

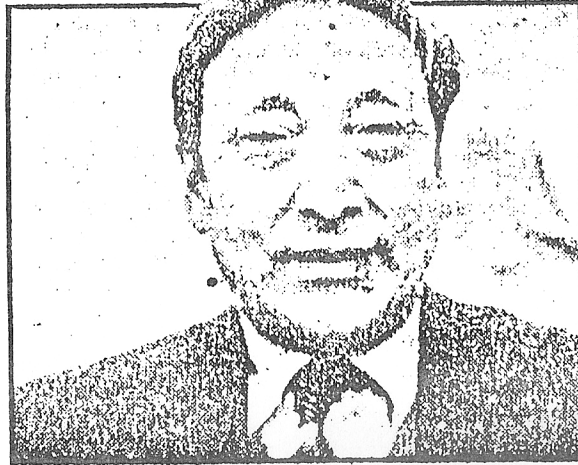
The Cultural Weather in China

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peared fully relaxed, unrepentant and convinced that they would not have been so harshly treated in the current cultural climate. Their self-assurance may have stemmed in part from the popular support they have received within the country and from abroad. Unlike the victims of past purges, some of whom are still in jail, they have not been detained or suffered physical punishment. The interviews were conducted in Chinese and translated by Andrew Andreasen, the deputy director of the Center for U.S.-China Arts Exchange, who is a Sinologist and an expert on Chinese literature.

Liu Binyan is the best known and most respected journalist in China. As a social critic and investigative reporter he has been unsparing in exposing official corruption and malfeasance in the provinces. He is a strongly built, dynamic man who does not show visibly the effects of 21 years in and out of labor camps after being denounced in the anti-rightist campaign. He was expelled from the party last January for the second time after being accused of reporting too much on the dark side and making speeches that spurred the student demonstrations for a freer society last December.

Attired casually in Western dress for his first meeting with Americans since his ouster from the party, Mr. Liu settled into an easy chair, lit a cigarette and replied to questions at length. "When I was expelled from the



Liu Binyan, the social critic and investigative reporter.

posers. They speak obsessively of their experimental works, diverse explorations to arrive at a synthesis of Western techniques with expression that is indigenously Chinese. "I must find my own voice and it is possible now," said Li Bingyang, a young composer and writer.

The groping for synthesis is most obvious in music. At the Shanghai Conservatory we listened to the haunting melody of "Empty Valley," played on modernized Chinese instruments, which the 24-year-old female composer, Xu Yi, described as an interpretation of Taoist philosophy. (The instruments included a "reformed vertical flute.") The Shanghai Symphony Orchestra led a program with the classical symphonic overture "Dividing Cells," whose distinctive theme was drawn by the composer, Yang Liqing, from the music of minority people of his native Guizhou province. The

Shanghai orchestra is required to devote a quota of its programs to Chinese-composed music. While concerts of modern classical music are well attended, young people flock in far greater numbers to performances of Chinese pop music styled in Western tempos. Mo'erji-hu, the director of the film studio in Inner Mongolia, complaining of the lack of attention to the serious in music and films, said, "We hear disco music every day even on the remote grasslands."

MORE so than with music, Westerners find it difficult to assess Chinese literature, largely because of the problems of translation. Chinese ideographs do not relate closely to the spoken forms of the language. In October, a Chinese delegation visited Stockholm to explore at the Royal Swedish Academy why its Nobel Prize in Literature has never been won by a Chinese. We discussed the issue so distressing to the Chinese literati in Chengdu with Sun Jingxuan, a distinguished poet who was a member of the delegation to Stockholm. Deploring the lack of understanding of Chinese literature in the West, Mr. Sun said the delegation told the academy that Ai Qing, a 77-year-old poet who began writing in the 1920's, and Ba Jin, the most famous living Chinese novelist, the author of "Family," who did his main work in the 30's and 40's, had been suitable candidates for the prize. Ai Qing and Shen Congwen, a novelist who is in his 80's, were unsuccessful candidates for the prize in 1987. To assure a better appreciation of Chinese literature, the Swedes have inducted Goran Malmqvist, a Sinologist at the University of Stockholm, into the academy.

At the Ministry of Culture in Beijing we interviewed in turn three of the most prominent intellectuals disciplined in the Anti-Bourgeois Liberalization Campaign that began at the start of the year. They ap-

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The 24-year-old composer Xu Yi.

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