

The Cultural Revolution Revisited: Dissonance Reduction or Power Maximization

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The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution began with the publication of Yao Wen Yuan's article, "Comment on the new historical play 'Hai Rui Dismissed from Office'," which alluded to Chairman Mao's summary dismissal of Defence Minister Peng Dehuai six years earlier. The article first appeared in the 10 November 1965 issue of the Shanghai *Wen Hui Daily* under Chairman Mao's personal direction through the Shanghai Municipal Party Committee.¹ The curious unrolling of the Cultural Revolution during the subsequent three years through the consolidating Ninth Party Congress in the spring of 1969, exhibited three essential characteristics: first of all, an unprecedented increase in proselytizing for the Thought of Mao Zedong; secondly, an unprecedented leftist purging of the majority of the Politburo and Central Committee leadership; and finally, an unprecedented infusion of outside youth and soldiers of the People's Liberation Army to fill the vacated leadership posts.

What was the motive behind this massive historical movement? One popular approach views the Cultural Revolution as an enhanced drive by Mao to maximize his power.² An alternative approach views it as the Maoists' heightened search for ideological consonance following the dissonance created by a failed prophecy.³ The dissonance approach views the Cultural Revolution more as a Jacobinic reign of terror and virtue than as a Stalinist-style purge. What I shall examine here are the relative explanatory contributions of these two approaches to understanding China's Cultural Revolution in the light of the historical evidence which has accumulated more than a decade after the event.⁴ This evidence now includes documents released earlier under Mao's leadership by rampaging Red Guards as well as documents released in 1981 by the Sixth Plenum of the 11th Central Committee under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, one of Mao's opponents during the Cultural Revolution.⁵

1. See editorial in *Hongqi (Red Flag)*, No. 9 (1966), pp. 31–34.

2. Franz Michael, "The struggle for power," *Problems of Communism*, Vol. XVI, No. 3 (May–June 1967), pp. 12–21. This paper is an excellent early source of information on the development of the Cultural Revolution.

3. Paul J. Hiniker, *Revolutionary Ideology and Chinese Reality: Dissonance Under Mao* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1977), p. 275. This book contains a more thorough treatment of the dissonance reduction thesis advanced in this paper. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 87th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association in New York, 1 September 1979.

4. For a balanced historical account of the era, see Phillip Bridgham, "Mao's Cultural Revolution: the struggle to consolidate power," *The China Quarterly*, No. 41 (January–March 1970), p. 16.

5. Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), *Daily Report: People's Republic of China* (1 July 1981), "Full text of Party resolution on historical questions" Beijing, 30

Dissonance Explanation

Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance is based on the notions that the simultaneous existence of cognitions which in one way or another do not fit together (dissonance) leads to efforts on the part of an individual to somehow make them fit better (dissonance reduction).⁶ The dissonance explanation of the Cultural Revolution rests on the facts that Mao and his supporters launched the Great Leap in 1958 while publicly prophesying it would lead to a communist utopia; instead, the Leap failed in 1959 resulting in economic chaos and socialist retrogression. These twin facts created cognitive dissonance in the minds of Mao and his supporters on the Politburo. Whereas those Politburo members who were not highly committed to Maoist ideology reduced their dissonance by *decreasing* their commitment to the Great Leap ideology to conform to the evidence of failure, Mao and the highly committed among his supporters on the Politburo could not do so. Their only recourse for dissonance reduction was to rationalize the Leap's failure as the work of class enemies and to *increase* their proselytizing for new believers both inside and outside the Politburo. Whereas this increased wide-ranging Maoist proselytizing began immediately following the Leap's failure, its only early successes were among those outside the Politburo, and there only among soldiers and youth. As extremist Maoist proselytizing persisted during the early 1960s, the divergent reactions to the Leap's failure among Politburo members widened. Increasingly unable to agree on policy, the Politburo polarized over the application of Maoist ideology, particularly the exculpating class struggle rationalization for the Leap's failure. This increasing ideological opinion divergence on the Politburo resulted finally in an enormous Maoist purge of the unbelievers as class enemies beginning in 1966. We shall examine this dissonance approach in more detail later.

Power Struggle Explanation

An early explanation of the phenomena characterizing the Cultural Revolution, cast it as a "struggle for power."⁷ This approach holds that "the real purpose [of it] was to use the cult of Mao as a weapon for the reconquest of the Party organization."⁸ Mao lost some power, if not his chairmanship of the Central Committee, *circa* 1959, due to the failure of the Great Leap.⁹ By the summer of 1966, since the cult of Mao proved insufficient to gain majority Central Committee support or to dislodge the entrenched opposition, Mao had to resort to outside force, namely the army to endorse his directives.¹⁰ Since the cult of Mao backed by the

June (Xinhua). See also "Resolution on questions in Party history since 1949," *Beijing Review*, No. 27 (6 July 1981), pp. 10–39.

6. Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Evanston, Illinois: Row Peterson, 1957).

7. Michael, "The struggle for power," pp. 12–21.

8. *Ibid.* p. 18.

9. *Ibid.* p. 21.

10. *Ibid.* p. 19.

army was also insufficient to monitor correct implementation of Mao's directives, Mao had to broaden his power base by recruiting bands of adolescents subject to army control, namely the Red Guards.¹¹

Power Theory

Whereas the power struggle explanation makes reference to the three essential characteristics of the Cultural Revolution, it rests upon implicit generalizations and leaves some notable gaps that need to be explained. These gaps become apparent when the underlying propositions are cast in the kinds of explicit general terms required for true explanation.¹² A set of explicit general premises such as the following would be required:

1. Political power is the ability to make others responsive to one's own will.
2. If a leader attempts to gain more power and fails, he loses some power.
3. If a leader loses some power, he seeks to regain it.
4. A leader may use persuasion, coercion or remuneration as means for obtaining or exercising power.
5. In choosing between means of exercising power or obtaining more power, a leader selects the alternative which minimizes his likely losses while maximizing his likely gains in power terms.
6. In seeking power, coalitions may be formed among several contenders.

Power Theory and the Case of the Cultural Revolution

It is obvious that the Cultural Revolution involved a power struggle; the enormous purge involved by itself attests to that. It is unclear, however, that such a theory about power can satisfactorily explain the curious phenomena involved in the Cultural Revolution. Reduced to its base elements, the power struggle explanation posits a drive for power over the Central Committee by Mao as the sole motivating force behind the Cultural Revolution and seeks to explain the essential phenomena of it, *viz.* the cult of Mao, and the use of both soldiers and youth to purge the Politburo and Central Committee, as the means of this end.

Indeed, the Cultural Revolution obviously involved massive shifts of incumbents in positions of leadership, including reconquests by Mao and other conquests and losses. It also clearly involved new coalition formations and the flagrant use of coercion, bribery and persuasion. But granting that a power drive by Mao was *a* motive in the Revolution was it

11. *Ibid.* p. 20.

12. For an interesting example of a deductive power theory which has been applied broadly to Chinese politics see G. W. Skinner and E. Winckler "Compliance secession in rural communist China: a cyclical theory," in A. Etzioni (ed.), *Complex Organizations: a Sociological Reader* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969). For further applications of this theory, see J. Townsend, *Politics in China* (Boston: Little Brown, 1974). For a seminal general model stressing rewards, coercion, expertise, affection and legitimacy as bases of power, see John R. P. French, Jr., "A formal theory of social power," *The Psychological Review*, No. 63 (1956), pp. 181-94.

necessarily *the* prime motive, i.e. is it sufficient to account for all the essential phenomena, and does it, in the absence of other motives, necessarily entail the selection of the means employed? We shall now examine the questions of Mao's use of arbitrary power and Mao's utilization of the means to power of persuasion, remuneration, and coercion as well as the tactic of coalition formation.

Arbitrary Power. First of all, Mao's behaviour demonstrated that he did not seek arbitrary power in the sense of trying to make Central Committee members responsive to his every whim. Rather, he sought power for the implementation of a particular programme of development for China. Far from being whimsical or capricious, Mao had unremittingly striven for a similar programme for more than a decade. Secondly, Mao's selection of the means to gain power over the Central Committee in order to implement this programme was not dictated by sheer power calculation; rather it, too, was noticeably constrained by the ideology which underlay this programme.

Persuasion as a Means to Power. The active use of persuasion was perhaps the most distinctive means of power-seeking associated with the Cultural Revolution. The power struggle approach ambiguously refers to this activity as "the cult of Mao," masking the important distinction between the cult of personality, which Mao repudiated, and spreading the Thought of Mao Zedong, which Mao never repudiated, and which I have designated as proselytizing. Although Mao was personally hailed during the Cultural Revolution as "The Great Leader, Great Supreme Commander, Great Helmsman and Great Teacher" he confided to friends after the Ninth Party Congress that he found all this embarrassing and unrealistic and that he wished to be remembered simply as a teacher.¹³

Furthermore, the specific effort to spread the Thought of Mao throughout the development of the Cultural Revolution was not designed to enhance Mao's standing with the Politburo and Central Committee. On the contrary, this Maoist proselytizing clearly served to alienate most of these people causing Mao to *lose* power with them. Mao even spoke of the desirability of disbanding the entire Chinese Communist Party. Why, from the power perspective, did Mao break precedent with all ruling communist parties and go *outside* the Party elite to seek social support for his ideology and the castigation of his bourgeois critics, culminating in the formation of Red Guard contingents in 1966? What power calculus recommends the use of adolescents by a ruling Party Chairman to persuade his Politburo and Central Committee colleagues to obey him?

A major reason for the Central Committee purges was to remove those people who were obstacles to the spreading of the Thought of Mao Zedong. Indeed, the "cult of Mao," in the sense of spreading his

13. Edgar Snow, *The Long Revolution* (New York: Vintage, 1971), p. 169. For one interesting set of observations on the ageing process and how it relates to Mao's "inflexible" behaviour in the Cultural Revolution see, Jerrold M. Post, "On aging leaders," *Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, Vol. VI, No. 1 (1973), pp. 114-18.

Thought, was not created in order to gain power over the Central Committee. Only the converse is true: power over the Central Committee was sought in order more effectively to spread the “cult of Mao” – or to put it another way, to spread the Thought of Mao Zedong. Speaking before the Albanian Military Delegation on 1 May 1967, Mao explicitly stated that the goal of the Cultural Revolution was ideological change, “to solve the problem of world outlook; it is a question of eradicating the roots of revisionism.” Mao went on to say that “to struggle against power-holders who take the capitalist road” is only “the main task,” a means to the larger end.¹⁴

Mao’s persuasive tactics might have been more effective with the Central Committee leadership had he chosen to moderate his demands. Indeed, the distinctive character of post-Great Leap Maoist proselytizing was that far from compromising failed policies the Maoists became even *more extreme* in the kinds of demands they placed upon their potential followers and in the kind of activism they demanded! While the economy was in disarray, the Maoists simultaneously urged ever renewed efforts in studying the ideology upon which the plan for the fiasco had been based. The irony of this situation was made the more tragic by long hours spent in ideological study detracting from practical economic recovery efforts. Cadres and peasants alike were exhorted creatively to apply abstruse Maoist dialectics to everyday life; the resuscitated “living ideology” not only underpinned Great Leaps Forward but also was demonstrated to improve the growth of watermelons, contribute to winning games of ping-pong as well as healing the sick. How could these extremist efforts at persuasion have been expected to increase Mao’s stocks of popularity or expertise with the populace?

Indeed, the Sixth Plenum resolution, which is generally critical of Mao’s Cultural Revolution, admits to the sincerity and earnestness of Mao’s proselytizing efforts as a central puzzle of it.

While making serious mistakes, he [Mao] repeatedly urged the whole party to study the works of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin conscientiously and imagined that his theory and practice were Marxist and that they were essential for the consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Herein lies his tragedy.¹⁵

Remuneration as a Means to Power. Given that the persuasive means adopted by the Maoists were insufficient to gain power over the Central Committee, Mao needed to employ some other means. Logically, this could be either remunerative or coercive – not solely coercive as implied by the early power struggle explanation. But, again, Mao’s selection of means was not dictated solely by rational power calculations of gain and loss, but by large and looming ideological tenets. Employment of material incentives to gather supporters was, indeed, a practical means of winning supporters. Mao’s opposition successfully employed the practice to gain the support of urban workers and trades unions for their programme. Because of this they were roundly criticized by the Maoists

14. *Miscellany of Mao Tse-tung Thought (1949–68)*, Washington, D.C.: Joint Publication Research Service, No. 61269, 20 February 1974.

15. FBIS, 7 January 1981, p. K-18.

for indulging in the sin of “economism,” an unsocialist practice which the Maoists considered tantamount to bribery and conducive to a capitalist restoration.

Coercion as a Means to Power. The remaining means of acquiring power available to the Maoists was that of coercion. Such practices were widely employed by Stalin in his great purges of the 1930s. With practical control of the army in Mao’s hands, shooting the opposition would seem an expedient tactic with adequate communist precedents. But Mao’s Cultural Revolution was notable for its admonitions against physical liquidation of opponents. Rather, Mao urged the army to take the lead in promoting ideological study. As shown in Figure 3, all eight living members of the Politburo who were purged during the Cultural Revolution were rehabilitated in the 1970s. Indeed the same formative Yan’an experience which supported Mao’s turn to the army to proselytize for his ideology, also dictated that coercion was a last resort in politics. To paraphrase Mao’s writing of the era, in a case of ideological illness one should try to treat the disease and save the patient. Again ideological tenets constrained the means of power acquisition.

Choices in Coalition Formation. Finally, in broadening his power base to monitor the correct implementation of his programmes, Mao considered a number of possible coalition partners other than adolescents. Rich peasants were an emerging force as were government officials and managers. But just as decreased tolerance for infractions of ideological tenets limited Mao’s selection of other means of power acquisition, so also increased restrictiveness of the ideological acceptability of social groups limited the freedom of Mao’s choice of coalition partners.

Rich peasants and managers were forsworn as Mao moved to contract his tolerant “four class bloc” (workers, peasants, petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie) formula of the 1950s to the purer “dictatorship of the proletariat” of the late 1960s. This heightened class struggle and increased restrictiveness of class acceptability applied with equal force to the validity of the utterances of speakers.

Whereas Mao stated during the revolutionary Yan’an era that “in class society everybody lives in a certain class and inevitably bears the mark of that class,” this assertion was radicalized by the Maoists in the 1960s: Chen Boda stated, “There is no absolute truth, only class truth”;¹⁶ Lin Biao stated, “Every sentence of Chairman Mao’s works is truth, one single sentence of his surpasses ten thousand of ours.”¹⁷ Similarly Mao’s Yan’an dictum that art and literature should serve only the interests of proletarians was radicalized in the 1960s to outlaw the extolling of “middle characters”; all heroes were to be good and proletarian; all villains were to be bad and bourgeois; no compromising mixed class characters were permitted.

16. *Renmin ribao*, June 1966.

17. “Lin Biao’s address at the enlarged meeting of the CCP Central Politburo (18 May, 1966),” *Issues and Studies*, Vol. VI, No. 5 (February 1970), p. 92.

Whereas peasants and workers would have been Mao's natural coalition partners, in the 1960s practical difficulties of mobilization and some nostalgia moved him to rely on the adolescent "revolutionary successors" as his vanguard. Whereas in terms of political support adolescents would not be the most desirable coalition partners, in terms of social support for a besmirched ideology their support was highly appreciated by Chairman Mao.

Dissonance Reduction Approach

The dissonance reduction approach stresses the primary role of a search for ideological consonance in the development of Mao's Cultural Revolution. This explanation views Mao's Revolution as an example of the general phenomenon of ideological polarization, a *group* phenomenon characterized by increased ideological proselytizing by highly committed members of a social movement coupled with derogation and rejection of increased numbers of disbelievers. Such ideological polarization is a manifestation of the dissonance reduction activities of highly committed ideologues who are faced with undeniable evidence of the failure of their utopian prophecy.¹⁸

In the case of Mao's Cultural Revolution, the cognitive dissonance approach asserts that Mao and some highly committed supporters on the Politburo, unable to accept fully the evidence of Great Leap failure, took their sole open option for dissonance reduction and began to increase proselytizing for the Great Leap ideology and the exculpating class struggle rationalization for its failure. In regard to this interpretation of the origins of the Cultural Revolution, the Sixth Plenum resolution, produced under the leadership of Mao's second most formidable Politburo opponent of the early 1960s, Deng Xiaoping, advances the view that Mao was, indeed, deluded:

History has shown that the "Cultural Revolution," initiated by a leader labouring under a misapprehension and capitalized on by counter-revolutionary cliques, led to domestic turmoil and brought catastrophe to the party, the state and the whole people.¹⁹

While impugning the sincerity of Lin Biao and others and while terming some extreme Maoist proselytizing a "personality cult," the resolution nevertheless cites Mao's increasing concern with class struggle and Mao's persistent proselytizing for his ideology as central points of disagreement leading to the Cultural Revolution:

During this period [1957–66] his [Mao's] theoretical and practical mistakes concerning class struggle in a socialist society became increasingly serious, his personal arbitrariness gradually undermined democratic centralism in Party life, and the personality cult grew graver and graver. . . . Careerists like Lin Biao, Jiang Qing, and Kang Sheng, harbouring ulterior motives, made use of these

18. See Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*, esp. pp. 16–18, 177–83. For one experimental study with Chinese see, Paul Hiniker, "Chinese reactions to forced compliance: dissonance reduction or national character," *Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 77 (1969), pp. 157–76.

19. FBIS, 7 January 1981, p. K-16.

errors and inflated them. This led to the inauguration of the “ Cultural Revolution.”²⁰

Let us examine more closely the dissonance reduction mechanism hypothesized to underlie this behaviour.

Dissonance Theory. Generally, cognitive dissonance is defined to exist between a pair of beliefs when one implies the obverse of the other. If, for example, a person believes (1) “ The Great Leap Forward leads to communist utopia ” and is confronted with evidence that (2) “ The Great Leap leads to economic failure and socialist retrogression ” he suffers uncomfortable cognitive dissonance. He can reduce this dissonance by changing his belief in either. If (2) is undeniable, he can only change his prior belief in (1), the ideology. He will behave this way if he is not highly committed, by past actions, to belief in the Great Leap Forward. However, if he is highly committed to belief in the Leap principle he can only reduce his dissonance by bolstering this cognition with additional consonant evidence, since the magnitude of dissonance is a function of the ratio of dissonant cognitions to the total number of relevant (dissonant and consonant) cognitions. He especially seeks an exculpating rationalization for the failed prophecy, e.g. the Great Leap Forward was sabotaged by class enemies. The highly committed believer will, in effect, attempt to “ drown out ” the dissonant cognition of failure; he becomes open to confirmatory evidence, indeed searches for it, and closed to criticism.

Generally relevant evidence will be either physical or social in its source. In this case, consonant physical evidence could be gained from such events as new successful experiments with the underlying Great Leap Forward ideology, or, in the extreme case, with a successful reimposition of the Great Leap. Consonant social evidence, termed social support, could be gained by recruiting people who profess faith in the Great Leap ideology and in the exculpating rationalization for the failure, i.e. by proselytizing – 800,000,000 Chinese waving little red books cannot be wrong!

Thus the reactions of highly committed and relatively uncommitted people to the failed prophecy are very different. While the highly committed become more active in bolstering their faith in the ideology by proselytizing for new converts and by searching for additional evidence consonant with the validity of the ideology, the poorly committed fall away from the faith. They now have less use for the ideology and no use for the exculpating rationalization for the failed prophecy. They feel no need to proselytize for the ideology or to obey its behavioural constraints. They are more willing to engage in actions inconsistent with the ideology, and they may actively attempt to distance themselves from it. They become unbelievers.

When commitment to a belief is distributed from high to low in a social group, e.g. the Chinese Politburo, the effect of the disconfirming event is to initiate a self-reinforcing process of more dissonance and

20. *Ibid.* p. K-14.

more polarization, i.e. opinion discrepancy, with respect to the original belief. Former highly committed and poorly committed members are transformed by their own actions into radicals and unbelievers respectively. This diverging process occurs because social disagreement dissonance is defined to obtain whenever people who consider themselves generally like one another disagree. The effect of the disconfirmation, then, is to widen the disagreement causing the less committed in the group to become even less so, while causing the more committed to undertake actions that make them still more so.

An additional avenue is open for dissonance reduction in the group context: the otherwise "like" people can become perceived as "non-like," i.e. as unworthy of opinion comparison. At low levels of opinion discrepancy, this dissonance reduction method may take the form of disparagement; at high levels, it often results in excommunication. Erstwhile "comrades" may become perceived as "class enemies" and be purged; the criterion of truth, itself, may assume a class character thus rendering the validity of the critical utterances of "non-proletarians" as unworthy of consideration.

Mao's Failed Prophecy

China's Great Leap Forward of 1958 was predicated on the Thought of Mao Zedong as evidenced by his dialectical articles on "The 10 great relationships" of April 1956 and "On the correct handling of contradictions among the people," February 1957. The Great Leap followed on the heels of an anti-rightist campaign which grew out of the "Hundred Flowers Movement." The Great Leap movement, itself, as symbolized by the slogan of the Three Red Banners (general line, great leap, and people's communes) was designed according to Maoist principles.²¹ The people's communes, in particular, were the organizational incarnation of these ideals. Mao's identification with the Great Leap prophecy was obvious to the Chinese populace.

At the peak of the Great Leap movement, on National Day 1958, Mao's prophecy of imminent communist utopia was spread across the pages of *People's Daily*:

Today is the era of Mao Zedong, heaven is here on earth. . . . Chairman Mao is really a great prophet. . . . Each prophecy of Chairman Mao had become a reality. It was so in the past; it is so today.²²

The Sixth Plenum resolution holds Mao and his supporters responsible for the extremes of the Great Leap as well as its failure. It states that during the latter half of 1958:

"Left" errors characterized by excessive targets, the issuing of arbitrary directions, boastfulness, and the stirring up of a "communist wind," spread unchecked throughout the country . . . [this] was due to the fact that Comrade

21. For a brilliant analysis of the Great Leap as a dialectically reasoned embodiment of the thought of Mao Zedong, see Franz Schurmann, *Ideology and Organization in Communist China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), pp. 73–104.

22. *Renmin ribao*, 1 October 1958.

Mao Zedong and many leading comrades, both at the Centre and in the localities had become smug about their success, were impatient for quick results and overestimated the role of man's subjective will and efforts . . . the Great Leap Forward and the movement for people's communes were initiated without careful investigation and study. . . . It was mainly due to the errors of the Great Leap and of the struggle against "right opportunism" together with a succession of natural calamities and the perfidious scrapping of contracts by the Soviet government that our economy encountered serious difficulties between 1959 and 1961, which caused serious losses to our country and people.²³

Western experts also deem the economic losses entailed by the Great Leap to have been serious indeed.²⁴ Undeniable dissonant evidence of the failure of Mao's utopian prophecy in agriculture and industry and the downgrading of the people's communes was forthcoming at the time of the Lushan Plenum in August 1959 and increased in its aftermath. Peng Dehuai was the unfortunate messenger.

Politburo Members' Divergent Reactions to Failure of the Great Leap

The Politburo was split in its reaction to the failed prophecy: the highly committed Maoists, including Mao Zedong, Lin Biao, Chen Boda and Kang Sheng, seeking the consonance of social support, immediately began to proselytize far and wide for their ideology and the exculpating class struggle rationalization for its failure; the less committed on the Politburo, including Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, became even less credulous of Maoist ideology, refused to proselytize for it and even instituted counter programmes for recovery.²⁵ As summarized in Figure 3, these less committed Politburo members eventually became targets of Mao's deepened "class struggle" in the Party leadership that was so forcefully enunciated by him at Lushan and, as social disagreement dissonance and accompanying group polarization increased within the Politburo over the years, they became victims of an enormous purge. Simultaneously, the early receptive targets of domestic Maoist proselytizing outside the Politburo, chiefly soldiers and youth, were

23. FBIS, 7 January 1981, K-13.

24. The economic failures of the Great Leap were reported by Peng Dehuai at the Lushan Plenum. Agriculture nose-dived in 1959 and industry in 1961. Prominent western economists have assessed the Leap as an economic fiasco. Robert Michael Field estimates it cost China a full decade of industrial growth; Alexander Eckstein gives the same estimate; Lui estimates that a total of seven years growth, from 1958-65, was completely lost. See Robert M. Field, "Chinese communist industrial production," in Joint Economic Commission (JEC) of the U.S. Congress, *An Economic Profile of Mainland China* (New York: Praeger, 1968), p. 285; Alexander Eckstein, *Communist China's Economic Growth and Foreign Trade* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1966), p. 85; Liu Ta-Chung, "The tempo of economic growth on the Chinese mainland, 1949-65," in JEC, *An Economic Profile*, p. 53. For a quantitative analysis of the Great Leap style of development see Paul J. Hiniker and R. Vincent Farace, "Approaches to national development in China: 1949-58," *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (October 1969), pp. 51-72.

25. The empirical scaling of individual Politburo members' commitment to Maoist ideology involved a nine-item behavioural scale and resulted in a coefficient of unidimensionality measuring inter-item correlations at 0.70. An individual's score on the commitment scale correlated 0.90 with not being purged in the Cultural Revolution. For further information of the scaling of commitment, see Hiniker's *Revolutionary Ideology and Chinese Reality*, pp. 307-313.

organized as a vanguard of new disciples to replace the old incredulous leadership.

Maoists' Early Proselytizing Behaviour. Immediately following Peng's pronouncement of Great Leap failures at the Eighth Plenum at Lushan in August 1959, Mao began in earnest to proselytize for his ideology and initiated themes to be echoed in the Cultural Revolution six years later. There Mao vociferously set forth his exculpating rationalization that "The struggle that has arisen at Lushan is a class struggle. It is the continuation of the life-or-death struggle between the two great antagonists of the socialist revolution during the past decade."²⁶

In an August 1959 letter to his close comrade Wang Jiaxiang, Mao clearly stated his intention to proselytize for his ideology. "I have written a few words purporting to refute Khrushchev. Later I will write some articles proselytizing in favour of the people's communes. The Khrushchevs oppose or are sceptical about these three things: one hundred flowers blooming, people's communes, and the Great Leap Forward . . . we have taken extreme initiative. . . . We must use these three things to challenge the entire world, including a large number of opponents and sceptics within the Party."²⁷ To foster correct ideology Mao then ordered that the Party launch a nationwide study movement which was to deal with Marxism-Leninism and the Thought of Mao Zedong.²⁸

In September 1959 Mao addressed Lin Biao's new fiefdom at an enlarged meeting of the Military Affairs Committee and the Foreign Affairs Conference where he received support from Lin and asserted that despite exaggerated criticism by rightists, the Great Leap Forward would continue towards success.²⁹ On 1 October Kang Sheng echoed Mao's Lushan reaction in his article, "A communist should be a Marxist-Leninist, not a fellow traveller of the Party" which stated that: "This [Great Leap achievement] is a powerful reply to and retaliation for the various attacks and slanders of the right opportunists against the general line, the Great Leap Forward and the people's communes. Every member . . . should become more cognizant of the law of class struggle . . . study Marxism-Leninism and the Thought of Mao Zedong more deeply. . . ."³⁰

Later, during 1960, Mao reaffirmed the correctness of his Great Leap Forward and criticized the Soviet Union's *Textbook of Political Economy*; he emphasized that domestically "the question of the struggle between the two roads of socialism and capitalism and the question of using socialist ideology to remould man and discipline him are a big problem in our country."³¹ Ominously, Mao went on to write the following critique of the media which were so important to his proselytizing drive:

26. *Chinese Law and Government* (White Plains, New York: International Arts and Sciences Press), Vol. 1, No. 4 (Winter 1968), pp. 73–74.

27. *Ibid.* p. 53.

28. *Ibid.* p. 53.

29. *Ibid.* pp. 79–84.

30. *Ten Glorious Years* (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1960), pp. 253–54.

31. *Miscellany of Mao Tse-tung Thought*, p. 262.

If (newspapers, periodicals, broadcasting stations, and motion pictures) lie in the hands of a limited number of right opportunists, then the vast majority of people who are in urgent need of a Great Leap Forward will have their rights in these sectors taken away from them. . . . In short the people must have the right to take charge of the superstructure.”³²

Accordingly, in June 1960, Chen Boda, editor of *Hongqi*, attended an important national conference of 6,000 cultural and educational workers in which Lin Feng’s keynote address, “All-out effort in Cultural Revolution among worker–peasant masses and labour performance by intellectuals,” was replete with references to the Thought of Mao Zedong, especially to his Yan’an line on art and literature.³³

In September 1960 intimations of themes later to be amplified in the Cultural Revolution began to appear. Presaging the appearance of Red Guards were prominent efforts to teach the youth about the revolutionary traditions and ascetic ways of the Yan’an period.³⁴ In October Volume IV of *The Selected Works of Mao Zedong* was published with much fanfare; simultaneously at the second extraordinary meeting of the Military Affairs Committee, Lin Biao’s People’s Liberation Army was granted an unprecedented mandate, personally endorsed by Mao, to proselytize for the “living ideology” of Mao Zedong not only among the military but also among the civilian population in “government organs, and schools, enterprises, etc.”³⁵ Thus, within 14 months of the Great Leap failures announced at Lushan, for the first time in the history of the People’s Republic, Mao went *outside* the Party propaganda apparatus to proselytize for his ideology among the civilian populace.

Comparative Proselytizing Reactions of Politburo Members

Not all Politburo members reacted to the failure of the Great Leap Forward in the same way as Mao, Lin Chen and Kang, namely by increasing their proselytizing for the Thought of Mao Zedong. As expected from dissonance theory, during the period 1960–67 the activities of individual members of the Politburo sharply differed in the extent to which they became active in proselytizing for Mao’s Thought in the wake of the Great Leap failures depending on their prior commitment. As shown in Figure 1 and indicated by contributions to *Hongqi*, the theoretical journal established by Mao in 1958 and edited by Chen Boda to “hold ever higher the revolutionary *Red Flag* of the proletariat,” the relatively highly committed eight members of the

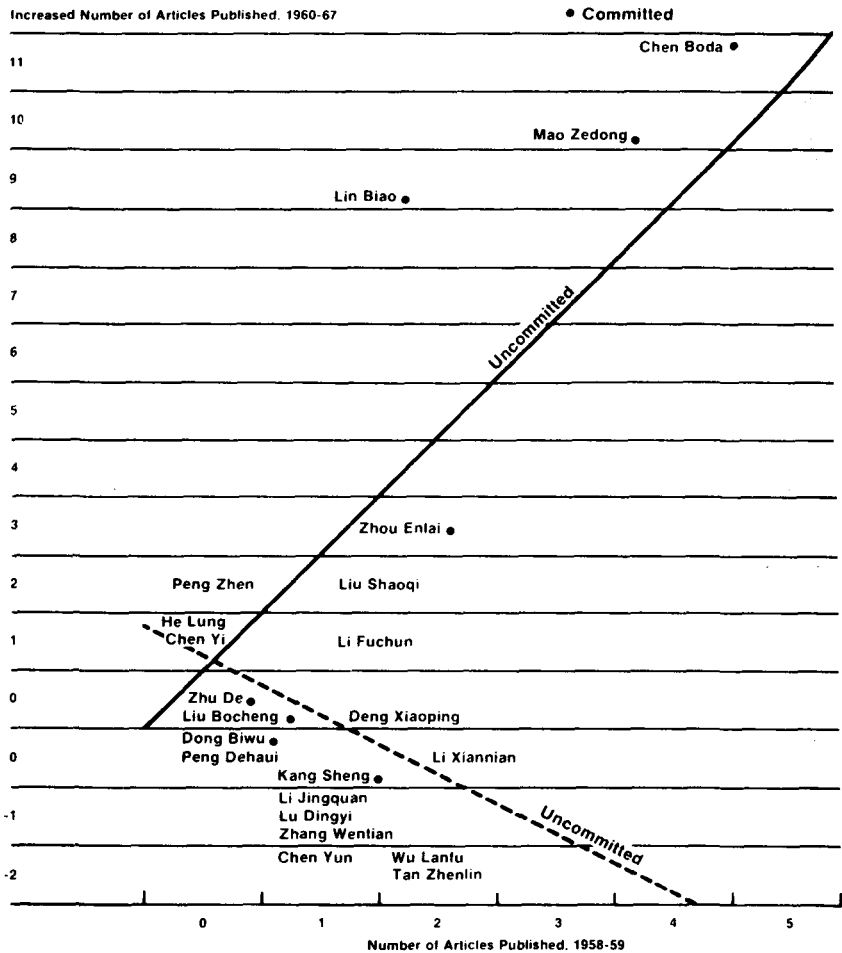
32. *Ibid.* p. 266.

33. See Lin Feng “The tasks of China’s Cultural Revolution,” *Peking Review*, Vol. 3, No. 25 (21 June, 1960), pp. 14–19; and No. 26 (28 June 1960), pp. 19–25.

34. Merle Goldman, “The unique blooming and contending of 1961–62,” *CQ*, No. 37, p. 59.

35. See J. Chester Cheng (ed.), *The Politics of the Chinese Red Army: A Translation of the Bulletin of Activities of the PLA* (Palo Alto, California: Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, 1966), No. 3, 1960, No. 1, 1961, and No. 2, 1961. See also John Gittings *The Role of the Chinese Army* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 245, 249, 254.

Figure 1: Analysis of Covariance Between Amount of Proselytizing by Politburo Members in *Hongqi* (1958–59) and Increased Proselytizing (1960–67), Controlling for Degree of Commitment to Mao's Thought



Politburo tended to increase their proselytizing for proletarian ideology following the Great Leap failures; simultaneously the 15 relatively poorly committed members tended to desist. On average each of the highly committed Politburo members more than doubled his pre-failure output during the seven years following the failure of the Great Leap; in contrast, each of the less committed Politburo members tended to decrease his output in direct proportion to the number of articles he had written before the failure.³⁶ Kang Sheng is the only notable exception to this generalization among the committed Maoists. Perhaps this deviation

36. Among the highly committed Politburo members $r_{ab}=0.97$ and the regression equation is $a=1.1+2.1b$ where "a" is the increased number of articles published after the failure and "b" is the number of articles published before the failure. Among the less committed $r_{ab}=-0.61$ and the slope of the regression line changes direction yielding $a=0.8-1.2b$.

is attributable to Kang's notorious taciturn nature and his normal role as intelligence specialist.

Unbelievers' Early Recovery Efforts

The behaviour of the less committed members of the Politburo was indeed very different from the committed Maoists' following the Leap's failure. During 1961 and most of 1962 critical Party figures and outspoken intellectuals reared their heads as Great Leap failures continued and the Party's first line of leadership under Liu and Deng vitiated the Thought of Mao Zedong with their recovery policies and appeared deaf to Mao's leftist directives. Together they designed and promulgated the "Sixty articles" justifying the appearance of socialist retrogressions in agriculture and in the people's communes. More rightist criticism of the Great Leap was voiced at a conference of 7,000 cadres held in January 1962. In the words of the Sixth Plenum resolution:

In January 1962 the enlarged central work conference attended by 7,000 people made a preliminary summing-up of the positive and negative experience of the "Great Leap Forward" and unfolded criticism and self-criticism. A majority of the comrades who had been unjustifiably criticized during the campaign against "right opportunism" were rehabilitated before or after the conference.³⁷

Polarization of Opinion on the Politburo

In response to Party inaction in promoting the Thought of Mao Zedong and the class struggle rationalization, and in the face of rightist criticism of his programme, Mao returned to the first line of leadership at the 10th Plenum in September 1962 and initiated the socialist education movement calling for "... a great revolutionary movement. . . . This is a struggle that calls for the re-education of man. This is a struggle for reorganizing the revolutionary class armies for a confrontation with the forces of feudalism and capitalism who are now feverishly attacking us."³⁸ Mao also called for special class education for the young, as later carried out in the Lei Feng emulation model campaign in which Lin Biao's army distinguished itself as propagandists. In the 12-article document on strengthening the collective economy of the people's communes produced by the Plenum, the intention to fulfil the promise of Mao's Three Banners of the Great Leap era was reasserted.³⁹

In contrast to Mao's revolutionary ardour and class hatred, the Sixth Plenum resolution adopts a different view of Mao's socialist education movement:

At the 10th plenary session of the Party's eight Central Committee in September 1962, Comrade Mao Zedong widened and absolutized the class struggle existing only within certain limits in a socialist society. . . . The socialist education movement unfolded between 1963 and 1965. . . . In 1965 the erroneous thesis

37. FBIS, 7 January 1981, p. K-13.

38. *Issues and Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 8 (May 1966), pp. 58-59.

39. C. S. Chen and C. P. Ridley, *Rural People's Communes in Lien-chiang* (Palo Alto, California: Hoover Institute, 1969), p. 81.

was advanced that the main target of the movement should be “ those persons in power taking the capitalist road ” . . . In the ideological sphere, a number of literary and art works and schools of thought and a number of representative personages . . . were subjected to unwarranted, inordinate political criticism . . . These errors eventually culminated in the cultural revolution. . . .⁴⁰ Comrade Mao Zedong’s principal theses for initiating it conformed neither to Marxism-Leninism nor to Chinese reality. They represent an entirely erroneous appraisal of the prevailing class relations and political situation in the Party and state.⁴¹

Apparently the authors of the Sixth Plenum Resolution did not share Mao’s class struggle rationalization for the failure of the Leap Forward.

This growing difference in viewpoint on the proper role of class struggle in the conduct of Mao’s socialist education movement was apparent as early as 1963 with the Central Committee’s promulgation of two conflicting 10-point directives on the conduct of the movement in rural areas. The first of these directives, which appeared in May under Mao’s authorship, emphasized raising the class consciousness of poor and lower-middle peasants through ideological study, the organization of these awakened peasants into strong associations within the communes, and the unleashing of them to struggle against “ class enemies ” including errant Party cadres. In contrast, the later 10 articles, which appeared in September under Liu Shaoqi’s leadership, subverted the essence of the proposed mass movement and attempted to convert it into a gradual bureaucratic reform movement from above while confining criticism of Party cadres to that by other Party cadres, hence protecting Party cadres from criticism by the masses. The peasants’ ire was to be deflected from class enemies to common criminals.⁴² At the end of 1963 Mao responded by moving away from the Party leadership for the conduct of his movement to Lin Biao’s virtuous army, calling upon the entire nation to “ Learn from the People’s Liberation Army ” and to “ Cultivate revolutionary successors.” The increased polarization on the Politburo is indicated in Figure 3.

Maoists Capture the Mass Media. Control of the official press was naturally very important to the proselytizing Maoists in the course of their movement. As shown in Figure 2, systematic content analysis of the press over the period unequivocally demonstrates that the ideological and class contents of Chen Boda’s *Hongqi* were out of synchronization with the more pragmatic contents of the Party-controlled *Renmin ribao*: whereas *Hongqi* showed a sharp rise in ideological and class themes immediately following Lushan as expected from dissonance theory, *Renmin ribao* showed no similar rise until Mao’s turn to the army in late 1963. Another rise in these themes occurred when the Maoists finally captured the Party-controlled media in 1966.⁴³

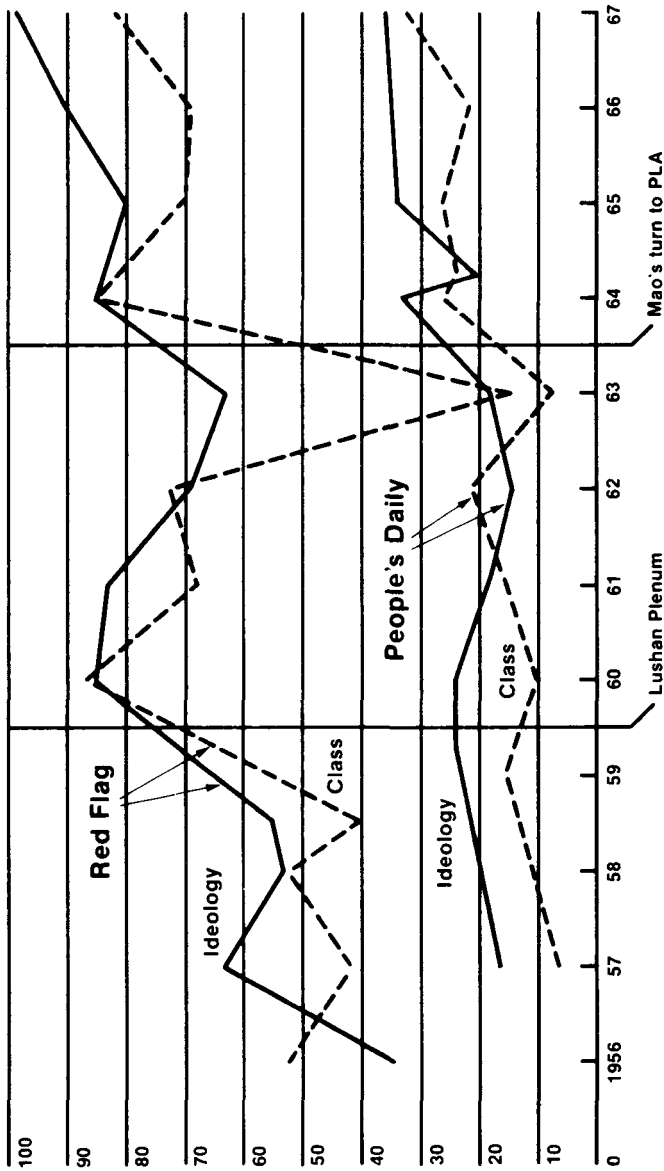
40. FBIS, 7 January 1981, p. K-13.

41. *Ibid.*

42. Hiniker, *Revolutionary Ideology and Chinese Reality*, pp. 183-88.

43. *Ibid.* pp. 229-47. For further analysis based upon scaling and content analysis of *People’s Daily*, see Paul Hiniker and Jolanta J. Perlstein, “ Alteration of charismatic and bureaucratic styles of leadership in Communist China,” *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 4, January 1978.

Figure 2: Proportion of *Hongqi* Articles and *Renmin ribao* Articles Mentioning Ideology and Class Themes, 1956–67



Indeed, those who managed the Party press were among the first high-level officials to be purged in the Cultural Revolution. Although Lo Ruiqing, chief of staff of the army, was the first to be purged in the Cultural Revolution in the winter of 1965, his main crime had been resisting a purge of supporters of Zhou Yang in the army cultural apparatus and General Political Department. In the spring of 1966, Zhou Yang, deputy chief of the Party Propaganda Department, was purged along with his boss Lu Dingyi and Peng Zhen, mayor of Beijing. Among Zhou's most heinous crimes was the allegation that during 1961 and 1962 he had supported intellectuals who had criticized Mao and the Great Leap Forward in Aesopian language and waged a continuous behind the scenes battle against zealous provincial Party officials and the army's General Political Department to curb the spreading of the Thought of Mao Zedong.⁴⁴ Though Zhou reportedly toned down such activities after Mao's 10th Plenum speech, he allegedly continued to use his authority over the years to oppose films which the army leadership considered good in popularizing Mao's Thought.

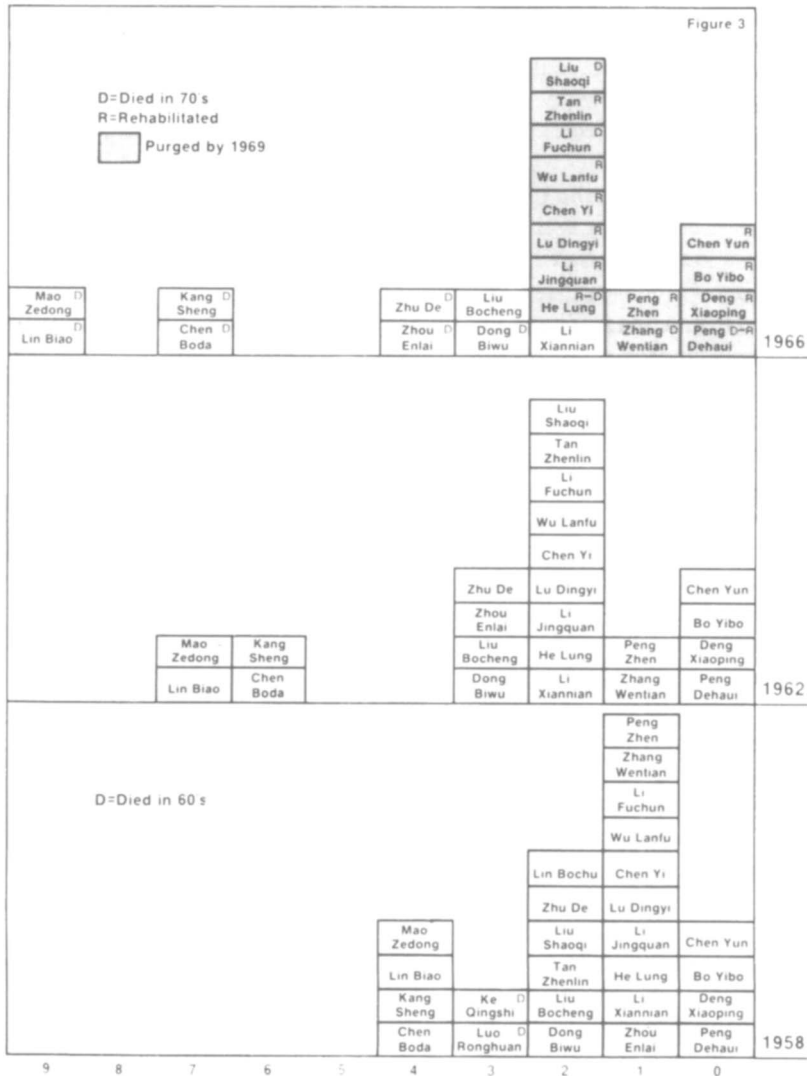
Peng Zhen, the first member of the Politburo to be purged, had been charged by Mao to launch the Cultural Revolution, but instead had used the opportunity to convert it from a social movement into an academic debate. After finally gaining control of the Party press, with the aid of the army in the spring of 1966, Mao's message was at last carried far and wide, and he proceeded to call the 11th Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee in August, downgrading Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping and implementing the full-blown Cultural Revolution with the aid of youthful Red Guards. During the succeeding three years 150 million copies of Mao's *Selected Works* were printed, more than a dozen times the total produced during the previous decade.⁴⁵

Maoist Purges of Unbelievers. To reduce growing social disagreement dissonance within the Politburo the purges of "capitalist roaders" wrought by Mao in the Cultural Revolution were extensive and included every member of the former Eighth Central Committee Politburo who had not been extraordinarily active in proselytizing for Mao's Thought in the wake of the Great Leap failures. As shown in Figure 3, nearly all members of the Politburo elected or re-elected by the Eighth Party Congress in 1956 or 1958 who were not above the group median in action commitments to Mao's Thought before the 10th Plenum of 1962 were purged from the Politburo elected at the Ninth Party Congress in 1969.

44. Harry Gelman, "Mao and the permanent purge," *Problems of Communism* (November–December 1966), pp. 2–14. By the summer of 1979 all the prominent figures purged early in the Cultural Revolution, with the sole exception of Liu Shaoqi, had been rehabilitated, at least to the level of government posts: Lo Ruiqing was re-elected to the Central Committee; Yang Xianzhen, author of the "Two-combine-into-one" heresy, was made an adviser to the Higher Party School; Zhou Yang was made head of the All-China Federation of Art and Literature; Wu Han, Deng Tuo and Liao Mosha, members of the literary "Three family village" who had satirized the Leap in the early 1960s, were all rehabilitated, the two first mentioned posthumously; even Liu Shaoqi's widow, Wang Guangmei, was made a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

45. *Renmin ribao*, 3 January 1969.

Figure 3: Distribution of Commitment to Mao's Thought in the Politburo, 1958–69



The sole surviving exception was the administrator Li Xiannian who stood to the right of the group median.

As shown in Figure 3 we have constructed an explicit scale of the degree of Maoist commitment for all 26 Eighth Central Committee Politburo members. It was fashioned from an assemblage of nine items denoting committing Maoist actions performed by members of the political elite through the main eras of Maoist rule. These items included the following: serving as an instructor or administrator of the Central Party School at Yan'an during Mao's first rectification campaign between 1942 and 1944; publicly endorsing Mao's concept of rapid agriculture collectivization leading to the Great Leap Forward and

communes between 1954 and 1958; publicly supporting Mao's class struggle rationalization of the reports of the Great Leap failures following the Lushan Plenum in 1959; and publicly defending Mao's Great Leap at the critical conference of 7,000 cadres in January 1962. In keeping with Kiesler's definition of commitment, only those actions were considered which were public, important and somewhat voluntarily undertaken. The selected items do indeed form a unidimensional scale of Maoist commitment with high validity for a Politburo member's survivability during the 1960s.⁴⁶

Purged before the end of the Ninth Party Congress of 1969 were the numbers one and two "capitalist roaders," Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. Gone were Mao's vociferous assailants at the Lushan Plenum, Peng Dehuai and Zhang Wentian. Dropped was the conservative economic adviser, Chen Yun. His cohorts in industry and agriculture, Bo Yibo and Tan Zhenlin were purged. Gone were the recalcitrant mayor of Beijing, Peng Zhen and the reluctant propaganda chief, Lu Dingyi. Purged also were the middle-roaders, Chen Yi, He Long, Li Jingquan, Li Fuchun, and Wu Lanfu.

Rising to prominence in the new Politburo were Chairman Mao's active proselytizers. The new standing committee was composed of Chairman Mao, his Thought now enshrined in the Party constitution, Lin Biao, as Mao's designated successor, Chen Boda, Zhou Enlai and Kang Sheng. As a whole the Politburo was dominated by Lin's proselytizing army: 12 of the 25 Politburo members held their primary roles in the army. Sprinkled throughout were civilian leaders of the insurgent youth movement of Red Guards such as Mao's wife, Jiang Qing, and especially noticeable were radicals from Shanghai, Zhang Chunqiao, Wang Hongwen and Yao Wenyuan. All these rising personalities had been instrumental in creating the network of cultural revolution groups and revolutionary committees which now formed a parallel organization to the Party-government pyramid down through the provincial level.

Concomitant with the Maoist purges of unbelievers were abortive attempts by the Maoists to revive the communes, especially with the Shanghai commune in 1967 and the rural people's communes during 1968.⁴⁷ The radicalized Maoists were temporarily in charge again.

46. See Hiniker, *Revolutionary Ideology and Chinese Reality*, pp. 307–314. See also Charles Kiesler, *The Psychology of Commitment* (New York: Academic Press, 1971), pp. 25–33. The nine items selected do, indeed, form a unidimensional scale: the average item to total scale correlation is 0.70; the average inter-item correlation is also high, $\phi/\phi_{\max} = 0.69$. When subjected to Guttman scale analysis to test the ordinality of the nine items along the commitment dimension, they yield a coefficient of reproducibility of 0.94. In a perfect scale, the responses of a subject to all of the items can be reproduced from knowledge of his rank position alone; in our commitment scale, 94% of the responses of the 23 Politburo members can be reproduced from knowledge of the member's rank alone. This implies that a member who ranked low, e.g. Deng Xiaoping, practically never endorsed an item not also endorsed by a higher ranking individual such as Liu Shaoqi; and similarly Liu practically never endorsed an item not also endorsed by an even higher ranking member such as Lin Biao. See Warren S. Torgerson *Theory and Methods of Scaling* (London: John Wiley & Sons, 1967), pp. 307–331.

47. For evidence on the abortive attempts to revive the people's communes during the

Discussion

Both the power struggle explanation and the dissonance reduction explanation agree that a struggle for power and purging occurred in the Cultural Revolution. The power-struggle explanation views the power drive as an end in itself. The dissonance reduction explanation views the power drive as a means to the larger end of ideological consonance. However the dissonance explanation also accounts quite well for whom the Maoists would attempt to purge ($r = 0.90$) and even predicts well on the basis of pre-Great Leap failure commitment to Maoist ideology ($r = 0.74$). The power struggle explanation does not explicitly predict which individuals Mao would choose to purge. In fact, Mao purged *all* those not extraordinarily active in proselytizing for his ideology. Unfortunately neither theory, by itself, contains propositions which propose to assess or explain the relative power capabilities of the contending forces. More work is clearly needed here, especially by advocates of power analysis.

Dissonance theory alone deals with motivation, not capabilities. The fact that the Maoists in post-Liberation China continually had events conflicting with Mao's ideology thrust upon them in the forms of increasing bureaucratization, specialization and elitism is not an occurrence derivative of dissonance theory. This phenomenon is accounted for by Max Weber's *Theory of Social and Economic Organization* which predicts the eventual routinization of charismatic movements.⁴⁸ Weber and others have pointed out that a burgeoning division of labour is characteristic of industrializing societies. The type of undifferentiated charismatic authority so characteristic of Mao's style of rule, is historically a very transitory phenomenon.⁴⁹

What the power struggle explanation finds beyond its scope fits quite well with the dissonance explanation, *viz.* Mao's sincerity in increased ideological proselytizing and the severe ideological constraints self-imposed by Mao upon the choice of means used to regain power. In particular the increased restrictiveness of the class groups with which Mao was willing to form coalitions following the failure of his Great

Cultural Revolution, see the following sources: Kwangtung Provincial Party Committee, "The 10 great measures for the implementation of Chairman Mao's instructions (13 August 1966)," excerpted in "Quarterly Chronicle and Documentation, CQ, No. 28 (October–December 1966), pp. 174–77; Steve Washenko, "Agriculture in mainland China – 1968," *Current Scene*, Vol. VII, No. 6 (31 March 1969), p. 3; Colina MacDougall, "The Cultural Revolution in the communes: back to 1958?" *Current Scene*, Vol. VII, No. 7 (11 April 1969), p. 4; "China's economy in 1969: policy, agriculture, industry, foreign trade," *Current Scene*, Vol. VIII, No. 11 (1 June 1970), pp. 1–17; Han Ke-Chau, "Recent developments in rural communes on the Chinese mainland," *Issues and Studies* (May 1969), p. 6; and Li Tieh-min, "The people's commune: focal point of resistance to the Cultural Revolution," *Issues and Studies*, Vol. VI, No. 1 (October 1969), pp. 43–52.

48. Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York: Free Press, 1964), esp. pp. 324–406 on the types of authority.

49. Cyril E. Black, *The Dynamics of Modernization* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1966), pp. 1–100. See also Gabriel Almond and G. Bingham Powell, *Comparative Politics: A Development Approach* (Boston, Little Brown, 1966). As applied to China, see Benjamin Schwartz, "Modernization and the Maoist vision," Roderick MacFarquhar (ed.) *China Under Mao* (Cambridge: MIT Press), pp. 3–19.

Leap Forward, when he needed all the help he could get, is problematic for the former approach, as is the related fact that the struggle itself was couched in "class" terms by the Maoists. Furthermore, the non-persuasive character, with respect to the Central Committee, of the extremist Maoist proselytizing following the failure of the Great Leap Forward and the active attempts by Mao to reinvigorate the faltering people's communes were clearly non-instrumental in power maximization.

In predicting increased action attempts to reintroduce a successful Great Leap and commune programme, our use of dissonance theory is similar to that proposed by the economist Albert Hirschman in analysing the exit and voice responses of loyalist members of an organization to declines in the quality of production.⁵⁰ In addition to attempting to "drown out" the cognition of Great Leap failures by proselytizing for their ideology, the "loyal" Maoists also attempted to reduce their dissonance by changing the implications of that cognition through actually reimposing another Great Leap-style programme in China. As Hirschman points out, like the historian Crane Brinton before him, the attempt by the most committed of the revolutionaries to eliminate the gap between the actual and the expected state of affairs of the revolution leads to their attempt to change it anew and accounts for the oft-noted generalization that "revolution, like Saturn, devours its own children."⁵¹

When applied to the general phenomenon of revolution, the ideological polarization concept derived from dissonance theory provides a social-psychological mechanism for Brinton's "reign of terror and virtue" phase of revolutions, which follows the seizure of state power by revolutionaries.⁵² According to Brinton, among the victors, and following a series of troubles, power passes from the moderates of the movement to the extremists who proceed to implement a "reign of terror and virtue" in the concerted but doomed attempt, once and for all, to close the gap between human aspiration and human nature.⁵³ The "reign of terror and virtue" was always followed by the Thermidorean Reaction.⁵⁴

In keeping with Brinton's generalizations, China's Thermidor has been accompanied by the rise of a pragmatic strong man, Deng Xiaoping. One would hope for China's sake that the Cultural Revolution will not be followed by a counter-revolution employing similar tactics. The use of forced compliance to create attitude change in Chinese has proved to be a short-sighted tactic. Given that the original Chinese revolutionaries have passed from the scene, dissonance theory would

50. Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 93–95.

51. *Ibid.* p. 95. See also the perceptive article by Leszek Kolakowski in Robert C. Tucker (ed.) *Stalinism: Essays in Historical Interpretation* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977).

52. Crane Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution* (New York: Vintage, 1965), esp. pp. 122, 132.

53. *Ibid.* p. 122.

54. *Ibid.* pp. 235–36.

suggest that committed Maoists exist only among those initially converted in the 1960s through voluntaristic inducements. Among these, only that portion outside the Chinese mainstream have any real possibility of retaining their acquired convictions uncontradicted by their own actions. While isolated cult-like pockets of Maoism may so persist, they pose no real threat to the regime. Regarding these lingering believers, dissonance theory and the best of Mao and Mencius alike suggest the following:

When people are subdued by force they do not submit in heart. They submit because their strength is not adequate to resist. But when they are subdued by virtue, they are pleased in their inner hearts, and they submit sincerely.