

Photos: Fathers of Chinese Leaders at Revolutionary 'Struggle Sessions'

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MAR 21, 2012 | GLOBAL

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The denounced parents of modern-day Chinese leaders are a reminder of the Cultural Revolution's legacy.



ifeng.com

Full Screen



Bo Yibo, together with other purged Party leaders (ifeng.com)

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position as Chongqing Party chief earlier this month, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao announced at the National People's Congress that corruption among China's ruling class must be dealt with, or Beijing would risk a purge of leadership "like in the Cultural Revolution."

Ironically, cleaning house is itself reminiscent of the Cultural Revolution. In 1966, Chairman Mao Zedong, in an attempt to maintain his authority and destroy the increasingly powerful political elite, sparked what would become a 10-year internal conflict that pitted the nation against its revolutionary leaders.

The victims of the Cultural Revolution were many, and its legacy, though rarely discussed in Chinese politics, still hangs heavily over the country. Currently circulating around the Internet are photos released by Hong Kong-based media company ifeng that depict the fathers of Bo Xilai and Chinese Vice President and presumed presidential successor Xi Jinping, enduring one of the darker trends of the Cultural Revolution: "ideological struggle sessions."

In such sessions, everyone from politicians to teachers would be dragged before a large audience and forced to humiliate themselves with withering self-criticism, denunciations of their friends and allies, and pleas for forgiveness. Bo Yibo, Bo Xilai's father, was then a high-ranking member of the Communist Party. He was targeted for promoting a policy of economic opening, which Mao opposed. In the photos above, he is made to "struggle" at Worker's Stadium in Beijing.

The photos, as well as Wen's recent speech, are a reminder of the Cultural

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