Between Generations: Activist Chinese Youths in Pursuit of a Political Role in the *San-fan* and in the Cultural Revolution

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This paper attempts to assess just how much and in what ways behaviour has changed between the generation that experienced the *San-fan, Wu-fan* Campaign in 1951–52 and the generation that pitched itself into the Cultural Revolution of 1966–69. We focus in the first instance on the confluence of the *San-fan* with a thought reform movement in the schools in 1951–52, in which students "drew a clear line of demarcation between self and family," often denouncing their parents, and in which a youth vanguard forced their teachers as well to criticize themselves.[1] Impressionistic comparisons between that campaign and the Cultural Revolution of the ways in which adolescents tried to establish continuity between patterns of behaviour learned in childhood and adult social-political roles may reveal differences in the direction and nature of their rebelliousness and may reflect changes in family relationships and in socialization patterns.

The psychological underpinnings of political behaviour are an important part of the texture of youth movements. Such movements catch individuals at an important phase in their lives between childhood and adulthood. Youth are seeking to test their autonomy against authority and to gain approval for their actions from their peers. Although these depth personality variables may not always be prime determinants of political participation, they explain the intensity of political participation and very often account for the directions a movement takes, its susceptibility to certain types of manipulation, and the subjective aspirations of its participants.

In examining the political sub-culture of youth in two historically separate movements, my emphasis is on change rather than continuity. Whereas Solomon and Pye explain the broad Chinese political culture in terms of a continuing pattern of authority-dependent child-rearing,[2] I argue that early socialization has become more egalitarian in a long process of change that was accelerated by the Communist Revolution.

Social and political norms and structural changes since the revolution have contributed to the autonomy of the child in the home, to

1. For a general discussion of this event, see A. Doak Barnett, *Communist China: The Early Years 1949–1955* (New York: Praeger, 1964), pp. 125–34.

2. Richard H. Solomon, *Mao's Revolution and the Chinese Political Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), *passim*; Lucian Pye, *The Spirit of Chinese Politics* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1968), pp. 74–75 and *passim*.

his self-image, and to a more one-to-one or *horizontal* relationship between parents and children. These changes may be enumerated in part as follows:

The emphasis on the comparative ideological purity of the post-revolutionary generation and on the general backwardness in thought and behaviour of the older generation;

The notion that the child should serve as a political instructor in " struggle " between parents and child;

The added stigma of bad class background, which creates a cleavage between parent and child in former Kuomintang, landlord, rich peasant, bourgeois, and even petit-bourgeois (including professional and intellectual) families;

The expanded role of a horizontal and mutually reinforcing peer group at school (formally embodied in small group meetings) which can help the youth absolve himself of any guilt over conflict with parents and authority;

The pressure which the peer group itself exerts on the individual;

The environmental enticement to self-initiative in the new society.

As a rule, primary socialization and the structure of family relations is slow to evolve because it is the last to receive feedback from change in the political superstructure. But in the new China, the family has served as a wellspring for broader change, and consequently has been all the more battered by the concatenation of cataclysms it helped set in motion. Paradoxically, at the very time of the effort to restore filiality in the mid-1950s, after the anti-filial outbursts of the *San-fan, Wu-fan* discussed in this paper, several articles in the youth press sharply criticized the punitive side of formal education, characterized by the teachers' " day-long shouting [at children] that they must do this or that." [3] It was considered deplorable that educational workers relied so much on " intervention and restrictions," only encouraging children to develop " into timid conservatives " rather than into individuals " cheerful and bright in disposition." [4] Thus, as the regime was exhorting " young revolutionaries " to respect and obey their superiors they earlier had defied so vehemently, it was also trying to strike a balance in the new generation between initiative and self-assertiveness on the one hand and deference for authority on the other. This dialectic unity between two aspects of the personality was to be the formula for the " revolutionary successor " in the era of the Cultural Revolution. Exhortations to be " the master of the household " (*lao-jen-chia*) *vis-à-vis* cadres and to " dare to defy " were aimed periodically at the adult citizen and might have had a minimal emotional effect on their target against the backdrop of a relatively authoritarian political and administrative superstructure; from all personal accounts, it only served to inculcate the ritual of " struggle " in

3. Cheng Chin-wu, " Be good at encouraging the youth to advance," *Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien*, No. 22, 16 November 1956, in *Extracts from China Mainland Magazines*, No. 31 (1956), pp. 49–52.

4. *Ibid.*

accordance with the " mass line " style of leadership.[5] The family, on the other hand, was especially sensitive to these new mores because parents were jealous of their prerogative to be primary socializing agents with regard to their children, and were likely to have been defensive against encroachments from the system at large. And as parents made a conscientious effort to change their behaviour in child-rearing, the maturing child strived for more real autonomy and equality with his parents. The behaviour of two different generations of youth in political movements 15 years apart would reflect these changes in socialization.

The *San-fan* was characterized by the defiant and sometimes seemingly uncontrollable outbursts of youths. The rebellion of suppressed and apparently authority-dependent young personalities manifested itself in such a rage that it spilled over into the movement in the schools. I suggest that the nature of their rebelliousness was such that youth inveighed against their superiors only to experience remorse and the need to resubmit to some sort of authority. Hence, the restoration of order in the wake of the *San-fan* could be accomplished by appealing to the filial emotions of the younger generation, as well as by rewarding them with recognition of their adult status in society.

In the Cultural Revolution, this sort of authority-dependent behaviour only characterized a minority of the participants. In general, the Cultural Revolution resonated with a different youth sub-culture in which individuals were less submissive and enjoyed more one-to-one relationships with their parents. I argue that because adolescents felt closer in the hierarchy to their parents and authorities at school, they were not just venting rage against authorities who overpowered them. Rather, the more activist youths aspired to replace and out-perform their superiors. Theirs was a rivalry with rather than rebellion against authority. They even fantasized acceding to official positions in society. When their mobility upward was blocked and they were in essence treated like naughty children after the Cultural Revolution, they could not be expected easily to be reintegrated into society. Indeed, they might well have come to constitute a quasi-interest group which would demand a greater voice in politics and a more egalitarian political system.

I apologize to the reader for methodological inconsistency. The large exodus of youths in the recent years following the Cultural Revolution provided an unusual opportunity for in-depth interviewing which became the basis for my hypotheses about youth participation in the Cultural Revolution in the summer of 1966. I did my interviewing at two separate intervals: winter 1971 – spring 1972 and summer 1976. For the *San-fan* period, I did not have access to more than a few respondents who could recall their involvement in that early " post-Liberation " movement. My impressions about youth behaviour in

5. See, for example *Nan-fang jih-pao*, 14 November 1964.

1951–52 were for the most part gleaned from articles and letters to the editor in local newspapers and in the national Youth League (YCL) newspaper and magazine. Although the Chinese press of the 1950s is relatively open and revealing, it is not as good a source as interviewing for my type of questions. I ask the reader to accept the methodological shortcomings of this article in the interest of gaining some new, if only tentative, insights into the dynamic relationship between socialization and political behaviour in China.

The San-fan in the Schools: Whether to Defy One's Parents

The *San-fan* movement against waste, corruption and bureaucratism merged with the *Wu-fan* to make the position of the urban bourgeoisie untenable. In late 1951 and early 1952, these movements combined with the ideological remoulding movement in upper middle schools and universities. Urban educated youths were confronted with a difficult choice. They had to "draw a clear line" between themselves and their bourgeois families and had to try to coax their bourgeois relatives to confess any corruption. Generally, the movement in the schools was anti-parochial in nature, urging youths to break through the "emotional side" to expose those close to themselves.[6] More specifically, the movement seemed to have the effect of loosening the bond between children and parents. By the beginning of March, 47 reports in Ningpo, for instance, exposed fathers, while only 28 documents dealt with friends, and two with other categories.[7] At least having to renounce, at most bringing themselves to denounce their fathers, these youths often found themselves in the position of making a choice. Should they turn against their parents at a stage when they were still dependent on their support or cling defensively to a close identification with their parent's plight? One respondent, who had been pushed to the conservative extreme by the political changeover, perceived the situation this way:

> They consistently used the slogan that the new generation ought to betray their class . . . a lot of people also accepted this argument . . . there were some who considered this as just suiting the purpose of the new generation as they saw it. . . . In my opinion, if there had been no social change then, the struggle between new and old generations might have been more blatant. Conversely, the social change [i.e. revolution] ameliorated the struggle between generations. In my case because the new social experience . . . was circumscribed by class background. . . . My father's destiny and my own were tied together.

In April, *Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien*, which by that time seemed more intent on mollifying the outbreak of anti-filial rebelliousness, still noted that a number of youths had "not drawn a line between self

6. *Tientsin jih-pao* (*Tientsin Daily*), 13 January 1952.
7. *Chekiang jih-pao* (*Chekiang Daily*), 3 March 1952.

and family" and were "even letting their parents know about the progress of the state investigators." [8]

In January 1952, as the coalescence of the ideological remoulding campaign in the schools with the *San-fan* movement got underway, a *Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien* article exhorted youths to "struggle" parents and "all authorities who harm the nation and the people, no matter who they are or what responsibilities they have." [9] Not to expose and/or "struggle" such people was considered a "manifestation of irresponsibility towards nation and people." [10] This major article encouraged unrestrained "struggle" by youth even against the elderly and against veteran cadres who had committed mistakes. Manipulating the possible anxieties of youths of bourgeois family background about their futures, the article warned:

> If you yourself do not speak out, do you have a future or not? Of course, you do. . . . If you go on behaving like a youth selfishly hiding from the organization . . . not only can you be found out at any time, but burying your thoughts will hurt your work.[11]

A little earlier, youths were even encouraged to expose parents and authorities at school on suspicion alone. Youths were told that "if the material [they had] in their grasp was insufficient," it should still be turned over to the League for investigation. Such behaviour against authorities, they were reassured, would not be rash but would be in the best interest of everyone and would certainly not be misconstrued as acts of "personal revenge." [12]

The Stirring of Emotions and Problems of Control

According to one respondent, himself an activist at Peking University during the *San-fan*, the denunciation reached a peak during the spring and spilled over into the public criticism of teachers at student-teacher meetings. These exercises in political consciousness most assuredly were characterized by high emotion, if not vengeance. One young woman was described in the newspaper as having come to "hate her father in her bones." [13] The *San-fan*, *Wu-fan* in the schools seemed to be as much directed at smashing traditional familial ties as at exposing bureaucratic and bourgeois abuses.

8. Wei Chun-yi, "How youths of bourgeois families should treat their families," *Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien*, No. 7 (19 April 1952), p. 8.

9. "A talk about thought questions in the *San-fan*," *ibid.*, No. 2 (26 January 1952), p. 12.

10. *Ibid.* p. 14.

11. *Ibid.* p. 13.

12. *Ibid.*, 12 January 1952, p. 26.

13. *Kuang-ming jih-pao* (*Kuang-ming Daily*), 26 July 1952. Although respondents report that more males than women took an active stand then, many of the models in the newspapers were young women, and their attacks against their fathers seemed all the more venomous and personal.

The Youth League was offered as an alternative to parochial relationships. True, membership in the YCL often appeared as the happy ending to stories in the press about young people denouncing their parents, and respondents admit that not a few youths then seemed to be publicly humiliating their parents in order to make an impression; these people must have regarded the Youth League as a ladder for upward mobility. But the YCL served a still more important function as a support to those rebelling. It represented a new identity in values and personal relationships to those who felt they had obliterated their former identities. At Nankai University, where 70 per cent of the students attended YCL classes, one student was reported to have said:

> In the past, I always concerned myself with family and returned the comfort my mother had given me. Now I feel that the education the organization has given me is still more intimate than Mother's.[14]

Still another student at the same university is alleged to have said:

> In the past, I was completely biased by the erroneous thought I had learned. Now, after participating in the organization, I want to sever ties with all mistaken thinking.[15]

The expansion of the YCL at universities was closely linked to this movement. At Pu-jen University, for instance, one out of eight League members was "at the forefront" of the *San-fan* in the schools, and 80 per cent of the student body was applying for League membership in the whirlwind of this movement.[16]

The importance of positive reinforcement from the League can be understood in the light of the adolescent need to have one's identity confirmed by one's peers. One article discussing student meetings at universities and secondary schools in Hangchow noted that "many schoolmates spoke out [against their fathers], deeply examined their own standpoint, and made up their minds to learn from each other."[17]

At the same time, many youths felt restricted by friendship ties formed earlier. The press frequently observed that some youths appeared to have been duped by the false friendship which the bourgeoisie offered. Instead, it called for a new style of friendship based on "standpoint," and it pledged that agencies of the Communist Party stood ready to offer moral support of a sort that combat soldiers would give one another "on the battlefield."[18] One respondent, who steered clear of political involvement until then spoke of the difficulties at school for those who spoke out publicly against their parents:

> Of course, we didn't necessarily react in the absolute way by making rumours or ignoring [the activist]. Nevertheless, other people would no

14. *Ibid.* 27 May 1952.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.* 6 June 1952.
17. *Chekiang Daily*, 15 February 1952.
18. *Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien*, No. 2 (26 January 1952), p. 14.

longer regard him in the same way. It was not so much revealed in our actions as something in the heart. . . . He would be well off to find new friends in the Communist Party or YCL.

The student who vigorously denounced his parents had little choice but to reach for the embrace of the political organizations.

Those who reported their parents, particularly the ones who exposed their fathers at mass meetings, were not just making a formal gesture to the regime or acting out of necessity. It took a great deal of emotional determination to break away from a father who had been used to respect and obedience from his offspring. One young woman and her younger brother just starting university in Tientsin reportedly turned in their father who had tried to escape the *San-fan* by moving to another city. Before he had fled his former place of work, the father had temporarily silenced his children by threatening suicide, a fairly common parental reaction in those days when children suddenly defied parents. The newspapers praised these youths for "breaking through father-child emotions to courageously expose actions of a corrupt element."[19] A female medical student tried quietly to persuade her businessman-father to step forward and confess his crimes. Her father told her to mind her business and go back to school where she belonged. She recalled that he demanded "angrily" to know what she had revealed to the organization and had tried to bribe her by giving her his favourite Parker pen and 10,000 *yüan* to spend as she pleased. The following testimony expresses her emotional reaction:

Why has my father in the past been so strict with me and today changed so suddenly? . . . From this, I recognized how the bourgeoisie's emotions between father and daughter are basically dependent on money and material wealth. I just recorded this affair on paper to hand over to the organization . . . but I carelessly let him see it. Very angrily, he said to me: "You are unfilial to your father and even of one mind with outsiders." . . . He said, "What have I got to live for? . . . I wavered and unrestrainedly cried tears of sympathy, but then I thought: "This is a test" . . . I wiped away my tears . . . and continued to struggle him.[20]

The reader can sense the personal hurt, the feelings of past rejection, and an anger that survived her father's pleas for mercy and was even further fuelled by his hypocritical attempt to play on her filial guilt. He appealed to her out of fear, not love, and she managed to rebuke him. Psychoanalytically-oriented readers could probably interpret the daughter's carelessly letting her father see the report as an unconscious attempt to provoke her father.

Most of the reports and denunciations of fathers were rationalized in terms of the objective criteria of the *San-fan, Wu-fan.* However, the underlying subjective motivation when it leaked out often seemed to

19. *People's Daily*, 14 January 1951.
20. A personal testimony in *Sian ch'ün-chung jih-pao*, 8 March 1952.

be a resentment of a father's authoritarian treatment or of his neglect. Such behaviour is typical of the authoritarian-dependent syndrome in vertical family relationships. When the adolescent in such a family rebels against a parent, he does so not out of a constructive desire to show his parents that he can carve a niche for himself in the adult world, but as an act of defiance aimed at gaining a parent's attention and bringing him to his knees.[21]

In April 1952 an article appeared in *Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien* referring back to the January issue discussed earlier, which had issued a call to arms.[22] This article clearly sought, by qualifying the content of the earlier piece, to restrain a youthful rebelliousness which had got out of bounds. The anger of young people towards their parents clearly had exceeded the response anticipated by the regime. Apparently, the act of criticizing parents had elicited a strong emotional reaction. Perhaps because the Chinese child had suppressed any hostile feelings towards his parents, he found it difficult to contain the anger once released.

Although the *Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien* article continued to stress the need to " draw a clear line of demarcation " between self and family, it now urged young people to separate emotion from thought and to have enough faith to remain attached to their families and to educate them in the new ways.[23] The writer indicated a sensitivity to the reality that " activists in particular had dealt with their families by severing relations with them," but argued against this break in terms of the " New Democracy." It exhorted the rebellious to return to the family fold. Young people were told that they could best serve the people in the long run by continuing to take their parents' money for school expenses rather than withdrawing from school or expecting the state to foot the bill.[24] The difficulty, according to respondents, was that after publicly repudiating a father, it was most difficult psychologically to face him again; one felt an " inner contradiction, an inner chaos (*luan*)." Not having been able to make a clean break with his family, the youth either capitulated contritely to the family he had reported, or felt that much more unsettled for having exposed his father in the first place.

The article in *Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien* also deplored a condition in which " some readers from non-bourgeois families had written in to

21. Cf. T. W. Adorno *et al.*, *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York, Harper, 1950), *passim*; David Raddock, *Political Behavior of Adolescents in China*, AAS Monograph XXXII (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1977), Chaps. IV and VI.

22. Wei Chun-yi, " Tsai 'San-fan,' Wu-fan ' yun-tung chung tzu-ch'an-chieh-chi chia-t'ing chu-shen-ti ko-ming ch'ing-nien ju-ho k'an-ti tzu-chi " (" How the revolutionary youth of bourgeois background see themselves in the Three-anti and Five-anti movements), *Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien*, No. 7 (19 April 1952), pp. 8–9.

23. *Ibid.*

24. *Ibid.*

say that they also wanted to sever relations with their families." [25] Even the offspring of unquestionable families wanted to get into the act. Since admission to the Youth League was readily available to them, these youngsters stood to gain nothing tangible from denouncing their parents; in fact, such behaviour was often considered reprehensible by one's peers. Yet many felt a need to denounce their parents that apparently emanated from within themselves. Non-bourgeois youths who already held cadre posts were advised to help their families financially and not lose their "family concept." "Do you mean to say the revolutionaries completely ignore their filial relations (*liu-ch'in-wu-jen*)?" the article asked its readers.

Uncontrolled rebelliousness, a condition among urban youth, had been set in motion by the need and opportunity to personally expose and even denounce parents. By spring 1952, it had clearly reached epidemic proportions. It was so contagious that it crossed class boundaries. Why should youths from non-bourgeois backgrounds also want to cut themselves off from their families? The effort to put a lid on the campaign by urging bourgeois youths to continue to accept their parents' money and by imploring non-bourgeois youth to suppress their inclination to rebel must have exacerbated their malaise. As this rebelliousness came to a head in spring–summer 1952 at different times in different locales, it seemed to serve as a catalyst in the ideological remoulding campaign among school teachers.

It was the students, perhaps expediently shifting hostility from parents to teachers or boiling over with enough anger to scald anyone who represented authority, who took the lead in deepening the teachers' campaign for self-reform and who linked the *San-fan* to their teachers' bourgeois-like behaviour in the classroom.[26] Parental neglect, aloofness, oppressiveness – these were some of the probable sources of the person's discontent with authority. One respondent actually recalls that he assailed a teacher for "not paying enough attention to his students." I commented that his activism was consistent in both the *San-fan*,*Wu-fan* and in the movement in the school. The following dialogue ensued:

Respondent: Even though the time period was about the same, the situations were different. My father stole from the people, and I felt that it was my duty to report him.
Interviewer: Not very filial . . .
Respondent: Filial? Filial piety depends on mutual relations . . . (angrily). Our relationship was a class relationship. *He was as uninterested in me as he was in the workers in his shop* [emphasis added].

In the movement in the schools, students who were alleged to have been as nervously reluctant to criticize their teachers at first as their parents because they considered teachers "to be just like parents,"

25. *Ibid.*
26. *People's Daily*, 14 March 1952.

were able to fault them in terms of the new mores.[27] They could focus their hostility on remote criteria of the campaign rather than on their own diffuse and confusing discomfort with authority.[28] Attacks against teachers in the Cultural Revolution were to be much more subjectively explicit.

In 1956 an official drive to restore filiality at the primary level of society and upward got underway because of both the economic need to relieve the state of the obligation to support the aged and the imperative of establishing social order out of chaos. Respondents agree that debating one's superordinates had been the fashion of the day. The leadership called for a new filiality removed of its "feudal" trappings, an old wine in a new bottle. One article stated:

> The "people's filial piety" sees respect for elders and caring for parents as the proper obligation of children, and is built on the excellent conduct of mutual respect and love.[29]

The regime recognized the universality of natural cleavages between generations in a family,[30] but urged the younger generation not to forget that they too would become old one day; they deplored the fact that many youths "felt that older people were conservative and backward and because of this denied or only patronizingly listened to the opinions of their elders."[31] An argument against this trend was that although older people still harboured "feudal" and "backward" thoughts from the old society, like wanting their sons to be officials, their children should not lecture them.[32]

Youth League officials took the position that the family was the foundation of social order. Some noted that older people were being alienated from society because of a trend towards "lack of respect for parents."[33] Most important for our analysis was the notion that an alleviation of the generational cleavage within the family would

27. *Kuang-ming Daily*, 20 June 1952.

28. See, for example, *Sian ch'ün-chung jih-pao*, 5 May 1952; *Ch'ang-chiang jih-pao*, 24 February 1952.

29. Chu Po-lun, "Tsun-chung ho fu-yang fu-mu shih wo kuo jen-min yu-liang-ti tao-teh ch'uan-t'ung" ("Respect for and support of parents is the excellent moral tradition of our people), *Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien*, No. 23, 1 December 1956.

30. Chou Fang, "Ai ni nien-lao-ti fu-mu" ("Love your aged parents"), *Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien pao*, 23 December 1956.

31. Hsieh K'e-heng, "Chiao-yu ch'ing-nien tsun hao yang-lao" ("Educate youth to respect and support the aged"), *Chung-kuo ch'ing nien pao*, 30 November 1956.

32. Yao Yang-fang, "From filial piety to the treatment of parents," *Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien*, No. 21, 1 November 1956, transl. in *Extracts from China Mainland Magazines* (Hereafter *ECMM*), pp. 21–26.

Contrast this position with the hard-nosed position on the attitude of striving "to become officials" adopted after the Cultural Revolution.

33. *Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien pao*, 30 November 1956; see also *Ibid.*, 26 December 1956.

have important ramifications for the general attitude of the younger generation towards authority in society. An editorial in *Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien* stated:

> Whether family relations are good or bad has a great influence on the order of social life. In maintaining a family relationship of love and mutual help, where the old and young both have their place, our social life will not be chaotic. The moral concept of family relations is an important part of the superstructure. We should realize that a portion of youth today have the erroneous thought of abandoning parents . . . this has its historical roots.[34]

Feng Ting, who was to be struggled years later for his bourgeois theories of human nature, observed that the historical roots of the tension between generations at that time could be traced to the May Fourth Movement and to the *San-fan, Wu-fan*'s "drawing of a clear line of demarcation between self and family." He hailed "the lofty character of harmony" which the family, as the "basic cell of society," would bring to socialism in China.[35]

If the "demarcation of a clear line between self and family" in the *San-fan* had made the younger generation intolerant of their parents, it also had led to a general disrespect for teachers as well. One writer related his current resistance to his professors to the residual effect of pointing out the ideological errors of teachers in the *San-fan* years earlier. Youths were now exhorted to listen to their teachers for the sake of progressing in their work.[36] Issues of *Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien pao* carried pictures of youth learning from their more experienced and skilled elders.[37]

The rebelliousness of this first post-Liberation generation of youth seemed by and large to be characterized by a general *defiance* of authority in an authority-dependent relationship, rather than by a *competition* with authority. Hence, although its intensity and extension to authorities outside the family had been greater than desired, it could be quelled by the relegitimization of authority. There is no evidence in the years following the *San-fan* of overt, articulate rebellion against authority on the part of the *San-fan* generation. If resistance to authority existed, it was beneath the surface, and some was doubtlessly released during the "Hundred Flowers." The general tendency of adolescents who only flout an oppressive authority in the home is to fall into a similar pattern of behaviour as their father's upon attaining adult status. One exception, or so it seemed, in a rash

34. *Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien*, No. 23 (1 December 1956), p. 29.

35. Feng Ting, "Love and support of parents is also a necessary virtue in the social society," *ibid.* No. 24, 16 November 1956, transl. in *ECMM*, No. 65 (1956), pp. 17–20.

36. "Learn from the old generation," *Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien*, No. 2 (16 January 1952), p. 11.

37. For example, see the photo of a young person studying the art of wood-block printing from an old man, in *Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien pao*, 22 December 1956.

of letters to *Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien*, was the lone protest that an individual's responsibility was to the children he brought into the world, not to his parents, and that extended families were responsible for "encouraging dependency." [38] Perhaps, such exceptions socialized their own children, part of the generation of the Cultural Revolution in a more enlightened one-to-one manner.

Movements like the May Fourth in the 1920s and the *San-fan* after Liberation, not to mention the Communist Revolution itself, must have served in the long run to undermine the social base of traditional filiality. Patterns persisted, but changes also took place. While many educated youths identified all the more closely with their bourgeois fathers as a result of the *San-fan*, many others seized the opportunity to "dare to defy" parents and teachers. And while some of these youths must have found their rebellious stance untenable because of the need to continue taking money from their fathers, others might have become *more* rebellious and displaced this rebelliousness on teachers. And whereas most of these adolescent rebels assumed responsible positions in adult society and ultimately must have conformed once again to authority and held sway over their own children and subordinates, still others might have continued to chafe under authority and might have had the insight to be more tolerant of their children.

Fifteen Years Later: The Generation of the Cultural Revolution

Fifteen years later, the Cultural Revolution brought forth a different type of youth activist. In summer 1966, in an atmosphere of near chaos and the delegitimation of conventional authority in the middle schools and the universities, youths could make a decision to abstain from the Red Guards, to participate as followers (passively emulating their friends or responding to the centripetal pull of the movement), or to become activists (assuming leadership responsibilities and continuing to take part in the Cultural Revolution at least through the first armed struggle in 1967). A new generation of youths, like their historical counterparts in the *San-fan* in the schools, would relate unresolved family conflicts to their broader social-political environments. Unlike the *San-fan*, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution did not call for a direct renunciation or denunciation of parents. But by exhorting youths to "defy authority" with the cry of "the world belongs to you," the stage managers of the Cultural

38. *Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien*, No. 23, 1 December 1956, p. 33. Cf. Hu Shih's anti-filiality poem during the May Fourth:

In reality I wanted no son
But you have come
But I shall have to feed and teach you
This is my obligation to humanity
It is not a special favour to you

Revolution were tapping the conscious and unconscious variances in individual dispositions towards authority.

The author interviewed thirty-five male respondents in 1971–72, all of whom as adolescents had the opportunity to participate in the Cultural Revolution. Eleven of the informants were activists who assumed leadership roles in the Cultural Revolution and who continued to participate in the armed struggles between Red Guard factions in 1967. Seven of these actually had created their own Red Guard units in the summer of 1966. All free-associatively linked their interaction with their fathers and their quest for adult identity with their active participation in the Cultural Revolution. Although other variables often intervened to affect political behaviour one way or another, the frequency with which respondents linked generational conflict with the decision to participate in the Red Guards was striking. One lucid and commonly shared manifestation of the transference from family to society and polity was reflected in the subjective choice of targets for "struggle" (teachers and other authorities) in summer–autumn 1966. For example, one respondent had become very intimate with his father by the time he was preparing to enter middle school. As this close relationship characterized by mutual respect fed the autonomy of the son and stirred him to greater assertiveness at school as well, the frustration began to mount in him. Recalling his relationship with his father during those years, he proclaimed, "My father and I were equal . . . But it was still a father-son relationship; *there was still a taste of taking orders*" [emphasis added]. This informant became increasingly intolerant of any teachers who would not comply with his demands. In the school year prior to the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution, one particular teacher, generally a rather lenient man, took him to task for embarrassingly defiant behaviour which placed the instructor in a defensive position before the class. In August, at the very time his father admonished him about engaging in the Cultural Revolution, this potential Red Guard militant seized the opportunity to "struggle" that teacher in a *ta-tzu-pao* (wall-poster). "I felt what the teacher said was *not necessarily correct* (*pu-yi-ting tui*). Therefore, I didn't much obey what the teacher said" (emphasis added) he reflected. In retrospect, he regarded his hostility toward the teacher as drawing him into the Cultural Revolution. Soon thereafter, he formed his own Red Guard unit. But why use the Cultural Revolution for this purpose and disobey your father? he was asked. He answered, "Because what parents say *is not completely correct*. . . . If you obey the directions of others, you yourself will have no independent point of view" (emphasis added).

The son generalized from his father's "incorrect" attempts to encroach on his autonomy to the teacher who "incorrectly" held him down. The father's specific value priorities in this case as in others did not have a direct bearing one way or another on the adolescent's

motivation for participation. Generational rivalry took precedence. In recalling his father's admonition about participation as early as August 1966, this respondent commented, "I always felt older people's thoughts were backward and not with the current of the times."

The pattern in which adults and their teenage children related to one another apparently had changed considerably by the time of the Cultural Revolution. Of the 11 activists in my original sample, nine clearly indicated that they had grown up in a relatively horizontal family environment, in which as they approached adolescence their fathers came to relate to them on a fairly one-to-one basis. Only one of the politically active youths clearly conformed to the paradigm of vertical or authority-dependent socialization in the home.[39]

These contrasting family patterns could affect political commitment in different ways. Some educated youths in the vertical category from bourgeois and petit-bourgeois background derived immense ego satisfaction from the act of flouting their father's wishes simply through participation in the Cultural Revolution. One such youth formed his own Red Guard unit and flaunted his hand gun in front of his disapproving father. However, somewhat like historical counterparts in the *San-fan*, once having rebelled through political channels, such youths often found themselves in the dilemma of having to make a *total* break, unexpectedly difficult psychologically, from their parents. And their only alternative afterwards was to fill the identity vacuum left by their parents by gaining clear-cut acceptance from society. If early efforts to gain political acceptance were thwarted, the

39. Apart from case-specific indicators, the syndrome of a "horizontal" father-son relationship consists of such shared factors as lack of arbitrary and harsh discipline; father's encouraging son to express his opinions and taking them into consideration; closeness of father and son (as opposed to father's aloofness); mutual respect; father's encouragement for and praise of son's independent achievements; open debate between father and son over differences.

The "vertical" paradigm is indicated by a father's arbitrary punishment; image of severity; intolerance of a son's legitimate disagreement, not to mention disobedience; aloofness which increases as the boy approaches adolescence.

Both the "vertical" and "horizontal" categories are, of course, necessarily somewhat arbitrarily delimited. For instance, within the comparatively broad "horizontal" grouping, there is a great deal of variance, ranging from horizontal in some degree to nearly equal; in the former, some of the above indicators would be less pronounced. A diagram quantitatively correlating these intra-familial patterns with level of activism among Red Guard participants appears below:

	Red Guard Active	*Red Guard Passive*
Clearly indicated "Horizontal"	9	2
Clearly indicated "Vertical"	1	4

See also David M. Raddock, *Political Behavior of Adolescents in China: The Cultural Revolution in Kwangchow*, AAS Monograph XXXII (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1977), Ch. 4, and *passim*.

sons were apt to fall back on an identification with their fathers. Youths in the *San-fan* had found themselves in a similarly tenuous situation when, in spite of being admitted into the Youth League, they were still forced to take money from their bourgeois parents.

On the other hand, the youth who enjoyed a more one-to-one relationship with his father did not have to turn away from his family to gain his father's attention. In a more egalitarian family, although the motivation to surpass the father was paradoxically more acute and steadfast because of the perceived proximity in status between the two generations, mutual respect either induced a greater area of shared values or militated against the father's imposing his will on the son's area of autonomous behaviour. Inter-generational rivalry expressed through political channels could be realized more successfully in such cases.[40]

The Task of Reintegrating the Rebels

Because so many of the active Red Guards in two pools of respondents between 1971 and 1976 seemed to be subjectively motivated in part by the unconscious wish to prove themselves to their parents in the context of the New China, they reacted negatively to rustication. Being sent down for a lifetime in the countryside represented a traumatic discontinuity in their career prospects. Their rebellion against teachers had been holding them back from " cutting a smart figure " and from social and political advancement. In Kwangchow, activist members of the *Hung-ch'i*, embroiled in factional strife with the *Tung Feng* or " conservative " faction, regarded their opponents as representative of the sons and daughters of a routinized elite which they wanted to smash and replace. Unlike the *San-fan* youths, they were not acting chaotically, uncontrollably venting rage against parents and teachers. On the contrary, they had specific targets in mind. Because their behaviour was more directed and goal-oriented and was aimed not at parents but at teachers in the schools and at local officials, this generation of youths seemed to have proceeded with considerable deliberateness towards the pursuit of positions of authority after the Cultural Revolution. Many even had fantasies of becoming mayors and revolutionary committee members.[41]

40. See discussion of the implications of pecking or ranking orders in Konrad Lorenz, *On Aggression* (New York: Harcourt, 1966), pp. 40–44; for one of many discussions of competition between subordinates and immediate superordinates as the basis for the need for creating organizational counter-measures, see Michel Crozier, *The Bureaucratic Phenomenon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 162 ff.

41. Kenneth Keniston discusses a similar phenomenon in his article, " The sources of student dissent," *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (1967), pp. 119–21. He suggests that student rebels in the United States were trying to implement the very values their parents had compromised as adults. Seen in Chinese perspective, this apparent *emulation* is also a form of generational *rivalry*, an effort to surpass one's parents.

For this reason, they would not be brought so easily under control as the youths who had engaged in the *San-fan* in the schools. The impediment, most often publicized in the news media has been their "desire for fame and officialdom." In 1968, news reports complained of "hooliganism" in the countryside.[42] One respondent told me that he and his friends would amuse themselves by staying up late at night singing and disturbing the villagers or by ganging up on the "village idiot." Apparently, it has not been easy to accept the authority of peasants one considered to be less progressive than oneself and to be pupils again. The one or two youths in my pool of respondents who made a serious effort to integrate with the peasantry were frustrated by the resistance of peasant adults to their well-intended suggestions. One respondent from the later group of interviewees stated:

I got into arguments with them at first. Once, a person did some things of no benefit to the production team. He said, "Why are you criticizing me? You still have to accept our further education!" But I said that it was wrong to take things belonging to the work team, and did he mean this sort of education?

The segregation of youths in dormitories apart from the peasants also might have contributed to the development of an anti-social youth sub-culture. The same respondent recounted his experience:

The main thing is that when we came to live apart from the peasants, there was no one to watch over us. . . . Come evening, we educated youth ran about everywhere. In the beginning, when we lived with peasant families, it was of no use. But afterwards, we went off to the neighbouring brigades to talk. . . . In the village it was this way – if you didn't work, there were no work points. We spent only a few days each month, and they didn't care. Some of us painted . . . we also discussed the future of art . . . discussed western painting and the outer world . . . to a point where some people mentioned that they would like to go abroad to see.

One would have thought that the Youth League might have assisted "educated youths" in adjusting to the countryside and to new forms of authority,[43] as it had once given moral support to youth in the *San-fan* in the schools. Discussion of League expansion in the countryside, reported in the Chinese press over the past few years, indicates that some "educated youths" have been integrated into a new life. However, the separateness of identity of "educated youths" and their living apart from the peasants remain a potentially counter-cultural lure to the Cultural Revolution youths and their younger brothers and sisters. Also, the Youth League in the countryside usually has had a membership base comprising peasants and is therefore

42. *Shanghai wen-hui pao*, 4 August 1968, transl. in *Survey of China Mainland Press* (*SCMP*), No. 4251, 5 September 1968.

43. Cf. David Raddock, "The 'revolutionary successor': some psychological perspectives on youth participation in the Cultural Revolution," *China Report*, Vol. XI, No. 3 (May–June 1975), pp. 27–31.

somewhat alien to the newly-arrived youths from the cities. Respondents have noted that whereas the companionship of Red Guards in the city has been an important palliative in encounters with authority and in their assertion of greater autonomy from their families, the YCL in the countryside cannot fill this need. Articles in the press have deplored the fact that "educated youths" in the countryside are often affected by "sugarcoated bullets and corrupted by bourgeois influences."[44] One respondent reported:

> Very few educated youths wanted to become cadres in the countryside – maybe one or two per cent. And none of these people I knew to be active in the Cultural Revolution could have done it sincerely. . . . The others who joined the YCL didn't want to become cadres but to return to Kwangchow.

What has become of the new socialist man, the "revolutionary successor"? Several of the people interviewed came close to this ideal in their Cultural Revolution activity, trying to prove themselves to both their parents and the masses; for a time, identification with the creed of "serving the people" and generational competition were not necessarily incompatible. But because so many youths apparently perceived rustication as a form of punishment and as a discontinuity in their career paths, or were frustrated in their renewed effort to climb the ladder of success in the countryside, it was easy for them to go awry. One way the regime has tried to deal with the "ambition to become officials" has been to re-educate parents; for example, delegations of parents of rusticated youths have been sent to visit the localities and to see their children in their new homes.[45] But how will the regime deal with persistently self-assertive youths who, having been unable to fulfil themselves by serving the masses, determine to devote their energies to serving themselves? Has the Maoist educational policy, aimed in part at developing a consonance of values between parents and children, been sufficient to cope with the frustrations of urban educated youths who still wish to out-perform their parents?

It could be that those Cultural Revolution rebels from vertical family relationships, who were only trying to gain their parents' attention by actively participating in the campaign, have adjusted, along with those people whose participation in politics has only been ritualistic, to the new structure of authority in the countryside. If they have just been advancing in administrative and political hierarchies,

44. For example, see "Using the Party's basic line to educate a new generation of minors," *People's Daily*, 20 August 1975, transl. *SCMP*, No. 5941 (24 September 1975), pp. 52–61; "Seriously carry out on a solid basis the policy on 'educable children,'" *People's Daily*, 21 April 1972, transl. in *SCMP*, No. 5126 (4 May 1972), p. 141.

45. "Educated Peking youth integrate with workers and peasants," New China News Agency (Peking), 7 May 1972, transl. in *SCMP*, No. 5136, p. 164.

they are just as likely to become routinized and to abuse authority as their predecessors.

A share of the younger generation may well pose a serious problem for the socio-political system. So many young adults who grew up in more horizontal family relationships have been able to defy authority more easily and with greater direction than the youths of the *San-fan*. Still retaining a sense of separate identity not so easily quashed as in the *San-fan*, young veterans of the Cultural Revolution might constitute the vanguard of an age-oriented interested group anxious to articulate demands for themselves and for representation in the post-Mao elite.

Moreover, primary socialization increasingly has become more egalitarian, bolstering the ego autonomy of a new generation of Chinese. This process was probably underway during the period of social ferment in China preceding the Communist Revolution. Since the Communist Revolution, a self-consciously anti-authoritarian or permissive strain in the Chinese Communist political culture has had a greater impact on children than on adults, legitimating certain types of rebelliousness and self-expression in the New China. Movements like the *San-fan* in the schools and the Cultural Revolution in particular have reinforced and amplified this trend. Harry Eckstein has suggested that incongruence of patterns of authority between the family environment and the broader social and political environments threatens the stability of the system.[46] If emerging adults in today's China expect to play a role in the adult social system consistent with their more democratic treatment in the home, they are apt to come up against the brick wall of a basically authoritarian political infrastructure. If so, something has to give!

46. Harry Eckstein, *A Theory of Stable Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961).