The Cultural Revolution and the Chinese Political System[1]

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ONE of the most extraordinary and puzzling events of the twentieth century is surely the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China. This most profound crisis in the history of the Peking regime provides us with the best available opportunity to study the Chinese political system. For it is during a crisis that the nature, the strength, and the vulnerabilities of a political system fully reveal themselves. Furthermore, we can attempt not only to note the unique features of this extraordinary event, and of Chinese politics itself, but also to see whether the seemingly unique Chinese experience does not reveal some universal dilemma of the human condition and fundamental problems of the socio-political order in a magnified and easily recognizable form. It is my belief that the Chinese political system prior to the Cultural Revolution is one of the purest forms found in human experience of a type of association in which there is a clear-cut separation between the elite and the masses. If one follows Ralf Dahrendorf in asserting that in every social organization there is a differential distribution of power and authority, a division involving domination and subjection,[2] the Chinese political system can be taken as one of the polar examples of all social organizations, showing clearly their possibilities and limitations, their problems and dilemmas. From this perspective, the Maoist vision as it has revealed itself in its extreme form during the early phases of the Cultural Revolution can be considered a critique of this type of political organization. It represents an attempt to minimize the consequences arising from the division between domination and subjection by changing the pattern of participation of the dominated in the political process within every single organization, by redefining the role of those in positions of authority, and by changing their attitudes and values so that the line between domination and subjection is blurred and a new type of relationship between the two groups will be obtained.

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[2] Ralf Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1959), pp. 165, 169.

Beyond this, the ideal society in Mao's vision is one in which the absolute validity of its basic values and norms are beyond question, total commitment to societal goals is demanded from the individual, and all powers are employed in repeated efforts to realize his vision. In this totally mobilized society everyone is deeply concerned with public affairs. Every act must be relevant to politics. Every person must actively participate in the political system and processes. It is commonplace to say that Mao's vision has its roots in his experience in conducting guerrilla warfare which requires total commitment and preoccupation with power to achieve a common objective. But, in Mao's view, this vision also contains the proper corrective for an increasingly bureaucratized, modernizing society in which the gap between values and practices widens, idealistic pronouncements become empty rhetoric, commitments to societal goals are weak, and power is used to pursue narrowly defined interests. In the Cultural Revolution, the elevation of the cult of Mao's thought to a new height is meant to be, among other things, a reaffirmation of the societal values and goals. The repeated emphasis on "the three constantly read articles" is intended to bring about total commitment. Power is to be recaptured and used to implement his vision.

Obviously, the establishment and the successful functioning of the Maoist political system requires a concomitant change in public and private morality and indeed in what we call human nature. Marx has written that "the whole of history is nothing but a continual transformation of human nature."[3] Whereas Marx seems, as Robert Tucker puts it, to "look to the future Communist revolution as the source of a radical transformation of man or 'change of self,'" Mao in effect has attempted to make a series of revolutions and to bring Communist society into existence by a radical transformation of man. From this general perspective, let me now first discuss the pre-Cultural Revolution political system and then the course of the Cultural Revolution so that I can give concrete meaning to these abstract generalizations.

Inner-Party Tensions prior to the Cultural Revolution

Prior to the Cultural Revolution, Party dominance operated not only in the political system as a whole but also in every organization from the top to the lowest levels.[4] As the Three-anti and Five-anti campaigns,

[3] Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, p. 160, quoted in Robert C. Tucker, "The Marxian Revolutionary Idea," in Carl J. Friedrich (ed.), *Revolution* (New York: Atherton Press, 1967), p. 219.

[4] A. Doak Barnett, *Cadres, Bureaucracy, and Political Power in Communist China* (N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1967).

the socialist transformation of industry and commerce, and the collectivization of agriculture show, the ruling class of Party leaders, cadres, and members could effectively control the demands of the masses and impose programmes of sweeping change against the wishes of the non-elite. At the only time during which the Party was openly and directly criticized in the spring of 1957, at its own invitation, it could abruptly terminate the blooming of a Hundred Flowers and launch an anti-rightist campaign to eradicate the "poisonous weeds" and to suppress the "freaks and monsters." As the aftermath of the Great Leap Forward and the establishment of the communes demonstrate, only passive resistance and slowdown on a massive scale could thwart the will of the Party.

When such a high degree of centralization of power in the ruling class was combined with a clear-cut division involving domination and subjection, the substantive policies followed by the elite had enormous and immediate effect on the population; and the way in which the elite dealt with the non-elite was also of crucial importance in determining their relationship. Although Mao cast his analysis of political problems in Marxist terms, his actions constantly reflect, and his pronouncements sometimes explicitly reveal, a firm recognition that conflicts arising from differential distribution of authority in the society represents the most basic fact of social life. In his famous speech, "On the Correct Handling of the Contradictions among the People," he departed from Soviet orthodoxy in his open admission of the possibility of contradictions "between the government and the masses," between "those in positions of leadership and the led."[5] His juxtaposition of non-antagonistic contradictions among the people and antagonistic contradictions between the enemy and ourselves suggests that he is quite aware of both the consensual and coercive bases of a political system. His technique of "thought reform" consists essentially of a method of coercive persuasion which skilfully manipulates man's two fundamental motives for obeying political power.

The materials disclosed during the Cultural Revolution, as well

[5] Mao Tse-tung, *On the Correct Handling of the Contradictions among the People* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1957). For Mao's departure from Soviet orthodoxy, see G. F. Hudson, "Introduction" in Mao Tse-tung, *Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom* (N.Y.: The New Leader). Mao is apparently not the only one who has made this point. According to the Maoists, Liu wrote in his "On Organizational and Disciplinary Self-Cultivation by Communists" that the Party "is a combination of contradictions. It has leaders and those who are led, Party leaders and Party members, the higher Party organizations and lower Party organizations." *Peking Review*, 15 November 1968, p. 18. This was a report delivered by Liu in the early 1940s at the Central Party School. The quotation can be found on page 3 of a mimeographed version in Chinese, *Tsu-chih shang ho chi-lü shang ti hsiu-yang*. See also Franz Schurmann, *Ideology and Organization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), p. 54.

as the very fact that it occurred, have added immensely to, and modified in some fundamental aspects, what little we know about the power relationship among the top leaders and the process of decision-making. Elsewhere I have tried to show the incongruity between Mao's thought in its radicalized version and the changing social reality in China.[6] I have also attempted to indicate how this incongruity disrupted the pre-existing unity between the ideology, the leader and the Party organization. What needs to be stressed here is that the Party organization has shown greater willingness and ability to adjust itself to the new, emergent social situation than Mao, who had earlier demonstrated a profound realism in political-military affairs during the Civil War. Over the years, the head or heads of the Party organization have developed a perspective and approach to China's problems quite different from those of the supreme leader. These differences between the supreme leader and the Party organization constitute the political reality behind Mao's rhetoric on the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and on the struggle between two lines.[7] Hopefully, an examination of these differences and the ability or inability to resolve them will deepen our understanding of the decision-making process and political relationships in China.

The first and basic issue confronting a revolutionary regime is whether it should rapidly implement its revolutionary programme or give priority to the consolidation of revolutionary gains and the newly-established institutions. With the possible exception of the Hundred Flowers episode and the subsequent anti-rightist campaign, in which the roles played by Mao and the Party organization are still a matter of doubt, Mao has always been the promoter and initiator of new radical policies. With the possible exception of the controversial case of the Socialist Education Movement during 1964, Liu has always tried to consolidate the gains and tended to move more slowly. As the head of the Party organization, he was more a co-ordinator of activities than an initiator of new policies. In the process of policy-making as distinct from Party management, he generally played the role of approving, supporting, or rejecting ideas or programmes advanced by his subordinates. The programmes which he supported or approved were generally less radical than those later adopted by Mao. Liu was also the spokesman and executor of the more moderate

[6] Tang Tsou, "Revolution, Reintegration, and Crisis in Communist China," in Ping-ti Ho and Tang Tsou (eds.), *China's Heritage and the Communist Political System* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 277–347.

[7] For an earlier discussion of the tensions within the Party in terms of the differences in approaches between the guerilla leader and the political commissar, see John W. Lewis, "Leader, Commissar, and Bureaucrat: The Chinese Political System in the Last Days of the Revolution," *ibid.* pp. 449–481.

policies of the regime, which in all probability he wholeheartedly favoured.

The contrast between Mao's drive for rapid revolutionary changes and Liu's preference for consolidation was most clearly documented by the recent revelations regarding the programme of setting up agricultural co-operatives. In his first self-criticism posted by the Red Guards on 26 December 1966, Liu admitted that in 1951 he incorrectly criticized the Shansi provincial committee's decision to develop the mutual aid teams in the old liberated areas by forming agricultural production co-operatives.[8] In 1955, Liu also gave at least tacit support to the proposal of Vice-Premier Teng Tzu-hui to dissolve 200,000 agricultural co-operatives. When Mao declared, on 31 July 1955, that some comrades were tottering along like a woman with bound feet, and proposed a programme of rapid co-operativization, he was referring directly to Teng Tzu-hui and indirectly criticizing Liu. The caution of Liu and Teng reflected the inherent conservative tendency of a vast organization which had to implement policies and to deal with day-to-day problems of a very practical nature.

Within the Marxist framework, this preference for consolidation and for incremental change was justified by emphasizing the limits imposed on human effort by the objective forces of production and by the need to develop production as a precondition for changes in social and economic institutions. Liu has been charged with having said at different times during the early years of the regime that "the socialist revolution is possible" . . . "only when industry accounts for 40 or 50 per cent. of the total production," that "short of industrialization, it is categorically impossible to realize the collectivization of agriculture," and that restriction on rich peasants, nationalization and collectivization "prematurely" would "hamper the growth of the productive forces."[9] In contrast to these views, Mao believes that "in certain conditions, such aspects [of the society] as the relations of production, theory and the superstructure in turn manifest themselves in the principal and decisive role."[10]

The different approaches between the supreme leader and the organization are also reflected in the ideological issues of the status of class struggle in China. After the socialist transformation of industry and commerce and the programme of co-operativization were well under

[8] One of the three slightly different versions of this self-criticism available to the author indicates that this self-criticism was made on 23 November 1966, at a Central Committee Work Conference. There was a central work conference in October 1966. It is possible that this self-criticism was made during that conference.

[9] Editorial Department of *Capital Red Guard*, "P'i-ch'ou Chung-kuo Ho-lu-hsiao-fu ti fan-ko-ming sheng-ch'an-li lun" ("Criticize China's Khrushchev's Reactionary Theory on Production Forces Until It Smells"), *Jen-min jih-pao* (*People's Daily*), 3 September 1967.

[10] Quoted in *Peking Review*, 13 October 1967, p. 11.

way, Liu declared in his political report to the Eighth Party Congress that "the question of who will win in the struggle between socialism and capitalism in our country has now been decided." [11] A resolution of the Eighth Party Congress declared that "the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in our country has been basically resolved" and that "the major contradiction in our country is between the advanced social systems and the backward productive forces of society." [12] The authorship of these two statements has been attributed by the Maoists to Liu. Liu himself admitted in his third self-criticism, released on 2 August 1967, that Mao at the time objected to these two statements and that they had never been officially repudiated or revised up to that time.[13]

This first question, of the priority between rapid revolutionary change and consolidation of revolutionary gain, was intimately related to a second: how the Party, in implementing its revolutionary programme and in establishing new institutions, should treat the various social groups and sub-groups which were most directly affected. These groups and sub-groups in various sectors of the society had different statuses, positions, privileges, powers and influence. To what extent should the interests of these various social groups and sub-groups be taken into account and their participation in the political structure and process be provided for?

By now it comes as no surprise to anyone that the Party organization has shown a greater sensitivity to the material and personal interests of the various selectively privileged social groups than Mao. According to the Maoists, Liu wrote in his "instructions to An Tzu-wen and others," dated 23 January 1950, that "the type of peasant household which owns three horses, a plough, and a cart should increase to 80 per cent. [of the total number of rural households] in the next few years." [14] Liu admitted in his first self-criticism that, soon after the Communists captured the large cities, he made a series of statements "to correct the over impatient sentiments towards capitalist industry and commerce and the over hasty methods used against them." [15] According to the

[11] *The Eighth National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party*, Vol. I (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1956), p. 37.

[12] *Ibid.* pp. 115–116.

[13] *Mainichi*, 3 August 1967.

[14] Editorial Departments of the *Jen-min jih-pao*, *Hung-ch'i*, and *Chieh-fang-chün pao*, "Struggle Between the Two Roads in China's Countryside," translated in *Peking Review*, 1 December 1967, p. 12. As the spokesman of the Party's rich peasant line, Liu declared in a report in 1950 that the policy of preserving the rich peasant economy "is of course not a temporary policy but a long-term policy." Liu Shao-ch'i, "Report on the Problems of Land Reform," *Hsin-Hua yüeh-pao*, Vol. II, No. 3 (15 July 1950), p. 494.

[15] Liu Shao-ch'i's self-criticism, big character poster posted by Chingkangshan Red Guards on 26 December 1966. From a xeroxed handwritten copy in the author's possession.

Maoists, he said that "exploitation not only is no crime but is a contribution," and that "if socialist steps were taken right now," they would not be "in the interests of the people" and would "damage the enthusiasm of private industries and individual producers."[16] In his third self-criticism, he denies that he had ever said that "exploitation has some merits." But he did not deny that he ordered the records of these talks to be burned.[17] After the Socialist transformation of industry and commerce, the capitalists were not only given fixed dividends for a number of years but also were retained in various positions in their own companies or assigned to state-owned enterprises. The Maoists charged that at one time in the sphere of commerce in Shanghai more than 170 capitalists were appointed to positions of manager or associate manager in over 100 specialized companies and more than 14,000 capitalists were appointed directors or deputy directors, managers or associate managers of factories and stores which were under the socialist ownership of the whole people.[18] Red Guard reports also indicated that many of the technical and management personnel at middle and lower levels not only retained their posts but were also absorbed into the Party later. These actions were in perfect accord with the Party's policy at the time and were apparently approved by Mao. But they are now considered to be errors and anti-socialist acts after Mao became seriously concerned with their "revisionist" implications and wanted to mobilize the underprivileged groups to attack the Party organizations.

The Party organization's sensitivity to the material interests of the various social groups and its ability to work with the privileged groups might surprise an early twentieth-century Marxist. But from the viewpoint of theory of organization they are perfectly understandable. First of all, the most immediate and most important task of a Party organization is the management of men with different social backgrounds, attitudes, interests, and preferences under rapidly changing circumstances. At a very early date Liu Shao-ch'i realized that even in a revolutionary organization like the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which drew into its ranks some of the most idealistic, selfless and rootless individuals, he could gain their loyalty and get the best out of them by taking into account their personal interests. After

[16] Editorial Department of *Capital Red Guard*, "Criticize China's Khrushchev's Reactionary Theory on Productive Forces until it Smells," *Jen-min jih-pao*, 3 September 1967.

[17] *Sankei*, 16 August 1967, in *Daily Summary of Japanese Press*, 16 August 1967, p. 12. Liu declared in his political Report to the Eighth Party Congress that "workers in privately-owned factories were saved from unemployment." *The Eighth National Congress of the Communist Party of China*, Vol. I, p. 31.

[18] "Thoroughly Criticize the Reactionary and False Theory of the Dying out of Class Struggle," *Jen-min jih-pao*, 24 August 1967.

emphatically underscoring the absolute and unconditional subordination of personal interests to Party interests, he nevertheless pointed out in the first Chinese edition of his *How to be a Good Communist:*

> Although the general interests of the Party include within themselves the personal interests of the Party members, they still cannot include these latter interests completely. The Party cannot and should not wipe out the individuality of the Party members. . . . As far as possible, the Party will attend to and safeguard its members' essential interests. . . .[19]

The Maoists attributed to Liu many remarks in which he tried to foster devotion to the Party's interests by appealing to the individual's self-interests.[20] It would seem that Liu Shao-ch'i's notion of human nature stemmed from his experience in Party management—in the first instance, management of underground Party organizations in the "White" areas. Confronted frequently with the self-interests of its members and having taken them into account in their decisions, the leaders of the organization would not find it too difficult to give the minimum necessary weight to the interests of other social groups.

In contrast, Mao, as the charismatic leader of a revolutionary movement and later of a nation at war, relied on personal, ideological, and nationalistic appeals to mobilize the masses. In dealing with them, he tried to reduce the distance between the leaders and the led not only by encouraging mass participation, but also by urging the leaders to go among the masses and become one of them. In so doing he could exploit spontaneous mass actions for his own purposes and guide them in the desired direction. Just as making the necessary concessions to the interests of the various social groups is the hallmark of Liu's method of leadership, bridging the visible gaps between the leaders and the led is the characteristic feature of Mao's *modus operandi.* Whereas Liu takes a paternalistic attitude towards the masses, Mao appeals to their sense of their own dignity, power, and importance, and to their love and devotion to an omniscient figure. Both techniques are subsumed under the concept of the mass line. But over the years, Liu and Mao have come to place increasing emphasis on one or the other of these two different aspects of the mass line, until in recent years the distinct emphasis has become very clear.

The second explanation for the ability of the leaders of the Party organization to work with the privileged groups in society is that after

[19] Liu Shao-ch'i, *Lun kung-ch'an-tang-yüan ti hsiu-yang* (*On the Self-cultivation of a Member of the Communist Party*) (Hsin-Hua shu-tien, 1946), p. 40.

[20] For example, Liu was reported to have said: "A Party member can only achieve his own success in the success of the Party." "By striving for the development, success, and victory of the Party's cause, it is possible to develop oneself and rise to a higher position." See "We must use the world view of the proletariat to build up a proletarian Party," *Jen-min jih-pao*, 14 December 1967.

coming to power, they became—to use a vague, ill-defined, but for some purposes useful word—the establishment, *par excellence*. As heads of a vast organization, they had a proper appreciation for the ability of the managers of other organizations and the problems of operating these organizations. As the leaders of the establishment, they found it easy to deal with the leaders of other establishments in subordinate positions. Speaking of the capitalists, Liu was reported to have said in 1957 that their level of education is higher than that of other classes, "that they know techniques," and that "their administrative ability surpasses even that of our Party members." [21] Chou Yang, the former Vice-Director of the Propaganda Department of the Chinese Communist Party, was charged with having adopted towards the intellectuals the policy of giving them high salaries, high royalties, and high rewards and relying on famous writers, famous directors, and famous actors.[22] Through policies of this type which took account of their minimum interests, an establishment, based on political power and holding all material resources in its hands, absorbed into its orbit of control other establishments based on wealth, knowledge, education and skill. The United Front policy, which Mao had taken the initiative in formulating for strategical and tactical reasons in the 1930s, became the ideological foundation of this absorption or merger. In this absorption or merger, the members of the other establishments were never given real power, but their minimum interests were preserved. The process of absorption took place smoothly, not only because the non-Party groups had no alternative, but also because the Chinese Communist Party had become by 1949 a vast bureaucracy with concomitant built-in conservative tendencies. Although the United Front in the narrow, political sense progressively declined in importance after 1949, the merger of the various establishments under the aegis of the Party organization went on as a socio-political fact. The establishments based on political power, education, knowledge and skill formed a fairly cohesive privileged group in China with many personal and organizational ties among them. Judging from over-all performance, these leaders in various fields were very able and efficient men. The Maoists so far have been unable to uncover outright corruption at the upper levels of these establishments. What the Maoists did prove is that they formed a privileged stratum, keeping various levers of power in their hands and living fairly comfortably amidst the general poverty of China even during the years of agricultural crisis.

The fact that the Party worked with and through the establish-

[21] "Thoroughly Criticize the Reactionary and False Theory of the Dying out of Class Struggle," *Jen-min jih-pao*, 24 August 1967.

[22] *Peking Review*, 19 August 1966, p. 37.

ments and the more privileged groups and individuals in various sectors implied that the interests of the lowest and most underprivileged groups in the society were not given the highest priority by the Party organization. In contrast, Mao's sympathies seem to have been always with the most deprived groups in the society, particularly the poor and middle peasants who furnished the manpower for his guerrilla army. The political importance attributed to the poor and lower-middle peasants, and perhaps even a solicitude for their welfare, underlay Mao's drive towards the establishment of the co-operatives to prevent the further "differentiation of classes in the countryside" and to avoid the danger of the "rupture of the worker-peasant alliance." As the poor and lower-middle peasants and the underprivileged groups constitute the overwhelming majority in Chinese society, it is easier for Mao to justify his programme in terms of "public interests" than for the opposition. The contrasting attitudes between Mao and the Party organization can most clearly be seen in recent disclosures on educational policies since 1958. During the Cultural Revolution, Mao was to turn the grievances of all the underprivileged groups against the establishment of Party committees, educators, high intellectuals, well-known artists, popular writers, capitalists and college-trained engineers. The only exceptions were the army and the scientific and engineering personnel in highly sensitive fields, during the early phases of the Cultural Revolution. In short, the Cultural Revolution is a revolt of those outside the establishment against the establishment, or at least a large sector of it. But it is a revolt inspired, supported and manipulated by the supreme leader to perpetuate his revolution—a leader who had lost effective control over a large sector of the establishment.

The third difference in approach and perspective between the Party organization and the supreme leader need only be briefly discussed. It evolved around the issue of the extent to which functional specialization and creativity should be promoted even at the expense of relaxing ideological control and reducing ideological fervour. The vast Party organization consists of men engaged in numerous types of functional activities. The acceptance and promotion of functional differentiation within the Party made it easy for the heads of the organization to see the value of functional differentiation in the society at large. The specialized functional groups within the organization are constantly subject to the innovative and creative influence of the functional social groups. Current Maoist attacks on Liu Shao-ch'i's slogan, "red and expert," suggest that the formula was intended by Liu to allow functional specialization as much as it was used to enforce ideological

uniformity. Contrary to popular impression at an earlier time, Liu is not a rigid ideologue.

In contrast, Mao tenaciously held the simple life of Yenan as the model of his ideal society and his guide to the solution of the problems of a bureaucratized society. He has an almost mystical faith that interchange of roles, the assumption of multiple roles and mutual penetration can somehow bridge the gaps among men of different occupations and statuses, and help to promote ideological uniformity and political unity. In addition, he demands that ideological and political criteria override professional and technical ones in making decisions and judging work performances.

The fourth difference between the supreme leader and the Party organization lies in the methods used to control men. As the ideological leader, Mao sought consensus on the deepest levels of goals. Indoctrination on basic political and philosophical levels are his principal means of controlling the Party bureaucracy.[23] As the head of the organization, Liu sought in the first instance consensus on the level of organizational principles and exercised his control through rules and regulations. Depending on increasing goal-consensus on the deepest levels, Mao relies less on control and co-ordination through a "tall" hierarchical structure and more on spontaneous and decentralized action. Trying to control the organization through rules and procedures, Liu Shao-ch'i tended to be a disciplinarian and took drastic action against the cadres when it was necessary to enforce strict discipline. In a vast organization, the leaders at a particular level would have many more informal, personal ties with leaders immediately below them than with cadres at the lower levels, and their general outlooks have more similarity than those between these leaders and the cadres at lower levels. Except in the case of factional struggle among the top leaders, the leaders of the organization tend to take more drastic disciplinary actions against cadres at lower levels than at higher levels. For a supreme leader who regards ideological and political deviations as a source of all errors, the mistakes made by the lower cadres tend to be attributed to faulty ideological and political leadership at the high levels. This difference in perspective and approach obviously underlay the Maoist charge that during the Socialist Education Movement of 1964, Liu followed the policy of attacking a larger group of cadres (at the lower levels) to protect a few cadres (at the upper levels).[24]

[23] Chalmers Johnson, "China: The Cultural Revolution in Structural Perspective," *Asian Survey*, Vol. VIII, No. 1 (January 1968), p. 4.

[24] For an account of the Socialist Education Movement, see Richard Baum and Frederick C. Teiwes, *Ssu-ch'ing: The Socialist Education Movement of 1962–1966* (Berkeley, Calif.: Center for Chinese Studies, 1968); Richard Baum and Frederick C.

After having outlined the differences in approach and perspective between the supreme leader and the Party organization, it is necessary to emphasize immediately that these differences did not lead to any serious conflicts in the years between 1949 and 1958—an indisputable fact which the Maoists attempt to deny in their effort to rewrite history. On the contrary, these differences seem to have made possible a more careful assessment of the objective situation and the adoption of a less radical programme than would otherwise have been the case until the Great Leap Forward, which divides the history of the regime prior to the Cultural Revolution into two distinct periods. In sharp contrast to the Maoists' current version of history, the Eighth Party Congress of September 1956 provides the best evidence for the high degree of unity within the Party. According to a talk given by him on 25 October 1966, it was Mao himself who proposed the division of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau into a first line and a second line. Liu Shao-ch'i, Teng Hsiao-p'ing and others manned the first line, Liu directing some of the major meetings and Teng handling daily works.[25] Mao himself held the second line—which presumably means that he was to concern himself only with the most important decisions and with defining policy goals. His avowed purpose was to foster the prestige of the other leaders so that his death would not cause great turmoil in China. Most likely, this proposal was made and adopted at the Eighth Party Congress which produced a new Party Constitution providing for a Politburo Standing Committee.

In the Party Constitution, the sentence that "the CCP takes Marxism-Leninism as its guide to action" replaced the old formula that the CCP "guides its entire work" by "the thought of Mao Tse-tung." According to a statement made by P'eng Te-huai in late December 1966, or early 1967, it was he who suggested the deletion of the phrase, "the thought of Mao," and Liu Shao-ch'i immediately agreed to the proposal. But a remark of the outspoken Foreign Minister Ch'en Yi suggests that the decision not to mention the thought of Mao Tse-tung was made by "Chairman Mao [and] the Political Bureau."[26] Thus, whoever took the initiative, Mao apparently agreed to the suggestion without much ill feeling at that time.

The accomplishments at the Eighth Party Congress marked an

Teiwes, "Liu Shao-ch'i and the Cadre Question," *Asian Survey*, Vol. VII, No. 4 (April 1968), pp. 323–345. For an exchange of views between Richard Baum and Charles Neuhauser, see *The China Quarterly*, No. 34 (April–June 1968), pp. 133–144.

[25] "Chairman Mao's Talk at the Central Work Conference," printed by Red Guards on 19 December 1966. From an unpublished version in the author's possession.

[26] "P'eng Te-huai's Statements—Records made in the interrogation of P'eng Te-huai under detention," 28 December 1966–5 January 1967, *Current Background* (Hong Kong: U.S. Consulate General), No. 851, 26 April 1968, p. 17. Ch'en Yi's remark is in *Hung-wei chan-pao* (*Red Guard Battle Bulletin*), 8 April 1964, p. 4.

immense step toward routinization and institutionalization in China's political development. A preliminary solution of the most difficult problem of succession was apparently reached. The downgrading of the more explicit, operationally more specific, and thus more restrictive principles of the thought of Mao in favour of the more abstract principles of Marxism and the less directly applicable rules of Leninism could furnish more leeway for policy experimentation and lead to the broadening of the ideological foundation of the political system. Mao permitted and perhaps even encouraged others to take these steps toward routinization within the Party, presumably because his place in history was not in doubt, the validity of his thought was not directly challenged, the Party organization had been responsive to his wishes (as the rapid implementation of the programme of co-operativization had just demonstrated) and because the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU had recently denounced the cult of personality.

It was the failure of the Great Leap Forward which transformed the inner-Party differences in approaches and perspectives to increasingly sharp political conflict. In its public pronouncements, the regime attributed the agricultural crisis from 1959 to 1961 primarily to natural disaster and secondarily to some shortcomings in the implementation of policies. But many Party leaders at the top had no doubt that the policies themselves were largely responsible for the disaster.[27]

During the period between 1959 and 1962, Mao's control over Party affairs was weakened as the Party adopted a series of pragmatic policies to extricate China from the economic crisis.[28] Mao's loss of effective control over the Party organization reveals a great deal about the power relations and pattern of policy-making within the Party. Over the years, Mao tended more and more to limit himself to setting goals of policy and allowed the Party organization to devise methods of achieving them.[29] The highly bureaucratized and quite cohesive Party organization had developed numerous methods to thwart the wishes

[27] See for example, "P'eng Te-huai's Letter of Opinion," in *Current Background*, No. 851 (26 April 1967), pp. 21–23; Editorial Departments of the *Hung-ch'i* and *Jen-min jih-pao*, "To Follow the Socialist Road or the Capitalist Road?", in *Hung-ch'i*, No. 13 (1967), p. 11; and *Peking Review*, 25 August 1967, p. 10.

[28] There are many well-documented accounts of these developments. Only two articles will be cited here. Harry Gelman, "The New Revolution," *Problems of Communism* (November–December 1966), pp. 2–14. Philip Bridgham, "Mao's Cultural Revolution: Origin and Development," *The China Quarterly*, No. 29 (January–March 1967), pp. 1–35.

[29] Liu Shao-ch'i was reported to have said in the summer of 1961: "Chairman Mao concerns himself only with important state affairs. It is enough for him to propose to turn the whole country into a big garden and forest land. He has no time to solve this problem. . . . Therefore, I have to tackle it." Hung Fen, "Exposing the Crimes Perpetrated in Heilungkiang Province by the Biggest Party Person in Authority Taking the Capitalist Road," *Heilungkiang Daily*, 14 June 1967.

of the supreme leader.[30] Mao could not use the secret police to control the Party organization, for this ran counter to his style and to the Party's tradition. Although Mao succeeded in gaining control of the Ministry of Public Security at the Central Government prior to the Cultural Revolution, the loyalty of the security forces was still uncertain. The secret police and public security bureau at the provincial levels and below continued to be under the control of the Party committees and their reliability was doubtful. For example, in November and December 1966, in Peking itself, the Red Guards opposed to the Cultural Revolution Group were engaged in serious violent clashes with the Maoist Red Guards, arresting their opponents, establishing detention centres, and setting up "courts." On 18 November 1966, the CCP Municipal Committee of Peking issued an order prohibiting these actions.[31] For nearly a month this order was not obeyed. On 16 December, Chiang Ch'ing criticized the "organs of dictatorship" for their timid and "non-interventionist" attitude toward the "pickets" in the West, East and Hai-tien Districts of Peking.[32] The next day, it was the public security forces of the Ministry of Public Security, led personally by its Vice-Minister, rather than the municipal police, who arrested the leaders of the anti-Maoist Red Guards.[33] As a consequence of such incidents Mao had to use the army to take over the local police apparatus in many localities.

Mao's principal method of controlling the Party had been indoctrination and the system of criticism and self-criticism. The system of criticism and self-criticism was regarded as a very severe sanction and a most humiliating experience even by top leaders. In 1945, just prior to the meeting of the Seventh Congress (April–June 1945), a North China Conference was held, one of its main purposes being criticism of P'eng Te-huai.[34] The conference lasted 40 days and P'eng was reported to have made a self-criticism reluctantly. During the Lushan Conference in 1959, P'eng used obscene language to characterize this experience; and the same words were in his complaint that the conference, which apparently criticised Mao's policies, did not last long enough.[35] During the Cultural Revolution, Chu Teh, the former Marshal, was compelled to make a self-criticism. In disclosing this incident, Vice-Chairman Lin Piao said that "it was the Party Centre which made him take off his pants."[36]

[30] Tsou, *loc. cit.* (see note 6).
[31] *Hung-wei-ping pao* (*Red Guards' Newspaper*), No. 15 (22 December 1967), p. 4.
[32] *Ibid.* p. 1. [33] *Chingkangshan*, No. 4 (23 December 1966), p. 4.
[34] "The Wicked History of Big Conspirator, Big Ambitionist, Big Warlord P'eng Te-huai," in *Current Background*, No. 851 (26 April 1968), p. 7.
[35] *Ibid.* p. 14.
[36] *Ko-ming kung-jen pao* (*Revolutionary Workers' Newspaper*), No. 5 (19 February 1967), p. 4.

The effectiveness of criticism and self-criticism as a sanction depends ultimately on the validity of the ideological premise on which the criticism or self-criticism is made, and on the correctness of the policy which is juxtaposed to the incorrect policy pursued or proposed by those criticized. But the failure of the Great Leap and the Commune system revealed the errors of Mao's policies and their ideological premises. Criticism and self-criticism could no longer be used effectively by Mao to control his subordinates and to mobilize ideological and political support for his policies. One of the many indications of this fact was the widespread sympathy for P'eng Te-huai's criticism of Mao's policy at the Eighth Plenum of 1959 and for his demand in 1961 for a reversal of the decision against him.[37]

By 1962, the Chinese economy showed signs of recovery. The Party organization seems to have preferred to push forward a policy of further retrenchment and to give even greater recognition to material incentives.[38] To call a halt to the tendency towards individual operation in agriculture and to the policy of encouraging small private enterprises in commerce and industry, Mao began his counter-offensive at the Tenth Plenum in September 1962. To regain effective control over the Party organization, he abolished the distinction between the first and second line. To re-establish the old standards of legitimacy, he intensified a drive to restore the authority of his thought and to elevate it once again to its position in the political system before the Eighth Congress. To set the general orientation and to bolster further the position of the army he asked the whole nation to learn from the PLA. To set up new monitoring agencies to control the government bureaucracy, he established within the branches of economic administration political departments patterned after those in the PLA and manned by former political commissars and military officers. He launched the Socialist Education Movement in 1963 and a purge of literary and art circles in 1964. The failure of these efforts to produce results sweeping enough to satisfy Mao was rooted in the fact that many Party leaders remained sceptical of the applicability of Mao's thoughts and the soundness of his policy views. It convinced him of the powerful resistance of the vast party machine and increased his

[37] One of the most interesting sidelights of the Cultural Revolution is that the reports of the Red Guards have confirmed almost every detail of the account by David A. Charles in "The Dismissal of Marshal P'eng Teh-huai," *The China Quarterly*, No. 8 (October–December 1961), pp. 63–76. Of the numerous materials on P'eng Te-huai, the most interesting one is the compilation issued by the Chingkangshan Corps of the Tsinghua University. This compilation is translated in *Current Background*, No. 851 (26 April 1968), pp. 1–31. For excerpts of the Resolution of the Eighth Plenum condemning P'eng Te-huai, see *Peking Review*, 18 August 1967, pp. 8–10.

[38] Liu Shao-ch'i's first self-criticism, posted on 26 December 1966.

fear of a further growth of revisionism. Thus, in the six years after the failure of the Great Leap, the previously reconcilable differences in approaches toward both modernization and revolution gradually hardened into irreconcilable conflict between the Party organization's conception of the priority needs of modernization and Mao's uppermost concern about the fate of his revolution. During a period of intensifying conflict and open polemic with the CPSU, the Soviet system provided Mao with a vivid negative example of "revisionism" in operation. At the same time, the processes of forced modernization and industrialization under very difficult objective circumstances created tremendous social tension just beneath the surface of political stability maintained by the effective control of the Party organization. From Mao's point of view, these developments made it both imperative and possible to develop new methods and new instruments in order to exploit the social tensions, to attack new targets, and to obtain absolute control.

Hence the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

The Disruption of the Political System during the Cultural Revolution

Chou En-lai told the revolutionary rebels on 25 January 1967 that the "form of mobilization in the early phase" of the Cultural Revolution was "not entirely the same" as that in all other mass movements in the past in Communist China. He explained that whereas these other mass movements were conducted both "from the top to the bottom" and "from the bottom to the top," the unprecedented Cultural Revolution was "essentially" a movement "from the bottom to the top." He then added immediately that "of course, we cannot detach ourselves from the supreme leadership, the leadership of Chairman Mao and the Party Centre." "These [the principle of 'from the bottom to the top' as the essential form and the supreme leadership of Chairman Mao and the Party Centre] are, in our belief, the two fundamental principles."[39] Viewed in the light of the course of the Cultural Revolution, these statements suggest that the Cultural Revolution is a rebellion of the dominated against the establishment in most spheres of Chinese society—a rebellion inspired and manipulated by the supreme leader. The emphasis on "from the bottom to the top," as the essential form, implies that a measure of spontaneity and autonomy on the part of the masses and their own leaders was permitted and encouraged

[39] Premier Chou En-lai's important talk on 25 January 1966 to a rally of more than 20,000 revolutionary rebels on "the scientific and technological fronts" as reported in *K'o-chi chan-pao* (*Science and Technology Battle Bulletin*) (Peking), No. 2 (1 February 1967), p. 3.

during the early stages of the Cultural Revolution. It indicates that this was so much greater than that permitted in the mass movements in the past as to make the Cultural Revolution qualitatively different and thus unprecedented. Indeed, the masses, i.e. the Red Guards and the revolutionary rebels, constituted Mao's main instrument of attack in the first 18 months.

Even with the Red Guards and the army as his instruments, Mao was confronted with the very difficult problem of justifying his revolution and legitimizing his attack on the Party organization. For the Party and the Party organizations in various units had become symbols of authority, and the policies pursued by the Party organization were eminently successful when measured in terms of practical results. What Mao did essentially was to use personal, moral, and ideological appeals to override pragmatic standards. Immediately before and during the Cultural Revolution, the Maoists elevated the position of Mao's thought to a new peak. Lin Piao made the following statement in May 1966. "Chairman Mao's experience in passing through many events is more profound than that of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. No one can surpass Chairman Mao in his rich revolutionary experience."[40] He also said on another occasion that Mao stands on a much higher level than Marx, Lenin, and Stalin, and that "99 per cent. of the Marxist-Leninist classics which we study should consist of Mao Tse-tung's writings."[41] Repugnant as it may be to us, this cult of Mao and his thought served a definite political purpose. It set a new standard of legitimacy and correctness with which the actions and opinions of many top leaders were to be judged.

This apotheosis of Mao was accompanied by a further radicalization of his thought by pushing to their extremes its constituent elements: the idea of conflict, the tendency toward polarization, the concept of centrality of man, the controlling importance of politics, and finally, the importance of ideas and revolutionary morality. To exploit the conflict between those in positions of superordination and those in positions of subordination in order to smash a well-entrenched establishment, the Maoists revived and incessantly used a hitherto neglected assertion made in 1939 by Mao in a speech celebrating Stalin's sixtieth

[40] Lin Piao's talk at an enlarged session of the meeting of the Political Bureau in May 1966, quoted in *Chingkangshan*, Nos. 13–14 (1 February 1967), p. 6. It is clear that the cult of Mao was used to overcome the resistance to Mao's thought and policies. Mao himself said in 1967 that at the time when he presided over the drafting of the 16 May 1966 circular, a large group of persons considered his views outmoded and that, at times, only he himself agreed with his own views. *Wu-ch'an-che chih sheng* (*The Voice of the Proletariat*) (Wuchow, Kwangsi), No. 10 (1 January 1968), p. 1.

[41] Lin Piao's remark in September 1966 at a talk to members of military academies and colleges. Quoted in *Chingkangshan*, Nos. 13–14 (1 February 1967), p. 6.

birthday: "In the last analysis, all the myriad principles of Marxism can be summed up in one sentence: 'To rebel is justified.'" The destructive purpose of conflict was blatantly extolled: "Without destruction there cannot be construction and destruction must come before construction."

Mao and the Maoists drew the picture of a Party which was polarized into two groups reaching up to the very top. The class struggle became the struggle between the bourgeois and the proletarian lines within the Party. Mao personally called on his followers to bombard the headquarters, i.e. the headquarters of the bourgeoisie within the Party. The Red Guards shouted time and again: "Protect the Proletarian headquarters." Polarization gives rise to double standards. The Red Guards solemnly announced that "we are permitting only the Left to rebel, not the Right." The Chinese people were urged not to obey the orders of their superiors blindly. But at the same time, they were told to carry out Mao's instructions and follow his great strategic plans even if they did not understand these for the time being. The ideological and political criteria used in the first phases of the Cultural Revolution to destroy the authority of the Party committees were completely different from those employed during the final phase to establish the authority of the revolutionary committees.

To mobilize the masses to rebel, the role of man, not man as an individual but man as a member of the masses, was glorified. A *Hung-ch'i* (*Red Flag*) editorial of January 1967 stated that "the masses are reasonable and they are able to distinguish the people from the enemy." Repeatedly, the Maoists declared, "Let the masses liberate themselves and educate themselves." "Trust the masses, rely on them, and respect their initiative." The practice of the mass line has undergone a perceptible change during the Cultural Revolution.[42] Glorifying the creative role of the masses in history also serves the purpose of downgrading the importance of the experts and of refuting the pragmatists' view that material conditions impose a limit on rapid changes.

Likewise, the controlling importance of politics has been pushed a step further. The Maoists consistently pointed out that so long as the general political orientation of individuals or groups is correct—that is to say, so long as they directed their attack against Liu Shao-ch'i and his followers—their mistakes should be overlooked. The Maoists explained that in a period of great upheaval, great division, and great realignment the only thing that counted was the general political orientation, and that mistakes were inevitable, and disturbances,

[42] Chou En-lai's remark cited above, p. 78, is one of the best evidences of the change in the mass line.

disruptions, and disorder must not be feared. In effect, this meant that laws and traditions, customary standards and humane considerations could be violated with impunity.

Finally, correct ideology and revolutionary morality must override everything else including such long-established principles of democratic centralism as the minority obeying the majority. Many Western observers doubt whether Mao had majority support within the Party council. According to a Red Guard newspaper, Mao said in one of his "latest instructions" that he had the support of just a little over the majority at the Eleventh Plenum which gave full Party sanction to the Cultural Revolution.[43] Whatever the case may have been at the Eleventh Plenum, there is no doubt that the Red Guards constituted a minority in the various universities, schools, and units for a long period of time. Thus Chiang Ch'ing, the wife of Mao Tse-tung, justified the right of the minority to impose its view on the majority on the ground that "one could not talk about a 'minority' or 'majority' independent of class viewpoint."[44] In effect, this meant that the thoughts of Mao and Mao himself were placed above the Party as the ultimate source of authority and standard of right and wrong.[45] Practical results achieved by the Party and government bureaucrats were considered to be contaminated by their appeal to the self-interests of the individuals. Complete devotion to public interests and standards of revolutionary virtues as defined by Mao have been used to judge the actual performance and the motives of the Party leaders and cadres. The Red Guards attempted to set up puritanical rules of behaviour and enforce them on everyone. The new revolutionary committees set up to replace the government administration and Party committees on the provincial level and below adopted stringent regulations on improving their style of work. These regulations were aimed at maintaining collective leadership, preserving the anonymity of the individual members, ensuring constant contact between the officials and the masses, and eliminating the outward differences between the leaders and the led. In turn, these proclaimed virtues were used to justify the revolution and the new revolutionary order. Thus, the Maoist vision is both a

[43] "A great strategic disposition—Chairman Mao's Latest Instruction," reproduced in *Wu-ch'an-che chih sheng* (*The Voice of the Proletariat*) (Wuchow, Kwangsi), No. 10 (1 January 1968), p. 1.

[44] *Peking Review*, 9 December 1968, p. 1.

[45] For example, Ch'en Po-ta told students at Peking University, on 26 July 1966, that "this leadership of the Party is the leadership of Mao Tse-tung's thought and the leadership of the Party Central Committee." On 21 August 1966, T'ao Chu said that "now the only correct leadership is that of Chairman Mao and the Central Committee under his leadership." *Hung-se tsao-fan pao*, 26 December 1966, p. 4, translated in *Joint Research Publication Service* (*JPRS*), No. 40, 349 (March 1967), pp. 76–77.

long-term goal and an immediately available means to destroy the opposition.

The strategy adopted by Mao in launching and making the revolution bears on the problem of legitimizing his actions. The Maoists have made it clear that the criticism of the "academic authorities" and the intellectuals had the purpose of preparing public opinion for the so-called seizure of power which took place after January 1967 in many units below the top level. The Maoists captured the control of the propaganda agencies and mass media of communication before they attempted to seize power from the Party committees.

At first, P'eng Chen and later Liu Shao-ch'i were left in charge of the Cultural Revolution. Harry Gelman and Philip Bridgham,[46] two leading U.S. Government analysts in the field of Chinese Communist internal affairs, have developed the theory that Mao put his erstwhile lieutenants through tests to determine their loyalty and purged them when they failed. This interpretation is correct as far as it goes. But Mao's strategy also served the purpose of legitimizing his removal of the top Party leaders and mobilizing the masses to attack them. The intellectuals in a totalitarian society, because of their role as the seekers of truth and critics of society, are the most vulnerable targets of attack by the ideologues. Their published writings are indestructible proof of guilt, once a policy of liberalization is replaced by a drive to re-impose strict ideological control. Wu Han and other intellectuals fell victim to this process. There is no question that they also criticized Mao by historical analogy or in Aesopian language. After the cult of Mao and his thought had been pushed to a new peak, their veiled criticism could be made into the most serious political offence. When P'eng Chen tried to protect them, he could be charged with protecting the "freaks and monsters." Similarly, when the work teams endeavoured to restore control over the revolutionary students, a sharp conflict occurred between the establishment and those outside it. The resentment of the revolutionary students against the work teams was transferred to Liu Shao-ch'i and the other Party leaders responsible for sending them. By adopting the principle of letting the masses liberate themselves, trusting the masses, and relying on them, the time-honoured method of using the work teams became an error in orientation and an error of line. After Mao had criticized the dispatch of the work teams, the top leaders like Liu Shao-ch'i and Teng Hsiao-p'ing could only defend their decision by saying that they were old revolutionaries who encountered new problems, that they had no understanding of new things, and that their failure of understanding stemmed from their lack

[46] See above, p. 75, n. 28.

of a firm grasp of Mao's thought. Once Mao had succeeded in making a case out of a specific mistake, he then generalized his criticism by linking this error with the past and present policies, proposals, and actions of the other leaders and traced them to basic ideological sources. In this process, Mao and the Maoists perverted history and departed from the standards of fair play, which notion they specifically repudiated. But in this way they attempted to present a plausible case for their sweeping purge. There is still another aspect of Mao's strategy which should be noted. Mao is a revolutionary romantic with a radical vision, but he is also a cautious man in his strategy and tactics. Generally speaking, he tends to try out less radical measures first before he resorts to more radical ones. The events from September 1962 to March 1967 suggest that he followed the same rule. The resistance of the Party organization made it necessary for him to escalate his conflict with the Party organization until he purged its top leaders.

During the Cultural Revolution, the resistance put up by the Party organization was a matter of self-protection and survival. It has brought out several interesting points about the Chinese political system. In the first period of 50 days, most of the work teams were able to gain ready acceptance of their authority and received adequate support from the students, even though they took fairly stern disciplinary actions against some of the cadres on the one hand and repressive measures against the Red Guards on the other. They succeeded in keeping the Maoist students under control until Mao returned to Peking, criticized the work teams, and ordered their withdrawal. Although both persuasion and coercion were extensively used by the work teams, it is also true that they enjoyed genuine authority and obtained obedience to their orders without too much difficulty, so long as they were considered the embodiment of the Party. "To oppose the work team is to oppose the Party" was one of the most effective slogans at this time.[47] During the early autumn of 1966, most of the workers and peasants also obeyed the orders of the Party committees in various units when some of them were instigated here and there by the Party committees to attack the Red Guards. This shows that the rule of the Party was accepted as legitimate and that a true relationship of authority existed between those in command and those in subordination. It is precisely because obedience to the orders of the Party organizations had become quite habitual, and because this

[47] The Maoists had to counteract the tendency to obey the Party committees in various units by constantly reiterating the point that not every Party organization or individual Party member represents leadership by the Party. Ch'i Pen-yü told the Red Guards on 12 November 1966: "Leadership by the Party is mainly political and ideological leadership and leadership by Mao Tse-tung's thought. It is not specifically the leadership of a certain person or a certain organization."

obedience was based at least partly on the internalization of those values and norms justified in and propagated by Liu Shao-ch'i's many writings, that the Maoists had to launch an attack on "the slave mentality advocated by China's Khrushchev."

Another significant but not surprising point about the Party committees was their amazing tactical skill and their cohesiveness. In the first seven months, revolutionary committees were established in only six out of 29 units at the provincial level. Leaving aside Shanghai and Peking as special cases, all the four provinces in which revolutionary committees were successfully set up were those in which one or several Party leaders of fairly high rank came out at a fairly early stage to support Mao. In the rest, the Party committees maintained their solidarity. In some places, they staged what was called sham seizure of power by handing over the office building and the official seals to Red Guard units organized by them or at least sympathetic to them. One of the reasons why revolutionary committees could not be as rapidly set up as Peking wanted was that most of the top Party and government leaders refused to break with their colleagues and join the Maoists.[48] Hence Peking's repeated call for the cadres to "stand out," and its constant emphasis that correct treatment of the cadres, by forgiving their former mistakes and supporting them in their work, was an indispensible condition for successfully establishing the revolutionary committees.

But the tactical skills and the cohesiveness of the local Party committees stand in contrast to another phenomenon. I have uncovered no evidence that Liu Shao-ch'i, other non-Maoist Party leaders, and the various Party committees, ever had a nationwide, strategic plan to oppose Mao publicly and to take offensive action against him. The opposition to Mao was essentially a case of the Party organization trying to defend itself under the major premises and the rules of the game as laid down by Mao. All the organizations pledged allegiance to Mao and his thought. All of them said that they supported the Cultural Revolution. Mao's prestige, Lin Piao's control over the army, the narrow majority obtained by Mao at the Eleventh Plenum by rather irregular means, are three obvious explanations. But still another explanation is, I suspect, Mao's success in making his thought the sole legitimate criterion of right and wrong, whether one actually agrees with it or not. The disability of the Party organization shows the

[48] As we shall note later, another reason was that Mao made the establishment of a "great alliance" among the revolutionary rebel groups a condition for the establishment of revolutionary committees and their recognition by Peking.

significance of political ideology and the difficulty of challenging an established doctrine and evolving a new one in a totalitarian system.[49]

Another major target of the attack launched by Red Guards and revolutionary rebels was the government bureaucracy. The disruption of the government bureaucracy has received less publicity in the American press than the fighting and conflicts in the provinces. But a perusal of Red Guard publications shows its seriousness. Still, the government bureaucracy survived the Cultural Revolution in much better shape than the Party. With notable exceptions, like Chiang Nan-hsiang, the Minister of Higher Education, and Po I-po, the Chairman of the State Economic Commission, many of the top government leaders are still at their posts. In contrast to Liu Shao-ch'i, Premier Chou En-lai's influence and power increased during the Cultural Revolution. No doubt, Chou's personality and skills in political manoeuvre and his ability to protect his subordinates constitutes one explanation. Another, and perhaps more basic, reason is that although the government administration, like the Party organization, is also a huge bureaucracy with its tendency towards conservatism and routinization, the Party bureaucracy and the government bureaucracy in the Chinese political system differ from each other in their respective relationship with the supreme leader. First, the Party is the locus of power, whereas the government bureaucracy is one step removed from the centre of authority. When actual conflicts occur over policies, they are inevitably linked up with issues of power, and the Party organization becomes the focus of conflict with the leader. Secondly, ideological matters are one of the main concerns of the Party organization. The innate tendencies of the organization and the attitudes and views of its members would sooner or later find expression in ideological writings or statements. These incipient ideological intrusions into the eminent domain of the supreme leader, and these doctrinal deviations, however slight, can easily be viewed as a challenge to the authority of the leader. Thirdly, in the government bureaucracy each of the various vertical systems has some specialized function. They are usually not the immediate source of generalized political power. In contrast, the core of the Party organization is its system of Party committees and secretaries at the regional, provincial, and local levels, having generalized political authority over most activities. These can more easily become "independent kingdoms." Finally, the tasks performed by the government bureaux are of greater practical use to the supreme leader than the control functions performed by the Party organization.[50]

[49] Tang Tsou, "Cultural Revolution: Causes and Effects," *Proceedings of the Symposium on China*, 13 January 1968 (Berkeley, California: Chinese Students Association and the Center for Chinese Studies, 1968), pp. 34–41.

For footnote 50 see p. 86.

The army has also behaved in an interesting manner during the Cultural Revolution. Its behaviour stems from its dual, ambiguous role in its relation to Mao and within the Chinese political system. Under Lin Piao, it has been Mao's main basis of power. It has been highly indoctrinated with the thought of Mao Tse-tung. But it is an organization which has its own professional standards and expertise. It was also a part of the establishment. The ties between the military leaders in various military regions and districts and the Party leaders on the regional and provincial levels were particularly close. Thus, while the army has been one of Mao's two chief instruments during the Cultural Revolution, it has also become a conservative force in the Maoist coalition, frequently resisting the more extreme measures advocated or undertaken by the Cultural Revolution Group and the Red Guards, particularly after Liu Shao-ch'i had been effectively pushed aside. While it has dutifully carried out what it believes to be Mao's instructions, it has also tended to interpret these orders with a bias toward preserving law and order and limiting the extent of the political purge.[51] This role offers an explanation for the relative compliance of the army until its integrity as a whole was threatened in August 1967, when Wang Li and other radicals in the Cultural Revolution Group raised the slogans of "dragging out a small handful in the army." The dismissal of the Acting Chief of Staff Yang Ch'eng-wu, in March 1968, suggests that despite the growing power of the People's Liberation Army, China is still not under army dictatorship. Mao remains the pivotal figure who welds together a coalition of forces and maintains a balance among them by throwing his influence on the one side or the other. His purpose has been to keep the Cultural Revolution going without plunging China into intolerable political chaos or a civil war.

While Mao's ultimate source of power was the army, the spearhead of Mao's Cultural Revolution was the Red Guards and the revolutionary rebels. The reasons why Mao had to use them as his offensive forces are obvious. Such a momentous undertaking as the Cultural Revolution must be justified on the ground that it is demanded and

[50] In outlining the steps to be taken in the seizure of power, Chou En-lai told the Red Guards on 23 January 1967 that as a first step they should merely supervise the business operations of the various agencies. But if the agencies concerned "do not have business operations as in the case of the departments and units within the Party, a thorough-going revolution can be made by the Red Guards." *Yu-tien feng-lei* (*Thunderstorm in the Postal and Telecommunications Services*), No. 5 (10 February 1967), p. 3.

[51] The worst offender against the Maoist line of supporting the Left was Chao Yung-fu the Deputy Commander of the military district of Chinghai province. See "Order of the Military Committee of the Central Committee," 6 April 1966, *Chung-kung chung-yang wen-chien hui-chi* (*Collection of Documents Issued by the Party Centre of the CCP*), reprinted by the Liaison Station of the Red Guards of the Men-t'ou-kou district of the city of Peking (April 1967), pp. 170–173.

supported by the masses. Mao and his followers had no direct control over the mass organizations and thus could not use them as their instruments. Strictly speaking, the Maoists cannot be said to have been an organized faction prior to the Cultural Revolution. They had no organization of any kind under their direct control, with the exception of the army. If the difficulty confronting Liu Shao-ch'i was Mao's success in making his ideology the only source of legitimacy, the problem confronting Mao was Liu Shao-ch'i's control over all the organizations with the exception just mentioned. Yet Liu Shao-ch'i and the numerous persons purged by Mao cannot be called a faction in the strict sense of the term. If there had been a Liu-Teng faction, this must have had almost complete direct control over the Party apparatus. This is shown by the fact that 90 per cent. of the work teams were accused of having committed errors in the 50 days in June and July of 1966. Almost all the Regional Bureaux and Party committees at the provincial and municipal levels resisted the Cultural Revolution. Operationally speaking, such a faction would be almost identical with the whole Party organization.[52]

Mao's shrewd sense of politics led him to see the potential conflict between the establishment and those outside the establishment, and he set out to exploit the repressed resentment against the establishment to attack the leaders of the Party organization. Furthermore, the students, unlike the Party leaders engaged in practical work, had no real knowledge of the actual consequences of the thought of Mao and his disastrous policies. Instead, they had been exposed in the communication media to nothing but the praise of Mao, his thought, and his achievements. The Party organization's practice of "waving the red flag to oppose the 'red flag'" may have been a necessary expedient, but it also played a part in promoting the cult of Mao among the masses. Brought up under a relatively stable regime and without any personal experience of the social dislocation and ideological confusion of pre-1949 China, the students knew only one set of legitimate values and had a remarkable sense of moral certitude. Thus Mao permitted and indeed encouraged, during the early stages, the Red Guards to take spontaneous action, and granted them a large measure of autonomy. Not only were their mistakes overlooked, but the blame for any conflict between them and those in authority was placed on the latter. Vice-Premier Hsieh Fu-chih told the students that Chairman Mao had said:

> Where outside cadres assume leadership responsibility, if their relationship with local cadres is bad, then the outside cadres should bear the

[52] Tsou, "Cultural Revolution: Causes and Effects," *Proceedings of the Symposium of China*, pp. 34–41.

> main responsibility for it. . . . Where army cadres are actually in leadership positions, under normal circumstances, if their relationship with local cadres is unsatisfactory, the main responsibility should be placed on the army cadres. . . . Where veteran cadres assume the main responsibility of leadership, if the relationship between the old and new cadres is poor, then the former should bear the responsibility.[53]

Then the Vice-Premier added as his own opinion that in regard to the contradictions between the majority and minority factions, the former must bear greater responsibility. After the work teams were withdrawn, every political leader including Ch'en Po-ta and Chiang Ch'ing assumed, at least for a brief period, the posture of learning from the students in talking to them.[54]

The students and rebels organized themselves into numerous small units with all sorts of strange names. To form or join a Red Guard unit became an absolutely essential means of self-protection and of obtaining power and prestige. Power soon drifted into the hands of Red Guard units sponsored by Maoists like Nieh Yuan-tzu of Peking University and Kuai Ta-fu of Tsinghua University, and these units maintained close contact with the Cultural Revolution Group. Probably, most of the members of these units were not members of the Party or the League and the majority of them were children of workers, peasants and soldiers.

The exploits of the Red Guards have been reported extensively in the press. But there are several interesting points which ought to be made. Not all the students took an active part in the Revolution. In a remark reminiscent of Karl Marx's description of the Communist utopia, a Red Guard newspaper reported that " in the high schools the students read Mao's *Selected Works* in the morning, took a rest in the afternoon, and learned to swim after four o'clock." [55] The active Red Guards, however, waged their struggle on many fronts. They carried their quarrels and their factionalism everywhere they went. Not long after the Red Guards were sent to the factories to promote the Cultural Revolution, Ch'en Po-ta found it necessary to scold them for bringing to the workers the bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideas of small-group mentality and factionalism instead of proletarian

[53] " Vice-Premier Hsieh Fu-chih's Seven Viewpoints," *Wu-ch'an-chieh-chi wen-hua ta-ko-ming yu-kuan ts'ai-liao pien-hui* [*sic*] (*Collection of Materials Pertaining to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution*) (Canton, 28 October 1966), Vol. II, pp. 25–27, in *JPRS*, No. 40,391 (24 March 1967), p. 7.

[54] From the minutes of a forum held by the revolutionary teachers and students of the College of International Relations under the auspices of Teng Hsiao-p'ing and Li Fu-ch'un. See also *Current Background*, No. 819 (10 March 1967), p. 72.

[55] *Wu-ch'an chieh-chi wen-hua ta-ko-ming ta-shih chi. 1965.9–1966.12* (*The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution—a Record of Major Events. September 1965–December 1966*), in *JPRS*, No. 42,349 (25 August 1967), p. 26.

influences.[56] Several months later, he bluntly told a group of workers not to be misled by the factionalism of the students into adopting a wrong orientation. The fragmentation of the Red Guard movement reveals one of the general consequences of the breakdown of political authority. It also forcefully demonstrates the impotence of ideology which is not supported by an organization. For ideology and general directives cannot create unity and produce united action unless there is a hierarchy of organizations to give them authoritative interpretation, to translate them into specific decisions, and to enforce them in various units.

The movement to seize power did nothing to improve matters. In a speech in January 1967, Ch'en Po-ta said:

> In some units the seizure of power is like this: you want to seize power and I also want to seize power; instead of seizing power from power holders taking the capitalist road, some small groups struggle with one another for power to see who can seize power first. Those groups which did not seize power before now also want to seize power. Thus, internal struggles are created.

He asked: "If, for instance, a small group of yours cannot represent the great majority of a school but still want to take over a nationwide unit, whom can you ask to recognize your seizure of power?" He concluded: "Now, the 'small-group mentality' has become a national problem."[57]

To counter this development, Mao adopted the policy of making the formation of a great alliance among the various small units a condition for recognizing their seizure of power in various schools, universities, departments, units and localities. But new problems immediately emerged. The Red Guards and revolutionary rebels in power were more concerned with personal prestige and position than with the interests of the whole. What the Maoists call "bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideas" turn out to be simply human tendencies of those in positions of power.

In waging their struggle against the Party leaders, the Red Guards resorted to methods not approved by the Maoist leaders. In a speech to the Red Guards in February 1967, Ch'en Po-ta pointed out that such slogans as "Smashing So and So's Dog Head" and such actions as putting a dunce cap on a person and forcing him to kneel down were not advocated by the Cultural Revolution Group. Some of the difficulties confronting the Maoist leaders arose from the amazing organizational and tactical skill of the Red Guard units. In December 1966,

[56] *Yu-tien feng-lei*, No. 5, 10 February 1967.

[57] *Ibid.*; *Huo-ch'e-t'ou* (*Locomotive*), No. 7, 2 February 1967, in *Survey of the China Mainland Press*, No. 3898 (14 March 1967), p. 4.

Chou En-lai noted that the Red Guards arrested P'eng Chen, the former mayor of Peking, in an action lasting only seven minutes, keeping even the Peking Garrison Command in the dark.[58] Even more serious was the Red Guards' attack on the army and the revolutionary committees and their refusal to obey orders. On 17 September, 1967 Chou pointed out to the Red Guards that when students went to other localities, they always supported those opposing the established leadership. But he told them that times had changed and they should not act in the same way as they acted in 1966.

Ch'en Po-ta is partly correct when he characterized some of the excesses committed by the Red Guards as "the shortcomings of the methods of struggle spontaneously created by the masses." It was also probable that many of the extreme actions taken by the Red Guards were encouraged or backed by a radical faction within the Cultural Revolution Group. But Mao must ultimately bear the responsibility because he explicitly permitted the masses to commit "minor" mistakes so long as their general orientation was correct; and because he praised similar methods of struggle in the famous report on the Hunan Peasant Movement. Furthermore, the Maoists' ideological pronouncements, used at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution to mobilize the students to attack the Party leaders, also served as justification for their excessive acts. It is also apparent that the Red Guards had absorbed the strategic thinking of Mao without accepting his idealistic values. For example, Mao has written that political power grows out of a gun. The Red Guards have raised the slogan that "political power grows out of strength" and used it to justify their self-serving actions. Repeatedly, the Maoist leaders told them to smash self-interest and establish public interest, but to no avail. Thus, the Red Guards had ultimately to be brought under control by the workers' teams in mid-1968.

Conclusion

The foregoing analysis of the Cultural Revolution shows that it has not only destroyed the Party organization and badly disrupted the government bureaucracy, but has also inflicted serious damage on the relationship of authority which had been established in Communist China. This damage will be vastly more difficult to repair than the economic disaster produced by the Great Leap. For the rebuilding of a new set of stable political relationships in the aftermath of the demoralization, resentment, cynicism, and frustrated hopes stirred up by the upheaval is a much more complex and intricate task than economic recovery and adjustment of institutions in the economic

[58] *Tou-cheng pao* (*The Struggle Newspaper*), early January 1967, p. 7.

sphere. The loss of confidence on the part of the Chinese Communist leaders in their own political institutions and their own political wisdom must have been profound. For some time to come, they will be preoccupied with the problems of rebuilding the political system.

The Cultural Revolution had its roots in the increasing divergence between Mao's ideology and the changing social reality. Yet the Cultural Revolution has destroyed the very institution in China which was more able than Mao to accommodate the material interests of the various social groups and the needs for differentiation and specialization in a rapidly developing nation. In the classical revolutions, the alienated intellectuals together with the rising expectations of the people played crucial roles in bringing about the upheaval. In the Cultural Revolution, the intellectuals who were alienated by Mao but supported by the Party organization became its first victims, and the rising expectations of most social groups were denounced as morally wrong. In the long run, many aspects of the Cultural Revolution and many elements in Mao's thought will probably be implicitly or explicitly repudiated.

But one must also not forget that in making the Cultural Revolution Mao has also been motivated by a noble vision. It is a vision of a society in which the division involving domination and subjection will be blurred, the leaders will be less distinguishable from the led in status and privileges, and the led will take part more directly in the policy-making process. The full realization of this vision is an impossibility. But it is just possible that somehow the Cultural Revolution will leave as a legacy a higher degree of political participation and economic equality, even if the former means merely a wider sharing of the high political risks and the latter is nothing more than an equality in poverty.