

Contradictions of Hua Kuo-feng's Regime:  
China Swayed by the "Shadow" of  
Teng Hsiao-ping

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I. "Inside of China" in Sight

Nearly eight months have already passed since China's October Coup d'etat and the subsequent establishment of Hua Kuo-feng's regime. And yet, Hua's regime has not received any official acknowledgement, institutional or political. In spite of a political change of this magnitude, a meeting of the Chinese Communist Party's Central Committee has not been called to order to date, not to mention a National Party Congress or a National People's Congress. By any standard, this is an abnormal situation.

Nonetheless, some observers say that Hua's regime is stable now and that the People's Republic of China has been born anew through the purge of the "gang of four." This analysis is misleading. It is as erroneous as the false, unrealistic, subjective view of a short while ago which held that Mao Tse-tung's regime was free from contradictions and that a firm collective leadership would be formed following the passing of Mao Tse-tung.

There is a way, however, by which we can gain a better knowledge of recent developments in China, or of "the inside of China." The Chinese authorities have disclosed "crimes" of "the gang of four" one after another, apparently out of necessity to provide material with which to pursue a campaign of criticism against them. The tone and wording of their official commentaries and articles give us a clue to what is happening in China.

For example, an article entitled "Charges Against the 'Gang of Four' in Shanghai Who Attempted to Take Over the Party and State Power" (*Peking Review*, No. 6, 1977) says that the "gang of four," to replace "Mao Tse-tung Thought", "fabricated 'Chang Chun-chiao Thought' with a mind to using it as a 'theory' to back their plan to take over the Party, seize state power and restore capitalism." And they "slandered Mao Tse-tung Thought as being out of date," the article says.

This criticism reminds one of a slogan carried by counterrevolutionary dissidents" in Tien An Men last April: "Gone for good is Chin Shih Huang's feudal society." It may be assumed that, in the last years of Mao Tse-tung, there was a trend rooted to considerable depth in Chinese society, from ordinary people to the Party's central figures, to break away from the tendency to regard "Mao Tse-tung Thought" as the absolute truth. At present, however, the "gang of four" are accused on the grounds that "they went so far as to declare that 'Chang Chun-chiao Thought' was 'developed' out of Marxism, Leninism and Maoism, and that it is the 'fourth milestone' following Marx, Lenin and Chairman Mao in the history of the development of Marxism." It is hard to believe whether the "gang of four" really advocated such "Chang Chun-chiao Thought" more ardently than "Mao Tse-tung Thought." But the "Study and Criticism (Hsüeh-hsi yü p'i-p'an)" magazine turned out to be just what we had conjectured it to be—a private party organ of the radical Shanghai Group who took a leadership role in the Great Cultural Revolution. "The 'Study and Criticism', of which the 'gang of four' were in direct control, was discovered to have been filled with counterrevolutionary articles. (*Peking Review*, op. cit.)

No publication has been made of this magazine since its 10th issue last year and the 9th issue is the last one sent to overseas subscribers, including myself. It is said that the "gang of four" took advantage of the magazine, and particularly Chiang Ching "dreamed, in the magazine, of becoming a modern 'empress,' likening herself to Lu-hou." This is what we thought they might be using it for. In Shanghai, it is reported, "One cadre was thrown into jail by Chang Chun-chiao simply because the former, well cognizant of the obscenities of Chiang Ching in the 1930s, made an

issue of her in the 1940s and '50s. ... Another cadre raised an objection to Chang Chun-chiao's attempt to divert 494 acres of land for Lin Piao's cottage, and had to spend many years in jail." Thus, the "inside" of the Mao Tse-tung regime has now been revealing itself.

I have often touched, elsewhere, upon the confrontation between the army and the militia. "The gang of four tried to erode the army, split it and put it into confusion, while they attempted to make the militia their tool, forming 'the second force' independent of the People's Liberation Army." After all, however, the "gang of four" "lamented their lack of power: 'What we have is only the pen, not the gun.'" And it is reported that "Wang Hung-wen stated, 'What worries me most now is the fact that the army is not in our hands and that we do not have our men in the army.'" (*Peking Review*, op. cit.) This could be an expression of their bona-fide feeling.

Then came the coup directed by Hua Kuo-feng. The December 17, 1976, *Jen-min jih-pao* (People's Daily) carried an article written by the editorial staff: "Desperate, Frenzied Struggle." If perused with a calm mind, it will give a clear and detailed account of how the coup d'etat in Peking came about. It is evident that the "gang of four" made a hurried attempt to establish a solid foothold in the Party after Mao Tse-tung died. And in doing so, they used Mao's directive to "act according to the principles laid down" (which itself is believed to have been re-worded by the "gang of four") as an indication of Mao's trust in them. The "gang of four," however, did not have control over the intermediate or low-level units of the production bases, the Party, the Government or the army. Their insufficient power or control is seen in the fact that criticism against the "capitalist roaders" which began last spring had not taken firm hold. So, the most they could do was to launch a press campaign of an offensive containment nature, mobilizing the mass media such as the People's Daily. This was exactly the situation in which Wang Hung-wen conceded that "We have only the pen, not the gun." And this made it easier for the Hua camp to round up the "gang of four."

The Chinese authorities have leaked information to foreign newspapers to the effect that the "gang of four" had an "armed uprising plot," and

seem to be in the process of instilling the veracity of this information into the minds of the Chinese people. The "gang of four" and their radical followers allegedly were to rise in arms in Peking and Shanghai on October 9 and 10, respectively, and if their action in Peking failed, were to wage a thoroughgoing armed struggle against the Hua forces with the Yangtze River between. But it is possible to make up any plot post factum as has been the case with the "571 Scheme" with regard to Lin Piao's abortive attempt. At any rate, the "gang of four" are now under arrest. However, one official account out of Peking says: "Followers of the 'gang of four' in Shanghai directed the continuing publication of articles on 'acting according to the principles laid down' in a Shanghai newspaper and had a radio station broadcast the song 'Let's act, to the end according to the principles laid down,' even though they already knew, through secret channels, that Chairman Hua and the Party were going to oust the 'gang of four.' This was part of their counterrevolutionary armed revolt scheme" (*Peking Weekly*, op. cit.)

The existence of such "secret channels" and the cutthroat struggle for power in the Party are nothing else but the "inside of China" disclosed by Chinese official news media. Such "inside facts" which cannot but be revealed serve to confirm the adequacy of an outline we have drawn about China's internal situation.

## II. Dilemma of Hua Kuo-feng

But then, political developments in China are dramatic and swift. The first anniversary of the passing of Chou En-lai came on January 8, and the Chinese people's respect and affection for the late Premier Chou grew infinite. Nowadays, Chinese official news media such as the People's Daily carry, almost everyday, articles on Chou with the best possible rhetoric to praise him. At the same time, this trend is beginning to take the shape of a new political undercurrent penetrating the bottom of Chinese society—calling strongly for another comeback of the fallen Teng Hsiao-ping. During the April riot in Peking's Tien An Men Square, demonstrators hung small bottles from the portraits of Chou En-lai placed at the Monu-

ment of the Martyrs of the Revolution. Their wishes, wisely expressed by those small bottles, are about to be fulfilled (A small bottle, "Hsiao-ping" in Chinese, corresponds in pronunciation to Teng "Hsiao-ping"—thus indicating popular support for Teng Hsiao-ping as successor to the late Chou En-lai). What a different situation it is from this time last year when criticism against the "capitalist roaders" was being ardently pursued nation-wide!

It is impossible, however, for Hua Kuo-feng to deny that the October 7 revolution in Peking was, in essence, "a coup d'etat by Hua." After all, Hua assumed the chairmanship of both the Communist Party and the Military Commission on the very day of that political upheaval, to the great cost of the "gang of four." Whatever "villainous counterrevolutionary dissidents" the "gang of four" may have been, they were all top leaders officially elected at a National Party Congress. However intense a struggle for power there may have been between Hua Kuo-feng and the radical group of four, it might have been Hua who violated the rules of power game in the most extreme situation of early October last year—this suspicion is hard to brush aside, considering the series of revelations of the facts surrounding the upheaval.

It goes without saying that the "gang of four" had had their way, sheltering themselves under Mao's influence, and ruled the Chinese people at large, with a firm grip on the Mao regime. Because of that, it was a task of the Party leaders and the people as well to get rid of the "gang of four"—and it had to be done sooner or later. The sudden accomplishment of the task came as a happy and delightful event. In this sense, Hua Kuo-feng is worthy of being called a hero. However, the "gang of four," closest to Mao Tse-tung, not only were the main architects of the Great Cultural Revolution but also were supposed, up until last October, to be living witnesses to the "new things" to which the Cultural Revolution had given birth.

It is most likely, therefore, that suspicion will duly arise, when the uproar and excitement associated with the eradication of the "gang of four" subsides, as to why Hua Kuo-feng has not practiced the "Mao Tse-tung Thought" formula of "criticism-unity-criticism" or "struggle-criticism-reform." It must be assumed then that Hua, faced with such doubt, lacks

convincing evidence to justify his sudden and shocking purge of the four radicals. In other words, Hua is in a touch situation where he is compelled to rack his brains to seek justifiable reason for both what he has done and his present status. What is considered feasible for Hua to do in such a situation is to play the leading role in a succession-to-power drama of pre-modern and non-socialistic nature: He would have to make the "worst criminals in the history of the Chinese Communist Party" of the "gang of four" by doing whatever he can to reveal their "old crimes", he would have to base his legitimacy to be at the helm on a directive "With you in charge, I'm at ease(Ni pan-shih, Wo fang-hsin)" by which Mao allegedly appointed Hua as his successor on April 30 last year; and with that directive Hua would have to vie for power against the "gang of four" who claim to have a similar mandate from Mao. In this circumstance, Hua would have to build up a personality-cult around himself, making himself a hero and genius. Recently, Hua's portraits are beginning to flood everywhere side by side with Mao's. This is part of Hua's image-building campaign, and also is a reflection of the kind of dilemma Hua is in.

In revealing the "old crimes" of the "gang of four," the Party always uses such lurid and vulgar language that one would be flabbergasted to learn that those official statements in the Chinese news media in fact came from the Party of a socialist state. The "gang of four" "had numerous indissoluble ties with the reactionary faction of Chiang Kai-shek's Kuo-mintang Party" (an address Hua Kuo-feng made to the Second National Congress on "Learning from Tachai," in December, 1976; and Chiang Ching "was a whore" sent in by the Kuomintang Party in the 1930s *Jen-min jih-pao*, December 3, 1976). These were among the far less gross expressions.

Unable to settle the Peking coup in terms of ideology and theory, the Hua regime has recently been devoted to the job of disclosing "old crimes" of the "gang of four," heavily relying on such sensational language. This is an expression of a crisis inherent in Hua's regime. As time passes by, these questions and doubts will certainly develop among the Chinese people: If the "gang of four" were as unscrupulous as they are said to be, why couldn't they be disposed of earlier? Why were they elected to

high office in the Party? How was it possible for Chiang Ching to remain Mao Tse-tung's wife for as long as 30 years? What a fool Mao was to keep such a "wicked woman" of a "whore" as his beloved wife! Isn't Mao himself held responsible for all this?, etc. These doubts and questions will turn into "arrows" and "thorns" which would force to the public eye the contradictions of Hua Kuo-feng himself who has spared no effort to emphasize his intention to succeed to the Mao Tse-tung policy and "Mao Tse-tung Thought" after purging the "gang of four." In other words, the most provoking dilemma of Hua lies in the fact that, theoretically speaking, the overthrow of and criticism against the "gang of four" inevitably leads to "criticism against Mao Tse-tung."

This may well be one of the important reasons for the abnormal situation in which even a Party Central Committee meeting has not yet been held and Hua's regime has not been confirmed as an institution in spite of the nearly five months' time which has elapsed since the political upheaval in Peking.

In the meantime, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress met in early December, the Second National Agricultural Conference on "Learning from Tachai" was held in late December last year and the Second National Industrial Conference on "Learning from Taching" was in late April this year. But these meetings have little political, if not economic and social, significance. The State Council, on the other hand, still has many vacant posts and the important Standing Committee of the Politburo still has only two members: Hua Kuo-feng and Yeh Chien-ying. The Politburo Standing Committee with the present membership cannot possibly function in a normal manner as the highest policy-making organization.

In this context, reports had poured in to tell of disturbances and armed fights in various parts of the nation after the October political upheaval. Local radio broadcasts which can be monitored outside China has attested to serious disturbances in such Provinces as Szechwan, Fuchien, Hupei, Henan, Chekiang, Kuantung and Liaoning. And it seems that the government has now put a considerably large portion of the nation under military control, succeeding at long last in preventing the disorders from

worsening.

On January 5 this year, the *Jen-min jih-pao* carried an article "Wang Hung-wen's Plot against the World of Proletariat" written by the Criticism Group of the National Construction Committee. It says: "Through such villians as Weng Sen-he (who is said to have been a cat's-paw of the "gang of four in Chechiang Province"—the quoter's note). Wang Hung-wen caused disorder not only in Chechiang Province but also in Paoting, Hupei Province; Chengchou, capital of Chiangnan Province; the frontier district; Hunan Province and other areas. In Paoting, riots and semi-civil war continued because Wang Hung-wen supported the rioters' looting fire arms, food and warehouses. In Chengchou, insurgents destroyed the nation's economic construction efforts by putting railways and other transportation means out of service. In the frontier district, they, with a secret intention in mind, caused ill feeling between tribes, split them, and undermined the large-family solidarity of the Chinese people."

Such realities of China are far beyond the grasp of those who have been to Peking or Shanghai on a one-or two-week "table d'hote" tour. It is arrogant of them to say, on the basis of their brief visit to China, that Hua's regime is firm. Their view about China can be nothing else but misleading.

### III. Growing "Shadow of Teng Hsiao-ping"

Under the Hua regime with such characteristics as described above, the "shadow of Teng Hsiao-ping" is growing darker than ever. Teng Kum, vice chairman of Wuhan's municipal revolutionary committee, had not been seen in public, like his brother Teng Hsiao-ping, since the Tien An Men Square riot last year. Teng Kum is reported to have appeared in Wuhan again, at the 54th anniversary of Peking-Hankou Railway General Strike (according to an AFP-Jiji news dispatch from Peking dated February 8, 1977). This news was received as suggestive of another comeback of Teng Hsiao-ping possibly in the near future. It appears, however, that the darker the "shadow of Teng Hsiao-ping" becomes, the less simple becomes the problem of his return to government office. Hua Kuo-feng secured the

exceptional post of the "first vice chairman of the Communist Party" immediately following the Tien An Men Square incident. At a Politburo meeting which decided on that appointment, Hua condemned Teng Hsiao-ping as a "counterrevolutionary element" (he defined the Teng Hsiao-ping issue as a "hostile contradiction"). Therefore, Teng's unconditional, full come back will further reveal how contradictory Hua Kuo-feng has been. On the other hand, in early January this year, in the midst of growing affection for the late Premier Chou En-lai, wall posters were pasted up, calling for Teng Hsiao-ping's return. This fact was extremely interesting, especially because those wall posters appeared at a time when Hua's cult-building campaign was being pursued in real earnest.

At any rate, the Teng Hsiao-ping issue is becoming the most important domestic task China confronts at the moment. And Teng's phoenix-like political vitality cannot but strike one with wonder.

If one had carefully examined the trend of Chinese internal developments over the past 1 or 2 years, with special attention to the ill-founded campaign last spring of criticizing "capitalist roaders" and to the political direction the Chinese people consciously opted for, as represented in the Tien An Men incident; and if one had taken into consideration Teng's past achievements and the internal conditions of the Chinese Communist Party where talents are very few now, it should have been possible to prognosticate that the Teng Hsiao-ping issue would re-emerge in the post-Mao era. (Teng is not only an excellent Party bureaucrat with an exceptional organizing ability, but also an able leader-administrator. In addition, he has a solid base in the army. He was also active on the international stage, attending the 20th Soviet Communist Party Convention in 1956 which criticized Stalin, and taking part in the Special Session on Resources of the UN General Assembly in 1974.)

As I have often pointed out in this publication, it is because Teng Hsiao-ping himself was convinced that his talent would be needed again in the post-Mao era, that he "did not repent at all" in the face of criticism by the "gang of four" against the "capitalist roader." Teng was purged in disgrace as a "counterrevolutionary dissident" at a Politburo meeting immediately following the Tien An Men Square riot, and was stripped

of all his titles except membership in the Party. That Teng was allowed to remain in the Party was to make "a sacrificed stone" of him with a view to reviving him in the post-Mao period. And the "sacrificed stone" Teng is now on his way to revival.

In other words, the following inference cannot but be made as to the context in which Teng was now deprived of his membership in the Party. Surprised to see the Chinese people at large launch severe attacks on Chiang Ching and Yao Wen-yuan in the Tien An Men incident even before the present campaign to criticize the "gang of four" pursued by the Hua regime (cf. My article "Restructuring: Tien An Men Incident", *Chuo-Koron*, September 1976), the "gang of four" would have wanted to throw Teng out of the Party. But the non 'Shanghai group' of the Cultural Revolution including Hua Kuo-feng might have felt restless and stayed neutral about the issue of Teng's Party membership, because the Tien An Men riot could have given them the feeling that their own political future would be at stake if they did not stay away from the "gang of four." And moderate leaders such as Li Hsien-nien and Yeh Chien-ying, and elders like Chu Teh, were probably against expulsion of Teng from the Party. All these factors combined must have worked for, and not against, Teng's continued membership in the Party.

The fall of Teng Hsiao-ping from power might have been facilitated through such an obscure process. But after the Peking political incident, in retrospect, Teng himself whom the "gang of four" so ardently purged cannot but become, theoretically, a hero who fought against villains.

As obviously expressed by the demonstrations in Peking's Tien An Men Square, the Chinese people entertain great expectations of Teng as the man to carry on the Chou En-lai line. The Party cannot ignore this public sentiment. Recently, Teng has been referred to as a "Comrade Teng" again. And a revision of logical importance was made to clear Teng's name: The Teng issue was not a "hostile contradiction" but a "contradiction inside the people."

The Chinese authorities, on the other hand, have so far denied every news story which said that Teng was already back at work—as the "first vice chairman of the Party" or as "advisor to the Politburo. And this

suggests the complexity surrounding Teng's possible comeback.\*

#### IV. The Key Is in Teng's Hand

I have strongly felt the "shadow of Teng Hsiao-ping" even behind the October revolution in Peking. If things go in the direction currently suggested in China and Teng is reinstated with popular support, Hua Kuo-feng might simply be reduced to the "author" of the political incident in Peking. So this, I think, is probably the exasperation and uneasiness Hua feels most in the issue of Teng's comeback.

"Counterrevolutionary dissidents" of the demonstrations at Tien An Men last spring have already been vindicated. And "those praised" for helping put down the April riot have been condemned as "villainous counterrevolutionaries." This development is a complete victory for Teng Hsiao-ping in terms of the line he has pursued. Teng's victory, at the same time, is a victory for Chou En-lai, for the Chou Teng line, and for the line of the "capitalist roaders."

It is also a triumph of the policy of "four modernizations" (that is, the comprehensive modernization of agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology). This was apparently proved through the Recent National Industrial Conference on "Learning from Taching," for major stream of this conference, including the impressive Reports of Hua Kuo-feng and Yeh Chien-ying, was influenced deeply by Teng's line of industrialization.

Seen in this context, since he has won the battle between policies and the situation has taken a complete turn-about in his favor, Teng is now in a position where he does not have to make an explicit claim for his reinstatement. He made bold statements while Mao Tse-tung was alive, such as "It does not matter whether a cat is black or white as long as it catches mice," and "I cannot afford to talk class struggle every day." He may have made these remarks not only because he was an elder in the

\*The most recent reliable information on Teng's status, came from Li Hsien-mien's comment to some Japanese "friendly People" in early May. According to Li's explanation, Teng is already responsible for the significant works in the Politburo.

Party or because he is a Hakka from Szechwan Province with an extremely strong personality, but also because he was not so ambitious about his own status or position although he had a burning sense of mission to pursue his pragmatic line of policy.

Some observe that, in returning to power, Teng has asked for all the key posts he had assumed before he was sacked in disgrace such as those of vice chairman of the Party, (first) Deputy Premier of the State Council and Chief of Staff of the People's Liberation Army, or the post of the Party Secretary General which he had held till the Great Cultural Revolution took place, and that Teng's comeback has not yet been realized because of this problem over what post(s) he should be given. But I suspect it is not because of the matter of post alone that Teng's reappearance has been delayed.

I tend to think that it is Teng Hsiao-ping himself who has the key to all such important decisions as when to reappear on the political scene, what post(s) to take, and whether he should make an "official" comeback or remain as the "shadow of Teng" for the time being. Moreover, it may be natural of him to feel "After all this criticism and purge!"

Teng Hsiao-ping has had that much impact on internal developments of China today. This fact also indicates that there have been a myriad of problems along the path taken by Hua Kuo-feng who rapidly broke away from the "gang of four" after the Tien An Men Square incident, which was handled solely as the Teng Hsiao-ping issue.

Under these circumstances, Mao Tse-tung's "On the Ten Great Relationships" written in 1956 was made public in late December last year—I suspect Teng was somewhat responsible for publication of this twenty-year-old document. On January 1, 1977, the joint editorial of the *Jen-min jih-pao* and other two news media quoted, with much emphasis, that portion of Mao's speech which says: "We must mobilize all the positive elements we can find inside and outside of the Party and of our nation, to make our country a strong socialist state." This direction is nothing less than the line defined by the "four modernizations," and advocated by the "capitalist roaders," the moderates and the pragmatists. It indicates that, in its domestic policy, China is about to go back to where it was

in 1956. It would also inevitably lead to denial of the line developed by the Cultural Revolution—and to the denial of the "Mao Tse-tung line."

When Teng Hsiao-ping's return to power is explicitly known and when we see him exerting his great leadership again, then, drastic change will be seen in China's relationship with other countries of the world, in particular, Sino-Soviet relations and Sino-North *Korean* relations. This will have to be discussed elsewhere or in our afternoon session on the Chinese foreign policy.

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