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Victims of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution

By DONALD W. KLEIN

P'ENG CHEN

THE political demise of Politburo member P'eng Chen in 1966 is one of the most significant political events in the Chinese Communist movement since Mao Tse-tung gained control of the Party in the late thirties and early forties.

The 64-year-old native of Shansi is a tall, robust man who worked in north China in the labour movement during the twenties and early thirties. He has been a Party member since 1926. P'eng allegedly spent some time in jail in the early thirties, but by the mid-thirties he was a top Party operative in the Peking area where he played a major role in contacting and recruiting students into the CCP. In these endeavours he seems to have been working directly under Liu Shao-ch'i.

During the wartime years P'eng divided his time between the Party headquarters in Yen-an and the fighting front in north China. He served for a time as the head of the Central Party School in Yen-an and was a prime mover during the famed "rectification" campaign that began in 1942. When in the field with Communist guerrilla forces, P'eng usually worked as a political officer. At the Party's 7th Congress in April-June 1945, P'eng was elected to the Central Committee and Politburo. Soon after, as the war was drawing to a close, the Communists dispatched a number of top officials to Manchuria, a group that included P'eng, Kao Kang and Lin Piao. Although Kao and Lin gained greater fame during the postwar years, both were probably outranked by P'eng who was political commissar of Lin Piao's army and, more important, the secretary of the Party's Northeast (Manchurian) Bureau. (It should also be noted that Lin Piao did not advance to Politburo membership until 1955.)

With the formation of the Communist government in 1949, P'eng assumed a host of new positions. Although he was most often mentioned in the press as the secretary of the Peking Party Committee (and, after 1951, as mayor), his principal tasks centred around the cabinet's Political and Legal Affairs Committee. The elderly Tung Pi-wu was chairman of this committee, but in fact P'eng, a vice-chairman, seems to have been the *de facto* head. In this capacity he delivered numerous reports on the "disposal" of counter-revolutionaries and the victims caught during the

famed “three-anti” and “five-anti” campaigns of the early fifties. Such activities earned for P’eng the reputation of an inflexible Party operative, and, apparently, the approval of the Maoist leadership, for immediately after the Eighth Party Congress in 1956 he was re-elected to the Politburo and was also named as the number two man (under Teng Hsiao-p’ing) on the Central Secretariat, the organ that implements Politburo policies on a day-to-day basis.

Until the mid-fifties P’eng’s career was almost completely orientated toward domestic events. But then in the wake of the Hungarian Revolution, and especially during the Sino-Soviet ideological dispute, he became deeply enmeshed in foreign affairs. His first such assignment occurred in late 1956 and early 1957 when he led a delegation that toured the U.S.S.R. and six East European countries. P’eng’s group stressed the necessity of maintaining “socialist solidarity.” Far more important was the mission he led to Bucharest for the 3rd Rumanian Party Congress in June 1960. Here P’eng held to the Chinese line that wars of “national liberation” were mandatory, and he is reported to have personally attacked Khrushchev (in response to the latter’s attack on Mao). Later that year he accompanied Liu Shao-ch’i to Moscow where the well-known summit conference (largely abortive) of Communist leaders was held. He was once again in Moscow for the 22nd CPSU Congress in October 1961, and when delegation leader Chou En-lai walked out in protest over Moscow’s attacks on Albania, P’eng was left in charge. In April–May and September–October 1962, respectively, he led delegations to North Korea and North Vietnam with the obvious purpose of gaining the allegiance of these nations in the Sino-Soviet dispute.

By now an acknowledged “hard-liner” in foreign policy, P’eng served as deputy leader under Teng Hsiao-p’ing in the delegation sent to hold talks in Moscow on ideological differences with the CPSU in July 1963—a meeting that seems to have agreed only to disagree. What little light remained within the Sino-Soviet alliance seems to have flickered out at this historic meeting. P’eng’s last foreign journey took him in May–June 1965 to Indonesia where he held a round of talks with Indonesian Communist leaders. In the meantime, during the early and mid-sixties, P’eng was almost always among the negotiators when foreign Communist Party leaders visited Peking. As late as March of this year he led the Chinese side in talks with the head of the Japanese Communist Party. In domestic politics he was also in the forefront of a hard ideological line—as represented by his well-publicised talk in mid-1964 on the necessity to “reform” the Peking opera. In September 1964 he was described (apparently for the first time) as one of Mao’s “close comrades-in-arms,” an accolade normally reserved for only a handful of Peking’s élite.

P'eng's fall from power was as sudden as it was surprising. After many years as one of Peking's top officials, he made a last appearance in late March 1966. Then, less than two months later, he fell victim to the "cultural revolution." He was replaced as Peking's First Party Secretary by Li Hsueh-feng.¹ The new Party Second Secretary, Wu Teh, is serving as Acting Mayor.

LU TING-YI

LU TING-YI, formerly Peking's top propagandist and an alternate Politburo member, was a major victim of the 1966 "cultural revolution," and, like P'eng Chen, was regarded as an ardent proponent of so-called hard line policies in both domestic and foreign affairs. He was born in Kiangsu and is now 65 years old. From his admission into the CCP in 1924 Lu was involved in propaganda work, initially with the Communist Youth League. He studied in the Soviet Union in the late twenties and made the Long March in 1934-35. In 1945 he was elected to the Central Committee and in the same year assumed the direction of the Propaganda Department, a post he retained (except for a brief period in the early fifties) for over two decades.

Since the establishment of the CPR in 1949 there have been few propaganda and education campaigns in which Lu was not a major participant. A recurrent theme in his voluminous writings has been the necessity to use art and literature as a weapon of ideology. Lu applied these ideas in a major 1951 article entitled "The World Significance of the Chinese Revolution," calling upon the "colonial and semi-colonial" countries to rise in revolt as the Chinese Communists had done. Although these thoughts were temporarily shelved during the Bandung period, they have re-emerged in the sixties under the slogan of "wars of national liberation," most recently articulated in Lin Piao's famous September 1965 article. Lu was a member of the delegations that attended the Communist "summit" meetings in Moscow—the one led by Mao in 1957 and the other by Liu Shao-ch'i in 1960.

Lu has been closely identified with Peking's uncompromising foreign policy, but he is far better known for his work in domestic affairs—particularly his famous "100 Flowers" speech in 1956. And, when the 100 flowers campaign went too far for the tastes of the Chinese élite, Lu made one of the initial attacks on the "rightists," remarks that were regarded as a definitive interpretation of Mao's talk on the "correct handling of contradictions among the people." He has also been specifically credited by the Communists as the architect of the part-work, part-study schooling system inaugurated in rural areas in 1958.

¹ For a short sketch of Li, see *The China Quarterly*, No. 26 (January-March 1966), pp. 222-223.

THE GREAT PROLETARIAN CULTURAL REVOLUTION

Lu has been an alternate member of the Politburo since 1956 and a Secretariat member since 1962. He was also named to replace non-Communist writer Mao Tun (Shen Yen-ping) as Minister of Culture in January 1965, a change widely interpreted as an indication of Peking's increasingly narrow and dogmatic handling of literature and art. He was last reported urging the more intensive study of Mao's thought at a meeting in Kiangsu in early April 1966. Then, like P'eng Chen, Lu disappeared and two months later he was replaced in the Propaganda Department by T'ao Chu.¹

¹ For a short sketch of T'ao, see *The China Quarterly*, No. 23 (July-September 1965), pp. 65-66.

CHINA'S CULTURAL REVOLUTION

This journal will publish early in 1967 a book of articles on the "great proletarian cultural revolution" and its impact on Party-army relations, the youth, education, the economy, the law, ideology, propaganda, foreign policy, with profiles of the major figures involved.

Authors will include Philip Bridgham, Ellis Joffe, Merle Goldman, Robert Barendsen, Donald W. Klein, John Israel.