

been. Teng Hsiao-ping's program for the implementation of this plan that precipitated the final showdown with the "fundamentalists", that very "Gang of Four" who had helped to humble him in 1966.

The propaganda battles over material incentives, factory rules and specialization, the use of foreign technology, the rustication of youth and improvement in the quality of education marked the build-up of this struggle between the radical-fundamentalists and the pragmatists, until Mao Tse-tung himself took a hand in the debate and pointed the fatal finger at Vice-Premier Teng as going the capitalist road again.

### Chou's death

The death of Premier Chou En-lai in January 1976 sharpened the conflict and began to bring the power struggle into the open. For, although the fundamentalists had the power, with Mao's support, to prevent Teng Hsiao-ping from becoming Premier, they could not put their own principal contender, Chang Chun-chiao, into that vital job.

Instead a relatively little-known member of the Central Committee, Number Eleven in the hierarchy, Hua Kuo-feng, was named Acting Premier, and Teng disappeared from official public view. But this elevation had only been blessed, apparently, by the Politbureau, not by the full Central Committee, and the internal fight went on in an increasingly public fashion, culminating in the violent incidents in Tienanmen Square on April 5.

The events of that Ching Ming Festival weekend in Peking's great central square of Tienanmen a year ago were remarkable for two reasons. They were the first major demonstration of public dissent against the hierarchy in almost a decade. Furthermore, whether the riotous incidents that climaxed the weekend were organized or not, the cause that sparked them — a massive tribute to Chou En-lai and his great plan for the future and denunciations of Chiang Ching and the radicals — was obviously popular. And, more important, on both the weekend and the riotous April 5 Monday, the majority of demonstrators and avid spectators were young people under 30, the future standard-bearers of the Revolution. Here was the first overt indication that ten years of puritanical, ideological campaigning for the new socialist man had not yet totally converted the new generation. These youthful Communists were publicly pledging their support for a Chou En-lai kind of Chinese future, and were apparently ready to wait

a little longer to produce that selfless man in the classless society whom Mao and his fundamentalists had been preaching.

This open defiance of the regime was too much for the authorities, and once again a hastily-summoned Politbureau stripped Teng Hsiao-ping of all his titles, though it left him his party card. And Hua Kuo-feng was officially proclaimed, with Mao's blessing, as Premier and Vice-Chairman of the Party. But still the Central Committee had not yet been called upon to give its blessing.

It was soon apparent that similar disturbances on Ching Ming weekend had occurred in many major cities throughout China, with the exception of Shanghai, whose administration was firmly under the control of Chang Chun-chiao, Yao Wen-yuan and Wang Hung-wen. Unrest grew in the provinces as the summer drew on, and Mao Tse-tung became so obviously infirm that he could no longer be allowed to see foreign leaders. Omens of the end of dynasties appeared — an eclipse of the sun, meteors falling in the northeast, and finally the major earthquake at Tangshan on July 28 — all combining to compound the rumors that spread everywhere with the visible absence of the great leader from the national scene.

The Tangshan earthquake, which devastated one of North China's major coal and steel cities and badly damaged the ports of Hsinkang and Tientsin, came at a time when the economic situation generally was in a chaotic state as a result of the shelving of Teng Hsiao-ping's program for the new Five-Year Plan. But, in facing up to this major calamity, the new Premier Hua Kuo-feng was able to show on a national scale his decisiveness and administrative talents. At the same time, the fact that the People's Liberation Army had to be called on for the massive rescue and rehabilitation task provided a national forum for demonstrating Hua's close relations with the army, a factor that had always been essential in previous power struggles in the Chinese Communist Party.

When, therefore, on September 9 the great Chairman died, the setting for the latest showdown was established and the only question was how soon the *dénoue-*

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*Demonstrations  
in major cities  
throughout China*