

China plays the 'America

Is Brzezinski's 'ace' a wild card the U.S. can't handle?

Under prompting from National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski and Energy Secretary James Schlesinger, the Carter Administration played its geopolitical "ace" last week, precipitously moving to extend official diplomatic recognition to the People's Republic of China in what Brzezinski sees as an effort to construct a "second front" against the Soviet Union in Asia.

Displaying what one perceptive China expert labeled "strategic tunnel vision," the Administration achieved its link-up with China by yielding on every fundamental point which had been in dispute between the U.S. and China over the important issue of Taiwan, and, at the same time, effectively granted the Chinese a sphere of influence over Southeast Asia. For that price, Brzezinski calculates that he has bought an important ally against the Soviet Union. The card he has played is actually a wild card in international politics, and, most experts calculate, the recognition move is reinforcing the "Han Chauvinist" tendencies within China that have made China historically the nemesis of nationalism and development in the Far East. If the pattern of the Administration's Camp David miscalculations is repeated, the "China card" could in fact force the fiercely independent nations of Southeast Asia to turn toward the Soviet Union as a counterweight to the U.S.-China axis.

What Asia, and many in the U.S. and Europe, fear is that rather than obediently serving as a NATO "second front" against the Soviet Union, the scheming and cynical Chinese leaders, Teng Hsiao-ping foremost among them, will use U.S. relations as sanction for Chinese domination in Asia. Asians are already monitoring closely China's moves against Vietnam — and the implicit Administration sanction given those moves through its support for China's puppet Cambodia — and none of Vietnam's neighbors which is familiar with the history of Chinese policy in Asia shares the National Security Council view that the China-Vietnam conflict is essentially a surrogate conflict with the Soviets. In the longer term, there is concern—the Soviets said so publicly (see page 10)—that the Administration has taken too little notice of China's official policy that "war is inevitable" between the Soviet Union and NATO. Where other countries are working to reduce that danger, the Administration's geopolitical orientation tends to reinforce the potential for conflict —

which the Chinese will certainly attempt to manipulate to their perceived advantage.

In the following three-part report, we analyze the powerful social and ideological forces at work in the Chinese population and leadership, indicating the pitfalls which must confront a nation such as the U.S. (and, importantly, Great Britain) which attempts to manipulate the Chinese along the lines proposed by geopolitical doctrines and adopted by the Carter Administration. Then we contrast the more cautious and farsighted strategic approach adopted toward the China question by Japan, West Germany, and Mexico, all nations which have major dealings with the Chinese. Finally, we report on the concern which the recent U.S. move has aroused among America's traditional Southeast Asian allies.

1. The 'New China' versus the 'Old'

For 10 days in late November, a force and a spirit welled forth from the Chinese population that, with one brief exception, has not been seen since the "Young China" upsurge of the first three decades of this century. This "New China," permitted to freely write wall posters in Peking and other cities during that 10-day period, displayed the same desire to reform the nation, the same iconoclasm and idealism, that sparked their predecessors more than 50 years ago, the generation which — behind the reform banner of Sun Yat-sen — formed the Communist Party itself in 1920.

For those 10 days, the "New China," the China of intellectuals, youth, and industrial workers seeking to cast off the dead weight of 2,000 years of a sterile Chinese cultural tradition with rationalism and science and bring China into the modern international community, spoke to the world and to its rulers. It spoke of the anger and bitterness of, especially, the last 12 years, all but two of them under the arbitrary and insane rule of Mao Tse-tung,

card'

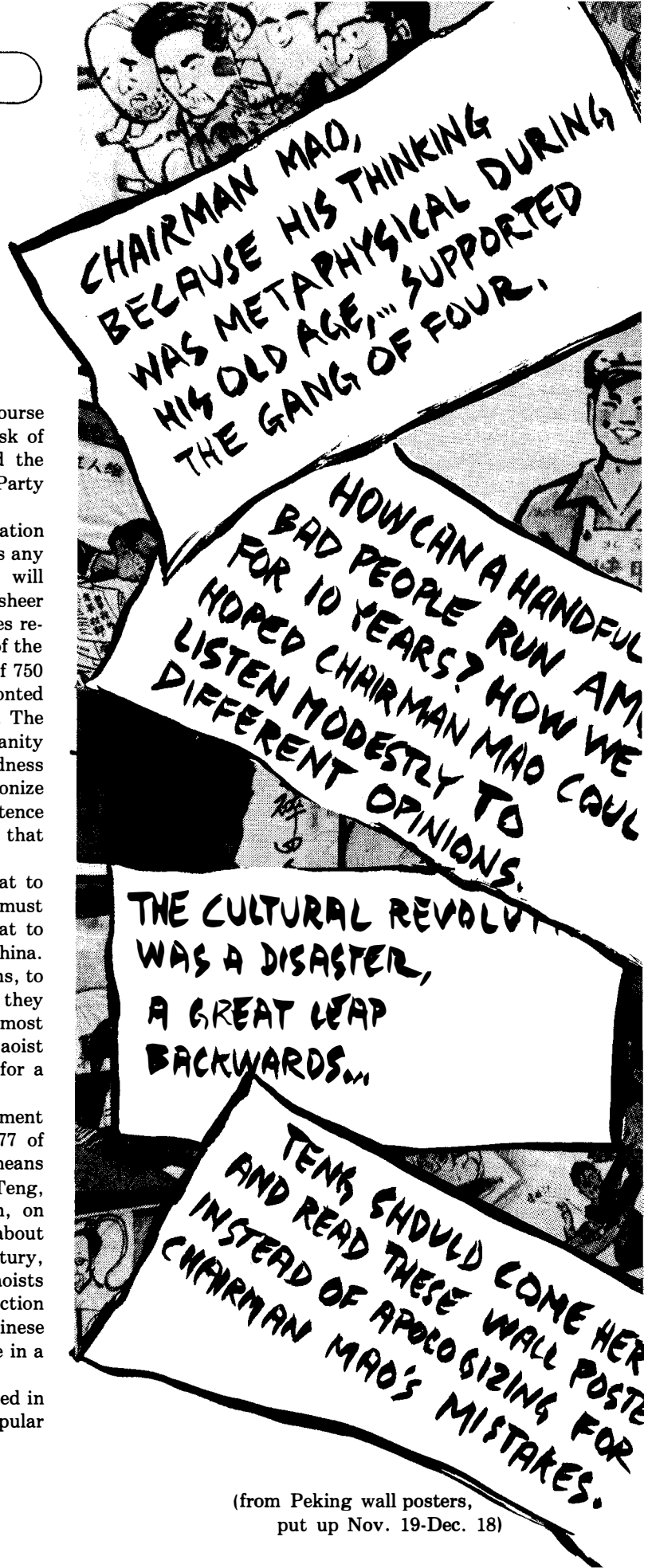
and it spoke of the need to abandon the unworkable course charted by Mao, and to move forward with the task of modernizing a China freed of the mythologies and the repressive hand of the government and Communist Party that brought on the Maoist tragedy in the first place.

The modernization — that is to say the industrialization and urbanization — of China is a task as formidable as any attempted in the history of mankind, one which will require a period of some 25 years to accomplish. The sheer magnitude of industrial capital and financial resources required is staggering. Even more immense is the task of the social transformation required for the “Old China” of 750 million or more peasants — a task that has confronted Chinese reformers since the end of the 19th century. The issue remains the same: how to free a quarter of humanity from peasant bestialism, superstition, and backwardness and bring it into the modern world; how to revolutionize the conservatism of family-centered personal existence and the bureaucratic, mandarin mode of government that have ruled China for centuries.

The post-Mao Chinese leadership understands that to make China into a strong nation, the country must modernize as rapidly as possible. And it knows that to modernize it must harness the energies of the New China. It has attempted, in a succession of popular campaigns, to reassure the formerly persecuted intellectuals that they will no longer face constant harassment, to repudiate most of the unpopular and economically destructive Maoist domestic policies, and to arouse mass enthusiasm for a new order.

But the hegemonic faction in the Chinese government — since the complete rehabilitation in June of 1977 of Vice-Premier Teng Hsiao-ping — has been by no means committed to modernization as an end in itself. From Teng, the regime's staunchest advocate of modernization, on down, it is deeply infected by cynicism, cynicism about the ability of the Chinese people to enter the 20th century, and cynicism toward the outside world. While the Maoists tend to oppose modernization outright, the Teng faction tends to see it rather as a means to the goal of Chinese hegemonism in Asia and a strengthened Chinese role in a world community dominated by geopolitical blocs.

Domestically, the Teng faction's outlook is reflected in the careful limits that Teng has defined in the popular



(from Peking wall posters, put up Nov. 19-Dec. 18)

mobilization behind the modernization drive; his allies such as *People's Daily* editor-in-chief Hu Chi-wei have progressively escalated their polemics against Maoism while generally holding back from direct attacks on Mao himself.

In foreign policy, the picture is far worse, and certain to rebound against the domestic modernization effort. Relying on the most overtly racist foreign policy approach in the world outside Great Britain — the Han Chauvinist doctrine of Chinese superiority over the “barbarians” — the Chinese have allied with the forces in today's world most opposed to industrialization of the underdeveloped world, from the British drug-running networks in Hong Kong to the oligarchist forces in Great Britain (which is negotiating to supply modern arms to the Chinese) to the architects and supporters of the Carter Administration's “Camp David” and “China card” policies.

Moreover, there are signs that the Teng leadership may lack some of the understanding of basic economic planning and methods needed to accomplish the modernization goals it has set.

A formidable challenge

Even a more farsighted leadership than Teng's would find itself confronted by formidable challenges in the effort to modernize China. To begin with, there is the baleful legacy of Mao's last 10 years in power, from 1966-76, a period in which Mao's unleashing of mass anarchy and virtual civil war for arbitrary factional purposes created animosities within the population that will not die out for generations. The most concentrated expression of this destructive process is the top-level faction fight between the forces led by the twice purged and twice restored Teng Hsiao-ping, and those Politburo members, led by Mao's security chief Wang Tung-hsing, who owe their careers and political legitimacy to this very post-1966 period. For the latter, every attack on Maoism undermines their claim to retain their posts. Since millions of Communist Party cadres were purged between 1966 and 1969 by the Maoists, and since half the Party was admitted after 1966, there is a huge organic constituency with a stake in slowing de-Maoization. Meanwhile, the now rehabilitated former party leaders want their old positions back, virtually pitting the “old” party against the “new” party at every stratum down to the village level.

Moreover, the wall posters demonstrated (see excerpts page 13) that many Chinese want to completely repudiate Mao, at least after 1957, which is much farther than even Teng can afford to go without calling into question the legitimacy of the Communist Party itself.

The five modernizations

Under the rubric of the “four modernizations,” a slogan launched by the late Chou En-lai in 1974 encompassing agriculture, industry, science and technology, and defense, Teng has initiated a wide range of radical policy shifts that constitute a general repudiation of Maoism. For industry, Teng has placed managers in charge again, made productivity and profits the criteria of success,

stressed improving quality of products, and called for an end to small labor-intensive plants in favor of large capital-intensive ones in many fields. For the labor force, he has reintroduced bonuses and wage incentives for high productivity, cancelled the frequent and time-consuming political study sessions in factories, and called on workers to take pride in and responsibility for their work. Things as elementary to all other countries as legally binding contracts governing transactions between factories are being introduced. And in agriculture, peasants are being allowed to enlarge their private plots, regional markets are being reopened, and remuneration for collective farm labor has been put on an output, not a time, basis.

Equally as important as these, however, is what deserves to be called the “fifth modernization,” modernization of thought (see p. 12). For the last year and a half, basic science and technology have been emphasized as having the utmost importance for China's future. Recently it was announced that over 600,000 science centers would be set up across the country to teach popular science to the peasants. Other campaigns have been launched for everything from learning from foreign literature to the need for “socialist democracy” and a socialist legal system (China has no legal codes in any field to date).

Soviets to U.S.:

In their first public response to President Carter's Dec. 15 announcement that the U.S. will recognize the People's Republic of China, the Soviet party daily Pravda said Dec. 19: “The present renewal of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and China is not only a historical necessity. It must also be a contribution to the future cause of peace in Asia and the whole world.”

While avoiding the Brzezinski bear-trap set to disrupt their detente policy toward the U.S., the Soviets clearly warned the China card players of the danger of their game. On the same day as Pravda's response to the Sino-U.S. thaw, another Pravda commentator, Beglov, warned: “The harsh lessons of history remind that blind reliance on anti-Sovietism always ends in tension and war and the first victims turn out to be the instigators of such opportunist policies and their countries.”

The Soviets have often chosen the British appeasement of Hitler as an example of such “opportunism” aimed at creating anti-Soviet military adventures. A Soviet television program aired after the Carter announcement again pointed at Britain. The “Tragedy of China” showed British Chief of Defense Staff Sir Neil Cameron embracing Chinese leaders and calling the Soviet Union “our common enemy.”

However, even before Carter's formal announcement the military daily Red Star was warning against incorporating China into a new anti-Soviet military alliance.

The economic bind

Most of these measures, however, only go to undo the Maoist damage and return the country to the status quo ante of 1957, when Mao launched his madcap "Great Leap Forward." Dealing with modernization has proved far more difficult. In addition to the Cultural Revolution and the Communist Party factional situation, the regime is headed for a severe economic crunch. It can only sustain the support of its working class on the condition that living standards are allowed to rise. But the massive demand for reinvestment of capital will make it next to impossible to grant any significant general pay increases for many years.

As a partial solution to this problem, in the space of a few short months the regime has entirely abandoned Mao's proscription against taking foreign loans, and has begun contracting debts into the billions. At the same time it has imported, or intends to import, a series of mammoth industrial projects, especially in coal and steel. Across the board, it is soliciting foreign investment in joint companies, and apparently intends to use its as yet undeveloped off-shore oil for many of the payments.

So much has been noted, but the potential dangers have not. It is not clear how well-thought-out or competent the economic planning behind these projects is; very little

planning has gone on for a decade. If other nations' experience is any guide, China's normal import bill will rise astronomically in the wake of the present round of construction of new plants. How will this be sustained? Is China already overextending itself in foreign loans?

Even more important, what will be the domestic costs? Can the population assimilate the rapid pace of foreign capital acquisition? What about the social disruptions occasioned by rapid industrialization, including an inevitable flood of people to the cities such as caused a crisis once before in 1958? If the breakneck pace of foreign capital installation leads to breakdowns in the process sheet of production, can this breed disillusionment with the whole process?

One ominous development in this regard has been the strong Chinese interest in the so-called Yugoslav model of development. As applied in Yugoslavia, this has not only led to an economic crisis and diminishing productivity, but to centrifugal tendencies that could tear the country apart. The Chinese leaders, desperate to inculcate enthusiasm in the population without having to provide much material reward, apparently are bedazzled by the seeming ability of the Yugoslav model to arouse this enthusiasm by so-called "worker participation" in management.

World peace at stake in China policy

In his Red Star article of Dec. 17, "NATO for Asia?" Col. A. Leontiev writes:

... The present U.S. administration has worked out a new strategy for Asia and the Pacific Ocean, which is viewed as a further growth of American military might in that region, and at the same time a strengthening of the partnership with Japan and China.

Now in the USA it is not only Tokyo, but also Peking which is referred to as the "fulcrum" of its strategy in Asia. Furthermore, the idea of creating a military-political bloc composed of the USA, Japan and China is now being proclaimed there. China's contacts with Japan and the USA are developing in such a way that specialists are talking about the origin of a "trilateral alliance," writes the *New York Times*...

Everyone is entitled to choose their own allies according to their own tastes. In his day, the Fuehrer bragged that he was ready to ally with the devil himself, so long as he emerged victorious. But the Fuehrer was a man obsessed. Are not certain gentlemen becoming like him, who intend to enter a coalition with those who are calling openly for a new world war, whose adventurism, duplicity, political unprincipledness and treachery is known to all the world?...

The advocates of creating a "NATO for Asia" stand on one and the same anti-Soviet and anti-socialist platform. The only difference between them is that in

Washington and Tokyo they call the Soviet Union "the most likely enemy," whereas in the Chinese capital they call it "enemy number one." But they are both dreaming about the liquidation of the revolutionary gains of the peoples, a new recarving of boundaries, and the establishment of their hegemony in Asia, and see in the Soviet Union the main obstacle in their path...

The widely proclaimed "unanimity" cannot conceal the fact that each of the participants (in the proposed bloc — ed.) views its partners as solely temporary, tactical allies...

Three-quarters of the territory of the USSR is located in Asia, and naturally our people are vitally interested in consolidating security in this region of the globe. The Soviet Union acts so that international detente can be deepened and broadened, so that it can be spread to the most populated continent of the planet — Asia. "Peace, quiet, being spared from interference from outside, good-neighborly relations — that is what Southeast Asia and the Asian continent as a whole, the countries of the whole world, particularly need," said Comrade L.I. Brezhnev in this regard recently.

Attempts by the enemies of detente to forge a new military bloc and at the same time to complicate the situation in the Far East demand from us unflinching vigilance, constant readiness to guard the interests and security of the Homeland.

The lie that binds

Teng Hsiao-ping and his cohorts want to modernize the country in order to make China a strong power, to begin to restore the sense of self-importance felt by an ancient and once-proud nation. To do this, however, they are tapping a fount of popular emotion that goes far beyond what the regime is prepared to sanction. The proof of this is in China's Han Chauvinist foreign policy. China is not trying to add its weight on the side of peace, but is promoting a public line it knows to be untrue — the claim that the Soviet Union is out to conquer the world, starting with Western Europe — for purely cynical reasons of state best described in China's own jargon as "manipulating the foreign barbarians." China's short-term strategy is to soak the West for all the economic and military aid and capital it can get in the shortest time by playing up to what China perceives to be the West's psychological vulnerability — fear of the Soviet Union. The irony of this situation, as one top U.S. analyst put it, is that China undoubtedly sees not the Soviet Union, but the U.S. and Japan as its long-term strategic opponents in Asia, and fully intends to turn its Western-aided strength to serve this interest at some point in the future.

The Teng faction relies on a similar lie domestically. For them, the New China is a means, not an end. They seek to use this ferment for their own purposes, but this is more dangerous than they seem to realize.

The question is not whether China's problems are intractable. They are difficult, but not intractable — provided China's leaders can face them totally realistically. China needs detente with both the U.S. and the Soviets: it needs the increased, and more concessional, aid that would be available if detente freed massive U.S. and Soviet arms budgets for world development, it needs the full implementation of the development-oriented European Monetary System immediately — which China's policy implicitly damages—and it needs to be able to rally its population on just such a *universal* principle. The analyst referred to above summed up the Chinese leadership's problem as a fundamental lack of *humanism*. Without that quality, the present leadership will find it cannot solve its problems in the end. Yet, the measures it is taking will lead to a completely different China in 10 to 20 years. The United States must orient to that 20-year process, the New China that promises at last to solve the world's — and China's — "China problem" and not to momentary configurations in Peking or strategic will-o-the-wisps.

—Peter Rush

Chinese press exhorts

The newspapers and radio in China have been largely taken over by the factional supporters of Vice-Premier Teng Hsiao-ping. The media is supporting Teng's program of modernization with a wide range of coverage of the problems facing China: chaos and inefficiency in industry, the persistence of the peasant mentality, the necessity to end religious worship of "Mao Tse-tung Thought," and others. But, while a window has been opened on daily life in China, the official press has stopped short of outright repudiation of the insane Mao legacy. Some excerpts:

People's Daily, Aug. 29: Those comrades who are reluctant to learn and apply science, who despise and belittle science and technology and who are instead proud of being "rustic" actually regard the modes of handicraft production and the habits of small production as unalterable. . . . These comrades should quickly liberate their thinking by learning science and technology. **Hsinhua, Sept. 16:** Machinery products are backward. Most are up to world standards of the 1940s or 1950s, incapable of meeting the needs of a modernized economy. . . . At present the poor quality of the products of the machine-building industry has almost become the central topic of the whole party and country.

Hsinhua, Sept. 16: The technical level of our production (of fertilizer — ed.) is still very backward. . . . At present each agricultural worker turns out an average of some 2,000 catties (about a ton — ed.) as compared with the more than 100,000 catties of the United States.

Red Flag, Oct. 1: Some leading cadres . . . feel no qualms about the old equipment, techniques or work processes which they have been using for decades or even centuries, and will not forsake them. . . . These backward things essentially stem from, and correspond to, our backward modes of production. The small peasant economy had always occupied the dominant position throughout the several thousand years of feudal society and the century and more of semifeudal and semicolonial society.

People's Daily, Oct. 14: In the days of Lin Piao and the Gang of Four, people had to take part in "living study." They had to begin their speeches, articles and even letters by quoting Chairman Mao or other revolutionary leaders. Quotations were posted everywhere. They were written at the beginning of announcements,

the nation to modernize...

on various commodities and even on packaging. This is ridiculous in the extreme. . . . It is imperative that we see that Mao Tse-tung thought needs to be enriched and developed by new experiences.

People's Daily, Oct. 14: Experiences, both of advanced and backward nations, have proved that the reorganization of scattered, small-scale serial production into concentrated, large-scale specialized serial production is conducive to adopting advanced production technology, raising labor productivity, improving quality, lowering consumption, renovating products and saving investment.

Hsinhua, Oct. 15: "Chinese civilization has constantly drawn on foreign culture, and, in return, contributed to world civilization [a former prominent Chinese professor once said]." . . . New China has published translations of important world literature covering works from ancient Greece and India and various periods up to modern times. . . . Publication of European classics, modern works, and new writings by Asian, African and Latin American authors, study of the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, 19th century critical realism . . . are all being resumed.

People's Daily, Nov. 9: Every forward step in history requires emancipated minds. . . . The emergence of Marxism itself resulted from the development of large-scale industry and the great emancipation of mankind. . . . Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung Thought has not put an end to truth.

...Wall posters attack Cultural Revolution, Mao, even Teng

A wall poster campaign begun on Nov. 19 in Peking with official approval quickly spread out of sanctioned bounds as it became more uninhibited than the official media. Posters have appeared attacking Mao by name, and some have even attacked Vice-Premier Teng for blocking full exposure of Mao. There seems little doubt that by Monday, Nov. 26, Teng felt compelled to rein in the freewheeling, self-styled "democratic movement" that had already extended to marches and street speaking, and on Nov. 28, word apparently went out to end the campaign. But, after a week's hiatus, posters began reappearing Dec. 8. Some samples:

Nov. 19 poster: "Chairman Mao, because his thinking was metaphysical during his old age and for all kinds of other reasons, supported the Gang of Four in raising their hands to strike down Comrade Teng Hsiao-ping. . . . Mao's mistaken judgment about class struggle [was used by the Gang]."

Nov. 24 poster titled "We've had enough of Dictatorship": "Chinese, arise. The time has come to oppose all dictators, whoever they may be. We must judge them and settle scores with them right along the line. . . . Begin the fight against the tsar [Mao] . . . [likened Mao to dictator first emperor of China who] oppressed the people and burnt books. . . . For thousands of years Chinese history has consisted of knocking down emperors who made history into the history of emperors . . . We must destroy the ideological great wall of several thousand years of dictatorship" [Signed "Torch Society" or "Society of Lights."]

Nov. 25 poster: "We say Premier Chou En-lai was the people's good premier and the people loved him very much. Why couldn't you (Mao) get this love from the people? . . . How can a handful of bad people run amok for 10 years? How we hoped Chairman Mao could listen modestly to different opinions. It is a pity he can't do so now."

Nov. 26 poster: "The Cultural Revolution was a disaster, a great leap backwards for China. . . . How many ordinary people were massacred, how many unfair trials were held, how many tragedies came about?"

Nov. 27 poster: "Who made history — Chairman Mao or the people? . . . Why must people always be overthrown if they have different opinions?"

Dec. 8 poster: "Statements about the people being masters of history are no more than empty talk. . . . If it were not for Mao Tse-tung's personal despotism, would China be in the state it is in today? Why did the people go along this road? Is it not because that bragging despot forced them along it? Is this the road to socialism? Of course not. It is a feudalist monarchical system disguised in the cloak of socialism. If we want to modernize our economy, science and so on, we must first modernize our people and modernize our social system."

Dec. 18 poster: "Teng thinks stability and unity are in the public interest and in the interest of modernization, but I think differently Teng should come here and read these wall posters instead of apologizing for Chairman Mao's mistakes."