existing broad social and economic conditions which are a continuing source for the sustenance of the rightist social grouping. The latter do not yield in this period to mere continual purgations and least of all to exhortatory revolutionary polemics.

FROM CULTURAL REVOLUTION TO FALL OF LIN PIAO

The Cultural Revolution may be divided into stages, the first lasting from November 1966 until the attempt to set up the Shanghai Commune.

This phase probably marked the period when enthusiasm for the Cultural Revolution was at its height. The apparent inability to set up the Shanghai Commune on the basis originally conceived, that is, like the Paris Commune with its broad participation and conflicting tendencies, opened up a period of disillusionment. It was slow and gradual, but nevertheless discernible. All the same, the Cultural Revolution was still marching on.

The next phase, however, ended in the fall of Lin Piao and his associates, and this properly marked the beginning of the Thermidorian ascendancy.

The revolutionary left—the Maoist grouping—was weakened tremendously by the fall of Lin Piao and his associates. Lin, after all, was one of the top leaders of the Cultural Revolution. His fall meant a split in the left wing of the party.