

Mao's Cultural Revolution: The Struggle to Consolidate Power

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"There is no construction without destruction. . . . Destruction means criticism and repudiation, it means revolution. It involves reasoning things out, which is construction. Put destruction first, and in the process you have construction."—Mao Tse-tung, quoted in "Circular of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China," 16 May 1966.¹

In his keynote political report to the Ninth Party Congress, Lin Piao discussed at some length the history of the "great proletarian cultural revolution" from its formal inception at a May 1966 Central Committee work conference to its nominal conclusion at the Party Congress in April 1969. Although he listed the objectives of the Cultural Revolution as ideological, political and economic in character, Lin stressed that "the fundamental question in the current revolution" is "the question of political power, a question of which class holds leadership."²

Mao Tse-tung's fundamental purpose in launching the Cultural Revolution, then, was to seek out and destroy his opponents within the Party and government, and replace them with loyal and dedicated supporters. As suggested in the quotation cited above, Mao expected that the Cultural Revolution would serve to identify his opponents and supporters by their conduct in the "destructive" phase of revolutionary struggle, and thus prepare the way for "construction" of a new revolutionary order. What actually happened, however, as Lin Piao revealed in his report to the Congress, was that the Cultural Revolution produced "an extremely complicated situation" in which (quoting Mao) it was "hard" to distinguish "between ourselves and the enemy."³

Inaccurate as it may be as a description of reality, Mao's formulation of the dialectical relationship between "destruction" and "construction" does provide an important clue for understanding the tumultuous course of the Cultural Revolution over the past three years. It helps to explain, for example, the pattern of periods of disorder ("destruction") followed by periods of relative order ("construction"). It helps

¹ New China News Agency (NCNA), 16 May 1967, in *Survey of China Mainland Press (SCMP)* (Hong Kong: U.S. Consulate General), No. 3942, p. 3.

² Lin Piao, "Report to the Ninth National Congress of the Communist Party of China," NCNA, 27 April 1969, in *Current Background (CB)* (Hong Kong: U.S. Consulate General), No. 880, p. 31.

³ *Ibid.* p. 30.

to explain, in the priority accorded "destruction," why the "constructive" phases have been short-lived, as Mao and his more radical advisers have discovered new opponents (or at least less than enthusiastic supporters) occupying positions of authority in the new revolutionary structure of power.

Finally, it helps to explain two paradoxical and puzzling features of Lin Piao's political report to the Ninth Party Congress. First, Lin appeared to be saying at one and the same time that the Cultural Revolution was over ("a great victory" has been won in exposing and destroying "the bourgeois headquarters headed by the renegade, hidden traitor and scab Liu Shao-ch'i"),⁴ and was not over ("the revolution is not yet over . . . in the realm of the superstructure").⁵ The second puzzling feature was Lin's meandering discussion of Party building which, together with surrounding commentary and post-Congress developments, strongly suggested that the task of reconstructing the Chinese Communist Party as the "core of political power" at intermediate and basic levels of society was just getting under way.

The strange fact that after three years of turmoil and violence in the Cultural Revolution the Chinese Communist Party is still largely inoperative outside of Peking can be explained in various ways. One explanation is that Mao, at least in the early period of the "January Revolution," the short-lived experiment with the Paris Commune type of organization and its replacement by the Revolutionary Committee, did not intend to reconstruct the Party, or at least restore it to its former position of centrality in the political structure. Another is that Mao has been thwarted in his plan to rebuild the Party by opposition within the military and the old Party and government apparatus.

A third, related explanation is that the primary cause for this protracted delay is Mao Tse-tung's insistence that the same "three-way alliance" principle underlying the new government (Revolutionary Committee) structure also governs the process of Party reconstruction. On each occasion when tentative steps have been taken to restore the authority of the Party, the Maoist leadership in Peking has drawn back out of fear of a "restoration of the old" (i.e., restoring power to the same old "bureaucrats" who had dominated the Party before the Cultural Revolution). It is Mao Tse-tung's long drawn-out and still largely unsuccessful effort to revitalize the Party with "new blood" ("new cadres") and thus construct a new Communist Party composed of loyal and enthusiastic "revolutionary successors" which provides the central theme of this paper.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 18.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 31.

MAO'S CULTURAL REVOLUTION

CONSTRUCTION: THE FIRST ATTEMPT

"With the Commune inaugurated, do we still need the Party? I think we need it because we must have a hard core, whether it is called the Communist Party or a social democratic party . . . In short, we still need a party."—Mao Tse-tung, quoted in a speech by Chang Ch'un-ch'iao, 24 February 1967.⁶

In January 1967, the Cultural Revolution was suddenly transformed from an effort to reform the existing structure of power into an all-out assault against the power structure itself. Whereas Mao earlier (at the Eleventh Plenum of the Central Committee in August 1966) had expressed confidence that only "a small minority" of Party cadres would oppose the Cultural Revolution,⁷ he was forced to concede in late January that "most old cadres still do not understand the Cultural Revolution"⁸ and to call for the overthrow of the Party and government apparatus which they controlled. Understandably alarmed by this display of resistance, Mao reacted by inciting the "revolutionary masses" to "seize power from below" and by authorizing the creation on an experimental basis of a new revolutionary organ of power modelled after the Paris Commune.

It is important to note, however, as the quotation cited above makes clear, that Mao did not intend that the "revolutionary rebels" who had risen at his command to "seize power" should actually exercise the power they had seized. Rather, it was necessary, as Mao emphasized, to have a "hard core" of leadership represented by "a party." Of additional interest in this quotation is Mao's almost contemptuous reference to the Communist Party as only one among a number of different possible parties. This curious statement reflects both Mao's bitter experience with the old Communist Party which had turned against him and a determination to reorganize this Party drastically before restoring it to a position of dominance in the new revolutionary order.

It was also envisaged from the outset that a reformed Party would lead the Revolutionary Committee, the new "provisional" organ of revolutionary power established in early 1967 to replace the abortive Commune. As is now well known, the Revolutionary Committee consists of a "three-way alliance" of representatives of the "revolutionary masses" (the Red Guards and "revolutionary rebels"),

⁶ "Comrade Chang Ch'un-ch'iao Transmits Chairman Mao's Latest Directives," in *Tzu-liao chuan-chi* (Special Issue of Reference Materials), 10 February 1968, SCMP, No. 4147, p. 7.

⁷ Ch'en Po-ta, "A Summary of the Last Two Months of Progress in the Cultural Revolution," in *Tung-feng chan-pao* (East Wind Combat News), 11 December 1966, Joint Publications Research Service (JPRS) (Washington, D.C.), No. 40, 488, p. 8.

⁸ *Asahi*, 4 February 1967.

representatives of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), and "revolutionary Party cadres" (defined as "those leading cadres who follow the proletarian revolutionary line represented by Chairman Mao"). As depicted in an authoritative *Hung-ch'i* (*Red Flag*) editorial at this time, these "revolutionary cadres" were to serve as "the nucleus or backbone" of the Revolutionary Committee.⁹ It was in keeping with this concept that the leadership of one of the earliest provincial Revolutionary Committees (that of Shansi) was vested in a "Party Nucleus Group," a practice described in the organizational regulations of this committee as "accepting the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party provincial level organization in Shansi."¹⁰

It was unfortunate for the future development and viability of the Revolutionary Committee that at just this point in time there occurred what has come to be known as "the adverse February current." The ringleader of this new "counter-revolutionary current" in Peking was Vice-Premier and Politburo member T'an Chen-lin who, it was later charged, directed such provocative questions to the Cultural Revolution Group as: "Do you still want Party leadership . . . old cadres . . . the People's Liberation Army . . . and production?"¹¹ More concretely, T'an, together with a number of other Party and government leaders, was charged with engaging in the practice of "false power seizure," whereby senior Party cadres or revived Party committees had reinstated all or most of the old systems of control, at the same time ignoring or suppressing the opinions of the "revolutionary Left."¹² The fact that this phenomenon of "false power seizure" or "restoration of the old" had also occurred in the great majority of China's provinces persuaded Mao that the great revolutionary enterprise of "seizing power" initiated during the January Revolution had largely failed.

The first attempt to construct a new revolutionary organ of power had failed because those who had stepped forward to lead these organs turned out to be, in Mao's eyes, the same old unredeemed and unrepentant cadres who had controlled the Party before the Cultural Revolution. It was necessary to initiate a new destructive phase of the revolution, to unleash the "revolutionary masses" to engage in struggle and criticism in order to dig out Mao's opponents still concealed in "each area, department and unit" throughout the country. The events

⁹ Editorial entitled "On the Revolutionary Three-in-One Combination," *Hung-ch'i* (*Red Flag*), No. 5 (March 1967), in *Selections from China Mainland Magazines* (SCMM) (Hong Kong: U.S. Consulate General), No. 568, p. 3.

¹⁰ Taiyuan Radio, 18 March 1967.

¹¹ Kweiyang Radio, 22 November 1968. Also see "Central Leaders' Important Speeches (Excerpts) on Counter-Attacking the Adverse February Current," *Chung-tung-fang-hung* (*Pearl River East is Red*), April 1968, SCMP, No. 4166, pp. 6-8.

¹² *Mainichi*, 17 March 1967.

of this new "destructive" phase extending through the summer of 1967 are well known and will not be discussed here.¹³ It is sufficient to point out that the Wuhan Incident in mid-July (viewed in Peking as an act of insubordination by leaders of the Wuhan Military Region Command) and the ensuing decision to arm selected Red Guard and "revolutionary rebel" units as a counter-force brought China by the end of August to the brink of anarchy. There was no choice but to apply the brakes, assess the damage and initiate a new "constructive" phase in the Cultural Revolution.

Reacting to the threat of anarchy, Mao Tse-tung issued a "great strategic plan" in September consisting of a series of "supreme instructions" designed to restore order from below by disciplining and reorganizing the "revolutionary ranks" and to restore order from above by speeding up the establishment of a new governmental structure. The immediate and inescapable problem in September was to deal with the phenomenon of "ultra-Leftism" in which militant Red Guards, incited by official propaganda and high-ranking officials, had launched a wide-ranging assault against the People's Liberation Army. This, as Madame Mao explained, had of course been a "mistake," but a mistake attributable primarily to "bad elements" who had sneaked into the leadership of these "revolutionary mass organizations."¹⁴

It is likely, however, that Mao was equally if not more concerned in the autumn of 1967 about the "mistakes" committed by the other main protagonist in the violent upheaval of the preceding summer—the leaders of the PLA at the military region and military district levels of command. In his published statements, Mao asserted that most of these "mistakes" had been unintentional, caused by lack of "education" and "experience," and to help correct this deficiency "training classes" for senior military cadres from the provinces were held in Peking throughout the remainder of the year.¹⁵ At the same time, the fact that Mao and Lin felt impelled in 1967 to purge and reorganize nearly half of these regional and district military commands was convincing proof of dissatisfaction with the performance of the PLA since it was ordered in late March to take over the functions of government at provincial and local levels.¹⁶

¹³ For a survey of developments in this period, see Philip Bridgham, "Mao's Cultural Revolution in 1967: The Struggle to Seize Power," *The China Quarterly*, No. 34 (April-June 1968), pp. 19-27.

¹⁴ "Important Speech Given by Comrade Chiang Ch'ing," Peking Leaflet, 18 September 1967, in *SCMP*, No. 4069, pp. 5-7.

¹⁵ "Chairman Mao's Latest Instruction," in *Hung-chan-pao* (*Red Combat News*), 10 October 1967, *SCMP*, No. 4072, p. 2.

¹⁶ Reorganization of the local military command structure was reported in the following provinces in 1967: Anhwei, Chekiang, Honan, Hopeh, Hunan, Hupeh, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Kiangsi, Shensi, Szechwan and Tsinghai.

Reflecting this dissatisfaction with the performance of the military, the final and perhaps most important "instruction" conveyed by Chairman Mao in September was that the process of setting up Revolutionary Committees in all the 29 provinces and major cities of China be speeded up and completed by the end of January 1968.¹⁷ To meet this deadline, there was an urgent need, as explained in an authoritative 21 October *Jen-min jih-pao* (*People's Daily*) editorial, for more "revolutionary cadres" who, because of their "richer experience . . . better organizing and working ability and higher understanding of policy," could "serve as the core and backbone in the revolutionary provisional organs of power"—the Revolutionary Committees.¹⁸

Mao's concurrent decision in September to resurrect the Party was directly related, it can convincingly be argued, to this felt need to recruit experienced civilian cadres to "serve as the core and backbone" of the new Revolutionary Committees, and thus bring to an end the situation of the preceding eight months in which, as Chou En-lai put it in a speech at this time, the PLA had been "charged with the monistic leadership of the Party, the government and the Army."¹⁹ Although this initial effort to rectify and rebuild the Party was largely unsuccessful, the policy directives and editorial discussion at this time provide important clues for understanding major issues concerning the Party which remain unresolved today. For example, concerning the knotty problem of the relationship between the rebuilt Party and the Revolutionary Committee, it was made clear at this time that a "nucleus group" or "core group" was to be created within each Revolutionary Committee to provide Party leadership over the new revolutionary organ of power.

At the same time, it was made quite clear that this concept of a "Party core group" was not to be implemented immediately, but rather pursued as a long-range goal.²⁰ An important prerequisite stipulated by Mao at this time was that this core should not be set up subjectively or be self-appointed, but should be "produced . . . through struggle and ideological education"²¹—that is, that the Party cadres comprising these core groups continue to be tested by their performance in the Cultural Revolution to ensure their loyalty before being entrusted with

17 "Chairman Mao's Latest Supreme Instructions . . ." in *Cheng-fa hung-ch'i* (*Politics and Law Red Flag*), SCMP, No. 4070, pp. 2-3.

18 NCNA, 20 October 1967.

19 "Speeches by Leaders of the Central Committee," Canton pamphlet, October 1967, in SCMM, No. 611, p. 10.

20 "A Transmittal of the Spirit of the Political Work Conference of the Provincial Revolutionary Committee," undated Kwangtung pamphlet, in SCMP, No. 4343, p. 8.

21 "Comrade Hsu Ching-hsien's Speech at Study Class for Investigators of Party Rectification and Rebuilding, Shanghai," *Wen-ko t'ung-hsün* (*Cultural Revolution Bulletin*), in SCMP, No. 4237, p. 9.

real power. Until such time as Mao and his principal advisers could feel reasonably confident that these new Party organs were controlled by loyal Maoists, it was emphasized (for example, in an important speech by Hsieh Fu-chih on 26 October about Party rectification) that the newly revived Party organs would "not play a leading role in the Revolutionary Committee" and that "the time of establishing the relations of leadership" would "be mentioned later."²² With the disclosure in early 1968 that there was "interference from the Right . . . in Party rectification and rebuilding,"²³ the first attempt to revive and reconstruct the Party apparatus initiated in the autumn of 1967 came to a halt.

The return of the "class enemy" to centre stage in March of 1968 marked the beginning of a new destructive phase of the Cultural Revolution which was to last until mid-year. Whatever the merit of specific charges, it was clear in the barrage of propaganda attacking Rightist reversal of verdicts, Right splittism, Rightist conservatism, Right capitulationism and Rightist restoration in the months that followed, that Mao and his radical advisers were dissatisfied with the character, composition and performance of at least some of the provincial Revolutionary Committees which had been so slowly and laboriously constructed in the preceding year. As perceived by the Maoists, they were faced with a revival of the "adverse February current" of a year earlier (depicted in the convoluted phraseology of the Cultural Revolution as an attempt "to reverse the correct verdict on the 'adverse February current'") in which senior Party cadres supported by military commanders had subverted the first great effort to establish new revolutionary organs of power by staging "false power seizures" and threatening to "restore the old." As had been true a year earlier, it was considered necessary to rectify the imbalance in the three-way alliance structure of the Revolutionary Committee system by strengthening the position of the representatives of "revolutionary mass organizations" (viewed as the "revolutionary Left") in relation to the military and Party cadre representatives (viewed as prone to Rightist error).

Although the hope was expressed (for instance in an editorial in the Shanghai *Wen hui pao* on 6 May) that this new revolutionary upsurge would serve to "consolidate" the new revolutionary organs of power, it soon became apparent that the practical application of the new slogan "give full play to the role of revolutionary mass organizations" was threatening the very existence of the Revolutionary Committee system. As more and more provinces began to report in May and June, "class

²² "Vice Premier Hsieh Fu-chih's Important Speech on Questions of 'Ninth Party Congress' and 'Party Organization'," *Wen-ko t'ung-hsiin (Cultural Revolution Bulletin)*, in *SCMP*, No. 4097, pp. 3-4.

²³ As in note 21 above, p. 10.

enemies" from the "ultra-Left" were exploiting this slogan to revive "bourgeois factionalism," resume armed struggle and split the entire revolutionary structure of power from top to bottom. Responding to this rising crescendo of violence, Mao Tse-tung on 28 July (at a meeting attended symbolically by the leaders of the five most important revolutionary mass organizations) issued a nationwide order authorizing the army to put an end to armed struggle, dissolve the rebellious factions and, once again, restore order.²⁴

CONSTRUCTION: THE SECOND ATTEMPT

"Following the universal establishment of revolutionary committees throughout China, the great proletarian cultural revolution has entered a new period—[that of] . . . carrying out the tasks of struggle-criticism-transformation conscientiously."—*Joint People's Daily, Red Flag, Liberation Army Daily* Editorial, "Advance Courageously Along the Road of Triumph," 1 October 1968.²⁵

Following the rapid formation of the last five provincial Revolutionary Committees in August and September, Mao's Cultural Revolution (as pointed out in the joint editorial honouring National Day) "entered a new period . . . [that of] . . . carrying out the tasks of struggle-criticism-transformation conscientiously." In its call for "struggle and criticism" in every "unit, department and organization," this new phase was to trigger off still another outbreak of violence in a nationwide purge at basic levels of society. The final step of "transformation," moreover, was to involve the introduction of a number of radical, inherently disruptive social and economic programmes. As a result, this second attempt by the Maoist leadership in Peking to construct a new revolutionary order eventually, in the face of mounting opposition and disorder, ground to a halt on the eve of the Ninth Party Congress.

In contrast with the preceding period, however, this phase of the Cultural Revolution was both controlled and expedited (carried out "conscientiously"). At a time when a major propaganda theme was the need to "unify our thinking, co-ordinate our steps and act in concert,"²⁶ it was the working class through the instrumentality of the "worker-peasant Mao Tse-tung's thought propaganda team" (the recipient of the much-publicized "precious gift" of mangoes from Chairman Mao on 5 August) which in theory provided the leadership necessary to effect this unity of thought and action by the Chinese

²⁴ For one account of this meeting, see Stanley Karnow, "Peking Starts Disbanding the Red Guards," *Washington Post*, 14 August 1968. For a Red Guard discussion of this important 28 July directive see "'Three Red' Organization of People's University . . . Unilaterally Hands in Weapons Used for Self Defence" in *Jen-ta San-hung* ("Three Red" of People's University), *SCMP*, No. 4266, p. 13.

²⁵ *Peking Review*, 4 October 1968, p. 19.

²⁶ See, for example, *Peking Review*, 13 September 1968, p. 6.

people. In fact, the composition of these propaganda teams (consisting not only of workers and peasants but, more importantly, of "PLA Commanders and fighters") and their subordination "under the leadership of the Revolutionary Committees"²⁷ (where again the military frequently dominated) meant that the new stage of "working-class leadership" initiated in August 1968 was to a large extent leadership enforced by military control.

Following a violent wave of purging of "bad elements" in basic-level administrative units in the autumn of 1968, attention was focused on the task of "transformation." It was with a sense of urgency that the Maoist leadership embarked upon this final stage of the Cultural Revolution in which China's institutional framework was to be radically reorganized ("transformed") in accordance with Mao Tse-tung's revolutionary vision of the good society. One of Mao's important objectives in the revolution, of course, was to effect a radical reform of the educational system, both to cleanse it of the corrupting influence of "bourgeois intellectuals and experts" and to transform it into a system combining intellectual and physical labour. The sending of teachers and students by the millions to labour in factories and communes in the autumn of 1968 marked the first step in this educational revolution.

Soon swelling the ranks of this mass migration to the countryside were large numbers of urban cadres sent down (in accordance with a Maoist instruction in early October)²⁸ as part of a sizable reduction in force of the government bureaucracy. This programme, as an expression of Mao's well-known anti-bureaucratic bias (his preoccupation with preventing the growth of a privileged bureaucratic ruling group), was soon combined with another, much more ambitious programme expressing what might be called Mao's anti-urban bias—namely, an undertaking to disperse all unemployed or under-employed urban residents ("city people divorced from labour") to "the front line of agricultural production."²⁹ By means of these programmes, it was planned to reduce the population of towns and cities (according to a number of reports by the end of the year) by as much as one third.³⁰

In addition to these large-scale, centrally-directed programmes, a number of radical, social and economic experiments, reminiscent of the Great Leap Forward and commune period, were introduced at this time on a trial basis. Reflecting the claim in the 1 October National Day editorial that this new stage of the Cultural Revolution would "consolidate and develop . . . China's socialist economic base," an undertaking to establish higher levels of socialization in agriculture, both in

²⁷ Shanghai Radio, 21 August 1968.

²⁹ NCNA, 21 December 1968.

²⁸ Shanghai Radio, 5 October 1968.

³⁰ *Washington Post*, 21 February 1969.

production and distribution, was reported in a number of provinces shortly after the Twelfth Plenum of the Central Committee was held in October. The most striking of the new reforms reported at this time was the introduction of a "free supply" system under which farm families would receive a large portion of income in the form of "free" food, medical care and education and other basic services.³¹ In some instances, communes inaugurating this new system required that peasants surrender their private plots, and in others, there were plans to re-establish public mess-halls. The primary beneficiaries of this system would be poor peasant households, those with large numbers to feed but weak in labour power.

If the radical reforms outlined above can be considered primarily social in character, it seems clear that this process of "transforming" China's social institutions was expected in time (in the words of Yao Wen-yuan in an August 1968 *Red Flag* article)³² to "greatly stimulate the development of the social productive forces." Although vague as to how and when this upsurge in production would materialize, Yao asserted that "many new things" were appearing on both the agricultural and industrial fronts and that a "vigorous technical revolution" was occurring in the midst of "an excellent and inspiring situation."

It was not long before, in accordance with this injunction to discover "many new things" appearing on the economic front, both the central and provincial press began to report a series of developments reminiscent of the Great Leap Forward. Most reminiscent of the Great Leap Forward period was the reappearance at this time of unrealistic production targets, inflated by a process of escalating original targets to demonstrate revolutionary zeal. This occurred both in industry where "the workers" in individual plants began to insist that original production targets be increased by as much as 20 per cent. and in agriculture where, for example, a 12 February 1969 Hunan broadcast revealed that 100 communes and brigades had raised earlier production goals to a proposed 15 to 20 per cent. increase in grain production and a 25 per cent. increase in total farm output. The second major characteristic of the Great Leap Forward era—the resort to fraudulent statistics—also began to reappear at this time, as in the claim that in the three-year period from 1966–68 Heilungkiang Province had increased grain production 47 per cent. and industrial output 33 per cent. over the preceding 1963–65 period.³³

³¹ For a rare public discussion of this new food supply system, see Wuhan Radio, 19 February 1969. Also see "China's Economy in 1968," *Current Scene* (Hong Kong), Vol. VII, No. 9 (3 May 1969), p. 11.

³² Yao Wen-yuan, "The Working Class Must Exercise Leadership in Everything," *Hung-ch'i*, No. 2 (25 August 1968), in *Peking Review*, 30 August 1968, pp. 4–5.

³³ Harbin Radio, 2 March 1969.

The most important task in the concluding "transformation" phase of the Cultural Revolution, however, was rebuilding the Communist Party, a task taken up at an enlarged plenary session of the Central Committee (the Twelfth Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee) held in Peking from 13 to 31 October. According to the somewhat meagre public record of the proceedings, the delegates attending this Plenum (i) listened to "a most important speech" by Mao Tse-tung which characterized (somewhat defensively) "the current great proletarian cultural revolution" as "absolutely necessary and most timely"; (ii) expelled Liu Shao-ch'i from the Party as a "renegade, traitor and scab" and (in fact without legal authority) dismissed him as well from all posts "outside the Party"; (iii) discussed a new draft Party Constitution; and (iv) decided to convene the long-awaited Ninth Congress of the Communist Party "at an appropriate time."³⁴

Supplementing the terse phraseology of the communiqué, a *Red Flag* editorial (entitled "Absorb Fresh Blood From the Proletariat—An Important Question in Party Consolidation")³⁵ published while the Plenum was in session provided important guidelines to govern a new stage of intensified Party building, one of "eliminating waste" (*i.e.*, purging) and "absorbing fresh blood" (*i.e.*, recruiting) in order to transform the Party, as Mao had demanded, into "a vigorous vanguard organization . . . composed of the advanced elements of the proletariat. . . ." The first of "two interrelated tasks" in "absorbing fresh blood" was of course recruiting new members, identified as "outstanding rebels, primarily advanced elements from among the industrial workers" who had demonstrated in the course of the Cultural Revolution a "strong sense of class struggle" and "firmness in opposing revisionism." The second part of this process—ensuring that admission of new members was controlled in each case by "a new leading body of a revolutionary three-in-one combination which resolutely carried out Chairman Mao's revolutionary line"—was of considerably greater interest.

The suggestion in this editorial that the Maoists in Peking were dissatisfied with the character of the new Party leadership organs which had reappeared at provincial and lower levels goes far to explain why the new phase of Party building initiated at this time was to be so protracted and laborious. As spelled out in this and subsequent editorials in the Shanghai press, what had happened in a number of instances was that there had once again been a "restoration of the old," a phenomenon which had occurred twice before in early 1967

³⁴ "Communiqué of the Enlarged 12th Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China," NCNA, 1 November 1968.

³⁵ *Peking Review*, 25 October 1968, pp. 4-7.

and in the winter of 1967–68 when Mao had ordered the first tentative steps in Party reconstruction. On this occasion, it was charged that the new Party organs were “composed entirely of former personnel” who tended to apply Liu Shao-ch’i’s revisionist line in Party building (*i.e.*, recruit those who “observed discipline” and were “good at production”) and find fault with and exclude “revolutionary rebels” who applied for Party membership.³⁶ If this were permitted to continue, Mao’s undertaking to convert the Party into “a militant, vigorous and vital organization of vanguards” would, as pointed out in a 19 October *Wen hui pao* editorial, come to naught.

The remedy, according to a 25 October *Wen hui pao* editorial, was to “renew” these “leading groups” in the Party both by purging some of the old cadres and by recruiting a number of “new cadres” who would “resolutely defend Chairman Mao’s revolutionary line.”³⁷ When it is remembered that these “leading groups” in the Party were often synonymous with the “leading groups” (*i.e.*, standing committees) of the Revolutionary Committees of which they were a part, it appears that another objective of this Party rectification campaign in the autumn of 1968 was to expand the representation and enhance the role of “new cadres” (the representatives of the revolutionary masses) within the Revolutionary Committee system. Whatever the intent, the provincial press by December was reporting that “ultra-Leftist” rebels were exploiting the revolutionary slogan, “oppose the restoration of the old,” and, once again, attacking worker propaganda teams, the PLA and the Revolutionary Committees.³⁸

The radical and disruptive “struggle-criticism-transformation” movement inaugurated in September 1968 had by the end of the year produced confusion and disorder at all levels of Chinese society. The dominant theme of the 1969 New Year’s Day editorial was, therefore, the need for greater unity (“unified thinking, policies, plans, command, actions”) as a prerequisite for fulfilling the three “glorious and arduous tasks of 1969”—holding the Ninth Party Congress, celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the founding of the Chinese People’s Republic, and “achieving all-round victory” in the Cultural Revolution.³⁹ In terms of the elastic concept of “democratic centralism” (also featured in this New Year’s Day editorial), the emphasis now was to be placed on “centralism” as expressed in a series of moderating policy directives issued by Chairman Mao. In addition to the instructions in the editorial

³⁶ Shanghai City Service, 19 October 1968.

³⁷ Shanghai City Service, 24 October 1968.

³⁸ See, for example, Chengchow Radio, 6 December 1968.

³⁹ Joint *People’s Daily*, *Red Flag* and *Liberation Army Daily* Editorial, “Place Mao Tse-tung’s Thought in Command of Everything,” in *Peking Review*, 3 January 1969, pp. 7–10.

to damp down "class struggle" (e.g., "the target of attack must be narrowed and more people must be helped through education"), a new "proletarian policy on intellectuals" was introduced in February, one which held that "the majority" could be "re-educated" and redeemed.⁴⁰ The extension of the new moderating trend to encompass the economy and society as a whole was then revealed in key editorials in February and March dealing with industry and agriculture, the shift towards more prudent policies in each being justified by Chairman Mao's most recent directive: "Serious attention should be paid to policy in the stage of struggle-criticism-transformation in the great proletarian cultural revolution."⁴¹

It is important to note the rationale for this general retreat, as set forth in these and an accompanying March *Red Flag* editorial entitled "On Summing up Experience."⁴² The responsibility for failure could not, of course, be assigned to Mao's radical programmes, but rather to "leading comrades at all levels" who had failed to understand "Chairman Mao's basic ideas . . . and integrate them with specific conditions in each department and unit." Since these "leading comrades" in most cases were PLA representatives in the Revolutionary Committee structure, the military once again was being held responsible for the failure of Mao's Cultural Revolution policies, charged this time with violating the "mass line" and resorting to coercion ("leading cadres should . . . guard against arrogance and rashness . . . [and] . . . listen attentively to the . . . masses")⁴³ when confronted by resistance to these radical reforms.

If domestic pressures were primarily responsible for this tactical retreat, the new Soviet threat exemplified by the large-scale border clash on 2 March also played an important role. It was necessary, as the same March *Red Flag* editorial emphasized, to "raise the level of understanding," not only of domestic problems but also of "the nature of Soviet revisionist social imperialism" and to "maintain high vigilance" concerning "the aggressive ambitions of the Soviet revisionist renegade clique." It was on this sombre note, then, that the long-awaited Ninth Party Congress convened on 1 April 1969.

THE NINTH PARTY CONGRESS

"From the opening of the Ninth National Congress to . . . [its] conclusion. . . , Chairman Mao consistently issued a call of great significance: 'Unite and strive for still greater victories.'"—Joint *People's*

⁴⁰ Shanghai Radio, 6 February 1969.

⁴¹ See, for example, *People's Daily Editorial*, "Grasp Revolution, Promote Production and Win New Victories on the Industry Front," 21 February 1969, in *Peking Review*, 28 February 1969, pp. 4–6.

⁴² *Peking Review*, 21 March 1969, pp. 3–5.

⁴³ *Ibid.* p. 4.

Daily, Red Flag, Liberation Army Daily Editorial, "Hold Aloft the Banner of Unity of the Ninth National Congress and Strive for Still Greater Victories," 9 June 1969.⁴⁴

For those who looked to the Ninth Party Congress to provide answers to basic questions about the recent past and future of Chinese politics, this first national congress of the Chinese Communist Party to be held in 11 years was a major disappointment. Whether viewed in terms of the new Party leadership, the new Party structure or the course of future political and economic policy, the published record of the Congress (three communiqués, Lin Piao's political report and the text of the new Party Constitution) was generally vague and contradictory. In view of the ambiguous character of the documentation, one's view of developments at the Congress is bound to be coloured by one's view of developments preceding the Congress, indeed by one's view of the Cultural Revolution as a whole.

Lin Piao's political report to the some 1,500 delegates attending the Congress seemed designed in large part to dispel erroneous views of the Cultural Revolution which were apparently widely held in China. Developing the theme which Mao had introduced at the Twelfth Plenum the preceding October, Lin's report was largely a retrospective review of the Cultural Revolution justified as "absolutely necessary and most timely for consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat, preventing capitalist restoration and building socialism."⁴⁵ Although hailed in the 14 April press communiqué as "a great programme guiding China's socialist revolution and construction," Lin's report, characterized by retrospection, abstraction and defensiveness, was anything but that.

Organization of the Congress appears to have been controlled from the top. As Hsieh Fu-chih had revealed in a speech in October 1967, the plan was to organize the Congress "from the top downwards" by having the Party Centre select those who would attend.⁴⁶ Although there is some evidence of uncertainty and disagreement in the pre-Congress deliberations of the top leadership, the proceedings of this Congress appear also to have been controlled from above, in particular the method of "electing" the members of the Presidium and the new Central Committee by the Congress and of the Politburo and its Standing Committee by the first plenary session of the Ninth Central Committee held immediately after the Congress adjourned.

It is interesting to note in this connexion that an apparently deliberate attempt was made to mislead foreign readers concerning the nature of this "election" process by using the term "elected" in the

⁴⁴ *Peking Review*, 13 June 1969, p. 6.

⁴⁵ *CB*, No. 880, p. 18.

⁴⁶ *SCMP*, No. 4097, p. 2.

translation of the new Party Constitution.⁴⁷ The Chinese might more correctly be rendered “produced,”⁴⁸ reflecting the strong disdain for electoral processes expressed in the 15 October 1968 *Red Flag* editorial on Party rectification, which had both “criticized and repudiated the formalism of blind faith in elections” and had stipulated that both Party and Revolutionary Committees should be “established not by elections, but by relying directly upon the action of the great numbers of revolutionary people.”⁴⁹

More important than these considerations in appraising the new Party organs is the character of the men selected to lead them. The selection of Mao as Chairman and Lin as Vice-Chairman as the only two officers to head the Central Committee, together with the new practice of listing other Politburo members by stroke-order, was clearly designed to underline the primacy of these two top leaders, with Lin Piao now officially enshrined in the new Party Constitution as “Comrade Mao Tse-tung’s close comrade-in-arms and successor.” The composition of the Politburo Standing Committee, by far the most important Party organ, demonstrates graphically the continued domination of the top Party leadership by Maoist radicals. Consisting of just five men (Mao, Lin, Chou En-lai, Ch’ên Po-ta and K’ang Sheng), this Standing Committee is similar to the one formed at the outset of the Cultural Revolution at the Eleventh Plenum in August 1966, and, in its composition, places control over the conduct of the Party’s daily and most important affairs in the hands of militant Maoists by a margin of four to one.

Less clear cut and therefore susceptible to divergent interpretation is the composition of the full 25-member Politburo “elected” on 28 April at the first plenary session of the new Central Committee.⁵⁰ To some observers, the main characteristic of this new Politburo is the significantly greater representation of the PLA (12 of the 25, including Lin Piao and his wife) compared either with the previous Politburo or the list of 14 who had comprised the *de facto* leadership of the regime since mid-1968. To these observers, this increase in military representation signified a shift in the balance of power in the top leadership in favour of proponents of relative “moderation” in domestic and foreign policy.

It is important to note, however, that two of the 10 military representatives (in addition to Lin and his wife) are superannuated and inactive veterans of the Red Army (Chu Teh and Liu Po-ch’eng) and

⁴⁷ *CB*, No. 880, p. 54.

⁴⁸ The same term was used in the draft Constitution. See the translation in *The China Quarterly*, No. 37 (January–March 1969), p. 172.

⁴⁹ *Peking Review*, 25 October 1968, p. 7.

⁵⁰ *NCNA*, 28 April 1969.

that four more are military men of a very special type. These four (Chief of Staff Huang Yung-sheng, Commander of the Air Force Wu Fa-hsien, Director of the Rear Services Department Ch'iu Hui-tso and Navy First Political Commissar Li Tso-p'eng) have all been closely associated with Lin Piao for a number of years, have all survived Red Guard attack by *inter alia* making "self-criticisms" and have all played key political roles in the Cultural Revolution.⁵¹ When it is further noted that the two military region commanders (Hsü Shih-yu and Ch'en Hsien-lien) named to the Politburo have also been closely linked with Lin Piao and also have survived the "test" of Red Guard denunciation by "self-criticism" and protracted sessions of "Mao-study" in Peking,⁵² it appears that an equally tenable interpretation of the addition of these military leaders to the Politburo is that they reflect an expansion in the power and influence of Lin Piao in this leading Party organ.

A much more difficult question is judging the political complexion of the new, much larger Central Committee "elected" at the Congress. In general, the composition of the Ninth Central Committee suggests a conscious effort to apply the "three-way alliance" principle underlying the Revolutionary Committee structure at provincial and lower levels of government to the Party structure at the centre. Employing a criterion of primary association, the 279 full and alternate members of the new Central Committee consist of: (1) representatives of the PLA, about 40 per cent.; (2) representatives of "revolutionary cadres," about 30 per cent.; and (3) representatives of the "revolutionary masses," also about 30 per cent. In addition to the preponderant share of the PLA, the dominant proportion (well over 50 per cent.) of regional representation (both from provincial Revolutionary Committees and the Military Regions and Districts) is another important feature of the new Central Committee worth noting.

The crucial question in judging the political complexion of the new Central Committee, then, concerns the character of these military leaders who already dominate the provincial Revolutionary Committee structure and who now have been assigned a major role in the Party leadership. On this point, the evidence is also mixed and does not support a clear-cut judgement. At the outset of the Cultural Revolution, Mao had called upon the PLA (in his famous 7 May 1966 directive) to become proficient in "politics, military affairs and culture," to engage in industry and agriculture, to "participate in each struggle of the cultural revolution"

⁵¹ See, for example, the identification of these four as members of a reorganized "Administrative Unit of the Military [Affairs] Commission" in *Ts'an-k'ao tzu-liao* (Reference Material), July 1968, SCMP, No. 4222, p. 7.

⁵² For a defence of Hsü Shih-yu by K'ang Sheng in early 1968, see "Old K'ang on Comrade Hsü Shih-yu . . ." *Wen-ko t'ung-hsun* (Cultural Revolution Bulletin), March 1968, in SCMP, No. 4166, p. 14.

and in this way come "to play a very great role indeed."⁵³ But this role was clearly secondary to that of the Red Guards in the early stages of the Cultural Revolution, and there is reason to believe that Mao was reluctant in January 1967 to order the PLA to intervene formally in the revolution, an order which soon led the army to carry out most of the functions previously exercised by the Party and government at provincial and local levels.

There is convincing proof, moreover, of Mao's and Lin's dissatisfaction with the initial performance of the PLA as the *de facto* government in the fact that roughly half of the Military Region and Military District Commands were subsequently purged and reorganized. Even after this large-scale reorganization and the selection of new military commanders to positions of leadership in the new provincial Revolutionary Committee structure, the performance of a number of these replacements was subjected to severe criticism in the anti-Rightist campaign spearheaded by Chiang Ch'ing (Mao's wife) in the spring of 1968. As noted above, the military was also assigned major responsibility for the failure of the new stage of the Cultural Revolution—"carrying out the tasks of struggle-criticism-transformation conscientiously"—begun in the autumn of 1968. These military commanders, however characterized, could hardly meet the criteria laid down by Lin Piao (in his Eleventh Plenum speech of August 1966) for the selection of new Party leaders—that they eagerly studied the thought of Mao Tse-tung, attached great importance to political-ideological work and were filled with revolutionary zeal.⁵⁴

On the other hand, the PLA has discharged its role as the main executer of policy during the Cultural Revolution, and as the whipping-boy for problems resulting from that policy, with remarkable discipline and obedience. With the possible exception of the Wuhan Incident, there is no known instance of local military commanders directly defying orders from Peking, orders which frequently resulted in their being subjected to physical attack and humiliating abuse at the hands of the Red Guards. When mistakes have been made, they have either been mistakes of omission (e.g., failure to identify and support the "revolutionary Left") or of misunderstanding (e.g., failure to grasp the intricacies and calculated ambiguities of Mao's "mass line"), or the result of a natural tendency to interpret ambiguous directives so

⁵³ Although not identified as such, the contents of this directive appear in the *People's Daily* editorial, "The Whole Country Should Become a Great School of Mao Tse-tung's Thought," 1 August 1966, in *Peking Review*, 5 August 1966, pp. 6-7.

⁵⁴ For a discussion of this speech, see Philip Bridgham, "Mao's 'Cultural Revolution': Origin and Development," *The China Quarterly*, No. 29 (January-March 1967), pp. 25-26.

as to minimize disorder and safeguard their own positions. Whatever the case, those local military commanders who have survived have accepted responsibility for these mistakes by engaging in "self-criticism." On balance, then, it appears that these military leaders at the regional and provincial levels to whom important Party and government functions have been assigned should be characterized as essentially loyal to Mao.

If there was uncertainty about the character of the new leadership and the nature of the new structure of power emerging after the Ninth Party Congress, there was also uncertainty about the course of future political and economic policy as discussed by Lin Piao in his political report to the Congress. The new stage of "carrying out the tasks of struggle-criticism-transformation conscientiously" begun in September 1968 had been modified by a new set of instructions issued by Mao in early 1969, all directed towards slackening the pace and restoring minimum levels of economic, social and political stability in the name of "unity." These instructions were now codified and presented by Lin as a series of "Party policies" concerning the intellectuals (to be "re-educated"), cadres (to be "liberated," but only if properly repentant), mass organizations (to form "revolutionary great alliances"), the "class struggle" (be both "lenient" and "severe" towards "class enemies") and the economy ("grasp revolution and promote production"). As Lin put it, "the main question at present is to carry . . . [these policies] . . . out to the letter."⁵⁵

Presented with these vague and contradictory instructions, the newly established Revolutionary Committees were then ordered to apply them in every factory, school, commune and all other basic units in society "in a deep-going, meticulous, down to earth and appropriate way," or, as Lin later put it, in accordance with "the specific conditions of the unit concerned."⁵⁶ The dilemma of the Revolutionary Committee leadership held responsible for solving problems by means of "the living study and application of Mao Tse-tung thought" was twofold. First was the undeniable fact that, as one provincial press commentary put it, "it requires time and effort for one to fully understand Chairman Mao's instructions." Much more difficult than this, however, was the task of "applying" these instructions in the light of actual conditions in one's own department or unit; that is, "educating the masses in policy and translating the Party's policy into the conscious action of the masses."

More specifically, how should the Revolutionary Committee leadership act, as the problem was posed in a Shanghai editorial not long

⁵⁵ *CB*, No. 880, pp. 34-37.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* p. 35.

before the Congress, "when faced with certain opinions or actions of the masses which do not conform with the Party's policies?"⁵⁷ Since it was taken on faith, as this same editorial went on to point out, that "the masses support the Party's policies," any such appearance of conflict could only result from "errors" by the leadership, either in understanding or applying the policy in question.

A common reaction of local leadership cadres, then, was to be "hesitant" and "fearful" and take refuge in silence when the masses "disagreed" with "Party policy." Lacking clear policy directives from above, rent by the differing viewpoints of the three disparate components of the three-way alliance, and confronted by the resistance of the masses to Mao's radical social and economic programmes, it is no wonder that the performance of Mao's new revolutionary organ of power—the Revolutionary Committee—was characterized in the spring and early summer of 1969 by instability, disunity and a general paralysis of leadership.

CONSTRUCTION: THE THIRD ATTEMPT

"At the first plenary session of the Party's Ninth Central Committee, Chairman Mao taught us: 'In the great proletarian cultural revolution, some tasks have not yet been fulfilled and they should now be carried on, for instance, the tasks of struggle-criticism-transformation.'"—*Joint People's Daily, Red Flag, Liberation Army Daily* Editorial, "Long Live the Communist Party of China," 1 July 1969.⁵⁸

As revealed in excerpts and a brief account of a speech delivered to the first Plenum of the Ninth Central Committee held in late April, Mao Tse-tung issued important guidelines which would govern the next phase of the Cultural Revolution extending through the summer of 1969. Although portrayed as a continuation of the "struggle-criticism-transformation" stage inaugurated the preceding September, it was to be carried out in a significantly different way—by relying primarily on persuasion and voluntary co-operation in place of the coercion and enforced compliance which had characterized the earlier attempt. As in earlier phases of the Cultural Revolution when, in Mao's view, the pendulum had swung too far in the direction of order imposed from above, it was necessary once again to stress the role of the revolutionary masses. And, as on each occasion when this had happened in the past, the end result would be still another outbreak of factional violence and anarchism as Mao's revolutionary supporters would contend for position and influence in the new revolutionary structure of power.

Mao's view of domestic political problems, as revealed in his April Central Committee Plenum speech, was typically optimistic. Just as

⁵⁷ Quoted on Shanghai Radio, 28 February 1969.

⁵⁸ NCNA, 30 June 1969.

he had earlier maintained (in the autumn of 1967) that "there is no conflict of fundamental interests in the ranks of the Red Guards and revolutionaries," so he now asserted that the "contradictions" between leading members of the provincial Revolutionary Committees and between mass organizations were "non-antagonistic" in character and could be resolved by improving the quality of political and ideological work. It was at this point, apparently in reference to the need for a more effective political apparatus, that Mao then alluded, somewhat cryptically, to "the problem of the army" which "exists in . . . [our] . . . work."⁵⁹

As disclosed in a series of key editorials throughout 1969, the "problem of the army," as the primary source of "leading cadres" in the new Revolutionary Committee structure, was essentially one of a defective work style, characterized variously as a tendency towards "arrogance and rashness,"⁶⁰ or being "crude and careless,"⁶¹ which led to "errors" in the implementation of Mao's revolutionary programmes. In terms of relationships within the three-way alliance structure of the Revolutionary Committees, this work style led to a slighting or suppressing of the viewpoints of the civilian components of these committees (the rehabilitated Party cadres and representatives of the "revolutionary masses"). In terms of the relationship between the PLA-dominated Revolutionary Committees and the masses, this work style, as noted earlier, violated the dictates of the "mass line" by substituting coercion and administrative decrees for the "responsible, down to earth, thoroughgoing and painstaking" work style⁶² required to persuade the masses to accept Mao's revolutionary policies.

As seen by Mao, three separate but related steps were required to solve this problem. The first was to place new constraints on the PLA's use of force, to prevent repetition of the "mistake" mentioned in Mao's Central Committee Plenum speech that "too many people have been arrested." The second was a campaign to rehabilitate more experienced and expert "veteran Party cadres," cited as "generally having richer experience and a better understanding of the Party's policies" and as therefore being more adept at translating these policies "into the conscious action of the masses."⁶³

⁵⁹ *Tokyo Shimbun*, 27 October 1969. Although it is not known how this summary of Mao's speech was acquired, the contents are credible and supported by subsequent developments.

⁶⁰ *Red Flag* Editorial, "On Summing Up Experience," 14 March 1969, in *Peking Review*, 21 March 1969, p. 4.

⁶¹ Joint *People's Daily*, *Red Flag* and *Liberation Army Daily* Editorial, "The People's Army Is Invincible," 1 August 1969, in NCNA, 31 July 1969.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ See, for example, *People's Daily* Editorial, "To Be Good at Translating the Party's Policy Into Action by the Masses," 17 February 1969, in NCNA, 16 February 1969.

The third step was a concerted effort to increase the representation of "new cadres"—the representatives of revolutionary mass organizations—on the Revolutionary Committees at provincial and local levels. The revival of these mass organizations, which had supposedly been dissolved in late summer 1968, to a position of some power and influence was one of the most intriguing developments in the post-Congress period. Justified as necessary to "unite the overwhelming majority of the people," the decision by Peking to reinstate radical Red Guards to positions of leadership in a number of provinces (e.g., Kwangtung)⁶⁴ also served to strengthen civilian representation at the expense of the PLA at provincial and local levels of government and provide these Red Guard leaders with still another chance to qualify as "revolutionary successors."

In spite of the dominant theme of "unity," the net effect of the Ninth Party Congress was to produce further disunity. By insisting on retaining the three-way alliance organizational form of the Revolutionary Committee, Mao is attempting to build a new power structure which is inherently unstable. Representing disparate groups with widely differing interests, the three components of the leadership of these new organs of power are also expected to perform differing roles, with the PLA responsible for maintaining order, the old cadres charged with providing administrative expertise, and the new cadres assigned such important tasks as maintaining contact with the masses, promoting revolutionary enthusiasm and, presumably, serving as revolutionary watchdogs to check and report on the performance of the military and veteran cadres to Peking. It is not surprising that following the Congress the Chinese provincial press was filled with reports of continuing "disunity" and, a new phenomenon, of "paralysis" within the leadership of these Revolutionary Committees.⁶⁵

The newly emerging leadership organs of the Party were, as noted earlier, also to consist of the same "revolutionary three-in-one combination."⁶⁶ These reconstructed Party organs were then expected, as reaffirmed in the 1 July 1969 Party Anniversary editorial, to "gradually form . . . a strong core of Party leadership" within the Revolutionary Committee structure, one which would "be armed with Mao Tse-tung thought, exercise unified leadership and maintain close ties with the masses." Instead of promoting "unified leadership," however, the immediate effect of Mao's insistence that Red Guards and "revolutionary rebels" be included in the new Party organs was to

⁶⁴ Canton Radio, 21 June 1969.

⁶⁵ Changsha Radio, 13 April 1969.

⁶⁶ *Red Flag* Editorial, "Absorb Fresh Blood from the Proletariat—An Important Question in Party Consolidation," 14 October 1968, in *Peking Review*, 25 October 1968, p. 6.

intensify factional struggle. And, as provincial press discussion of the problems of Party consolidation and building soon pointed out, the end result of this renewed effort in the summer of 1969 to apply the "three-way alliance" principle to Party reconstruction was to "bring bourgeois factionalism into the Party."⁶⁷

Following a by now familiar pattern of development, Mao's decision in the spring of 1969 to enhance the role of the revolutionary masses at the expense of the PLA in the revolutionary structure of power soon produced a nation wide outbreak of factional violence and anarchism. In perennially troubled Shansi Province, for example, the two "revolutionary mass organizations" (or rather, as Peking put it in a Central Committee directive issued on 23 July to deal with Shansi, "a handful of class enemies and bad leaders" who had "wormed their way" into these organizations) utilized their new freedom of action to: (i) "organize special armed combat teams for fighting"; (ii) "assault PLA organs and units"; (iii) "sabotage railroads, highways and bridges"; (iv) "loot and occupy state banks, warehouses and stores"; (v) "sabotage industrial and agricultural production"; and (vi) commit other "extremely serious counter-revolutionary crimes."⁶⁸

In September the campaign against "bourgeois factionalism" and anarchism assumed national proportions. Increasingly apprehensive about the possibility of Soviet attack, the Maoist leadership responded by launching a massive drive to "prepare against war" in which, apparently, the PLA was authorized to use whatever force was required to restore public order. Threatened by an external enemy and beset with a host of unresolved domestic problems relating to the construction of a new political, economic and social order, it is no wonder that the dominant mood of the 1 October ceremonies commemorating the 20th anniversary of Communist rule in China was one of sobriety and restraint.

PROSPECTS

"We must . . . carry out the tasks of struggle-criticism-transformation conscientiously . . . [and] . . . carry the great proletarian cultural revolution through to the end. . . ."—Lin Piao, Speech at 20th Anniversary Celebration, 1 October 1969.⁶⁹

Despite the mood of uncertainty which characterized the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of

⁶⁷ See, for example, Chengchow Radio, 30 September 1969.

⁶⁸ "Proclamation of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China," in *Chung-pao chou-k'an* (Hong Kong), 29 August 1969, in *JPRS*, No. 48,492, pp. 1-4. See also *The China Quarterly* No. 40 (October-December 1969), pp. 172-3.

⁶⁹ NCNA, 1 October 1969.

China, there is good reason to believe, as indicated by Lin Piao in his keynote speech on that occasion, that the Maoist leadership intends to persevere in the face of great odds towards the achievement of the original goals of the Cultural Revolution. An appraisal of progress to date in achieving these goals demonstrates that there is a considerable distance to go.

Progress towards the first goal—that of “smashing revisionism”—has been most notable, at least in a temporary sense. In this initial, destructive phase of the Cultural Revolution, Mao has largely succeeded in eliminating his opposition by destroying or radically modifying those institutions charged with breeding “revisionism”—the Party and government bureaucracy, the bourgeois-dominated educational system and, to a lesser extent, the whole fabric of urban society held responsible for corrupting the moral and spiritual life of the Chinese people. Although temporarily successful, the very nature of this undertaking would appear to be self-defeating, if for no other reason than that the political, educational and social institutions of the new Maoist revolutionary order will in time harden into a new Establishment.

Progress towards the second, related and even more ambitious goal of the Cultural Revolution—that of changing the very nature of Chinese man by means of a political indoctrination campaign of unprecedented intensity and magnitude—has been much less notable. Having “destroyed ‘the palaces of hell-rulers’” (as Lin Piao put it in his political report to the Ninth Party Congress) who in the past had “blocked Chairman Mao’s instructions,” it was now possible for all of the 700 million Chinese people to “hear Chairman Mao’s voice directly,” a momentous development which Lin went on to characterize as “the most significant achievement of the great proletarian cultural revolution.”⁷⁰ But, as suggested by the negative response of the “revolutionary masses” to the first attempt in the winter of 1968–69 to revive some of the radical features of the Great Leap Forward and commune programmes, this view of the Chinese people as willing and eager to subordinate self in order to promote Mao’s visionary aims appears to be erroneous. Indeed, this postulate of an identity of interest between Mao and the Chinese people as a whole appears to be a basic fallacy which sooner or later will destroy the Cultural Revolution.

Progress towards the third goal enumerated by Lin Piao in his report to the Party Congress—“strengthening and consolidating the economic base of socialism”—has been minimal, and, in fact, the effort so far to realize Mao’s visionary plan for accelerated economic development has probably been counter-productive. This plan, as already noted,

⁷⁰ *CB*, No. 880, p. 31.

embodies features of the earlier Great Leap Forward (the emphasis on manpower and political enthusiasm in place of capital and material incentives) and commune (the building of large-scale, self-supporting and publicly owned economic and social units in the countryside) programmes. At the same time, a number of its features can be traced to Mao's famous 7 May 1966 directive,⁷¹ particularly its goals of redirecting material and human resources to the countryside and of creating an omni-competent, all-purpose Chinese man and thus eliminating (a long-term Maoist goal) the three great differences between town and country, industry and agriculture, and mental and physical labour. Although the current moderate trend in economic policy indicates an awareness of practical difficulties, there is no reason to believe that Mao has abandoned the pursuit of his basic vision for the construction of a selfless, egalitarian, authentic Communist society in China.

The undertaking to achieve the fourth and final goal—the search for “revolutionary successors”—has in some ways been the most frustrating and least successful of all. At the very top, Lin Piao of course is now in place as Mao's successor, but there is considerable doubt both about Lin's health and his ability to endure after Mao is gone. As noted above, the Politburo is also weighted with hand-picked supporters, but few if any of these are both talented and youthful enough to take over when the present generation goes. It is at provincial and lower levels, however, where the failure to identify and promote to positions of leadership Mao's “revolutionary Leftist” supporters has been most apparent.

This more than any other reason explains why the programme of Party rectification and building under way for more than two years has achieved so little. Despite the flurry of activity at the Centre (two Central Committee Plenums and a National Congress between October 1968 and April 1969), the Party has yet to assume its assigned role of leadership within the provincial Revolutionary Committee system, nor, with a few exceptions, has it done so at basic levels of society. The primary cause for this snail's pace in Party building appears to be Mao Tse-tung's insistence that the same three-way alliance principle underlying the new government (Revolutionary Committee) structure also govern the process of Party reconstruction. Until such time as sufficient “new blood” (“new cadres”) is brought into the leadership, it appears that the Party will continue to lead a shadowy, ghost-like existence at provincial and local levels of the new structure of power.

⁷¹ See above, p. 17, n. 53.

MAO'S CULTURAL REVOLUTION

These, then, are some of the many tasks of the Cultural Revolution which remain to be completed. To the extent that they embody visionary aims, they can of course never be completed. But it would be a misreading both of the man himself and of the revolution which is so distinctively his to think that Mao Tse-tung will abandon the pursuit of these chimerical goals. As long as Mao Tse-tung continues to dominate his Party and people, the Cultural Revolution will continue, although perhaps under a new name, in Communist China.

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