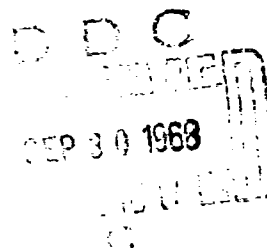


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RM-5731-PR
AUGUST 1968

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POWER, POLICY, AND IDEOLOGY
IN THE MAKING OF CHINA'S
"CULTURAL REVOLUTION"

W. F. Dorrill



PREPARED FOR:
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE PROJECT RAND

The RAND Corporation
SANTA MONICA • CALIFORNIA

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PREFACE

This Memorandum is a product of The RAND Corporation's continuing program of research for the United States Air Force on military and political developments in Communist China. It deals with the dramatic sequence of events that culminated in what its initiators have proclaimed as the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution." The objective of the research is to examine some of the implications of this upheaval for present and future policy and to spell out, however tentatively, what historical trends may be discerned in these events. The present study is being published as a contribution to our understanding, necessarily limited by the problem of access to Chinese sources, of the phenomena of leadership and control in Communist China and of the consequences of ideological quarrels for military and foreign policy.

The author, W. F. Dorrill, is a consultant to The RAND Corporation.

SUMMARY

Various theories have been advanced to explain the upheaval in Communist China that the followers of Mao have proclaimed as the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, designed, says Peking, to "overthrow the handful of Party people in authority taking the capitalist road." Some Western critics see it as essentially a power struggle for the succession to Mao, some as a clash over domestic and foreign policy, still others as mainly an ideological dispute. Even greater is the experts' disagreement on the likely implications of the struggle for the future of China.

With cautious use of the scant and often one-sided evidence, the author of this Memorandum traces the origins and development of this complex struggle, which he sees not as a master plan of Mao's but as a logical series of spontaneous eruptions. Although aware that the aforementioned interpretations are not mutually exclusive -- that indeed there is likely to be a close interaction of power struggle, policy debate, and ideological conflict -- he tries to clarify their separate roles, their sequential and causal relationship, and their relative importance.

As early as 1956, there were signs of strain and frustration in the Peking leadership arising from an apparent division over methods of speeding up the pace of industrialization and modernization and increasing agricultural production, and from a growing disenchantment with the Soviet model. But the leadership weathered these early disagreements; although, in March 1957, Mao called for a protracted struggle to defeat erroneous ideas and "revisionism," there is no proof of the serious rift between Mao and

some of his lieutenants (especially Liu Shao-ch'i and Teng Hsiao-p'ing) that has recently been described in the Red Guard press. While the momentous program of the Great Leap Forward and the Communes, launched in 1958, suggested a general shift leftward, it implied a consensus of the leadership on this uniquely Chinese path to socialism, being enthusiastically endorsed by Liu, Teng, and Minister of Defense P'eng Teh-huai in the face of its condemnation by Khrushchev. Later in 1958, as the Great Leap Forward took an economically disastrous turn and the Sino-Soviet rift grew, Mao gave up (voluntarily, the author believes) his control over the daily affairs of state, without, however, relinquishing supreme authority.

Not until August 1959, when the Eighth Plenum of the Central Committee met at Lushan and initiated an official retreat from the economic program of 1958, did a major leadership crisis become apparent. Many of the charges subsequently raised by the Red Guards have turned on an alleged "rightist" anti-Mao conspiracy antedating the Lushan meeting and said to explain the criticism there expressed, in particular, by P'eng Teh-huai. The few available records, including some supposedly (but not necessarily) authentic texts published by Cultural Revolutionary sources long after the events, suggest that P'eng -- whose "Letter of Opinion" forms part of the evidence -- may well have been openly outspoken in his attack on economic and commercial policies, but that his criticism was compatible with the shift in policy decided at Lushan, and charges of an earlier conspiracy with Khrushchev for the overthrow of Mao were almost certainly unfounded.

In the aftermath of the Lushan debate, which seems to have extended from the economic into military areas, P'eng was censured and removed from office, Party dominance was reaffirmed, and the remaining leaders closed ranks and proceeded to mitigate the unworkably rigid features of the economic system, restoring some incentives in agriculture and even limited private ownership. This relaxation was accompanied by greater intellectual tolerance, which, in the early 1960s, resulted in a markedly freer expression of ideas in literature and the press.

The Tenth Plenum, in September 1962, marked the end of that liberal period. Mao resumed his active leadership role, condemned "bourgeois" trends in art, literature, and the economy, and called for a nationwide campaign of "socialist education" and "class struggle," with intensive political indoctrination of youth, to maintain the purity of the Revolution. Though it brought about no radical shift in policy, the Tenth Plenum ushered in a period of renewed emphasis on ideology and on the thought and personality of Mao. Lin Piao as the new Minister of Defense plunged into highly successful efforts to strengthen political and ideological work in the People's Liberation Army (PLA), setting a trend away from military professionalism. It is possible that a less enthusiastically responsive Party and government may have suggested to Mao and his coterie the danger of another secular trend, causing them to launch, in 1963-64, a further ideological purification campaign, which brought tightened intellectual and cultural controls and denunciations of prominent philosophers, writers, and artists. Disappointed by the lack of fervor the campaign was able to arouse, and by China's inability to

regain the momentum of the 1950s, they shifted still further leftward in mid-1964, with a violent attack on those with allegedly "capitalist" and "revisionist" leanings, in tones that anticipated the Cultural Revolution. "Work teams" were dispatched from the center to "clean up" deficiencies in the rural situation as needed and to indoctrinate local people and institute reforms. In the economic agencies, a network of political departments modeled on the PLA supplemented the propaganda apparatus.

In 1965, as external and internal problems mounted, a perceptible decline in the theretofore increasingly militant, heavily ideological orientation reflected a prudent disposition in some quarters to meet the country's need for greater productivity and, in view of the threatening involvement in Vietnam, national unity. Nothing in the measures taken by exponents of this conciliatory, pragmatic approach, however, suggested the "bourgeois reactionary," counterrevolutionary, "Soviet revisionist" tendencies of which Liu, Teng, and others have since been accused (accusations for which the evidence has come only from the Prosecution).

Toward the end of 1965, when Mao appealed for renewal of the ideological struggle (his reaction, perhaps, to an internal debate and criticism of his person or leadership), singling out for public pillory a famous author and one of his plays, the relative power of top leaders seemed to be shifting, with Lin emerging more and more as a major theoretician and Liu losing ground. Whatever differences existed in the fall and winter of 1965/66 over aspects of economic and military policy did not apparently result in simple alignments of opposing opinions and personalities,

and division occurred within, rather than between, the various institutions. But, as time went on, dissension came to revolve less around such substantive issues than around the person and thought of Mao. In 1967, revolutionary wallposters were to make the sensational charge that several of the top leaders had planned a military coup for February 1966 in which to oust Mao. While apparently some efforts were going on behind the scenes in early 1966 to keep the growing campaign of socialist education within the limits of academic discussion, there is no indication that those who feared the excesses of Maoist purification were aiming for more than protection of the status quo. Yet the growing factional antagonisms were to erupt into open conflict that spring, when the Party, in a Central Committee circular of May 16, endorsed Mao's attack on Peng and other counterrevolutionaries, dissolved and replaced the group theretofore in charge of the Cultural Revolution, and threatened to remove or transfer all disloyal "bourgeois" elements in Party, government, army, and cultural life.

Changes in the Party's leadership and a purge of its central propaganda apparatus reflected the new Maoist militancy, as did the tone of the Party organ Jen-min Jih-pao. In May, June, and July of 1966, the Cultural Revolution spread from Peking to the provinces, directed against educators, writers, and artists as well as their supervisors in the propaganda organs. Initially, the Party's main instruments of enforcement at the local level were the "work teams"; though violence and terror were used, they apparently were applied selectively, as the Party sought to maintain some order and discipline. Ultimately, however,

Party authority clashed with the impatient revolutionary left over the unauthorized publication of a wallposter by a Peking university instructor: Mao himself ordered it distributed throughout China, a portent of the future direction of the Cultural Revolution and testimony to Mao's power and his determination to go "to the masses."

In retrospect, all efforts to preserve a measure of control in the face of near-anarchy were construed as subversive. The role of the work teams, sent to keep order and ensure Party dominance, led to allegations that they had been part of a plot to sabotage the Revolution. Liu's "socialist institute," where 500 persons prominent in cultural life who were under attack were to be sent for criticism and reform and thus be protected from the mob, like Liu's and T'ao Chu's proposed reforms of the educational system that would have reopened the schools closed by the Cultural Revolution, later became evidence of a wish to strangle the Revolution. Frustrated by the movement's failure to keep up with the people's rising expectations, Mao sought explanations, or rationalizations, in the hidden motives of those whom he had entrusted with its leadership, motives that he gleaned through the arbitrary, sometimes paranoid, scrutiny of their previously accepted statements and actions.

In July 1966, Mao returned to active leadership, and the Party recalled the controversial work teams and convened a Central Work Conference. In August, under Mao's personal direction, the Eleventh Plenum of the Central Committee adopted a program of historical importance and, in the most far-reaching reorganization since 1949, changed the order of the top leadership, putting Lin in second and

Chou En-lai in third place after Mao. The Plenum's final communiqué (August 12, 1966) dealt with the whole range of China's foreign and domestic problems, and stressed the central place of Mao's thought in the development of Marxism-Leninism.

In the author's opinion, the evidence does not point to a classic power struggle as the main cause of these developments, for the redistribution of offices and the new line of succession instituted by the Eleventh Plenum do not suggest the clash of organized factions, or the drastic purge of the losers, characteristic of the struggle for power and succession in totalitarian regimes. The final communiqué reflected no new departures, no break with the past, on major political and economic issues, lending weight to the author's belief that the Plenum was called chiefly to resolve the growing ideological conflict.

Mao's increasingly utopian aspirations and fundamentalist concepts of the revolutionary mission were further spelled out as the new leadership was chosen. In the months following, however, these leaders and groups of the Cultural Revolution -- backed, somewhat uncertainly, by the PLA and served by the destructive Red Guards -- were to prove as unsuccessful as their predecessors in resolving political crises and effecting the ideological transformation so insistently and unrealistically demanded by Mao.

As to the future, instability seems destined to continue so long as Mao and those designated by the Cultural Revolution to succeed him dominate the scene. Mere changes in leadership or alterations of particular domestic and foreign policies will not suffice to realize their revolutionary goals, which aim at a fundamental transformation

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of Chinese society and ideology. On the other hand, disorder is likely to increase, at least in the short run, if those in opposition are ever able to join forces for a concerted counterattack.

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I. INTRODUCTION

For over two years, Mainland China has been caught in the grip of an internal struggle which must rank as one of the world's most far-reaching political developments in this decade. Its official appellation, "the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," fails to convey adequately either the totality of the struggle or the intense passion and violence that have characterized it. It marks a watershed in the history of the Chinese Communist revolution -- a new and uncertain juncture. The leadership and the policies which finally emerge from the present chaos will determine China's power, direction, and pace of development for many years to come. In so doing, they will exercise a profound influence on the course of world history.

Despite its manifest importance, our knowledge of China's Cultural Revolution remains remarkably superficial. To be sure, the gross features and the more dramatic manifestations, such as the purge of government leaders and the rampages of the Red Guards, are well known. However, they do not tell us much about the underlying causes and the essential nature of the issues and contending forces. Without a clear understanding of these it is difficult to proceed to any confident -- let alone a definitive -- assessment of either the current trends and future prospects of the upheaval or its implications for Chinese policy.

THE PROBLEM OF INFORMATION

In part, the persisting confusion and obscurity stem from the paucity of verifiable data. While much can be learned from critical examination and exegesis of published Chinese sources such as official statements and press and radio comment, these rarely are intended to reveal or even to hint at sensitive "inside" information; far more often, their purpose is to mislead or distort.¹ In consequence, some of the more zealous practitioners of "Aesopian" translation have come to diametrically opposed but equally plausible conclusions as to the principal protagonists, viewpoints, and issues in the Cultural Revolution.

The problem is further complicated by the fact that much of our information on internal political developments is in the form of unsubstantiated indictments, which often appear first in ta-tzu-pao, the unofficial "large-character posters" that virtually any "revolutionary" individual or group can put up. Thus, the sensational charge that a "black gang" in the Peking Municipal Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was conspiring to restore capitalism, and the shocking allegation that for years

¹For example, in February 1967, the spokesman of a provincial radio station candidly told local critics (perhaps the previous management, recently ousted by "revolutionary rebels") who thought the broadcasts too one-sided: "The one-sided reporting is correct. Our fighting force will grow and the one-sided reporting will grow stronger. There will always be only one-sided reporting, the voice of the revolutionaries." (Anhui People's Broadcasting Station, February 14, 1967, as quoted in China News Analysis, No. 649, February 24, 1967, p. 1.)

Mao Tse-tung had been betrayed by many of his trusted lieutenants, do not in themselves constitute credible evidence but must be verified or modified in the light of other sources.

Reports from foreign observers in China, as well as from the trickle of refugees and defectors who come out of China, could do much to clarify the situation. However, these sources have thus far been very restricted in their geographic coverage. Sometimes, as in the case of some Soviet commentaries, they are tainted by political bias and exaggeration. Or, they may be severely limited in substance -- doing little more than repeat the unconfirmed, conflicting ta-tzu-pao and Red Guard newspapers.

These remarks are not meant, of course, to gainsay the very real value of information that can be gleaned from official statements, ta-tzu-pao, foreign press reports, and similar sources. The intent, rather, is to suggest the extraordinary need for caution and critical scrutiny in interpreting them.

Apart from the problem of evidence, our understanding of the meaning of the Cultural Revolution and of the forces underlying it is hampered by the complexity of the struggle itself. There have been indications that, at least in its early stages, some of Peking's highest Party, governmental, and military leaders -- men presumably "on the inside" -- were thoroughly confused about what was happening. Conceivably, the uncertainties and surprises that have accompanied the struggle are part of a devious masterplan drawn up by Mao in advance and calculated to entrap his unsuspecting enemies. If so, its full genius has yet to be revealed, for the strategy is still far from delivering a

decisive victory. Moreover, much that has happened has appeared to be unplanned and unanticipated -- a series of spontaneous eruptions and a capricious interaction of forces as the struggle unfolded.

THE PROBLEM OF INTERPRETATION

Many hypotheses and interpretations have now been advanced, with varying degrees of confidence, to explain the upheaval in China. They have tended to focus on one or a combination of three elements: power, policy, and ideology. Thus, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution has been viewed variously as essentially a power struggle, a clash over domestic and foreign policies, and a conflict over ideology. For example, a well-known academic specialist has emphasized the factional struggle within the Peking regime;² a high U.S. official has described it as primarily "a debate on policy between revolutionary romantics and pragmatists";³ and a prominent Hong Kong-based journalist has defined the main issue as "whether the approach to China's problems shall be spiritual or material."⁴ A former Chinese Communist trade official who sought political asylum in the United States in 1966 has described the Cultural Revolution as a power

²Chalmers Johnson, "Communist China's Political Turmoil," SAIS Review, Winter 1968, pp. 5-24.

³Walt W. Rostow, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, speaking at the University of Leeds, as quoted in The New York Times, February 24, 1967.

⁴Stanley Karnow, The Washington Post, December 20, 1966.

struggle of ambitious men competing for the succession to Mao, and, at the same time, a policy conflict between moderates and extremists, with heavy ideological overtones.⁵

Interpretations of actual events will vary, then, according to the interpreter's emphasis on one or another of the three basic elements. Furthermore, these diverse analyses of the nature of the struggle can lead to even wider and more significant differences when it comes to assessing the implications of the Cultural Revolution for the future of China. Some analysts, stressing the primacy of the succession problem, view it as having precipitated a polarization of the leadership along policy lines and heightened the inevitable tension between revolutionary aspirations and practical limitations. Others maintain that it was deep-rooted policy differences in the first instance which triggered the power struggle. Still others trace the origin to a widespread loss of ideological commitment. And, as will be suggested in this study, it is possible to see in it an attempt by Mao to push China toward new and unprecedented heights of faith and fervor.

These hypotheses need not, of course, be mutually exclusive. Indeed, any rigidly monocausal explanation would, on the face of it, be suspect. There is unquestionably a close interconnection and interaction between the power struggle, the policy debate, and the ideological conflict. For an understanding of the Cultural Revolution,

⁵ Miao Chen-pai, as quoted in The Washington Post, September 4, 1966, and U.S. News and World Report, November 7, 1966. As a member of the Chinese Communist Party, Miao was privy to internal Party directives and explanations of the Cultural Revolution until the time of his defection, in July 1966.

however, it would seem useful and perhaps even necessary to try to clarify their separate roles, sequential and causal relationships, and relative importance.

Thus, one properly takes note of Peking's official claim that the "main aim" of the Cultural Revolution is "to overthrow the handful of Party people in authority taking the capitalist road, especially the handful of top Party persons" doing so.⁶ But to understand what this really means one must inquire more specifically into the "who" and "why." Is what is happening primarily the rivalry of ambitious or embittered leaders bent on reordering the succession, avenging old wrongs, or satisfying personal drives for prestige and influence? Or, if the struggle is a dispute over principles, what issues of policy or ideological cleaves divide the contending forces?

The present study seeks to arrive at more complete and discriminating answers to these questions through an analysis of the origins and early development of the Cultural Revolution. In the attempt to identify major trends and to elucidate the role of underlying factors, the treatment of events will be selective rather than exhaustive. Though its main focus is on the background and the beginnings of the Cultural Revolution, the study will also consider and evaluate relevant evidence from later phases of the struggle. It will draw attention to available

⁶From the commentary entitled "Take Hold of the Principal Contradiction, Keep to the General Orientation of the Struggle," Hung Ch'i, No. 7, May 1967.

analyses of the subject⁷ in order both to avoid duplication and to indicate significant similarities or differences of interpretation.

⁷For example, Harry Gelman, "Mao and the Permanent Purge," Problems of Communism, November-December 1966; Philip Bridgham, "Mao's 'Cultural Revolution': Origin and Development," The China Quarterly, No. 29, January-March 1967; Gene T. Hsiao, "The Background and Development of 'The Proletarian Cultural Revolution'," Asian Survey, June 1967; L. La Dany, "Mao's China: The Decline of a Dynasty," Foreign Affairs, July 1967.

II. THE SEEDS OF CONFLICT: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The origins of the Cultural Revolution can be traced back at least a decade. It is possible, in retrospect, to detect ominous strains within the Peking leadership as early as 1956. By that time, the unifying revolutionary vision and program, shared so long and so successfully by Mao and his lieutenants -- from the Long March, through the fighting against Japan and the Kuomintang, and during the establishment and early years of the Communist regime -- had begun to face new and unprecedentedly serious challenges.

THE SEARCH FOR A NEW PATH TO SOCIALISM

In response to a combination of disappointments and persistent difficulties associated with modernization, economic development, and the administering of a huge and complex government, the Chinese leaders now began to grope for a new path, with all the uncertainty and potential disagreement that this entailed. Surging nationalist pride and rising expectations informed their mood, in tandem with a darkening, doctrinaire suspicion of incipient "revisionist" trends in the USSR. Despite their continued self-confidence and basic unity of outlook and goals, members of the inner circle in Peking felt frustrated by their inability to accelerate the pace of modernization and were divided over methods for increasing agricultural production and speeding industrialization. Many resented Moscow's parsimonious and patronizing attitude, and particularly Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin and its

potential meaning for Mao. Looking abroad, they were bewildered by the Hungarian revolt; at home, they were shocked by the outpouring of criticism from intellectuals during the "Hundred Flowers" campaign. Under the impact of these pressures and emotions, Peking began to modify and even to abandon major elements of the Soviet model that had shaped the organization and policies of the government, the economy, and the army of Mainland China during the early 1950s.

Despite the inner tensions that accompanied the search for new solutions and the move toward greater independence, it is important to note that the Chinese leaders remained essentially united in outlook. Their general orientation led them to temper revolutionary aspirations and doctrinal demands with consideration for the practical requirements of modernization. Thus, official policies reflected their tolerance of a modicum of personal incentives, the acceptance (under careful supervision) of economic, scientific, and managerial participation in society by "bourgeois" elements, and the encouragement of specialized education and professional development along with rigorous political indoctrination. This balanced orientation allowed the new regime to make rapid progress toward both modernization and socialization. Moreover, it enabled the leadership to weather, first, an apparent power struggle, which culminated in the purge of Kao Kang and Jao Shu-shih in 1954, and, in 1955-1956, a sharp debate over the speed of agricultural collectivization.

In the next two years, a series of important policy decisions reflected a significant weakening -- though no more than that -- in the balance that had characterized

the regime's orientation. The "Anti-Rightist" campaign of 1957 resulted in the purge of thousands of "counter-revolutionary" dissidents, especially intellectuals, and marked a general tightening of Party control over society. Prior to it, Mao had delivered his celebrated speech "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People," in which he declared that most conflicts in Communist-ruled societies were "nonantagonistic" differences among "the people" and, hence, could be resolved by discussion and persuasion. However, in this speech, as in an address delivered to a National Conference on Propaganda Work in March 1957, Mao stressed the necessity of a protracted ideological struggle to uproot "all erroneous ideas, all poisonous weeds, all ghosts and monsters" and to combat "revisionism," which he branded as more dangerous than dogmatism.⁸

It is possible, in retrospect, to construe these and other statements of that period as indicating that Mao

⁸ It is worth noting, however, that in the concluding section of his speech on contradictions Mao still urged solidarity with the USSR and declared: ". . . we should learn from the good experience of all countries, socialist or capitalist, but the main thing is still to learn from the Soviet Union" -- albeit in a selective manner. In the present Cultural Revolution these exhortations have been ignored, although the incongruous passages still appear in republications of the speech (e.g., the revised Foreign Languages Press version published by China Pictorial in 1967, p. 31).

Mao's address to the National Conference on Propaganda Work was one of his four works published for the first time in Selected Readings of Mao Tse-tung's Writings (Mao Tse-tung Chu Tso Hsuan Tu), 1964. Salient extracts were quoted in the "Circular" of the CCP's Central Committee dated May 16, 1966, and published by the New China News Agency (NCNA) exactly one year later, on May 16, 1967.

was more deeply concerned than were other top leaders over the threat posed to the regime by ideological impurities and, concomitantly, appreciated more keenly the need for the ideological and class struggle.⁹ Yet such a conclusion as to differences in degree of solicitude would still be far from establishing the existence of the kind of basic cleavage between Mao and his chief lieutenants, notably Liu Shao-ch'i and Teng Hsiao-p'ing, that has recently been described in the unofficial Red Guard press.¹⁰

⁹This has been a recurrent propaganda theme in the Cultural Revolution, particularly in 1967. In a letter dated October 16, 1954, but released by NCNA only as recently as May 26, 1967, Mao appears to have taken a remarkably keen interest at that early date in supporting two youthful critics who had accused a "bourgeois" literary figure of "poisoning" the minds of young people with his studies of classical works such as "The Dream of the Red Chamber." Mao evidently thought their efforts (and initial difficulty in getting a hearing), as well as his own criticism of two then current films, worthy of a letter to his colleagues on the Politburo.

¹⁰Red Guard newspapers have quoted alleged statements by Liu before local Party meetings in 1957 which, among other things, denied the possibility of contradictions in a socialist society and advanced a whole series of "rightist" economic views such as the advocacy of limited free markets and material incentives. It should be noted, however, that these statements cannot be authenticated on the basis of available credible evidence; even if they proved to be literally true, their truncated appearance, out of context, could easily distort the original meaning. Certainly, the Red Guard accusations and innuendoes to the effect that Liu and Teng were taking a rightist and anti-Party tack, besides implying that the two men were indulging an unlikely political death wish, are not substantiated either by their published statements at the time or by the line taken in official publications for which they would have had responsibility during the Hundred Flowers and Anti-Rightist campaigns.

THE POLITICS OF THE GREAT LEAP FORWARD

The launching of the Great Leap Forward and the communes, in 1958, gave positive content to the leaders' shared determination to follow a new and uniquely Chinese path to socialism. While it reflected a general shift leftward in the regime's orientation and involved a commitment to rapid development through mass mobilization and ideological motivation, the move was made with such remarkable facility and such widespread, unstinting enthusiasm as to suggest a broad consensus among the top leadership. To be sure, given the magnitude of the change, it is reasonable to suppose that some elements harbored silent doubts or reservations.¹¹ But the important thing to note

¹¹ Thus, articles by Ch'en Po-ta and "Commentator" in Hung Ch'i (Nos. 4 and 11, 1958, respectively) attacked dissident views on economic policy. Although they did not accuse any top leaders by name or clearly indicate the level to which the alleged dissent had reached, it was at about this time that Ch'en Yün, one of the regime's foremost economic leaders -- he was first Vice-Premier of the State Council as well as a member of the Politburo Standing Committee -- went into political eclipse. It remains difficult to document the precise reasons for Ch'en Yün's disappearance, but they probably were related to his prominent identification with the First Five-Year Plan and the relatively balanced, gradual Soviet model of economic development. (See relevant discussions in Franz Schurmann, Ideology and Organization in Communist China, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1966, pp. 76, 204-205, 208; Werner Klatt [ed.], The Chinese Model, Hong Kong University Press, Hong Kong, 1965, pp. 181, 202; and Howard Boorman [ed.], Biographical Dictionary of Republican China, Columbia University Press, New York, 1967, p. 266.) One of the ironies of the first phase of the Cultural Revolution was the reappearance -- albeit with questionable powers -- of this "rightist" economic planner in the most unlikely company of Mao and the Red Guard ralliers in the fall of 1966.

here is that these were not serious enough to impel public expression, or to polarize opinion within the leadership. In launching the Great Leap at the Second Session of the Eighth CCP Congress, in May 1958, Liu Shao-ch'i enthusiastically endorsed the leftward course and the economic speedup, lavishing praise on its author, Mao Tse-tung.¹² Although adjustments were made in subsequent months, as aspects of the radical new scheme proved functionally unsound (particularly in the commune system), Liu grandly portrayed it in the World Marxist Review as a model for the entire Communist world as late as October 1959, seven months after Khrushchev's stinging, if implicit, criticism of the commune idea at the Twenty-first Congress of the CPSU.

While the foregoing tends to focus on domestic factors in Peking's decision to shift to the utopian policy of the Leap Forward, it is not intended to minimize the influence of the growing Sino-Soviet tension and rivalry. Already generally disenchanted with the Soviet model for China, the Chinese were becoming increasingly disappointed

¹² Indeed, Liu's statements and actions were so positive as to prompt at least one scholar to advance the thesis that it was "Liu rather than Mao who must be regarded as the main sponsor of the Great Leap Forward." (Harold Hinton, "Intra-Party Politics and Economic Policy in Communist China," World Politics, July 1960, p. 515.) The decision to launch the commune system was made in August 1958 at an enlarged Politburo meeting held at Peitaiho; it was announced in Jen-min Jih-pao on September 1, 1958. Pilot "people's communes," notably the Wei-hsing (Sputnik) Commune in Honan, had begun to appear the previous April.

as the Soviet Union failed to fulfill their expectations of large military and economic aid. In pushing arrogantly ahead with the communes and radical economic measures of the Leap Forward in the face of Soviet warnings, they not only were giving vent to an overweening nationalism but appeared to be brazenly claiming the role of Moscow's rival for leadership of the world Communist movement, touting their own as an alternate and more rapid path to communism that threatened to shorten the lead of the Soviets.¹³

As in the matter of economic policy, there may well have been marginal differences of opinion within the Peking leadership over the tactics to be used or the severity of the challenge that should be hurled at Moscow. But the fact to be noted here is that all leaders -- including those later denounced as the "Chinese Khrushchev" (Liu Shao-ch'i), his "chief accomplice" (Teng Hsiao-p'ing), and the Peking "black gang" chieftain (P'eng Chen) -- displayed a strongly nationalist and anti-Soviet bias. Despite later Red Guard accusations and innuendoes to the contrary, there simply is no credible evidence that any one of the top leaders of the regime was less genuinely patriotic or significantly more pro-Soviet than Mao Tse-tung. Nor is there any reason why the subsequent collapse of the Leap Forward -- and, concomitantly, the failure of Peking's bid for world Communist leadership -- should necessarily have undermined Mao's position more than that of Liu, Teng,

¹³ Franz Michael, "Who Is Ahead on the Way to Communism?" Communist Affairs, Vol. 4, No. 6, November-December 1965.

P'eng, or others who were in the top echelon in 1958-59. All of them had firmly espoused the policies that failed (except perhaps P'eng Teh-huai, who, however, voiced his dissent only in mid-1959); though the boat might be sinking, they were all in it together. The writer cannot agree with the contention of Professor Franz Michael that the two disasters -- failure of the Leap Forward and the Sino-Soviet rift -- thoroughly and singularly discredited Mao and resulted in his removal from power, while leaving Liu Shao-ch'i politically unscathed and determined "to dismantle Mao's radical program" in favor of "a more rational economic development" plan.¹⁴ Without belittling the impact of the Sino-Soviet dispute on the Peking regime as a whole, this author believes that one must look elsewhere for the decisive factors that gave rise to the Cultural Revolution and the split among the Chinese leaders.

Perhaps a word should be said here about Mao's alleged complaint, as reported in Red Guard sources, that he was pushed aside and "pigeonholed" in 1958 by the ambitious and erring Liu and his chief accomplice, Teng Hsiao-p'ing.¹⁵ Unquestionably, Mao did relinquish his post as Chairman of the Republic -- but not his more powerful position as

¹⁴ Franz Michael, "Moscow and the Current Chinese Crisis," Current History, Vol. 53, No. 313, September 1967, p. 142.

¹⁵ These charges were contained in accounts of an angry speech said to have been delivered by Mao to a work conference of the CCP Central Committee on October 26, 1966. Purported texts of the speech were published in Red Guard newspapers -- one, an eight-page pamphlet entitled "Criticism by the Central Chairman Against Liu Shao-ch'i and Teng Hsiao-p'ing" -- which were posted on walls in Peking on January 4 and 6, 1967, and subsequently reported by correspondents of Mainichi and Yomiuri.

Chairman of the Party -- at the time of the Sixth Plenum of the CCP Central Committee, in December 1958. His proposal not to stand for reelection as State Chairman seemed plausible and amicable at the time, and Liu Shao-ch'i's subsequent election to that office was entirely logical.¹⁶ Overt preparations for the succession had been under way for at least two years, and Liu had been the heir apparent since 1945. Even the Red Guard posters quote Mao as having himself decided in 1956 to divide the Politburo Standing Committee into a "first" and a "second line" in order to prepare for an orderly succession and avoid problems such as had arisen after Stalin's death. According to the posters, however, Mao withdrew to the less active "second line" (following the Eighth CCP Congress, presumably) and then alleged that serious "decentralism" and other errors had occurred under the "frontline" leadership of Liu Shao-ch'i, who had been given important policy powers as first Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee, and Teng Hsiao-p'ing,

¹⁶ Commenting on the significance of Liu's elevation, Howard Boorman later observed: "Mao thus made his closest 'comrade in arms' in Party leadership his successor as chief of state during his lifetime, a probable attempt to raise Liu above all possible rivals and thus to insure his later succession to the truly decisive position of chairman of the Party." ("Liu Shao-ch'i: A Political Profile," The China Quarterly, No. 10, April-June 1962, p. 17.) This view was not untypical of those expressed by Western observers before the onset of the Cultural Revolution. However, the veteran Yugoslav journalist Branku Bogunovic recently recalled that there was considerable uncertainty among foreign correspondents in Peking in 1959 as to whether the man chosen to succeed Mao as President of the Republic would be Liu Shao-ch'i or Chou En-lai. (See Bogunovic's analysis, as translated from the Belgrade newspaper Borba, in Atlas, December 1967, p. 17.)

who managed the Party's daily work in the newly-created post of General Secretary.

The Eighth Party Congress (September 1956) also created the post of Honorary Chairman of the CCP, presumably as a niche for Mao after his retirement. Moreover, it adopted a new Party Constitution, the preamble of which, in contrast to the preamble of the Constitution of 1945 that it replaced, failed to include "the thought of Mao Tse-tung" among basic guidelines for action. These measures were in accord with the CCP's then accepted opposition to the "cult of the individual," in limited deference to the policy initiated by the Soviets in February 1956 at the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU. Thus, it is not surprising that Teng Hsiao-p'ing, in his report to the Eighth CCP Congress, lent general support to criticism of the "cult of the individual" (but not specifically to the de-Stalinization campaign), or that Liu Shao-ch'i, without actually raising that theme, failed to voice explicit praise of Mao's thought -- an omission that his Red Guard accusers were to recall a decade later.

It is possible to view these developments in 1956 as a deliberate derogation of Mao's stature and power by others in the top leadership, and even, with Gene T. Hsiao, as the "seed" of the Cultural Revolution,¹⁷ but the evidence thus far available does not warrant such conclusions. For example, Ch'en I, replying to Liu Shao-ch'i's accusers (and his own), has stoutly maintained that Mao himself

¹⁷Asian Survey, June 1967, p. 392.

and the Politburo approved Liu's report to the Eighth Congress.¹⁸ Presumably, this was the case with Teng Hsiao-p'ing's report as well. Moreover, a high-ranking Japanese Communist Party official, long resident in China, has pointed out that the 1956 revision of the CCP constitution, which was intended among other things to prevent the growth of any "cult of the individual," was written with Party Chairman Mao Tse-tung's "guidance and approval."¹⁹ Although the preamble of the revised constitution failed to mention Mao's thought, Franz Schurmann has observed that in practice, "since the latter part of the 1950's, the dualism originally stated in the 1945 Party Rules has been revived" in even stronger form: "Marxism-Leninism and the thought of Mao Tse-tung."²⁰ Finally, in assessing the impact of events in 1956 on Mao's position, one should bear in mind that even the Red Guard poster accounts of Mao's remarks indicate that Mao was not coerced or overpowered; he voluntarily stood aside in 1956 to groom his chief lieutenants for the succession. Whether or not they later misused their power, it had been Mao's decision to delegate it to them.

Two years after Mao had taken the step that he apparently came to regret, the mistake was compounded, according

¹⁸"I was there all the time," Ch'en averred. Quoted in the Red Guard newspaper, Hung Wei Chün Pao, of April 8, 1967.

¹⁹Ichiro Sunama, "Return from Peking," Part 2, Akahata, November 4, 1967.

²⁰Ideology and Organization in Communist China, p. 21.

to the reports, when he was forced to step down as Chairman of the Republic. From then on, Liu and Teng are said to have treated him like "their dead parent at a funeral." After 1959, according to one Red Guard account, Teng went so far as to refuse to brief him on the work of the Secretariat. Yet the charge that Mao was forced aside by Liu and Teng around 1958 and thereafter suffered a decisive loss of power to these disloyal lieutenants must be regarded as greatly exaggerated if not completely untrue.²¹ Although Mao voluntarily and temporarily relinquished control over many day-to-day decisions, this does not prove that he was forced to give up the supreme leadership or even that his position was seriously jeopardized. If Liu and Teng had usurped power in the way that Red Guard sources have suggested, how could Mao have retained the Party chairmanship, leaving conspicuously open the post of Honorary Chairman that had been created in 1956 in evident anticipation of his retirement? As Party Chairman he could hardly have been denied briefings on the work of the Secretariat, if he had insisted upon them. Moreover, it would seem rash to discount entirely the explanation proffered by the Central Committee in 1958 that it was Mao himself who had proposed not seeking reelection as State Chairman (though with the proviso that he could be nominated for another term if "special circumstances" arose) in order to be free to do theoretical work, an activity whose effects were

²¹ Indeed, the indictment still lacks official confirmation; no authenticated text of Mao's October 1966 speech, in which the allegations reportedly were made, has yet been published.

subsequently demonstrated in Peking's posture and polemics vis-à-vis Moscow.²²

A possible explanation of developments after 1958 is that an aging and somewhat embittered Mao, perplexed at the failure of his Great Leap and commune schemes to usher in the millennium, voluntarily withdrew into the background and, for the next few years, concentrated largely on finding theoretical formulas that would justify his practical failures and meet the threat of Soviet "revisionism." He may have left to his chief lieutenants the more unpleasant and difficult decisions aimed at China's "recovery" and even, on occasion, have yielded on some matters of policy to those in opposition, be it as a result of his own uncertainty or as a way of effecting a tactical accommodation. Whatever may have been his active role or true feelings during the disastrous years 1959-1961, a time of economic collapse and the alienation of Peking's erstwhile Soviet allies, Mao continued to enjoy a position of

²²The Sixth Plenum (November/December 1958), while calling for modifications in the commune system, categorically declared it to be the form of organization best designed to speed socialist construction and effect the transition from collective to "whole-people's ownership," that is, from socialist to Communist society. There is no evidence that Mao opposed either the modifications called for or the general approval of the concept reiterated by the plenary session. He may have been disappointed later over the compromises on economic policy adopted by the Seventh Plenum (April 1959) and popularized in the phrases "walking on two legs" and "taking the whole country as a coordinated chess game." But the trend toward moderation discernible in those compromises was soon reversed, as the Ninth Plenum, in August 1959, launched its attack against "rightist-inclined conservatism."

unrivaed stature and ultimate authority in China.²³ This was reflected in the military establishment, where his faithful comrade-in-arms Lin Piao rapidly rose to unchal-
lenged control, maintaining discipline and morale when hard times threatened disorder and greatly raising the army's place in society, all the while emphasizing the primacy of politics and the thought of Mao Tse-tung.²⁴

²³Thus, in the winter of 1959-1960, at the height of the crisis precipitated by the collapse of the Leap Forward, Li Fu-ch'un felt it necessary -- and, presumably, conclusive -- to declare that the new policy of "agriculture as the foundation" was based on Mao's own instructions. (Hung Ch'i, No. 1, January 1960.) The fact that Mao retained ultimate authority during this period has more recently been underscored in the confession of Liu Shao-ch'i, alleged to have been made at a Party conference in October 1966 (perhaps the same meeting at which Mao delivered the accusations noted above), in which Liu admitted (if we may trust the ta-tzu-pao text) having had his "rightist deviations" overruled by Mao in both 1962 and 1964. On at least one occasion, possibly in 1962, he had found it necessary to make a special trip to report to Mao, who was temporarily not in Peking. (The text of Liu's purported self-criticism was published in Mainichi, January 28 and 29, 1967.)

²⁴In May 1958, Lin Piao was elevated to the Politburo Standing Committee (as one of five newly-appointed vice-chairmen of the Central Committee), thereby coming to outrank the Minister of Defense, P'eng Teh-huai, who was also a Politburo member. Almost immediately thereafter, in his other capacity of Vice-Chairman of the CCP's Military Affairs Committee, Lin led a cheng feng rectification movement in the top echelon of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). This campaign, which lasted from May 27 to July 22, in effect put an end to the influence of the Russian military model in the PLA. It apparently capped one of the Communist regime's three major internal struggles alluded to in an Army Day editorial that appeared on August 1, 1966, in Chieh-fang Chun Pao (Liberation Army Daily). It also prepared the way for issuance of a revised set of basic

Mao's continuing power and his ability to preserve unity of outlook and orientation among the top leadership despite the buffeting storms of economic setbacks were graphically demonstrated in the late summer of 1959, although his prestige did not emerge from that process unscathed.

THE LUSHAN PLENUM

Details of the Eighth Plenum of the Central Committee, convened by Mao at Lushan in August 1959, remain obscure,²⁵ but there is little doubt that it witnessed a major crisis within the leadership. The final communiqué condemned the "emergence of right opportunists" who criticized the Leap Forward, and it enjoined Party committees at all levels to overcome such tendencies. Subsequently, Minister of Defense

principles on Party-army relations, which emphasized the CCP's control over the PLA and "politics in command." These developments, incidentally, grew out of Moscow's agreement, in October 1957, to provide China with technical and other assistance needed toward the acquisition of a Chinese nuclear capability. According to Peking's later polemics on the subject, the Soviets failed to deliver on schedule, and finally abrogated the agreement unilaterally in June 1959. (See "Statement by the Spokesman of the Chinese Government," August 15, 1963, in Peking Review, No. 33, August 16, 1963, p. 14.) Soviet sources have confirmed that the Chinese never forgave the USSR for failing to provide China with "samples of atomic weapons." (See a 1963 study by A. I. Iorysh and M. I. Lazarev, as quoted in Soviet Space Programs, 1962-1965. Staff Report, Committee on Aeronautical and Space Science, U.S. Senate, 89th Congress, 2nd Session, December 30, 1966, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1966, p. 522.)

²⁵ According to Red Guard sources, Chairman Mao "personally convened" the Lushan Plenum, another indication of his continued hold on the top leadership. See Chiao-yu

P'eng Teh-huai and other important military and political figures disappeared from public life.²⁶

Notwithstanding this circumstantial evidence, the tendentious explanations that followed (mainly in the form of indictments), and even the fuller documentation published more recently, our knowledge of the issues debated at Lushan and of the alignments of protagonists in the debates remains sketchy and one-sided. What, actually, happened? Did P'eng, as some analysts contend, attack "the whole range of Mao's radical domestic and foreign policies," thereby establishing the preconditions for a "crisis of confidence in Mao's leadership" when these policies continued to fail in later years?²⁷ Or does the evidence indicate that "the main dispute was over military

Ko-ming (Educational Revolution), a booklet published by the Peking Educational Revolution Liaison Committee on May 6, 1967, as translated in Joint Publications Research Service (JPRS), No. 41,932, July 21, 1967, p. 32.

²⁶ Among those who left were Huang K'o-ch'eng (PLA Chief of Staff), T'an Cheng (Director of the General Political Department of the PLA), Hung Hsueh-chih (Rear Services Director), and, on the civilian side, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Chang Wen-t'ien (a former Ambassador to the USSR) and Hunan First Party Secretary Chou Hsiao-chou. Earlier opponents of the leftward course in economic policy, such as Ch'en Yün, remained in political oblivion.

²⁷ This interpretation has been advanced by Philip Bridgham (The China Quarterly, January-March 1967, p. 2), who also suggests that P'eng proposed policies rivaling Mao's and "featuring Soviet military, economic and technical assistance." More recently, an almost identical interpretation has been offered by the British scholar Brian Hook in "China's Cultural Revolution: The Preconditions in Historical Perspective," The World Today, November 1967, p. 463.

policies," as others have suggested?²⁸ Can we "assert with confidence that P'eng was the leader of an 'anti-Party' group in the Politburo," which had made clandestine contact with Soviet leaders in an effort to secure their support for an attack on the Maoist leadership at Lushan?²⁹ These interpretations would seem to bear careful reexamination.

Recently published documents charge that P'eng Teh-huai, in a letter to Mao on July 14, 1959, and in subsequent speeches at the Eighth Plenum, painted a maliciously black picture of economic conditions, disparaging the "victory" of the Leap Forward, exaggerating the current "transient and partial shortcomings," and opposing the people's communes and the policy of high-speed development, as well as the mass movements for economic construction, high yields in agriculture, and "backyard furnace" production of iron and steel. These charges against P'eng appear in excerpts of the purported text of a censure resolution passed at the conclusion of the Eighth Plenum, on August 16, 1959, but published only eight years later.³⁰ Secondary sources available during the Cultural Revolution, which may tend to embellish the allegations contained in the censure resolution, depict P'eng as an outspoken critic of economic policy, who caustically referred to the Leap

²⁸ John Gittings, The Role of the Chinese Army, Oxford University Press, London, 1967, p. 226.

²⁹ David A. Charles (pseud.), "The Dismissal of Marshal P'eng Teh-huai," The China Quarterly, No. 8, October-December 1961, p. 64 and passim.

³⁰ Hung Ch'i, No. 13, August 17, 1967, pp. 18-20.

Forward as "a rush of blood to the brain," regarded the mass movements (for "backyard" steel, etc.) as so much "petty-bourgeois fanaticism," and thought the people's communes "a mess" for having been "set up too early."³¹ Various Red Guard versions of the 1959 "letter of opinion" (i-chien-shu) from P'eng to Mao quote P'eng as bluntly complaining about "leftist" tendencies ("always wanting to enter communism at one bound," obsession with being "the first"), and "failure to seek truth from facts," all of which had led to "hasty and excessive plans" in 1958 and resulted in failure to readjust imbalances in production and to "slow down a bit" so as to bring the frenzied, disorganized economy under control.³²

Not only, as suggested above, may recent secondary sources exaggerate the extent of P'eng's guilt as accepted at the time, but the literal authenticity of newly published texts of P'eng's "letter of opinion" and even of the Central Committee's resolution of censure is not beyond question. Given the eight-year delay in publication and the heavy bias of the sources, it would seem entirely possible that the primary documents have been altered or distorted to add support to more recent, Maoist interpretations.³³

³¹See "From the Defeat of P'eng Teh-huai to the Bankruptcy of China's Khrushchev," ibid., pp. 21-24.

³²One version of P'eng's letter, as taken down by Japanese correspondents in Peking, was published in Mainichi on August 22, 1967; another text appeared in a Red Guard newspaper, Exchange of Revolutionary Experience, on August 24, 1967.

³³Thus, the author shares M. La Dany's suspicions as to the literal accuracy of the Eighth Plenum censure

Actually, P'eng's criticisms may have been more restrained and balanced than the later charges against him would indicate. In the July 14 "letter of opinion" to Mao, for example (if we assume the authenticity of available texts), P'eng called for greater accuracy and realism in production figures -- a sentiment seemingly shared by the majority of his colleagues, to judge by the decision passed at Lushan to improve statistical reporting. While advocating changes in the communes to bring distribution more closely in line with labor, P'eng praised the commune system as having lifted the peasantry out of poverty and speeded the advance from socialism to communism. His warnings against "leftist" fanaticism were coupled with appeals to uphold the "mass line" and avoid rightist tendencies. Similarly, his criticisms of economic defects -- some of which he attributed simply to lack of experience -- were matched by expressions of confidence in the Leap Forward, as in the statement that "conditions for continued Leap Forward are present." He agreed with Mao that "the achievements are tremendous, the problems are numerous, the experience is rich and the future is bright." Indeed, he averred that, if present defects could be overcome -- by

resolution (China News Analysis, No. 685, November 17, 1967). He is not, however, persuaded by La Dany's argument that the reference in the resolution (as now published) to the dismissal of P'eng and others from various posts is contradicted by more credible evidence that those men actually were removed only after the Lushan Plenum -- at a meeting of the CCP Military Affairs Committee. The resolution as published in Hung Ch'i in August 1967 merely says that it is "essential to transfer P'eng" and the others from their responsible positions (except for membership in the Central Committee and Politburo), leaving the act of dismissal to other organs.

furthering the corrective action already taken in conferences at Wuchang, Chengchow, and Shanghai -- it would be possible to overtake the British level of production in only four years' time instead of the target of fifteen years originally set in the Leap Forward.

Subsequent commentaries by Cultural Revolutionaries have ripped P'eng's colorful phrases out of context and greatly distorted the position actually taken in his letter. For example, his advocacy of "balance" and "simultaneous attention" to both economic measures and "putting politics in command" (as well as his warning not to disregard scientific and economic laws) is now attacked as "eclecticism," denial of the primacy of politics, and a bourgeois effort to "put money in command"; his proposal to alter economic policies is described as a dark plot to completely abandon the communes and the Leap Forward.³⁴

P'eng's remarks, however, were not entirely at odds with the prevailing orientation at Lushan. It is sometimes forgotten that the most notable actions taken by the plenary session, aside from the censure of P'eng, were a drastic revision downward of production claims for 1958 and goals for 1959, and a further retreat from the communes as collective ownership and accounting were shifted

³⁴ See "From the Defeat of P'eng Teh-huai," Hung Ch'i, August 17, 1967; see also "Principal Crimes of P'eng Teh-huai, Big Ambitionist and Schemer," from the Canton Red Guard tabloids Ching kangshan and Kuang-tung Wen-i Chan-pao, translated in Survey of the China Mainland Press (SCMP), No. 4047, October 25, 1967.

downward to the production brigades at the next-lower level.³⁵

Since even his attackers admit that P'eng made "outward pretensions of support" for Mao and the Party's general line, we are left to ponder why the Eighth Plenum felt it necessary, not merely to overrule him, but to condemn his criticisms as constituting a "right opportunist line" that challenged "Party leadership in Socialist construction," and to accuse him of leading an "anti-Party clique" -- where "viewpoint" might have been the more accurate term -- a continuation of the 1954 Kao Kang/Jao Shu-shih plot. If P'eng had been seriously implicated in the "Kao/Jao anti-Party alliance," as is charged, it is difficult to understand why he should have been rewarded with an appointment as Minister of Defense in November 1954 -- just after the wholesale purge of Kao/Jao subordinates

³⁵ As Harold C. Hinton has pointed out, the revised production claims for 1958 -- while still not necessarily accurate -- reflected "an admitted overestimate of 50 per cent" in agriculture and represented a complete "writing-off of the output of the 'native' [backyard] furnaces as unusable in modern industry." ("Intra-Party Politics and Economic Policy in Communist China," World Politics, July 1960, p. 522; see also Schurmann, Ideology and Organization in Communist China, p. 491.) Although there was a brief, partial return to the earlier mass mobilization policies in the fall of 1959 -- in the wake of the "anti-rightist" campaign -- the general retreat from the communes and from the manic economic policies of the Leap Forward continued after mid-1960. Unfortunately, from November 1959 on, the regime's ban on the export of local and regional newspapers hindered the flow of information on economic trends.

in the Northeast and East China regional administrations in June, and after Liu Shao-ch'i had given intimations of the coming intra-Party purge at the CCP Fourth Plenum (of the Seventh Congress) in February. If P'eng actually made a self-criticism during the struggle against Kao/Jao in 1954, as is claimed in the newly published Lushan Plenum resolution, it would more likely have been the result of his association with Kao in 1953 as a member of the State Planning Commission (chaired by Kao, with Jao a member) than any serious charge that P'eng had participated in or led an anti-Party clique. In retrospect, P'eng's greater crime -- and the one implicating him in the 1954 factional struggle -- may have been his alleged deletion of a passage paying homage to the guidance of Mao's thoughts from a 1953 draft of regulations for PLA Party committees.³⁶

Even allowing for a high degree of exaggeration in the charges raised against him (especially his implication with the Kao/Jao plot) -- an exaggeration probably thought necessary to help shake P'eng's blameless reputation and wide following -- it is possible to discern several reasons why his colleagues in the Central Committee decided on the drastic action of censure and dismissal. P'eng's candid exposure of "defects" in the regime's Leap Forward and commune policies reflected on most of the Party leaders; and, accordingly, not only Mao but also Liu Shao-ch'i and Teng Hsiao-p'ing would seem to have had an interest in silencing if not discrediting him. But P'eng would not be

³⁶See "Settle Accounts with P'eng Teh-huai," Jen-min Jih-pao, August 17, 1967.

silenced. His arguments apparently struck a responsive chord among other leaders at Lushan -- not to mention their potential appeal to the Chinese masses straining under the burden of frenetic Leap Forward campaigns and economic setbacks.

In his "letter of opinion" of July 14, according to some accounts, P'eng pointedly rebuked those responsible for domestic programs when he charged that "We have not handled the problems of economic construction as successfully as we dealt with the problem of shelling Quemoy and quelling the revolt in Tibet." Moreover, he called attention to the worsening shortages of food and clothing with the warning that "the people urgently demand a change of the present conditions." The Eighth Plenum censure resolution of August 16 complained that P'eng had, time and again, asserted: "If the Chinese workers and peasants were not as good as they are, a Hungarian incident would have occurred in China and it would have been necessary to invite Soviet troops in."

The effect of these arguments apparently had begun to tell. The resolution declared that because of his influential position in the Party and the military establishment and his pretention of candor and frugality, P'eng "could and did mislead a number of people" at Lushan. In addition to his "handful" of accomplices (the resolution named Huang K'o-ch'eng, Chang Wen-t'ien, and Chou Hsiao-chou) and perhaps also to the rightists, there were presumed to have been "political speculators and alien class elements" and those with a personal grudge who had "sneaked into the Party," all of whom rose up at Lushan to launch a "fierce onslaught" against the Maoist leadership and general line.

Worst perhaps in the eyes of his colleagues was the fact that P'eng was as stubborn and uncompromising as he was outspoken. Not only did he refuse to recant when overruled, but he apparently declined even to meet halfway those willing to restore to the regime's policies a limited measure of realism. In his letter of July 14, for example, while noting that the greatly exaggerated reports of increased agricultural output had been revised downward (from the original claim of a twofold increase to one of 35 per cent), P'eng refused to accept even the new figures and complained that they still contained inaccuracies. Though he probably was right, this statement may well have alienated potential allies who were leaning toward piecemeal reform. In the end, P'eng's die-hard style of aggressive, unyielding dissent -- which may have culminated in a direct, heated confrontation with Mao -- probably contributed as much to his undoing as the substance of his complaint.

According to the account of David Charles,³⁷ based upon reports of tendentious, confidential briefings given to CCP members soon after P'eng's dismissal, the Party leaders at Lushan were taken aback by his bold initiative and -- either from surprise or in an attempt to smoke out the opposition -- allowed a protracted debate to proceed. In it P'eng was supported by Huang K'o-ch'eng, Chang Wen-t'ien, and others, including the venerable Lin Po-ch'ü (who died in May 1960). Ultimately, however, all wavering and dissent were smothered, as the leadership united behind a resolution (presumably that of August 16) which reaffirmed

³⁷"The Dismissal of Marshal P'eng Teh-huai," The China Quarterly, October-December 1961, pp. 67-68.

the absolute correctness of the Party line, rejected P'eng's criticisms without compromise, and condemned him for factional activity -- specifically, for going beyond permissible expression of dissent in the Politburo to lobby within the Central Committee. (This last distinction, mentioned by Charles, does not appear in later documentation.) At one point in the debate it was suggested that any attempt to disgrace P'eng might trigger a revolt in the PLA, whereupon Mao "declared with tears in his eyes that, if this happened, he would go back to the villages and recruit another army. The generals present then got up in turn and pledged their loyalty to Mao and to the Central Committee."³⁸

Although the evidence now available indicates that the main theme of P'eng Teh-huai's dissent at Lushan was opposition to certain aspects of the Leap Forward and commune policies,³⁹ the military implications of his criticism very likely were also a significant issue in the dispute, whether or not they figured prominently in the debate. The fact that serious dissent of any kind

³⁸ Ibid., p. 68.

³⁹ This, essentially, is also the conclusion reached earlier by David Charles on the basis of the reported briefings to Party members soon after P'eng's dismissal in 1959. "The shortcomings of the Great Leap Forward," says Charles, were the "main theme" of P'eng's memorandum (or "letter of opinion") presented at the Eighth Plenum. In general, he "preferred to concentrate his attack on the political and economic policies of the Party rather than air his professional [military] grievances. Throughout, P'eng acted as a senior member of the Politburo rather than as a dissatisfied Minister of Defense." (Ibid., pp. 67, 65.)

should have come from high in the military establishment must have been extremely disturbing to most Party leaders; and P'eng's insistent stress on restoring economic realism carried obvious implications for the allocation of military resources and for political-military relations. Given the nature of P'eng's criticisms at Lushan, the subsequent removal of top military officers -- and the fact that their removal was not paralleled by a purge of civilian planners and administrators -- makes it appear that the conflict was less a dispute between exponents of contending general economic policies than a dissent by the military (with scattered civilian support) over certain aspects of the prevailing policy, notably the adverse impact of Leap Forward measures on military capabilities and the Party's growing domination over all facets of army life.

Although the Cultural Revolution has provided much new information as to the chief culprits at Lushan and their crimes, the result has not been to lighten the onus of guilt or to shift it from the military officers associated with P'eng Teh-huai. The "economists," who have been so roundly criticized during the Cultural Revolution, have never been identified as the enemies who launched the "fierce onslaught on the Party's general line, the Great Leap Forward, and the people's communes" at Lushan.

While David Charles' article may have been lacking in documentary support, the charges against P'eng Teh-huai made public during the Cultural Revolution tend to confirm those portions of Charles' account which were based on reports of the first round of confidential briefings to CCP members after P'eng's dismissal. In other words,

the newly published documentation indicates that, in general, these were indeed the charges that constituted the grounds for the dismissal. (Whether or not the indictment accurately described P'eng's behavior and the debate at Lushan is another matter.) As we shall see, however, a second category of reports used by Charles, which told of later briefings to "selected cadres" beginning in the summer of 1960 -- after a revival of interest in the P'eng Teh-huai affair coinciding with a dramatic worsening of Sino-Soviet relations -- provides a much less credible basis of evidence as to the charges (true or not) which brought P'eng's removal.⁴⁰

Whether at Lushan or earlier, P'eng and his fellow dissidents evidently opposed the Party's assignment of ever-heavier economic and other nonmilitary tasks to the army and resisted further political encroachments that threatened to undermine military training and organization.⁴¹

⁴⁰For a discussion of the two categories of reports used by Charles see his bibliographic note, ibid., p. 65.

⁴¹On August 1, 1966, Chieh-fang Chün Pao printed a description of the second major struggle in the PLA after the establishment of the People's Republic, which reported that in 1959 an "anti-Party clique" took advantage of important posts it had acquired in the army to attempt to abolish political work and Party leadership, as well as the army's assigned tasks in socialist construction, mass work, and militia organization. While no minutes of the Lushan discussions are available, the speeches of P'eng Teh-huai and T'an Cheng at the Eighth Party Congress two years earlier revealed the two men's concern that Party control not be allowed to impair "individual responsibility" in command and that "guerrilla habits" not undermine discipline and impede modernization. However, they also warned against uncritical borrowing of "foreign military experience" and urged a uniquely Chinese approach to military

However, this opposition is not to be equated with the recent, sweeping charge that P'eng was all along a "careerist" who had "usurped" his position in the army to advance a full-fledged revisionist and "bourgeois military line," calling for "modernization at the expense of revolutionization," regarding the role of man in modern warfare as secondary to that of "technique, steel, and machines," and "nullifying political work in the army."⁴² Although there may be an element of truth in some of these charges (for example, that P'eng sought to maintain a balance between political and military requirements, that he wished to modernize PLA organization and capabilities, that he valued Soviet assistance), it is only by gross distortion of the evidence that P'eng is made to appear, in retrospect, a thoroughly deceitful and disloyal lieutenant, bent on abandoning the PLA's revolutionary traditions, Party leadership, and Maoist doctrines and on turning the army into "a tool for bringing about the restoration of capitalism."

Perhaps the best evidence of P'eng's dissent in the area of military affairs is to be found in issues of the secret army periodical Kung-tso T'ung-hsün (Work Bulletin)

development. See Eighth National Congress of the Communist Party of China, Vol. 2, Speeches, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1956, pp. 32-37, 41-43, and 259-278.

⁴² See, for example, the following articles: "Let Us Go Forward Triumphant Along Chairman Mao's Proletarian Line of Army Building," Hung Ch'i, No. 12, August 1, 1967; "Principal Crimes of P'eng Teh-huai," ibid., August 17, 1967; and "Settle Accounts with P'eng Teh-huai," Jen-min Jih-pao, August 17, 1967.

covering the first half of 1961.⁴³ Individual numbers of this journal, which was published by the PLA's General Political Department, charge that P'eng Teh-huai, Huang K'o-ch'eng, Hung Hsueh-chih, and other, unnamed officers (notably, "XX") advocated a "bourgeois military line" (nowhere fully defined), violated Mao's principles of army-building and combat, took a "simple military viewpoint," instituted "warlordism" (maltreating troops and straining relations between officers and men), and practiced "dogmatism" (in particular, by fostering "superstitious belief in everything foreign and free transplantation of raw foreign things"). More specifically, one or another of them was accused of neglecting the study of Mao's thoughts (the General Political Department, for example, was said to have failed to give adequate support to the army's Political Academy), delaying the compilation of native Chinese military manuals for two years after Mao (at an enlarged meeting of the Military Affairs Committee in 1958) had ordered them, and slighting Party organization in the army (especially at the company level), thereby creating a "general atmosphere of perfunctory service and indifference."⁴⁴

It is extremely difficult to evaluate the accuracy of these accusations as they applied to P'eng and others who were dismissed after Lushan. For the most part, the charges

⁴³Translated and edited in J. Chester Cheng, The Politics of the Chinese Red Army, Hoover Institution, Stanford, 1966.

⁴⁴See Kung-tso T'ung-hsün, Nos. 2, 3, 8, 24, 26, and 29, ibid.

in the 1961 periodical appear as fragmentary and tendentious remarks without specificity and concreteness. They may well exaggerate the degree of guilt, deliberately using P'eng and the other dissidents as scapegoats for the PLA's manifest defects and weaknesses -- particularly in political organization, training, and discipline -- in the wake of the disastrous Leap Forward. Still, they present a much less sweeping indictment than has appeared in commentaries published subsequently during the Cultural Revolution.

It is hard to believe, however, that P'eng should have been an exponent of a thorough-going bourgeois "military professionalism" and at the same time have adopted -- in opposition to Mao, allegedly -- a "completely passive attitude" towards military planning and preparedness (the negation of the Maoist "active defense"). paid little or no attention to the building of air, naval, and even ground forces, and neglected both the manufacture of conventional arms and the advancement of science and technology.

Conceivably, one so desirous of "regularization and modernization" could have become overly dependent on Soviet techniques and arms assistance. But it is at least questionable that a person of P'eng's nationalist pride and professional judgment would, as is now charged, have opposed the creation of "an independent and complete network of modern national defense industries" and refused to endorse the development of a Chinese advanced weapons program (including atomic and hydrogen bombs and intercontinental missiles). particularly as Sino-Soviet relations worsened after 1958. (He may, however, have objected to the excessive pace of the efforts to develop these indigenous

capabilities.) Still more improbable is it that P'eng and his supporters were engaged in a plot with Khrushchev to overthrow CCP leadership and set up a "revisionist" regime in China. This charge, based on inferences that go far beyond the facts adduced, is incompatible with P'eng's long record of loyal service to Mao and the Party.

Recent attacks against P'eng have made vague and unsubstantiated references to his "illicit relations with foreign countries."⁴⁵ This allegation, however, did not appear in the indictment -- a remarkably detailed one -- of the censure resolution passed by the Eighth Plenum on August 16, 1959 (as published eight years later). Indeed, the closest the resolution came to identifying P'eng's attitude toward the USSR was to quote his aforementioned observation that, considering the economic consequences of the Leap Forward "if the Chinese workers and peasants were not as good as they are, a Hungarian incident would have occurred in China, and it would have been necessary to invite Soviet troops in." The statement, if authentic, would seem to reveal P'eng as delivering a warning to prevent Soviet intervention rather than suggest that he was secretly conspiring to foster such intervention. Moreover, available issues of the secret military journal Kung-tso T'ung hsün, though critical of the PLA's excessive imitation of "foreign countries" (presumably the USSR) during P'eng's leadership,⁴⁶

⁴⁵ See, for example, "From the Defeat of P'eng Teh-huai," Hung Ch'i, August 17, 1967.

⁴⁶ See No. 26 (July 13, 1961) and No. 29 (August 1, 1961).

nowhere suggest that he or any of the other condemned generals conspired with Khrushchev or had improper contacts with Soviet officials. Nor have similar innuendoes of conspiracy been substantiated by Peking's quotation, in anti-Soviet polemics of 1963 and 1964, of statements attributed to Khrushchev which expressed friendship and sympathy for unnamed dissident Chinese leaders ("anti-Party elements," in Peking's terminology) who had courageously criticized the Leap Forward policies.

Probably the most important source of evidence remaining to support the notion of P'eng's culpability in his contacts with Soviet officials is the celebrated article by David Charles that appeared in The China Quarterly of October-December 1961. As has been pointed out, Charles' account is based largely on reports of two rounds of confidential briefings given to CCP members and "selected cadres" after P'eng's dismissal. Subsequent evidence has tended to support the authenticity of charges contained in the first round. Yet Charles admits that it was only in the later briefings, "which coincided with the exacerbation of Sino-Soviet relations in the summer of 1960," that "selected cadres were told about P'eng Teh-huai's contacts with the Soviet leadership -- an aspect of the case which had been concealed [if it existed] in the earlier general briefing."⁴⁷ The coincidence between the dramatically widening Sino-Soviet rift in mid-1961 and the sudden revelation of P'eng's "illicit relations," seen against the fact that no such allegation was raised in either the Lushan

⁴⁷"The Dismissal of Marshal P'eng Teh-huai," p. 65.

censure resolution (even in its present form) or Kung-tso T'ung-hsün, suggests the possibility that this charge was invented ex post facto, or greatly exaggerated on the basis of very tenuous evidence, to bolster Peking's case against Moscow and ensure a firm base of cadre support for it in China.

The hypothesis that P'eng conspired with Khrushchev to overthrow Mao has also been argued from a rather strained interpretation of some of his public statements prior to 1959 and from circumstantial evidence of contacts with Soviet officials in the course of official journeys abroad. Thus, P'eng's praise of the Soviet armed forces in 1957 as a model for the modernization of the PLA is sometimes cited as evidence of his anti-Maoist bias (his objection, for instance, to Mao's stress on the importance of men over weapons). However, P'eng's words seem perfectly appropriate and anything but disloyal when one recalls that they were uttered in the context of the Sino-Soviet agreement on assistance in nuclear and military technology, concluded in 1957, which Mao presumably also favored at the time. Besides, as pointed out earlier, Mao was still willing to sing the praise of the Soviet Union as late as 1957.

P'eng Teh-huai's seven-week "military goodwill mission" to the Warsaw Pact nations in the spring of 1959 inevitably put him in contact with Soviet leaders, but no evidence has been adduced that he conspired with them against Mao. In the absence of hard evidence one can, of course, speculate endlessly about the possibility of "illicit relations." Such charges, however, have often been grossly exaggerated by the Chinese Communists, as in the case of spy charges against American missionaries and,

more recently, Indian diplomats. Moreover, not only would treasonable activity have been out of character for P'eng, but he also was probably realistic enough to calculate accurately the limitations and dangers of disloyal connivance with Soviet officials. Without wishing to rule out once and for all the possibility of P'eng Teh-huai's involvement with the Soviets, this writer believes that, until we have better evidence to support such an hypothesis, there are good reasons for preferring a less sweeping and fanciful interpretation of the affair.

Whatever may have been the true nature of P'eng Teh-huai's dissent at Lushan, and whatever the cause of the subsequent purge, the incident created a severe test of the regime's cohesion and resiliency. It was as much in the spirit of prophecy as of admonition, as it turns out, that a contemporary Jen-min Jih-pao editorial, drawing upon the lessons of great heresies of the past (notably those of Kautsky, Plekanov, and Ch'en Tu-hsiu), warned that proletarian revolutionaries could always "degenerate" into bourgeois revolutionaries.⁴⁸ The top leaders, though profoundly shaken, quickly closed ranks and retained their essential unity; affirming the correctness of the regime's

⁴⁸Jen-min Jih-pao, September 1, 1959. This theme may have been a reflection of Mao's thinking at Lushan. Recent accounts of the session quote him as saying: "This struggle at Lushan is a class struggle, a continuation of the life-and-death struggle between the two major antagonistic classes -- the bourgeoisie and the proletariat." Observing that it had raged throughout the last decade of "socialist revolution," he predicted that it would continue in Party and nation for another twenty to fifty years. "In short," he concluded, "the struggle will cease only when classes die out completely." ("From the Defeat of P'eng Teh-huai," Hung Ch'i, August 17, 1967.)

general policy orientation, they continued to alter its more radical and unworkable features.

LIBERALIZATION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

During 1960 and 1961, as economic conditions worsened, the regime was forced to retreat further from the Leap Forward program and to relax controls over society. Successive years of bad harvests and inept management had wiped out earlier agricultural surpluses earmarked for investment and left severe food shortages and the threat of widespread famine. Plans for rapid industrialization were shattered in mid-1960 as Soviet technical assistance was precipitously withdrawn and scarce hard currency went into wheat imports for food-deficit areas.

In the first half of the year, there had been a momentary resurgence of the Leap Forward, with the renewal of mass labor campaigns and, in some areas, the recollectivization of private plots and the reopening of communal mess halls. In March 1960 -- according to charges recently aired in the Cultural Revolution -- Mao Tse-tung drafted a document known as the "Anshan Steel Constitution" (An-kang Hsien-fa). It laid down "five fundamental principles for Socialist industry," stressing such things as political leadership, reinforcement of Party guidance, and the promotion of mass movements in the operation of factories and mines. By the fall of 1960, however, this revival of the Leap Forward had again proved extremely disappointing, the early harvests having been even poorer than those of 1959.

In January 1961, the Ninth Plenum of the Central Committee, while continuing to mouth the empty clichés of a

vanished utopian confidence, adopted a sober and realistic policy aimed at recovery and consolidation. Agriculture was given priority over industry; primary responsibility for management was shifted downward from the commune to the production brigade and finally to the production team; and material incentives such as private plots and free markets were increasingly employed to stimulate output.

In September 1961, according to recent accusations, "the handful of top capitalist authorities in the Party" illegally published erroneous new directives for industry known as the "70 Articles of Industry" (literally, the draft of a "Work Regulation for State-Operated Industrial Enterprises"). The new draft allegedly ignored the thought of Mao, contravened the principles of his "Anshan Steel Constitution," and deemphasized the class struggle, treating industrial enterprises as primarily "economic organizations," and advocating such concepts as "production first," technology, material incentives, worker safety, and "plant management by experts" (excluding ordinary workers).

This condemnation, like other criticisms of its kind, entirely ignored the policy changes wrought by the Ninth Plenum, to whose decisions Mao and even members of his present coterie have not specifically taken exception; it judged guilt or innocence by Party criteria that were valid (and accepted by the "top capitalist-roaders") in earlier or later periods. The "70 Articles" (to which only fragmentary and probably distorted references appear in the recent indictments) would seem to have been squarely in line with the orientation announced by the Ninth Plenum, just as Mao's "Anshan Steel Constitution" was consonant with the Party line prevailing in March 1960. The same

kind of rebuttal can be applied to the more familiar charge that, after 1961, Liu Shao-ch'i and others advocated the "three-self, one guarantee" system (san tzu i pao), favoring the extension of private plots and free markets as well as an increase in the number of small enterprises exercising sole responsibility for their own profit and loss, and fixing or guaranteeing the fulfillment of production quotas based on the individual household. Not only does this charge distort Liu's position to make it appear that he favored an out and out "restoration of capitalism" (rather than a few limited and temporary tactical concessions to stave off imminent economic disaster), but it completely ignores two facts: that at the time of the Ninth Plenum Mao was, after all, Chairman of the Central Committee and that even subsequently he never condemned that session or its actions.⁴⁹

Despite the economic reverses of 1960-1961, there was no discernible disposition in the top leadership to seek salvation through a return to the Soviet model or a

⁴⁹ The above-mentioned charges in regard to Mao's "Anshan Steel Constitution" and the "70 Articles of Industry" appeared in a series of articles published in Pei-ching Jih-pao (Peking Daily) of July 15 and 16, 1967. The san tzu i pao charge against Liu was developed, among other places, in an article in Hung Ch'i, No. 13, August 17, 1967, and in the fourth instalment of a series attacking Liu that was published by Chieh-fang Chün Pao and excerpted by NCNA October 25, 1967. For a discussion of the brief resurgence of the Leap Forward in 1960 and the retreat from it in 1961, see Marion Larsen, "China's Agriculture Under Communism," in An Economic Profile of Mainland China, Studies Prepared for the Joint Economic Committee, U.S. Congress, Vol. 1, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1967, pp. 220-221.

rapprochement with Moscow. As in the mid-1950s, China would find her own way, building anew through dogged self-reliance.

Relaxation of economic controls was accompanied by a more tolerant attitude toward intellectuals. In August 1961, Ch'en I told graduates of Peking's Institutes of higher learning that in ordinary schools (as opposed to political academies) demands for indoctrination and manual labor should not be allowed to interfere unduly with specialized studies, needed for their contribution to socialist construction. If one wanted to ride in an airplane, the skill of the pilot would count for more than his political purity.⁵⁰ (One wonders what Ch'en's fate might have been today had he used the metaphor of the helmsman, so closely identified with Mao -- "our Great Helmsman" -- in the Cultural Revolution.) Not surprisingly, many intellectuals took advantage of this atmosphere of greater freedom to engage in subtle, sophisticated sniping at the leaders and policies they held responsible for China's economic catastrophe and international isolation. It is

⁵⁰Chung-kuo Ch'ing-nien (China Youth), No. 17, September 1, 1961. Another, related theme that began to be sounded at that time was the importance of restoring some balance between demands for physical and mental labor, on the one hand, and the human body's need for rest, on the other -- an idea largely ignored during the frenetic activity of the Leap Forward, to the detriment of health and productivity. As Fu Lien-chang (once Mao's trusted personal physician) pointed out in an article to youth, "the alternation of studying and work with recreation and rest is the necessary law governing human life." (Chung-kuo Ch'ing nien, No. 19/20, October 1961.)

difficult even now to be completely sure about the extent of this criticism, for most of the incriminating evidence has been furnished, belatedly, by the prosecution in the Cultural Revolution and consists only in incomplete quotations alleged to contain offensive double meanings, many of these hidden in historical allegory.⁵¹

The criticism appears to have been most acute in Peking, where prominent writers, like the historian Wu Han (who was also deputy mayor), and Party propaganda officials such as Teng T'ao, Liao Mo-sha, and Li Chi employed periodicals and newspapers controlled by the Municipal Party Committee to launch their veiled attacks. Thus, Wu Han's series of essays and plays published between 1959 and 1962 on the heroic but much-abused Ming dynasty officials Hai Jui and Yu Chien were later interpreted by the arbiters of the Cultural Revolution as a defense of P'eng Teh-huai, an attack on Mao, and a demand that unfairly dismissed officials be reinstated.⁵²

⁵¹In the present atmosphere of paranoid reexamination of former writings and statements, it is sometimes forgotten that, on the key issue of attitudes toward the position and thought of Mao, the "liberal" period of 1959-1962 exhibited a rising tide of public adulation. Thus, the Hong Kong correspondent of The Economist, writing in the fall of 1960, noted a dramatic rise in "the cult of Mao" that had begun early the preceding year: "As the ideological dispute with Moscow waxed," he observed, "so did the deification of the omniscient Mao gather weight and momentum. And so presumably will it continue to do." (October 1, 1960, p. 53.)

⁵²In mid-August 1967, during a renewed Maoist attack on Liu Shao-ch'i, the charge was raised that in 1962 "the Khrushchev of China" had encouraged P'eng Teh-huai to write an 80,000-word statement aimed at effecting a reversal of his Lushan censure and dismissal. According to an article in Hung Ch'i (No. 13, August 17, 1967), Liu "openly tried

Similarly, essays and newspaper columns authored or co-authored by Teng T'o during this period were viewed in

to reverse the verdict" at an enlarged work conference of the Central Committee held in January 1962, at which he defended P'eng's dissent, observing that much of it was in accord with the facts, and deplored the struggle against P'eng and his associates as one that had overstepped its limits. Still more recent Maoist sources maintain that, in the course of the "vigorous struggle," Liu launched a "frantic attack" against Mao, declaring that "to oppose Chairman Mao is only to oppose one individual" and advocating the principle of open opposition within the Party as well as among the people. He allegedly was immediately supported by Lu Ting-i, who recalled that even the ancient emperors had tolerated opposition, as was shown by the case of Wei Cheng, a dissident statesman of the T'ang dynasty whose biography Lu had recently ordered to be published. Afterward Liu was said to have mobilized his supporters and intensified his schemes to usurp Party and state leadership, assisted in this effort by P'eng Chen, who spread the suggestion that Chairman Mao be asked "to make his exit." (Jen-min Jih-pao, November 9, 1967.)

If these charges are true, and if Liu's motive in urging P'eng Teh-huai's reinstatement was actually to challenge Mao's authority -- as opposed to honoring the Lushan censure resolution by heeding its admonition to manifest "an attitude of great sincerity and warmth" toward P'eng to "help him recognize and rectify his mistake," which would have been good Maoist doctrine -- there might have been good cause for Mao's alarm. The plays and operas on the theme of Hai Jui's unjust dismissal from office, for example, could then be seen as part of a deliberate plot to prepare public opinion for P'eng Teh-huai's restoration. Similarly, the Central Committee's relaxation of economic controls in the early 1960s -- permitting free rural markets, private garden plots, and other incentives through which to raise production -- could be construed as evidence of a conspiracy to restore capitalism.

The recent accusations also indicate, however, that Liu did not succeed in promoting P'eng Teh-huai's exoneration and restoration of power. If Mao and his followers were thus strong enough to thwart Liu's alleged bid, one wonders why they did not at the time make any move to

1966 as having slyly satirized the Leap Forward for its boasts and illusions, praised the unyielding spirit of righteous officials unjustly dismissed, deprecated before all the world the "empty talk" of "East Wind Prevailing over West," and, worst of all, parodied Mao as a victim of "amnesia," a man who monopolized decisions, rejected good advice, and needed a "complete rest," or cure, by a blow to the head from "a specially made club."⁵³

From the viewpoint of those whose suspicions were aroused, the covert, esoteric criticisms of the intellectuals may well have seemed less serious than the toleration -- even protection -- of those critics by the Peking CCP's first secretary, P'eng Chen, and the Party's central propaganda apparatus under Lu Ting-i and his deputy, Chou Yang. Although these men remained unexceptionably hard-line and pro-Mao in their public statements and behavior, they were ultimately accountable for the misdeeds of those over whom they held authority. Indeed, Chou Yang, for one,

expose the conspiracy and curb Liu's power. Instead, Liu enjoyed a role of increasing prominence and responsibility, with Mao's acquiescence if not his blessing. If Liu did attempt in some way (perhaps now exaggerated) to rehabilitate P'eng Teh-huai or to encourage greater freedom of opposition (but not "excessive struggle") within the Party in 1962, his actions evidently were not regarded by Mao and his supporters as so seriously offensive or threatening to their authority as to require any overt response.

⁵³Excerpts from Teng T'o's writings singled out for condemnation may be found in Yao Wen-yuan, "On the 'Three-Family Village'," and in Lin Chieh et al. (comp.), "Teng T'o's 'Evening Chats at Yenshan' Is Anti-Party and Anti-Socialist Double-Talk," originally published in May 1966 and reprinted in The Great Socialist Cultural Revolution in China, Vols. 1 and 2, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1966.

was accused during the Cultural Revolution of having acted hypocritically, in remaining publicly upright while privately condemning the "subjective idealism" of the Great Leap, defending "revisionist" writers, and camping down the rising adulation of Mao.⁵⁴

As regards the liberal phase of the early 1960s, it should be noted that the accused critics have stoutly protested their innocence of deliberate wrongdoing. Innocent or guilty, the subtle criticisms for which they are being blamed were not likely at that time to find a very wide audience, since considerable sophistication would have been required to translate their hidden meanings. Though much

⁵⁴K. S. Karol, who had had a lengthy interview with him in the spring of 1965, believes that this indictment against Chou Yang contains "puzzling polemical falsifications." He reports that in their interview Chou had "sharply attacked" many of the very ideas that are now being imputed to him: "He is accused, for example," writes Karol, "of having considered the 'bourgeois realism of the nineteenth century' as the summit of the arts, while in fact he told [Karol] exactly the opposite. It is claimed that he was in agreement with Ting Ling during the Yen-an controversies of 1942 and that he was her protector during the 'hundred flowers' crisis of 1957, although in fact he was her main opponent. He is presented to the world as an admirer of Khrushchev, although in fact he talked to [Karol] about the former Soviet premier with complete contempt." Indeed, Chou, in talking with Karol, seemed to anticipate themes of the Cultural Revolution when he condemned the rigidity of the Soviet regime for having stifled the growth of proletarian culture in Russia. He criticized the CPSU, much as Mao might have, for entertaining the "absurd theory" that the class struggle and contradictions had ended with nationalization of the means of production. Such an analysis, he contended, had led the Soviets to an art that was "neither realistic nor socialistic -- [but] simply a version of bourgeois art." K. S. Karol, China: The Other Communism, Hill & Wang, New York, 1966, pp. 276-277, 284-285.

is made of them now, they did not then occasion either acknowledgment or rebuttal from those supposedly attacked. More important, they had no perceptible effect on the orientation or policies of the regime, whatever may have been their influence on individuals.

Nevertheless, it is entirely possible that Mao -- alerted perhaps by his censorious political secretary, Ch'en Po-ta, and his termagant wife, Chiang Ch'ing -- suspected the critics and, grievously wounded by their personal barbs, became obsessed with what he believed to be their potential threat to his own power and place in history and to the orientation of the regime itself. Such an obsession would have coincided with the conviction of other leaders, around mid-1962, that a general collapse had been averted and some progress was being made toward recovery -- a prospect which presented an opening for the gradual reimposition of tight social controls. Many of the top leaders besides Mao probably thought such a move desirable, alarmed as they were by the "spontaneous tendencies to capitalism" they detected among the peasantry in the course of the decentralization of collective farming and the acquisition of private plots and sideline production, and found reflected also in a rash of articles by urban economists advocating price and profit mechanisms as a basis for industrial planning and management.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Probably the most notable of these articles was entitled "A Tentative Discussion on Economic Accounting of Industrial Enterprises," and signed by two obscure economists, Yang Jun-jui and Li Hsun. Published in Jen-min Jih-pao, July 19, 1962, and translated in SCMP, No. 2817, September 12, 1962.

A lamentable paucity of reliable data makes it impossible to determine the extent of sympathy, if any, among individual leaders for the relatively liberal economic views aired in the first part of 1962. The noticeable cessation thereafter of any free discussion of this kind, however, and the firm action taken by the Tenth Plenum in September to tighten controls and restrict "capitalist tendencies," suggest the absence of any serious deviation within the top leadership from the basic goals and principles of Communist economic management. Although most of the limited economic freedoms of the earlier period were to be retained, the leadership appeared determined to curb any further relaxation of controls over collectivized agriculture or small-scale industry and commerce. True, one of the charges recently heard during the Cultural Revolution was that Liu Shao-ch'i, Teng Hsiao-p'ing (referred to as "the other top capitalist-roader"), and others were doing everything in their power in 1962 to restore capitalist agricultural and industrial policies; indeed, Teng Hsiao-p'ing, speaking in July 1962 at a meeting of the Communist Youth League's Central Committee that was also attended by P'eng Chen, Lu Ting-i, and Yang Shang-k'un, was said to have advocated a return to an individual peasant economy, declaring that "black or white, if cats can catch mice, they are all right." But when Mao criticized these views (which may actually have gone little beyond a reiteration of certain "compromise" features of the economic policy then in effect, Teng reportedly was "scared out of his wits," ordered the offending remarks deleted from the minutes of the meeting, urged his hearers not to spread false information, and confessed: "I forgot to stress the question of

collective economy. I did not mean to invent some theory to reject collective economy."⁵⁶

At the Tenth Plenum of the Central Committee, in September 1962, Mao, who is said to have convened that meeting, resumed a more active leadership role. He condemned "bourgeois" trends not only in literature and art but also in the economy, speaking out especially against the restoration of limited private ownership and incentives in agriculture, and he urged more intensive political education for youth to maintain the purity of the revolution. To counter the objectionable trends and ensure the desired influence among the masses, Mao called for a nationwide campaign of "class struggle" and "socialist education," and he subsequently gave instructions for the launching of a mass movement for socialist education in the rural areas.⁵⁷

According to sources associated with the Cultural Revolution -- though these may border on the apocryphal -- Mao also used the Tenth Plenum to let it be known (privately, at least) that he considered himself the target of subtle literary attacks. He allegedly said that "The use of fiction for carrying out anti-Party activities is a great invention" and intimated that P'eng Teh-huai -- or whoever was writing in his behalf -- was one of the great

⁵⁶Radio Peking (Domestic Service) December 3, 1967; Jen-min Jih-pao, February 10, 1968.

⁵⁷"Struggle Between the Two Roads in China's Countryside," Hung Ch'i, No. 16, November 23, 1967.

"inventors."⁵⁸ Mao must have been gratified by the session's final communiqué, which acknowledged the need to continue the class struggle throughout the long period of transition to communism, decried such persistent bourgeois influences in society as the force of old habits and spontaneous tendencies toward capitalism, and urged vigilance against attempts by reactionary elements to restore capitalism.

In addition to the communiqué, the Central Committee promulgated a resolution in September 1962 designed to strengthen the collective economy through the communes and to further agricultural production, and to these ends issued a revision of the "60 Regulations" governing rural work, which had been adopted in the more liberal atmosphere of 1961. A text of the revised draft was published in Taiwan in May 1965 by the National Security Bureau, Republic of China.⁵⁹

FRUSTRATION AND THE MAOIST IDEOLOGICAL REVIVAL

Although the Tenth Plenum marked the end of the liberal period brought on by the failure of the Leap Forward, the tightening of controls in the years following was not accompanied by radical shifts in the regime's policies. From 1963 onward, the most remarkable change, at a more

⁵⁸See Wen Hung-chan et al., "Pao-wei Yen-an," Jen-min Jih-pao, November 12, 1967.

⁵⁹"Nung-ts'un Jen-min Kung-she Kung-tso T'iao-li Hsin-cheng Ts'ao-an" (Revised Draft of Work Regulations for Rural People's Communes).

basic level, was the rapidly rising emphasis on ideology, particularly as personified in Mao and crystallized in his thought. Ideology was used both as an instrument of social rectification and as a way of stimulating the masses to greater efforts toward the attainment of revolutionary goals. Beyond this, in the face of continuing intractable problems in the objective situation, and in the absence of any new and promising solutions, the great ideological revival came more and more to serve as a kind of cosmic panacea. If carried to its logical conclusion, such an approach became a threat to the tenuous balance between ideal and practical components in the regime's orientation -- a balance that had been restored in the early 1960s after it had been affected by the disastrous course of the manic Leap Forward.⁶⁰ Leaders who had been able to unite in approving the unprecedented shift leftward in 1958 did not necessarily feel disposed, after their brush with disaster, to seek national salvation through a new campaign aimed at reviving the class struggle and getting the masses to give their hearts to Chairman Mao. Even the more chastened and realistic among them, however, probably were willing to support the revival in its early stages, be it

⁶⁰ An indication of the attempt to restore the balance during the liberal "recovery" period was the action of the Ninth Plenum, which moderated the radical economic policies of the Leap Forward and at the same time called for a major rectification campaign. (See Jen-min Jih-pao, January 21, 1961.) This campaign, however, which in somewhat vague terms was ordered to proceed "stage by stage and area by area" throughout the nation, did not prove to have the impact of the later "socialist education movement."

because of their abiding faith in indoctrination and an inability to suggest anything better, or be it, simply, because Mao demanded it and because concessions in the "cultural" area appeared to them as a way of limiting interference elsewhere.

Moreover, Lin Piao, upon assuming P'eng Teh-huai's position as Minister of Defense, had plunged immediately into efforts to strengthen political and ideological work in the PLA, advancing slogans such as the "Four Firsts," which emphasized the human element, politics, ideology, and the living of ideology. Although intensive work toward the achievement of a nuclear capability continued, it was a distinctly separate effort with little, if any, impact on the general trend away from military professionalism. Lin repeatedly called on members of the armed forces to study and live by the thoughts of Mao. In 1961 he had a small volume of the Chairman's sayings compiled and printed for use in the army -- the precursor of the little red-covered book later waved by millions of chanting Red Guards.⁶¹ In the controlled military environment, the emphasis on Maoist faith and works was rapidly intensified, although it is fair to assume that skepticism, even

⁶¹ Ironically, the later volume included a statement in which Mao spoke favorably of Liu Shao-ch'i, a passage that was deleted only in the second, revised edition of the book, in May 1967, over a year after the Cultural Revolution had publicly erupted. In looking back to the origins of the Cultural Revolution, it is also interesting to note that a call for the posting of ta-tzu-pao and for a course of "unity-criticism-unity" was issued in the PLA at the same time that Lin Piao launched the army's campaign to "study the thought of Mao Tse-tung." That campaign was based on a resolution of October 20, 1960 (for

if suppressed, continued to be felt in some quarters of so vast and varied an institution as the military. After a brief relaxation of controls during the darkest period of the economic slump, the army rapidly put "politics in command" and, beginning in December 1963, was held up as a model for the entire nation to emulate. Soon afterward, a program was launched to create PLA-style political departments in all industrial, financial, and commercial units of the government, from the national ministries down to local enterprises, and to have a parallel structure of departments for economic affairs at all levels of the Party.⁶² The army under Lin Piao thus became the most powerful institutional convert to the new, revivalist ideological approach.

Party and government were less positive in their response. Besides enjoying more freedom of expression than did soldiers under military discipline, the civilian personnel represented a higher level of educational attainment and, by and large, a greater degree of spiritual independence. While reiterating dutifully the outworn slogans of the Great Leap, administrative spokesmen began to hint that "policy" errors, as well as bad weather and the perfidious

the "Strengthening of Political and Ideological Work in the Army"), which Lin had guided through an enlarged meeting of the Military Affairs Committee. (See Kung-tso T'ung-hsün, No. 3, January 7, 1966, in Cheng, The Politics of the Chinese Red Army, pp. 66, 74, 77.)

⁶²See discussion in Chalmers Johnson, "Lin Piao's Army and Its Role in Chinese Society," Part II, Current Scene, Vol. 4, No. 14, July 15, 1966, pp. 4-6.

Soviets, had contributed to its failure.⁶³ In the countryside the "class struggle" campaign lagged, and, despite sporadic and sometimes intensive rectification drives -- directed particularly against the hapless rural cadres who were charged with corruption and inefficiency -- there seemed little disposition to abolish the earlier concessions to private incentives. In some areas, the ambitious attempt to politicize the nation's economic and commercial organs apparently ran into difficulties, as ministers and managers refused to accept the new cadres (often soldiers) sent out to create the PLA-type political departments and, instead, installed their own trusted personnel in these posts.⁶⁴ It is conceivable that Mao and some of his most devoted disciples (for example, Lin Piao and Chiang Ch'ing) may also have been disturbed -- and personally resentful -- over another "secular" trend, represented by the rising prestige of Liu Shao-ch'i, his upgrading of the chairmanship of the Republic, and the more prominent role assumed by his wife, Wang Kuang-mei, as "first lady."⁶⁵

⁶³ This admission appeared publicly in a Jen-min Jih-pao editorial of December 4, 1963. Individual exhaustion, disillusionment, and self-interest were added to an already growing process of bureaucratization and routinization in the civilian organs, rendering them less keenly responsive to Maoist revolutionary goals.

⁶⁴ Red Guard sources have leveled this charge at, among others, the venerable T'an Chen-lin (Minister of Agriculture) and the conspicuously successful Yü Ch'iu-lü (Minister of Petroleum).

⁶⁵ Liu's position as heir apparent to Mao was greatly enhanced by the republication, in 1962, of "How To Be a Good Communist" (perhaps better translated "On the Cultivation of Communist Party Members"), which Liu had originally written at Yen-an in 1939. The unprecedented

In the winter of 1963/64, the regime, spurred by an insistent Mao, responded to all the frustrations and

prominence and wide dissemination accorded this work in 1962 suggested an attempt to put Liu almost on a par with Mao as a leading theoretician of the Chinese revolution, with Liu the architect of victory in the cities, and Mao the guiding genius in the countryside. While criticisms of Liu in the Cultural Revolution have since charged that the republication of this book (especially in the light of certain revisions incorporated in it) was deliberately designed to denigrate Mao, this is an extremely arbitrary interpretation and the very opposite of the impression left by Peking's official media at the time. To be sure, aspects of the work -- such as the relatively moderate tone of the 1962 version, the soft-pedaling of "struggle," the condemnation of "dogmatism," and the exhortation to "self"-cultivation -- can now be faulted on the basis of changed criteria. However, Liu's continuing veneration of Mao seems unquestionable, as two American specialists pointed out at the time, when they wrote that the revised work "showed signs of increased deference to Mao, suggesting a deliberate intent on the author's part to profess his personal subordination to Mao's authority. Thus, Liu inserted many quotations from Mao -- some of them in poor context -- which had not been in the original Yen-an lectures, and he also left out a statement he had made in the earlier text to the effect that in the CCP 'we . . . do not idolize anybody.'" (A. A. Cohen and C. F. Steffins, "Disillusionment Within the Ranks," Problems of Communism, May-June 1963, pp. 12-13.)

In a recently published self-criticism, Liu himself allegedly said that the 1962 reprint of his revised treatise was undertaken "because some people had it carried forward and because a certain person had revised the book on [Liu's] behalf." The text of Liu's confession was contained in a Peking ta-tzu-pao of August 2, a résumé of which was published in Mainichi, August 3, 1967. Still later, Red Guard sources declared that Liu had falsely identified the "certain person" responsible for the second edition of his book as K'ang Sheng. They pronounced this a malicious lie since, in January 1962, K'ang allegedly dissolved a special "compilation committee" which the Party's Central Secretariat (at Teng Hsiao-p'ing's instigation) had established a year earlier specifically to edit

pressures that had arisen in the objective situation with a marked renewal of emphasis on ideological education and purification. A nationwide "socialist education" campaign was aimed at reeducating the entire population in socialist ideology, which, in addition to stressing the "class struggle," was increasingly identified with the thought of Mao Tse-tung. The masses were exhorted to study and apply Mao's thought in the manner of the PLA's "ordinary, extraordinary" hero, Lei Feng.⁶⁶ The lessons learned were to be applied in "three great revolutionary movements" -- the class struggle and the struggles for production and scientific experimentation.⁶⁷ Mao had warned that only through these struggles could China guard against the evils of

the "Selected Works of Liu Shao-ch'i." This last charge, which cannot be verified, appeared in the Canton Wen-ko T'ung-hsün (Cultural Revolution Bulletin) of December 11, 1967, translated in SCMP, No. 4097, January 11, 1968, pp. 5-7.

⁶⁶For example, see the editorial "Endeavor To Learn Well the Thought of Mao Tse-tung," Jen-min Jih-pao, March 26, 1964. During the next two years a nationwide campaign unfolded for the study of Mao's thought, which came to be presented as a panacea for all human problems. In the course of the Cultural Revolution it has now been charged, however, that Liu Shao-ch'i and others were critical of the resumption of Mao study. Liu is said to have declared in 1964 that "formalism" and "oversimplification" were infecting the program. (See the third of seven articles in Chieh-fang Chün Pao attacking Liu, as excerpted by NCNA, Peking, October 12, 1967.) If authentic, these "slandorous" remarks of Liu -- undocumented phrases taken out of context -- did not appreciably affect the rising adulation of Mao.

⁶⁷Jen-min Jih-pao, January 1, 1964.

bureaucratism, revisionism, and dogmatism.⁶⁸ In his view, there was a very real danger of a counterrevolutionary restoration that would ultimately lead to China's "changing color."⁶⁹

The renewed emphasis on indoctrination was accompanied by a severe tightening of controls in the intellectual and cultural sphere. In the autumn of 1963, Chou Yang, deputy head of the CCP Propaganda Department, called upon intellectuals to struggle relentlessly against all expressions of dialectical unity, revisionism, and humanism. Under such admonitions a campaign of surprising intensity was unleashed against prominent philosophers, writers, and artists. In mid-1964, what had started as an apparent philosophical debate over differing interpretations of the concept of "contradictions" resulted in the furious condemnation of Yang Hsien-chen, a well-known Party

⁶⁸ See his draft of a "Resolution of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party on Some Problems in Current Rural Work," May 20, 1963, as published in Issues and Studies (Taiwan), Vol. 2, No. 8, May 1966, pp. 58-59. The passage containing that warning also was quoted in an article by Jen Li-hsin in Jen-min Jih-pao, May 21, 1967. It is interesting to observe that, although the above draft resolution -- also known as the "ten-point decision" -- was primarily designed to deal with concrete economic and cadre problems, it stressed the importance of ideological regeneration, containing this statement by Mao: "The correct thinking that is representative of the ideologically advanced class will develop into a material force to reform the society as well as the world once it comes into the grasp of the masses."

⁶⁹ See excerpt from Mao's "The Seven Well-written Documents of Chekiang Province Concerning the Cadres' Participation in Physical Labor," as quoted in "Khrushchev's Phoney Communism and Its Historical Lessons for the World," Peking Review, No. 29, July 17, 1964, p. 26.

theoretician, member of the Central Committee, and former head of the Higher Party School. Yang was censured for his notion that "two combine into one" (instead of "one divides into two"), a concept said to neglect the proper Maoist emphasis on struggle and to leave the way open for reconciliation with class enemies and revisionists. The attack on Yang served at once to help define the philosophical basis for the new revolutionary struggle to ensure China's eternal "redness," and to underline the serious importance of the new drive -- from which not even members of the Central Committee were to be immune. Subsequent campaigns cut down such prominent thinkers and essayists as Chou Ku-ch'eng, who had argued that art should transcend classes and reflect the entire "spirit of the age," and Feng Ting, who had deprecated the "cult of the personality" and stressed the values of human happiness and tranquility, and they attacked among other celebrated literary figures Ouyang Shan, Hsia Yen, Shao Chuan-lin, Fan Hsing, and, ultimately, even the Minister of Culture, Shen Yen-ping (Mao Tun), who was not reappointed in 1965.

At the same time, measures were being taken to "reform" the substance of literature, art, and music. Although these efforts were not always well publicized at the time, we have recently been informed that

In 1963, under the guidance of Chairman Mao himself, the revolution in literature and art was launched in China, marked mainly by the reform of the dramatic arts; that was, in fact, the beginning of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.⁷⁰ (Emphasis added.)

⁷⁰ Jen-min Jih-pao, January 1, 1967.

Western music was banned outright. At the urging of Mao's wife, Chiang Ch'ing, a former Shanghai movie actress, the traditional Peking opera was rewritten in an effort to cut out "feudal" vestiges and highlight revolutionary mores and themes, an attempt that has recently been termed "a clarion call" of the Cultural Revolution and even "the great beginning" of it.⁷¹ Ironically, one of the most vigorous and outspoken champions of the Chinese opera "reform" in 1964 was P'eng Chen, head of the CCP's Peking Municipal Committee. His political star rose rapidly thereafter, and in September he received the supreme accolade, official recognition as a "close comrade in arms" of Chairman Mao.

Progress in implementing the new Maoist ideology was evident in many areas. On June 30, 1964, Hung Ch'i spoke of "a big revolution on the cultural front." At the same time, there was talk of eliminating entirely the traditional intellectual, whose specialized knowledge was a product of book-learning and who was divorced from physical labor. In August the Central Committee issued a directive on "Two Educational Systems and Two Systems of Labor," which called for the resumption of the work-study schools that had thrived early during the Leap Forward but had disappeared in 1959. In September a booklet entitled "A Great Revolution on the Cultural Front" went on sale throughout the country.⁷²

⁷¹See article in Hung Ch'i, No. 6, February 1967, which also printed the text of a speech delivered the previous July by Chiang Ch'ing before a forum of artists and officials who were connected with a festival of the new opera in Peking.

⁷²Radio Peking (Domestic Service), September 5, 1964. In addition to editorials from Hung Ch'i and Jen-min Jih-pao, the booklet contained speeches by Ko Ch'ing-shih, P'eng Chen, and Lu Ting-i regarding cultural reforms in drama and the Peking opera.

THE CONTINUING SHIFT LEFTWARD

Mao nevertheless remained dissatisfied with the pace of change and the less-than-universal fervor inspired by his revivalist approach to China's problems. He was troubled by reports of flagging enthusiasm, capitalist tendencies, and corruption among the rural population and cadres. He was particularly concerned about the revolutionary commitment and the stamina of the younger generation, inexperienced and untested in combat, to whom the present aging leadership would soon have to entrust the regime.⁷³ Indeed, he had begun to have doubts about the effectiveness, if not the reliability, of some elements within the Party and governmental leadership, especially in the propaganda apparatus.⁷⁴

⁷³ Interestingly, the swelling tide of concern over "revolutionary successors" in 1964 followed an important statement by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Roger Hilsman, on December 13, 1963, which forecast a profound erosion of ideology in "the more sophisticated second echelon of leadership" in China. (Department of State Bulletin, January 6, 1964.) In January 1965, Mao frankly voiced his doubts and anxiety about the younger generation in an interview with the American journalist Edgar Snow. (See The New Republic, February 27, 1965, p. 23.) Recent comment in the Cultural Revolution has reiterated Peking's extreme sensitivity to U.S. expressions of hope, at about the time of Hilsman's speech, that "new elements" would emerge in China to "promote liberalization from inside the regime." (See, for example, an article attacking Lu Ting-i in Jen-min Jih-pao, November 9, 1967.)

⁷⁴ In September 1963, on the basis of four months' experience in the new phase of the "socialist education movement" inaugurated by Mao's "ten-point decision" of May 20 (see fn. 68 above), the Party's Central Committee issued a revised draft of that resolution, entitled "Some Concrete Policy Decisions on the Rural Socialist Education Movement." (For the text see Issues and Studies, Vol. 2, No. 9,

Already in December 1963, if we may believe newly-published sources, Mao had warned that a "handful" in the

June 1966.) The new draft referred to the May 20 resolution as a "great document" which still possessed "guiding authority"; it praised Mao's "analyses and instructions" on the continuing class struggle in socialist society, and explained the present revision as motivated solely by the desire to deal with concrete problems of policy that had been revealed by the experience of the intervening months. Accounts published in the Cultural Revolution, however, have since charged that the new draft was concocted by "the other top capitalist-roader" (Teng Hsiao-p'ing) in direct opposition to Mao's "ten-point decision." By employing "counterrevolutionary two-faced tactics" (as in adopting the approved slogans), Teng allegedly "negated the essential content" of Mao's concept of the class struggle, protecting capitalist elements while obstructing or attacking the masses, especially the poor and lower-middle-class peasants. He was accused of thus promoting a "bourgeois reactionary line which was 'Left' in form but 'Right' in essence" in order to "stamp out the flames of the socialist education movement" previously lit by Mao. (See "Struggle Between the Two Roads in China's Countryside," Hung Ch'i, No. 16, November 23, 1967.) Presumably, the same or similar charges would apply to a second revised draft of the "ten-point decision," bearing the same title as the first, which was adopted by the Central Committee in September 1964. (Text in Issues and Studies, Vol. 1, No. 10, July 1965.)

Although a full evaluation of these charges will require further study and more information, these preliminary observations are possible: A comparison of the three drafts (May 1963, September 1963, and September 1964) does not in itself reveal any basic contradictions; it is possible to account for the differences in emphasis as well as for additions and changes in the later texts without accepting the present Maoist allegation that they were intended to scuttle the "socialist education movement" and promote the restoration of capitalism. Since even the latter-day Maoist critics admit that Teng and his associates employed a line which, though "Right" in essence, was "Left" in form, any confident judgment of the issue probably must await more and better evidence. In the meantime, it is worth noting that, whatever

CCP were continuing to promote feudal art forms. Six months later he told the Chinese Federation of Literary and Art Circles that, ever since 1949, literary workers, in their associations and in "most of their publications," had failed to carry out the policies of the Party, "acted as high and mighty bureaucrats," and been divorced from the people and from the revolution; he added that "in recent years" they had even "slid to the verge of revisionism," threatening, in the absence of thorough reform, "at some future date to become groups like the Hungarian Petofi Club."⁷⁵ Mao's emphasis on deviations and threats in the cultural area -- which, in view of the other pressing issues then confronting the regime, would seem to have been an inordinate preoccupation with a secondary problem -- provides an important clue to his assessment of China's real ills and his ordering of priorities in prescribing the remedies. Just as the Petofi Club provided the ideological spark for the Hungarian revolution in 1956, Mao feared that the existing ideological superstructure in China ("ideological" here connoting "political," "cultural," and "psychological"), unless brought into line with the revolutionary base of the socialist economy and society, would become the means for a restoration of capitalism. These thoughts were reflected in the important anti-Soviet polemic "On Khrushchev's Phoney Communism and Its Historical

actual differences existed between Mao and other top leaders at the time as regards the rural socialist education movement, they concerned matters of cadre policy and ideology rather than economic issues.

⁷⁵Excerpts quoted in "Fight To Safeguard the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," Hung Ch'i, No. 8, May 1967.

Lessons for the World," published in July 1964. This treatise, believed to have been penned by Mao himself, pointed to the alleged embourgeoisement of Soviet society in recent years as the path of degeneration into which China would also be drawn unless the people, profiting by the "negative example" of "Khrushchevite revisionism," prepared for a long and bitter struggle between socialism and capitalism and trained millions of successors to carry the revolution forward "from our highest organizations down to the grass roots."⁷⁶

Although these doubts and anxieties were felt most acutely perhaps by Mao and his immediate circle, they probably were shared by those in the top leadership who were deeply disturbed by China's drifting and her inability to regain the rapid momentum of the 1950s. The result was a further shift toward the one-sided Maoist emphasis on indoctrination and purification. At the same time, despite the resistance noted above, the establishment of PLA-style political departments in the nation's economic and commercial offices continued and increasingly assumed the

⁷⁶ Peking Review, No. 29, July 17, 1964, p. 26. ("On Khrushchev's Phoney Communism," originally appeared in Hung Ch'i, No. 13, and Jen-min Jih-pao of July 14, 1964 -- the two periodicals' ninth and final editorial comment on an Open Letter published by the CPSU a year earlier.) In addition to the prevailing general emphasis on purity of doctrine and the primacy of politics, the issue of political reliability and effectiveness within the leadership -- as distinct from the masses -- was becoming an increasingly prominent theme, as in this statement from a Jen-min Jih-pao editorial of August 3: "It is the nucleus of leadership that decides the direction for the advance of the revolutionary cause. Whether the nucleus of leadership of our Party and state at all levels consists of real proletarian revolutionaries or not is a decisive matter for the success and failure of our entire revolutionary cause."

nature of a supplementary network paralleling the existing propaganda apparatus.

From mid-1964 onward, the regime carried on an intensive campaign to "cultivate revolutionary successors," focusing on the criteria for selecting worthy heirs and on their training and tempering through struggle and hardship. One of the most authoritative statements on the nature of this campaign came from An Tzu-wen, then the Director of the Central Committee's Organization Department. In language anticipating that of the Cultural Revolution (which, ironically, he did not politically survive to see), An charged that even in the Party there were individuals who pretended to serve Marxism-Leninism but in reality opposed it, tolerating the notion of class compromise, undermining socialist literature, and hindering the socialization of agriculture. He concluded that the real test of a worthy successor was a person's attitude toward the proletariat and toward socialism in the struggle between two classes and two lines; it determined whether he was devoted to socialism or was in effect working for the "restoration of capitalism."⁷⁷

⁷⁷ An Tzu-wen, "Cultivating Successors to the Revolutionary Cause -- A Strategic Task for Our Party," Hung Ch'i, No. 17/18, September 1964. The suspicions and fears of Mao and other leaders concerned about ideological trends must have been further aroused by the discovery in December 1964 of a scandalous hoax: A celebrated painting of young commune laborers harvesting grain, which was reproduced in full color on the back cover of the Communist Youth League monthly, was found to contain several cleverly hidden ideographs and symbols ridiculing Mao and his Great Leap and repudiating communism. (See Charles Taylor, Reporter in Red China, Random House, New York, 1966, pp. 15-16.)

In the summer of 1964, a decision apparently was reached to transform the "socialist education campaign" into a movement of unprecedented force that would permeate society. During the spring, several high Party officials had conducted personal inspection tours in the countryside, and had discovered in many communes alarming evidence of gross inefficiency and corrupt "capitalist" and "revisionist" practices among the local cadres in charge of "socialist education." To rectify the situation, a greatly intensified "Four Clearances" (Ssu-ch'ing) campaign was launched to screen and reindoctrinate lower-level cadres, tighten rural Party organizations, and clean up the financial operations and management of the communes.

The focus of the attack was the basic level of cadres in charge of the rural production brigades and teams. They were accused of failing to check the growth of "spontaneous capitalist tendencies" among the peasantry, by permitting, for example, the expansion of private-sideline production at the expense of collective work, and of engaging in personal extravagance, bribery, and the misappropriation of funds (e.g., by awarding themselves excessive subsidies when calculating work points). In accordance with a CCP Central Committee directive of September 1964, the masses of poor and middle peasants were mobilized and urged to probe into such abuses, and to speak out boldly against any wrongdoing of the cadres, particularly in the four "unclean" areas of account books, warehouses, state properties, and work points of communes and production brigades. An important organizational feature of the Ssu-ch'ing campaign was the use of special "work teams," composed of outsiders (often urban university students) and led by

higher-level officials, which were dispatched to investigate conditions and carry out indoctrination and reform measures.

As a result, a storm of criticism and abuse broke over the rural cadres at the basic level toward the end of 1964, reducing their effectiveness and severely undermining their prestige and authority. As Chou En-lai described it in December 1964, the "historic" movement was to achieve a thorough "cleaning up and 'capital construction' in the political, economic, ideological, and organizational fields . . . so as to promote proletarian ideology and eradicate bourgeois ideology."⁷⁸

⁷⁸ See his "Report on the Work of the Government" (Summary), December 21-22, 1964, in Main Documents of the First Session of the Third National People's Congress, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1965, p. 28.

While the Ssu-ch'ing campaign undoubtedly involved severe and demoralizing attacks against basic-level rural cadres in the latter part of 1964, there is no persuasive evidence to support the charge later raised in the Cultural Revolution that these attacks were the product of a "bourgeois reactionary" cadre policy -- "'Left' in form but 'Right' in essence" -- which was allegedly authored by Liu Shao-ch'i and designed to "hit hard at the many in order to protect the few." Even assuming that Liu did write the September 1964 draft of the CCP Central Committee's "Some Concrete Policy Decisions in Regard to the Rural Socialist Education Movement" (the second revised draft of the "ten-point decision" mentioned in fn. 74, pp. 64-65 above), it should be noted that this document, though more hard-hitting and harsh than the earlier drafts, was not directed solely against the basic-level rural cadres; it called also for an exposure and criticism of "certain cadres of higher-level organizations" who had "instigated, supported, and protected" the erring basic-level cadres. Thus, it would not seem to have been designed to "hit hard at the many in order to protect the few." In the opinion of Richard Baum and Frederick C. Teiwes, "if Liu committed mistakes in 1964, these mistakes were probably confined to encouraging

widespread investigation and criticism of basic level cadres; they were unlikely to have been conceived as part of a systematic effort to protect higher level 'power-holders'." Baum and Teiwes also point out that Liu did not become politically culpable of such mistakes until after the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution, with its radically altered political criteria and reordered power structure. ("Liu Shao-ch'i and the Cadre Question," Asian Survey, Vol. 8, No. 4, April 1968; for a contemporary view, see Harald Munthe-Kaas, "China's 'Four Clean-ups'," Far Eastern Economic Review, June 9, 1966, p. 480.)

III. THE APPEARANCE OF CONFLICT:
PRECIPITATING FACTORS

At Mao's impatient urging the regime continued on course after 1964 toward a more militant, heavily ideological orientation. As before, this appeared to enjoy the united support of the nation's leaders -- whether from unquestioning deference to Mao's wishes or from an inability to suggest more attractive alternatives. In practical terms, moreover, the general trend seemed to be not so much toward radical policy changes as toward an intensified application of "more of the same" in the ideological and cultural sphere. During 1965, however, with China's mounting internal and external problems, which included her own failure to gain economic momentum and the United States' growing military involvement in Vietnam, there were indications in some quarters of a disposition to pull back and not to pin all hopes of salvation on Maoist ideology.

Yet this reluctance was clearly a matter of elementary prudence; it was not dictated by any desire to break with the cardinal policies of the past and go into active opposition. Contrary to later allegations, it was not tantamount to embracing a renascent "capitalist line" or "Soviet revisionism." How far removed the advocates of a modified course were from a "Soviet revisionist" policy was dramatically demonstrated, for example, by the behavior of Liu Shao-ch'i, Teng Hsiao-p'ing, and P'eng Chen -- the three men who now are being condemned as the top "capitalist-roaders" -- at the Soviet Embassy's National Day celebrations in Peking on November 7, 1964. Far from relaxing in the satisfaction of Khrushchev's recent downfall or the

pride of China's first nuclear detonation, P'eng Chen went out of his way to deliver a scathing attack on the entire Soviet "revisionist leadership," implying that Khrushchev's fate awaited them all (including his host, Ambassador Chervonenko) and suggesting that the class enemy of the Chinese revolution was to be found right there, in the Soviet Embassy. After witnessing the incident, Yugoslav correspondent Branku Bogunovic made the following entry in his diary:

Liu Shao-ch'i, Teng Hsiao-p'ing, and P'eng Chen . . . came tonight to the Soviet Embassy, firmly determined to humiliate the enemy and bring him to his knees. I think they left the embassy believing they had succeeded. While Ambassador Chervonenko . . . tried to maintain a polite attitude . . . , they answered him with provocation and insults. . . . What happened this evening in the Soviet Embassy in Peking demonstrated the highest triumph of dogmatic forces in the C.C.P.⁷⁹

Although Chou En-lai, in his major report to the Third National People's Congress at the end of 1964, emphasized the necessity of the class struggle and warned against complacency,⁸⁰ there was a perceptible decline in the

⁷⁹ See Bogunovic's account, as translated from the Belgrade newspaper Borba, in Atlas, December 1967, p. 16.

⁸⁰ See Main Documents of the First Session, especially pp. 25-39. Many of the observations made by Chou in this report were to be repeated -- phrase by phrase -- in the Cultural Revolution. However, the "top capitalist-roaders," who in 1964 were very much in authority, gave no hint of dissent at that time from such notions as the following: "From 1959 to 1962, when China's economy experienced temporary difficulties . . . the class enemies at home launched renewed attacks on socialism. . . . In the domestic field,

militancy of the struggle during the first half of 1965. That summer, in contrast to the earlier stress on frugal living and personal sacrifice for the revolution, the regime's propaganda media carried a spate of demands for greater attention to the health and material welfare of the people and published directives designed to effect a better balance between work (including political training) and rest.⁸¹ Such conciliatory and pragmatic measures, which constituted no more than a minimal tactical response to the immediate need to spur production and cement national

quite a few people actively advocated the extension of plots for private use and of free markets . . . [etc., and] 'reversing previous correct decisions.' . . . in the international field they advocated the liquidation of struggle in our relations with imperialism, the reactionaries and modern revisionism, and reduction of assistance and support to the revolutionary struggle of other peoples." It is highly unlikely that Liu Shao-ch'i (who was reelected Chairman of the Republic at the 1964 NPC session), Teng Hsiao-p'ing, P'eng Chen, or other leaders later condemned in the Cultural Revolution could have taken those charges as relating to themselves at the time. Even if others had entertained such suspicions they would have been reassured by Chou's confident assertion that "the nucleus of leadership of our Party and state is guided by Mao Tse-tung's thinking." (*Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.) It is also worth noting that Chou was joined in his class-struggle appeal by Lo Jui-ch'ing, who, moreover, went out of his way to praise Lin Piao for applying the thought of Mao Tse-tung and to attack P'eng Teh-huai. Both Lo and the venerable Ho Lung used the NPC platform not only to laud Mao's military thought but to denounce "the bourgeois military line" and "the revisionist military line" -- the very positions which they were later accused of having espoused and for which they were purged in the Cultural Revolution. (For reports of their speeches at the National People's Congress see *Peking Review*, No. 2, January 8, 1965, pp. 10, 12.)

⁸¹ See articles and editorials in *Jen-min Jih-pao*, June 21 and August 10, 1965; *Ta Kung Pao*, November 10, 1965; *Chung-kuo Ch'ing-nien*, August 14, 1965.

unity in preparation for possible warfare in Vietnam, did not contravene the regime's general trend toward a Mao-centered, spiritual-revivalist orientation. In retrospect, however, it appears that the aging, suspicious Mao and his most intimate, supersensitive followers placed just the opposite interpretation on them.

THE SSU-CH'ING EXPERIENCE

By the end of 1964, differences of serious potential import had apparently begun to arise among some of the leadership over the implementation of the "Four Clearances" movement. If we may believe the charges belatedly raised against prominent Party leaders such as Liu Shao-ch'i, Teng Hsiao-p'ing, and P'eng Chen, they and others were guilty of withholding support from the effort and even of sabotaging it. Thus, Liu and his wife, Wang Kuang-mei, who personally took charge of the campaign in a rural Hopei production brigade (the T'aoyuan Brigade), have recently been accused of carrying out a "bourgeois reactionary line" there and of attempting to have their experience emulated throughout the nation.⁸² Similarly, P'eng Chen has been charged with having tried (unsuccessfully) to overturn verdicts against several "class enemies" identified in a village struggle near Peking.⁸³ There have also been deprecating references to a "false rectification campaign" said to have taken place in the cultural departments

⁸² See, for example, "Sham Four Clearances, Real Restoration," Jen-min Jih-pao, September 6, 1967.

⁸³ Jen-min Jih-pao, April 25, 1967, p. 4.

under the Party's Peking Municipal Committee in 1964.⁸⁴ Early the following year, according to Red Guard newspapers and posters, P'eng Chen and Teng Hsiao-p'ing intervened at Peking University to suppress revolutionary activists who were criticizing President Lu P'ing, and to promote counter-revolutionary elements to the "work team" charged with investigating the situation.

Unfortunately, the only available evidence for these accusations is ex post facto and comes exclusively from the side of the prosecution. In the absence of information that can be authenticated, it is impossible to determine either the truth of the charges or the degree to which Mao and his present associates actually distrusted P'eng Chen and other leaders at the time.

There is little doubt, however, that Mao was dissatisfied with the progress that was being made in the "Four Clearances" movement. From a sifting of information and misinformation presented in the Cultural Revolution it would appear that, by the latter part of 1964, he had become seriously disappointed with the "spiritless" prosecution of the campaign and its inability to achieve any deep or dramatic results. Attributing this to failure fully to unleash the class struggle in the countryside, he is said to have blamed those in charge of the movement for being overly concerned with purging the corrupt and ineffectual low-level cadres instead of giving full rein to the poor and lower-middle peasants' struggle against the last vestiges of capitalist influence. In January 1965 he apparently gave vent to this dissatisfaction at a

⁸⁴ See article criticizing T'ien Han in Jen-min Jih-pao, December 6, 1966.

Politburo-sponsored National Work Conference, where he proposed a new draft of guidelines for the "socialist education movement," the now-famous "Twenty-three Articles."⁸⁵

The new document, without renouncing the previous guidelines of the campaign (incorporated in the September 1963 and September 1964 revisions of Mao's "Ten-Point Decision"), stressed the necessity of unfettered mass mobilization and "struggle." Also, perhaps to ensure the requisite local leadership for this intensified effort, it shifted the focus of attack away from the hapless basic-level cadres, suggesting that the vast majority were essentially good, and that their mistakes could be corrected through persuasion and education. Accordingly, the extremist measures of the investigating "work teams" of outsiders were to be curbed, and the teams reduced in size. Although the "Twenty-three Articles" did not shrink from recommending harsh measures against the few incorrigible cadres, their thrust was to encourage greater solidarity between the cadres and the masses. At the same time, the new document set as a basic objective of the campaign the rectification of "those authorities within the Party who are taking the capitalist road."

On the basis of these changes in emphasis, Cultural Revolutionary sources have recently claimed that as early

⁸⁵ The "Twenty-three Articles" were set down in a summary of the conference discussion (dated January 14, 1965) entitled "Some Problems Currently Raised in the Rural Socialist Education Movement" (Nung-ts'un She-hui Chu-i Chiao-yü Yün-tung Chung Mu-ch'ien T'i-ch'u T'i I-hsieh Wen-t'i). A text, printed by the CCP's Fukien Provincial Committee on January 18, was made available in Taiwan by the Intelligence Bureau of the Ministry of National Defense (Republic of China) the following year, on February 2, 1966.

as January 1965 Mao had used the "Twenty-three Articles" to launch a severe criticism against Liu Shao-ch'i, Teng Hsiao-p'ing, and other Party figures for their leadership of the "Four Clearances" movement. Red Guard sources have even quoted Chou En-lai as recalling that Mao by then had "nearly lost all hope in Liu Shao-ch'i."⁸⁶ Available evidence, however, does not bear this out. Already the aforementioned Party directive of September 1964, which has been attributed to Liu, had suggested that cadre errors should be traced to their roots in the higher organs of the Party. Although the "Twenty-three Articles" did mark an easing of the struggle against local cadres, they did not cause a major shift in the "Four Clearances" campaign toward a high-level Party purge.⁸⁷ A comparison with the Party directives of September 1963 and 1964 -- themselves revisions of Mao's original "Ten-Point Decision" -- fails to show that the Articles constituted a basic political attack on the Party directives or that they laid down entirely new "proletarian revolutionary" guidelines for the "Four Clearances" designed to help the campaign strengthen socialism in the rural communes. Moreover, the textual differences between the various documents do not point to a dispute within the leadership over substantive economic policies; rather, they suggest variations in emphasis as to methods for carrying out the socialist education movement.

⁸⁶ See text of an address attributed to Chou that was published in the Canton Revolutionary Rebel newspaper Hung Chan Pao, No. 15, November 29, 1967, and translated in JPRS, "Translations on Communist China," No. 1, March 4, 1968, p. 31.

⁸⁷ See the excellent analysis on this point by Richard Baum and Frederick C. Teiwes in Asian Survey, April 1968, pp. 336-338.

Nevertheless, the efforts of Party authorities to keep the campaign in bounds -- which in some cases may have involved condemning as "counterrevolutionary" some particularly vengeful and unruly poor-peasant elements -- were later construed by the more militant Maoists as proof of a deliberate attempt to suppress the class struggle. (Indeed, some may have felt so at the time.) More and more, the ultrasuspicious came to regard the whole emphasis on reeducation and reform as a way of turning "socialist education" into an exercise in formal learning and of relying, like the Kuomintang, on "tutelage." Similarly, the widespread purge of local cadres in 1964 came to be viewed, in retrospect, by some as an unfair and indiscriminate attack on "the many good and comparatively good" lower-level functionaries, designed to shield their superiors from blame in the rural situation. In Mao's increasingly distorted perspective, the stress placed on cleansing the "Four Uncleans" eventually appeared as only a means of avoiding genuine socialist revolution in the countryside and as ignoring the basic contradiction of the ideological struggle between socialism and capitalism.⁸⁸

Thus, by mid-1965 if not earlier, Mao and his closest disciples were obsessed with the idea of national salvation through ideological struggle. In the atmosphere of rising tension and utopian expectation, any action that tended to slow or divert the process was interpreted as a deliberate

⁸⁸ For a résumé of the Maoist interpretation -- at least, as it has been revealed in the hindsight of the Cultural Revolution -- see "Struggle Between the Two Roads in China's Countryside," Hung Ch'1, No. 16, November 23, 1967.

counterrevolutionary threat. Any person who showed less than single-minded devotion to Mao and enthusiasm for his increasingly one-sided ideological approach to China's problems was suspected of disloyalty. More and more, objective difficulties were attributed to willful opposition to Mao and his thought. Not only were present differences magnified in efforts to substantiate a given charge, but the root causes were sought in the alleged dissident's past criticisms and slights, real or imagined, particularly as these were discovered through the often highly arbitrary reexamination of his writings.

DISSENSION RISES TO THE SURFACE

Things came to a head in September/October 1965, after Mao, either during a Central Committee work conference or at one of related meetings held in Peking at about the same time, called for a general renewal of the struggle against "reactionary bourgeois ideology" and, in particular, for criticism of Wu Han and his play Hai Jui Dismissed from Office.⁸⁹ Unfortunately, no text of Mao's speeches or instructions is available, and we can only guess at their content and tone from a few bits of indirect evidence.

⁸⁹ According to evidence presented in 1967, Mao made these demands at an enlarged session of the Politburo Standing Committee that included "leading comrades of all the regional bureaus" of the CCP. This meeting ran from September on into October 1965. (See "Central Committee Circular" of May 16, 1967.) Although this would seem to point to a series of discussions, or debates, lasting days or possibly even weeks, a Peking wallposter speaking of Mao's participation in the conference gave the date of September 10. (Mainichi, April 27, 1967.)

Judging from subsequent claims that the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution began here and was "initiated and led" by Mao from this time forward, one can speculate that he used the conference in the fall of 1965 as a forum in which to voice his deepening dissatisfaction with the pace of the ideological revival, to reiterate and perhaps elaborate his increasingly utopian and self-centered vision of national salvation, and to demand an all-out effort to propagate the faith and wipe out all traces of "bourgeois" or "revisionist" sentiment.⁹⁰

Mao was evidently determined now to force the issue, and to compel his colleagues to make a clear choice between his new vision and the orientation of the past, which, though increasingly "red," still contained important balancing elements of flexibility, "expertness," tolerance of imperfection, and a general willingness to make concessions to reality while pursuing Communist revolutionary goals. It was not a case of Liu Shao-ch'i, Teng Hsiao-p'ing, P'eng Chen, or others' proposing to launch the regime on a rightist course toward the restoration of capitalism; it was, rather, a case of Mao's insisting on a radical departure from the status quo with its more moderate leftward momentum.

In all probability, the meetings of top Party leaders in the early autumn of 1965 were the occasion of searching discussions and even perhaps of sharp debates. Resistance

⁹⁰ Some Red Guard sources have quoted Mao as asking his colleagues point-blank what they would do if revisionism appeared in the Central Committee, and then suggesting that there was great danger that this would happen.

to Mao's demands and to his leadership apparently did not approach the point of outright opposition reached by P'eng Teh-huai at Lushan six years earlier. According to secret Party documents, however, P'eng Chen did go so far as to suggest, at a national conference of propaganda officials in September, that, since everyone had a right to speak and all were equal before the truth, even Mao should submit to criticism if he were wrong. And, at the same meeting, Lu Ting-i reportedly made a speech attacking Stalin which Mao interpreted as a challenge to his own position.⁹¹

Ironically, however, P'eng Chen was named one of the "group of five" (perhaps the principal member) that was created in the wake of the autumn meetings to lead the first stage of the cultural purification -- the investigation and criticism of Wu Han. K'ang Sheng, a stalwart Mao supporter and veteran intelligence specialist, was also named to the group. This mixed composition suggests that the selection was made by a shaky consensus of disturbed and divided leaders. Thus, P'eng Chen's prominent assignment may have been sought by the more moderate elements to balance the likes of K'ang Sheng -- or vice versa -- and to avoid a completely one-sided investigation. It is also possible that Mao insisted on placing P'eng in the forefront so as to be able to test his loyalty and, indirectly, that of other powerful Party leaders, such as Liu Shao-ch'i

⁹¹ Reports of the criticisms by P'eng and Lu were contained in secret Party documents seen by a former Chinese trade official, Miao Chen-pai, who defected to the United States in July 1966. (The Washington Star, August 31, 1966.) The phrase "everyone is equal before the truth" was publicly condemned as a "bourgeois slogan" in an article by Ch'in Chung-ssu in Chung-kuo Ch'ing-nien, June 16, 1966.

and Teng Hsiao-p'ing, whose position might be adversely affected by the conviction of Wu Han and his defenders.⁹²

Although the situation harbored potential threats to Wu Han's friends and superiors, notably in the Peking Municipal CCP Committee (a potential that may seem even greater in hindsight), there was as yet no necessary indicator that Mao was bent on a major high-level purge of the Party. Campaigns had been launched before against prominent literary figures -- some of whom had connections in the hierarchy of the regime -- without touching off a major power struggle. Even if the Cultural Revolution was indeed essentially a power struggle at this point, there was still time for those whom Mao had not directly condemned to prove their loyalty and salvage their positions -- assuming they did not aspire to challenge him.⁹³ To

⁹² According to Miao Chen-pai, P'eng Chen was specifically designated by Mao to lead the Cultural Revolution. (The Washington Post, September 4, 1966.) A Russian commentary names Lu Ting-i, Chou Yang, and Wu Leng-hsi as members of the group besides K'ang Sheng, suggesting thereby that the group was weighted heavily against Mao, to judge by the subsequent fate of those men. (See Yakovlev Ivanovich, "The Tragedy of China," Za Rubezhom (Abroad), Moscow, No. 40, September-October 1967, as translated in JPRS, No. 43,132, October 27, 1967, p. 10.) It should be noted, however, that Lu Ting-i and Chou Yang were likely candidates for such a group simply by virtue of their official positions in cultural and propaganda affairs.

⁹³ It has been said that leaders such as P'eng Chen, Lu Ting-i, and Chou Yang were already too compromised by the similarity of some of their previous statements to those of the condemned to avoid prosecution by the wrathful Mao. This interpretation seems to overlook the characteristic ambiguity of the statements in question, which would provide considerable latitude for those not directly implicated to dissociate themselves from the condemned in

be sure, hints of shifts in the relative power of a few of the top leaders were perceptible in August and September 1965 -- most notably in the fizzling of an attempt to build up the stature of Liu Shao-ch'i and in the sudden emergence of Lin Piao as an eminent theoretician (with the publication of his "Long Live the Victory of the People's War"). Nevertheless, no major change seemed to be in prospect that threatened to upset the existing power rankings or to re-order the succession to Mao, all of which had apparently been settled for several years.

POLICY ISSUES AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

Perhaps it would be well to consider at this point the theory, sometimes advanced, that the conflict which arose in the fall of 1965 and precipitated the subsequent Cultural Revolution was basically a dispute over economic or military policies. It would seem reasonable to suppose that the Chinese leaders were discouraged by continuing economic difficulties, shocked by conspicuous reverses in foreign policy (in Indonesia, Africa, and elsewhere), and anxious over the growing risks of a military confrontation with the United States in Vietnam. In the absence of hard evidence, we may hypothesize further that opinions in the leadership differed on how to respond to these problems. Indeed, such differences may have reflected two distinct policy positions: the relatively practical-minded, conservative, pragmatic, and "secular" outlook presumably

forthright contrition, and it fails to take account also of the familiar Maoist exhortation to redeem the offender rather than seek retribution.

found most often among administrators, economists, and professional soldiers, and the more revolutionary, radical, utopian, and doctrinaire position loosely associated with the Party apparatchiks and political commissars.

It has been theorized that the leadership, in trying to decide on the major goals and allocations for the Third Five-Year Plan (scheduled to begin in 1966), became seriously split over whether to continue the previous line of moderate economic advance, which meant tolerating certain small concessions to private incentive, or to launch another Great Leap Forward.⁹⁴ In the course of the Cultural Revolution numerous accusations have been raised against the "handful" in authority in the Party who were following the "capitalist road"; they include charges of economic policy deviations before the Tenth Plenum (1962) and of errors in cadre policy thereafter. There is no direct evidence, however, that any high-level debate on basic economic strategy took place in the fall of 1965. A few professional economists, such as Sun Yeh-fang, have been criticized for sniping at the Leap Forward or advocating (especially in the "liberal" early 1960s) "revisionist" price and profit theories at variance with the Party line -- albeit ideas which did not result in any important shift in the regime's economic

⁹⁴ See Chu-yuan Cheng, "The Cultural Revolution and China's Economy," Current History, September 1967, p. 150. Unfortunately, Dr. Cheng offers no documentation for this hypothesis, but argues mainly from circumstantial inference and intuition that "debates on the line of economic development" toward the end of 1965 helped lead to a "titanic power struggle."

policies.⁹⁵ In addition, the "handful" of accused Party leaders have been censured for either espousing or implementing policies that, although sanctioned at the time by the Central Committee (including, presumably, Chairman Mao), have since been modified or abandoned in accordance with the central leadership's changes in the economic line.

While one can challenge the fairness of these indictments and question whether the ideas so condemned were influential enough to cause major policy changes, it is nevertheless reasonable to suppose that differences existed within the leadership that were related at least indirectly to economic issues. No doubt, Mao's demands for heavy emphasis on political indoctrination and mass mobilization were deeply disturbing to the economic realists, who foresaw another huge diversion of physical and mental energy from both current production and future scientific and technological development. But the available evidence does not show that these general grounds for disagreement actually precipitated a clash over economic policy in the fall of 1965. It neither identifies protagonists and factions nor reveals conflicting positions on concrete questions of economic policy. Whatever economic debate may have taken place on the eve of the Cultural Revolution, it was not so profound as to account for the later Maoist

⁹⁵ See Meng Kuei and Hsiao Lin, "On Sun Yeh-fang's Reactionary Political Stand and Economic Programme," Peking Review, Nos. 43 and 44, October 2 and 28, 1966, an article originally published in Hung Ch'i, No. 10, 1966.

condemnation or for major changes in economic policy designed to rectify previous "errors."⁹⁶

Some have argued that the internal dispute which came to a head in the fall of 1965 sprang from a deep disagreement over military strategy and doctrine. As to strategy, the large-scale intervention of U.S. combat forces in Vietnam that year undoubtedly heightened Peking's anxieties and internal tensions. There certainly would appear to have been much room for disagreement, whether in the course of assessing the American "threat" to Vietnam and ultimately to China, or of redefining China's goals and priorities (such as the "fraternal" commitment to the Vietnamese "war of national liberation" as against the requirements for defense of the Chinese homeland). On the likely premise of increased tension and disagreement in Peking one can hypothesize that a bitter debate over policy was splitting the leadership into two or more factions -- "hawks," "doves,"

⁹⁶In the fall of 1965 the most notable change bearing on economic policy occurred in the socialist education campaign, where the main focus shifted from basic-level cadres to their hsien-level superiors. The latter were forced to confess to "bureaucratism," "commandism," "revisionism," and other sins. In a new emulation campaign that began in February 1966, they were exhorted to follow the example of Chiao YU-lu, a selfless, courageous rural Party secretary who had dedicated himself to the service of the masses. At the same time, the Party leadership continued, as it had done since 1963 or earlier, to emphasize the goal of collectivized agriculture, calling for the reduction of "excessive" private cultivation and forbidding the division of land among individual peasant households. Neither before nor after the onset of the Cultural Revolution, however, was there any major move to eliminate all private incentive measures, to reverse the rising investment in the production of chemical fertilizer for agriculture, or to return precipitously to a system in which the commune was the basic unit of agricultural management.

and possibly intermediate groupings.⁹⁷ Unfortunately, evidence for divergent positions on strategy must be marshaled almost entirely from interpretations of the public statements of various leaders, especially from the debatable kind of inference based on the belief that departures from standard phraseology and differences in nuance reveal hidden meanings.

Extrapolating from such evidence, one can argue that Chief of Staff Lo Jui-ch'ing, in an address he gave on the anniversary of V-E Day in May 1965, forecast the danger of an early confrontation with the United States, emphasized the need for intensive conventional military preparations to meet this threat, and even urged "united action" with the USSR in order to facilitate this preparation, regain the protection of the Soviet nuclear deterrent, and make possible the "active defense" of Vietnam (including, perhaps, an armed invasion), thus ensuring a favorable outcome there. One may go on to say that this strategic line of the "professionals" was emphatically rejected by Lin Piao (representing Mao and, some believe, P'eng Chen) in his V-J Day anniversary article on People's Wars, which

⁹⁷ The well-known analyst of Communist affairs Victor Zorza wrote in November 1966: "It was the dissatisfaction of the professional military leaders with the policy which the ruling group was trying to impose on them that brought the struggle to a head. . . . The real struggle began a year ago [i.e., in the fall of 1965], with Lin Piao's attempt to suppress the military opposition in the person of Lo Jui-ch'ing, the Chief of Staff." The Manchester Guardian, November 3, 1966.

seemed to stress the efficacy of China's involvement in Vietnam and the low risk it entailed, the unacceptability of even a partial reconciliation with the Soviet "revisionists," and the desirability of defending China against possible invasion by having the masses withdraw to the interior and mobilize for guerrilla warfare.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ In an article entitled "China's Cautious American Policy" (Current History, September 1967) Ishwer C. Ojha, an exponent of this general line of interpretation, maintains that the U.S. intervention in Vietnam after February 1965 led to a polarization of strategic views within the Chinese leadership and the formation of "two well-defined factions." The "interventionists," led by Lo Jui-ch'ing and P'eng Chen (who were joined by Liu Shao-ch'i in early 1966), expected U.S. operations in Vietnam to lead to war with China and were determined to render "unconditional help" to the Vietnamese Communists even though this might necessitate cooperation with the USSR. The "noninterventionists," led by Lin Piao and supported by Mao -- and, with lesser emphasis, Chou En-lai -- did not believe the war would spill over into North Vietnam and China and "offered only conditional assistance to Vietnam." By August 1966, Ojha says, the debate was resolved in favor of the noninterventionists.

Unfortunately, Ojha's case is built almost entirely on very debatable interpretations of selected published statements of the Chinese leaders. One wonders, for example, whether Lo Jui-ch'ing's fear that U.S. escalation would lead to war with China was not shared by many Maoists at the time. (Certainly, Wang Jen-chung, a power in Peking for several months after August 1966, had candidly expressed his fear of an inevitable war from his base in Hankow in the autumn of 1965.) According to Ojha, Lo Jui-ch'ing favored a strategy of "active defense." Yet it was precisely for not accepting the "active defense" strategy that his successor as Acting Chief of Staff, Yang Ch'eng-wu, was to condemn him in 1967. (Peking Review, No. 46, November 10, 1967.) Actually, the one credited with having devised the concept of "active defense" is Mao, whereas P'eng Teh-huai and Lo have been faulted -- perhaps unjustly -- for failing to subscribe to it. Ojha contends that Lo Jui-ch'ing's

Between these two positions some analysts hypothesize, on rather less evidence, the existence of a third faction, led by Liu Shao-ch'i and Teng Hsiao-p'ing, which was mainly interested in China's internal development but aligned itself with the "hawks" on the issue of more active Chinese intervention in Vietnam in order to justify a rapprochement with the USSR, its true purpose being the restoration of Soviet economic and technical assistance.⁹⁹

For several reasons, this line of argument is difficult to accept. First, it lacks adequate foundation in evidence, for it relies almost exclusively on esoteric messages in the public statements of certain leaders, rather than on any clear and unequivocal expression -- in word or deed -- of dissent or deviation. The interpretations derived from this "Aesopian translation" are strained if not downright arbitrary. Thus, respected analysts viewing the same evidence and relying on much the same method of textual exegesis have reached very different conclusions as to the nature of the dispute and the alignments of personalities.¹⁰⁰

strategy, which presupposed "some form of Soviet cooperation," was supported by P'eng Chen. Yet the Russians have regarded P'eng Chen as perhaps the most rabidly anti-Soviet leader in Peking at the time. At times, Ojha's use of evidence is questionable, as when he cites as representative of Mao's and Lin's position an article of July 1965 by Ho Lung -- the man who is now in disgrace for allegedly having undermined that very position at the time.

⁹⁹An interpretation along these lines, but positing a subsequent split of the Mao/Lin faction with P'eng Chen, has been advanced by Uri Ra'anana. ("Rooting for Mao," The New Leader, March 13, 1967.)

¹⁰⁰For example, compare Ra'anana ("Rooting for Mao") with the following: (1) Franz Schurmann ("What Is Happening in China?" The New York Review of Books, October 20, 1966),

More important, exegetical interpretations that find in the strategic debates the chief source of the Cultural Revolution often fail to acknowledge that these debates or similar sources also afford evidence to the contrary. Thus, they do not take account of Lo Jui-ch'ing's enthusiastic endorsement of Lin Piao's famous article following its publication in September, of the consistently "hard-line" anti-Soviet stance adopted by Liu Shao-ch'i and Teng Hsiao-p'ing, and of P'eng Chen's violent condemnation of "revisionist" cowardice and his militant call for revolutionary warfare during a visit to Indonesia in May 1965, as seen against the puzzling allegations by Hsieh Fu-chih and K'ang Sheng, later on, that P'eng had glorified Soviet "revisionism" and advocated capitulation with imperialism. Such contrary evidence may, of course, demonstrate only that Communist spokesmen reserve their disagreements for private debate, but to say this would be to cast doubt on any interpretation arrived at largely by textual exegesis. The fact that Peking's strategy and commitments with respect to the war in Vietnam appear to have remained

emphasizes Lo Jui-ch'ing's uncompromising hostility to the Soviet "revisionists." He aligns P'eng Chen with Lo among the "hardliners" on national liberation strategy, and locates Liu Shao-ch'i "to the 'Left' of Mao," whom he describes as "the man of the middle course, avoiding both the extremes of the right and the left." (2) Morton Halperin and John Lewis ("New Tensions in Army-Party Relations in China, 1965-66," The China Quarterly, April-June 1966) recall the "Party position" taken by Lo Jui-ch'ing in December 1964, which contrasted with that of such military "professionals" as Yang Yung (who, ironically, survived the purges of the Cultural Revolution until 1967 -- longer, that is, than "Party" men like Wang Jen-chung).

unchanged and to have suffered no criticism from either the Maoists or their adversaries (although the latter have been accused of opposition on many other points) strongly suggests that whatever disagreements may have developed on that issue in the fall of 1965 were not divisive enough to have precipitated the Cultural Revolution.

The difficulty of substantiating the existence of a regime-splitting debate over Vietnam strategy should not, however, obscure the likelihood that the military establishment was divided on other issues. We know that sometime in late 1965 or early 1966 Lo Jui-ch'ing was removed as Chief of Staff, to be replaced by the "acting" Yang Ch'eng-wu. Moreover, on August 1, 1966, an important editorial in the PLA newspaper Chieh-fang Chun Pao revealed that a "big struggle" had taken place in the armed forces not long ago, the third major internal conflict since 1949. According to the editorial, it had been a struggle against important officers who "had given first consideration to military affairs, techniques, and specialized work."

This suggests -- and subsequent indictments have made clear -- that Lo Jui-ch'ing and others associated with him in the military establishment were believed to have sought by various means to lessen the disruption of military training, professional specialization, and combat preparedness that Mao's increasingly unbalanced, utopian vision of the PLA threatened to bring about.¹⁰¹ This is not to say

¹⁰¹Lo's sins were catalogued in a surge of vitriolic articles published in the late summer and fall of 1967 and culminating in a sweeping condemnation of Lo by his successor, Yang Ch'eng-wu. (See Peking Review, No. 46, November 10, 1967.) In addition to the familiar pattern by

that they wished to reverse the trend entirely and to impose a "bourgeois military line," as has been charged.¹⁰²

which his deviations were traced back to Wang Ming in World War II and Lo was accused of complicity in the Kao-Jao/P'eng Teh-huai "anti-Party intrigue" -- a remarkable allegation in view of his promotion to Chief of Staff after Lushan and the high commendation for loyal service he received from Mao and Lin Piao (Kung-tso T'ung hsün of March 2, 1961) -- the most serious charges against Lo were centered on his resistance to the excessive pursuit of Mao-study in the army and on his modest interest in developing military skills. Lo, apparently in an effort to maintain a balance in the PLA's training activities, had supported army-wide tournaments for competition in military skills during 1964, and the Maoists interpreted this as a diversion from political activities and opposition to Mao's thoughts on army-building. (Jen-min Jih-pao, August 28, 1967.) Also, Lo's attempt to promote the study of Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism was later branded a denigration of Mao-study, and his entirely natural conduct in transmitting the reports of Liu Shao-ch'i (his superior as Chief of State) and publicizing Liu's second edition of "Self-Cultivation" was construed as having been designed to vitiate Mao's position of absolute authority in the army. When an exasperated Lo condemned ritual Mao-study as "dogmatism," this was duly noted, especially by Lin Piao, who seems increasingly to have regarded Lo as a rival to be watched. When Lo allegedly questioned the appropriateness of Mao's thought as guidance in state affairs and challenged Lin Piao's claim that it was the acme of Marxism-Leninism, the trap was effectively baited.

¹⁰² See "Basic Differences Between the Proletarian and Bourgeois Military Lines," Peking Review, No. 48, November 24, 1967. Aside from the charge that its exponents (Lo Jui-ch'ing, P'eng Teh-huai, and others) overvalued weapons and technique and undervalued politics and Mao-study, the authors of this article -- "proletarian revolutionaries" in offices of the PLA General Staff headquarters -- seem to have defined the most serious manifestations of the "bourgeois military line" as opposition to the buildup of militia and regional forces (as distinguished from main forces) and resistance to the Maoist policy of "active defense." The latter concept is far from clear, but, as

Had they not, while continuing modest efforts to modernize the armed forces in preceding years, led in implementing a steady stream of measures to abandon the Soviet military model, "put politics in command," emphasize the importance of men over weapons, and "democratize" the armed forces through measures that included the abolition of ranks? To Mao in his radical and utopian mood, however, any admonitions to "go slow," and even feeble resistance to the growing demands for political indoctrination, as well as any questioning of the use of troops for nonmilitary economic and mass mobilization tasks or the ultimate goal of a worker-peasant army of nonspecialists, were indications of flagging enthusiasm that aroused serious doubts of reliability and furnished grounds for dismissal.

This is not to discount the likelihood that Mao's increasingly immoderate emphasis and the priority he accorded to "army building" gave rise to real and substantial opposition in many quarters. But it is entirely possible that the hapless Lo Jui-ch'ing was purged not so much for his particularly advanced "professional" viewpoint or for

contrasted with the alleged "passive defense" of Mao's adversaries (which would build up widespread defensive works and deploy main forces around the country to man them), it would appear to emphasize the mobilization of local forces and the old guerrilla strategy of "luring the enemy to penetrate deep" into Chinese territory, followed at propitious times by a concentration of superior defending forces for battles of annihilation against the invader. If this is, in fact, what the Maoists mean by "active defense," it has not resulted in any major shifts in recruitment, organization, or deployment since the purge of the opposition in the Cultural Revolution. The PLA shows no signs of reverting to a conglomeration of guerrilla armies that would fall back to "lure" an invading force into the interior.

any "bourgeois" inclinations (after all, his background was in Party and secret-police work and he would hardly have been selected to replace Li'eng Teh-huai had he not been considered politically oriented and reliable) as because of his vacillating and ineffective leadership. Mao may have wished to make an example of him before the powerful regional commanders -- who were not to be so easily displaced. The removal of Lo also served to strengthen Lin Piao's control over the military establishment.

In sum, though differences over aspects of economic and military policy undoubtedly existed in the fall and winter of 1965-66, they were extremely complex, and their precise nature is difficult to establish.¹⁰³ Springing

¹⁰³ Some of those who maintain that the Cultural Revolution sprang primarily from substantive policy differences have cited as evidence ta-tzu-pao allegations that certain "anti-Party" leaders following a "bourgeois" line had seized upon the difficulties of China's "three hard years" (after the failure of the Great Leap) to advance a policy of "san-ho i-shao" (literally, "three reconciliations and one less": reconciliation with reaction, imperialism, and modern revisionism, and less support to revolutionary struggles abroad). A recent self-criticism attributed to Liu Shao-ch'i tends to cast serious doubt on the validity of this sweeping and inadequately documented accusation -- at least, insofar as any such tendencies influenced the top leadership. In his alleged self-criticism, which was contained in a Peking wallposter of August 2, 1967, Liu declared that, while the san-ho i-shao might have been advocated by individual comrades, it was never brought up at any meeting of the Central Committee, and that he "did not even know of the existence of such an opinion." Liu also denied that he had ever during that period attacked the "three red flags" (i.e., the policies of the Leap Forward, the people's communes, and the general line) -- and all his published statements and actions at the time certainly would seem to bear this out. (A résumé of this self-criticism was published in Mainichi, August 3, 1967.)

from a variety of viewpoints, interests, and motivations that were not always clear or consistent, they did not result in a simple alignment of opposing opinions and personalities over the whole range of issues. Thus, it is difficult even now to categorize the disputants: Presumed "hard-liners" have since been among those most severely criticized, while "soft-liners" have survived (some of them having actually been restored from previous disgrace). Nor were the divisions along institutional lines (as, for example, between Party and army); rather, they occurred within the major institutions. All of this suggests that the growing division among the leaders was not primarily the result of a split between proponents and opponents of certain domestic or foreign policy measures. It was a disagreement not so much over the particular methods, direction, and speed to be employed in order to attain commonly-agreed national objectives -- such as "modernization" or "Great Power status" -- as over the nature of those basic goals themselves and the general approach to them.

THE IDEOLOGICAL ISSUE

The previous discussion indicates that more was at issue by the end of 1965 than the economic or military policies espoused by the different leaders. To be sure, the mounting problems Peking encountered in both domestic and foreign policies, and the failures already sustained in those fields, very likely accentuated and intensified existing disagreements, but they did not radically alter the terms of these debates. The factor that now intruded

to place the entire range of policy disputes in a different perspective was the Maoist drive for ideological revolution. As attitudes toward the thought and personality of Chairman Mao became the primary issue, substantive differences over specific policies lost some of their importance and urgency, for their solution would be determined by the outcome of that primary struggle.

For Mao and his closest followers, national policy goals such as economic development or enhancement of national power (at least, as measured by the usual indices) were decidedly subordinate to the attainment of an ideologically pure, revolutionary environment. Their increasingly one-sided stress on indoctrination and spiritual revival as the key to all of China's problems and aspirations sprang from a growing fear, after the Leap Forward debacle, that revisionism, as in the USSR, was threatening to take over the minds of the Chinese people and their leaders. They contended that, even after a Communist regime has come to power through revolution, there is a continuing danger that this power may be wrested again from the proletariat -- perhaps for a prolonged period of time -- by the wiles and treachery of the remaining bourgeois elements. It was to prevent such a "capitalist restoration" in China that the Maoists sought to change the outlook of society by establishing the absolute authority of the thought of Mao Tse-tung. The "great mental force generated by Mao's thought" would then be transformed into a "great material force" able to maintain the dictatorship of the proletariat and to "establish the ideological foundations for the consolidation of the

socialist system and insure the gradual transition to communism."¹⁰⁴

Other leaders, probably including the vast majority of the CCP Central Committee, evidently saw in the existing environment -- already highly politicized and oriented toward the Left -- no menacing conflict between the requirements of ideology and those of national power, and no need to embark on a more radically Leftist, ideology-possessed course in order to subordinate the latter interest to the former. This was not because they had been greatly corrupted by latent capitalist influences, as the Maoists were later to charge. Nor did it necessarily imply (as some Western observers have suggested) that the dissenting high-level leaders had become unduly mellowed by the

¹⁰⁴ This statement of the Maoist position appeared later in the Cultural Revolution in the course of a seven-article attack on "China's Khrushchev" (Liu Shao-ch'i) published in Chieh-fang Chun Pao between September 17 and December 4, 1967. The passages quoted above were from the third article, released by NCNA on October 12. In the first article of the series (NCNA, September 17, 1967) Lin Piao was quoted as having stressed the primacy of ideological regeneration: "It is possible to overthrow the political power of the bourgeoisie and other exploiting classes within a comparatively short period of time. It is also possible to overthrow their systems of ownership within a short time. But it is in no way a simple and easy matter to sweep them out of their positions on the ideological front. That will take a very long time. And if victory is not won on this front, then the victories gained in the political and economic spheres might all be lost." In a later article of the series (NCNA, October 25, 1967) Mao himself was quoted as having taught: "Ideological education is the key link to be grasped in uniting the whole Party for great political struggles. Unless this is done, the Party cannot accomplish any of its political tasks."

natural processes of bureaucratization and routinization resulting from their long tenure in power -- although such trends had become painfully manifest among lower-echelon cadres in the Socialist Education and Ssu-ch'ing movements. Indeed, the overt attitudes of the top dissenters must have been almost unexceptionable (their behavior certainly was unorganized and ineffectual), for their Maoist adversaries could do little more than condemn them for having espoused positions which, though sanctioned even by Mao at the time, were later altered by the Central Committee; for the rest, their opponents have been largely reduced to allegations of dissident thoughts and motives and to the lame indictment that they had "waved the red flag to oppose the red flag."

The immediate issue in the fall of 1965 that was to divide the leadership and precipitate the Cultural Revolution arose over Mao's seemingly insignificant demand for criticism of Wu Han and his "bourgeois" literary productions. Dissatisfied with the progress of the campaign to defame Wu, Mao directed an obscure journalist, Yao Wen-yuan, to write a critique of Wu's famous play, Hai Jui Dismissed from Office. This critique, now said to have been written "under the direct guidance" of Mao's wife,¹⁰⁵ labeled the play a "big poisonous weed" that served the interests of unnamed anti-Party elements and class enemies. Publication of the article in the Shanghai Wen Hui Pao on November 10, 1965, apparently came as a surprise to P'eng Chen and the Peking Municipal CCP Committee, one of whose representatives

¹⁰⁵ On Chiang Ch'ing's role see NCNA dispatch of May 29, 1967.

immediately telephoned the Shanghai Party Committee for an explanation of the article and of the reason that Peking had not been told of it in advance of publication.¹⁰⁶

Reproduction of the article in the Shanghai Party organ Chieh-fang Jih-pao and, more significant still, the army newspaper Chieh-fang Chün Pao at the end of November indicated Mao's determination to press the attack and undoubtedly heightened the anxiety in Peking.

Yet there was no immediate sign of a general eagerness to join in the assault. The predominant mood was one of uncertainty and confusion, with hints of resistance in some quarters. Although the national Party daily, Jen-min Jih-pao, as well as the Peking Committee's Peking Jih-pao finally reprinted Yao Wen-yuan's article, their accompanying editorials avoided taking sides -- in striking contrast to the comment of the army editors -- and called for open debate of the case. For several weeks there was indeed a relatively free discussion, in which some of Wu Han's Peking associates, most notably Teng T'ao, attempted to conduct an active defense. In addition, several powerful Party leaders -- including, according to later indictments, P'eng Chen and deputy propaganda chief Chou Yang -- worked intensively behind the scenes. Despite these efforts, however, Wu Han's cause was lost, and on December 30, 1965, Jen-min Jih-pao printed his self-criticism. In it, Wu admitted that he had "forgotten class struggle" and made other "serious" mistakes in his writings, but he continued to defend the purity of his intentions and stopped short

¹⁰⁶ See article by Ch'i Pen-yü in Hung Ch'i, No. 7, May 1966.

of a summary confession of political guilt. Similarly, his vulnerable defenders began anxiously -- and, as time would prove, vainly -- to try to make the most of the distinction between "academic error" and political culpability.

After the attack on Wu, Mao disappeared from the public eye, perhaps to plan "cultural" attacks on others with the help of Ch'en Po-ta and Chiang Ch'ing. He later intimated that he had left Peking because of the lack of support there for his campaign against Wu Han.¹⁰⁷ If so, one may speculate on the significance of the rising prominence of P'eng Chen and Liu Shao-ch'i in the capital at about that time.¹⁰⁸ On the other hand, Chou Yang, who was more immediately vulnerable than either P'eng or Liu, delivered a widely publicized address, on November 29, which strongly endorsed Mao's demand for renewed class struggle in literature and art. Besides warning against the danger of a Hungarian-style Petofi Club's emerging in China, Chou censured the bourgeois-feudalist tendencies in culture during 1961-62, praised the reform of the Peking Opera

¹⁰⁷ In a speech of October 26, 1966 (published in a Red Guard newspaper in December), Mao reportedly declared that, a year earlier, he had felt that his ideas could not be carried out in Peking, and that this was the reason the criticism of Wu Han had begun in Shanghai.

¹⁰⁸ P'eng was the featured speaker at the October 1 National Day celebrations; Liu was named chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Sun Yat-sen Centennial (to be observed in 1966) and, in December 1965, was lionized as the hero of the "December 9" Student Movement on its thirtieth anniversary.

(spurred by Chiang Ch'ing), and explicitly lauded Lin Piao and the PLA as models of cultural orthodoxy.¹⁰⁹

Despite its universally acclaimed example and its leadership in the criticism of Wu Han, the PLA apparently was not without internal differences and difficulties. In late November, about the time of Mao's disappearance, Lo Jui-ch'ing vanished from public view. It was not to become clear until mid-1966 that Lo had actually been removed as Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, and both the exact time and the reasons for his dismissal remain obscure. One may conjecture that a growing anxiety over China's unpreparedness for war had lessened his enthusiasm for Mao's unbalanced notions of "army-building" and the guerrilla mystique, and that disenchantment had resulted in uninspired leadership over subordinate military commanders and eventually perhaps had led to a break with Lin Piao. The occasion for such a split (which Mao and Lin might have forced to permit them to tighten control over the PLA) could have come around November, when Lin proclaimed a five-point directive for the work of the army in 1966, an order that established the "living study and application of the thought of Mao Tse-tung" as the highest directive for all army work, the criterion for testing loyalty and efficiency, and the basis for a more vigorous policy of promotions.¹¹⁰ (The abolition of ranks in the PLA, which

¹⁰⁹The text of Chou Yang's speech, which was originally delivered at a national conference of "spare-time" writers, appeared in Hung Ch'i, No. 1, January 1966.

¹¹⁰Jen-min Jih-pao, November 27, 1965. The order also reiterated the leading role of "politics" over military concerns. Later, Red Guard sources were to charge that Lo Jui-ch'ing had "opposed" and "distorted" Lin's

had been ordered several months earlier, had already greatly reduced the independence, mobility, and prerogatives of professional officers.)

Whatever the precise timing of his deposition, Lo evidently was not present at an important twenty-day conference of the PLA's General Political Department in January 1966. The meeting was presided over by Director of the Political Department Hsiao Hua, who in his main report suggested the existence of dissension within the armed forces over the role politics should play, warned that thenceforth promotions would be closely related to one's ideological rectitude, and pointedly praised Lin Piao for "creatively applying" the military thought of Mao Tse-tung.¹¹¹ Other prominent leaders identified as addressing

five-point directive, stressing only its principle of "training hard in difficult skills and in fighting at close quarters and at night" (while relegating Mao study to a secondary position) and emphasizing -- "with ulterior motives" -- that if "the problem of methods" were not solved, even the best "guideline" would be of no avail. This contention appeared in an article entitled "Lo Jui-ch'ing Desires To Die Ten Thousand Times for His Crimes," published in a joint issue of the Canton Red Guard newspapers Chingkangshan and Kwang-tung Wei-i Chan-pao, Nos. 7-8, September 5, 1967.

¹¹¹ News reports of the conference were published on January 25, and the text of Hsiao Hua's speech appeared in Jen-min Jih-pao that same day. The main themes of the speech were reiterated on February 6 in an article in Jen-min Jih-pao, which put senior PLA cadres on notice that military achievements in the first half of life did not necessarily assure the correctness of political views in the second half. Other articles and statements about this time criticized the stress that allegedly was being placed on military technique to the neglect of "politics," and called for greater emphasis on political indoctrination.

the PLA meeting were Chou En-lai, Teng Hsiao-p'ing, P'eng Chen, Yeh Chien-ying, and Yang Ch'eng-wu, then Deputy Chief of Staff. (Yang later replaced Lo Jui-ch'ing as Acting Chief of Staff, but was himself purged in the spring of 1958.) The presence of Teng and P'eng, which seems somewhat ironic in retrospect, indicates that both were still among the top leaders carrying out the ideological rectification, and suggests that the issues which led to their downfall were distinct from those immediately responsible for the purge of Lo Jui-ch'ing.

The new year had begun with another call for a sharpening of the class struggle and greater emphasis on the study of Mao's thoughts.¹¹² Succeeding weeks saw the unfolding of a campaign of unprecedented zeal to glorify Mao and his works, a swelling chorus of adulation bordering on deification. By the end of January the relatively restrained Jen-min Jih-pao was enthusiastically expounding on the "worldwide significance" of Mao's thoughts and noting with approval that army recruits were presented a copy of Mao's writings before anything else. Propaganda sources found an ever-widening range of problems that could be successfully solved through Mao study -- from the treatment of burn victims to improvement of the PLA's combat effectiveness. Regional bureaus of the CCP joined loudly in the praise, the Central-South Bureau resolving on January 16 that the thought of Mao Tse-tung was "the

¹¹² A nationwide movement for the study of Mao's thoughts had been gradually gaining force for about two years, particularly since the publication of an editorial in Jen-min Jih-pao, on March 26, 1964, summoning the masses to "learn earnestly the thought of Mao Tse-tung."

apex of contemporary Marxism and the highest and most lively form of Marxism" (a paean that may help account for First Secretary T'ao Chu's subsequent meteoric, if short-lived, rise in power).¹¹³ Commentators spoke openly of Mao as the successor to Marx, Lenin, and Stalin, and some declared that, in consequence, the center of world communism had moved from the USSR to China.

Although February and March saw something of a lull in public attacks against Wu Han, we now know that intensive ideological discussions and political maneuvering went on behind the scenes. From January 25 to March 5, a national conference of political workers in industry and communications met in Peking, following which Lin Piao, exceeding his authority as PLA commander, addressed a letter of commendation to the civilian participants, praising them for placing Mao study first and doubtless raising suspicions in some quarters that he was trying to move into control of the labor movement.¹¹⁴ Within the army,

¹¹³ T'ao had probably already ingratiated himself with the Maoists by taking a strong position of support for reform of the traditional Chinese opera (e.g., in a statement of February 20, 1965, recalled in a Jen-min Jih-pao article of July 29 that year) and by continuing to exalt the Leap Forward and denounce critics of the commune system (e.g., in an article written for Hung Ch'i, No. 8, July 1965).

¹¹⁴ Although dated March 11, 1966, Lin's letter was not published for some three months, by which time the purge of the CCP's central propaganda organs was openly under way. (See Jen-min Jih-pao, June 19, 1966.) If this delay in publication was actually part of a deliberate attempt by some Party leaders to throttle Lin's growing power or to obstruct the swelling Maoist ideological tide, it would help explain the subsequent sweeping purge of CCP propaganda organs. On the basis of the unverified or circumstantial evidence now at hand, however, this possibility can no more than be suggested.

Lin glowingly introduced Mao's wife, Chiang Ch'ing, as she came to preside over a PLA forum on literature and art. The forum itself, held February 2-20, 1966, arrived at the sweeping conclusion that China's literature, drama, cinema, opera, and art all had been politically misguided -- an echo of Mao's bitter complaint of 1964 that his ideas on culture had been ignored for years.¹¹⁵

THE RISE OF THE POWER STRUGGLE

The widening differences within the leadership over the nature and role of ideology, which precipitated an increasingly open, if subtle, debate in the fall and winter of 1965 and early 1966, gradually and almost inexorably took on the character of a power struggle, as the chief protagonists were unable either to resolve or to live with their differences within the existing power structure. For the Maoists, who had initiated the dispute and continued on the offensive, the clash of ideas was no academic matter, although it could be argued in philosophical terms. While they regarded the persistence of "reactionary ideas" and wily bourgeois influences as the basic cause of the feared "capitalist restoration," they saw the ideological struggle as involving the ultimate question of state power. This was clearly expressed after the Cultural Revolution had entered openly upon the struggle for power:

. . . Forgetting about state power means
forgetting about politics, forgetting about
the basic theses of Marxism and switching

¹¹⁵ A summary of the forum's work and conclusions was printed in Hung Ch'i in May 1967. (See also NCNA, May 28, 1967.)

to economism, anarchism and utopianism and becoming muddle-headed. In the last analysis, the class struggle in the ideological field between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is a struggle for leadership.¹¹⁶

In the early part of 1966, however, the relationship between the ideological struggle and the regime's power structure was only gradually becoming clear to those in the leadership who were not fully committed to a militant Maoist position. In Peking, anxious and bewildered Party leaders, while echoing the praise of Mao, calling for emulation of a loyal rural Party secretary, Chiao Yu-lu, and joining campaigns of invective against such prominent literary figures as T'ien Han and Chien Po-tsan, made desperate behind-the-scenes efforts to prevent the criticism of Wu Han and others from leading to a high-level purge of the regime.

On February 12, according to recent Maoist sources, P'eng Chen released to the CCP, in the name of the Central Committee, an "Outline Report on the Current Academic Discussion" purportedly made by the Group of Five in charge of the Cultural Revolution. This report, which evidently tried to channel the criticism of Wu Han into a politically innocuous "academic" dispute, allegedly was released with the backing of Liu Shao-ch'i but without the approval of K'ang Sheng.¹¹⁷ Mao counterattacked on March 17 with a

¹¹⁶From an editorial entitled "Sweep Away All Monsters," Jen-min Jih-pao, June 1, 1966.

¹¹⁷See the May 16, 1966, Circular of the Central Committee. According to this source, P'eng Chen held no discussions within the Group of Five and exploited his

stinging, categorical condemnation of Wu Han, charging that his likes were no better than followers of Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang and that the Peking Municipal Committee would have to be dissolved if it shielded him further.¹¹⁸ Three days later he is said to have raged: "The Central Propaganda Ministry is the palace of the king of Hades [i.e., Chou Yang] and so we must overthrow the king and liberate the small devils."¹¹⁹ These outbursts (if we may accept their authenticity) were not even hinted at in published sources at the time; they probably were confined either to a small circle in the top leadership or only to Mao's immediate coterie. It is interesting to note, moreover, that Mao was not yet ready to single out P'eng Chen for direct attack even in private -- either because he still hoped to win P'eng over or, possibly, because he wanted to bait a bigger trap.

The conflict over ideology and general orientation, which thus far had been the primary force in the Cultural

position as chairman of the group to rush through a draft of the "Outline Report" and submit it to the Party in the name of the Central Committee. Among other errors, the report was said to have diverted argument from the central political issues in the Wu Han case, to have raised the slogan "everyone is equal before the truth," and to have stressed "again and again that the struggle must be conducted 'under direction,' 'with prudence,' 'with caution,' and 'with the approval of the leading bodies concerned.'"

¹¹⁸ This information, which cannot be verified, is from a ta-tzu-pao posted in Peking on April 25, 1967, and quoted in Mainichi two days later.

¹¹⁹ This quotation appears in an article entitled "Chronology of the Two-Road Struggle on the Educational Front in the Past 17 Years," which was included in Chiao-yu Ko-ming (Educational Revolution). See JPRS, No. 41,932, July 21, 1967, p. 50.

Revolution, was now becoming entwined with a struggle for power. Available evidence does not, however, bear out the subsequent allegations and innuendoes that ambitious Party figures such as P'eng Chen cynically moved to seize power for themselves. It suggests, rather, that successive leaders who came under Maoist attack (either directly, or indirectly through their protégés and subordinates) attempted in desperation to preserve the status quo -- the existing balance of power within the regime, including the well-defined order of succession. While considerations of power thus came to play a role, the conflict was still far from being, at its heart, a classic power struggle. It was not fundamentally an unprincipled strife arising out of conflicting personal ambitions and loyalties. Even if we hypothesize that internal tensions and disagreements within the leadership led to the emergence of informal alignments and interest groups, there is still no evidence that these coalesced into power factions operating with a distinct and relatively consistent membership and dedicated primarily to the seizure of power.

To be sure, unofficial wallposters put up by "revolutionary rebels" in 1967 were to make the sensational charge that several top Party leaders (including Liu Shao-ch'i, P'eng Chen, and Lo Jui-ch'ing) had plotted to oust Mao and seize power in a military coup d'état scheduled for February 1966.¹²⁰ If such a coup had been planned, it seems

¹²⁰ A ta-tzu-pao posted in Peking on April 17, 1967, and signed by "revolutionary employees of the Peking CCP Committee" declared that information compiled from records of the Committee showed P'eng Chen and Liu Shao-ch'i to have plotted for several years to stockpile food, arms, medicine, and gasoline, independent of central control, in

curious that its discovery and prevention should not have been revealed for a year, and stranger still that in the interim (even after Mao and Lin Piao consolidated their control at the Eleventh Plenum) the chief conspirators could have been entrusted with the highest responsibilities in state and Party, including the prosecution of the Cultural Revolution. Indeed, later ta-tzu-pao quote Chou En-lai as denying the alleged February plot, but officially sanctioned newspapers have continued to speak vaguely of an attempted coup, though perhaps more in reference to a suspected general threat over the years than to any concrete, specifically documented conspiracy.¹²¹

Peking suburbs in preparation for the February 1966 coup. This and other posters named Lo Jui-ch'ing, Lu Ting-i, and Yang Shang-k'un among the leaders of the plot and identified Teng Hsiao-p'ing (along with Liu Shao-ch'i) as an "archconspirator." Other posters have emphasized Ho Lung's alleged role in the coup, suggesting that Ho later attempted to use his military connections around the country (particularly in Szechuan) to prepare for a seizure of power. Thus far, these charges have not been specifically documented in official sources and cannot be verified on the basis of available evidence.

¹²¹Thus, a Jen-min Jih-pao editorial of April 17, 1967, in the course of an attack on Liu Shao-ch'i, referred in vague generalities to an attempt by P'eng Chen in the past to engineer a coup in behalf of Liu; it did not specify when that attempt took place. On April 28, according to Peking wallposters of May 7, Chou En-lai explicitly denied the existence of the rumored plot for a February 1966 coup. Admitting that P'eng Chen had ordered food to be stored in Peking suburbs to guard against any future crisis, Chou nevertheless argued that this action had subsequently been misinterpreted by the ultrasuspicious "revolutionary rebels." Chou's denial was indirectly supported by K'ang Sheng, who, although loath to criticize the suspicions of the rumormongers, suggested that P'eng Chen's stationing of troops near Peking University and the People's

While there is no evidence that the leaders who had run afoul of Mao's intensifying drive to purify the regime were aiming for anything more than preserving the status quo, their position became untenable in late March, when Liu Shao-ch'i, perhaps now the strongest force for order and cohesion in the Politburo, left Peking with his wife on a state visit to Pakistan and Afghanistan and, later, Burma. It is interesting, in retrospect, to note that their departure, on March 26, in company with Ch'en I and his wife, came just before the last public appearance of P'eng Chen,¹²² and that Lu Ting-i also disappeared from the scene about this time.

University in February 1966 might have been misunderstood by the revolutionary students. (Extracts of the quoted statement by Chou and K'ang appeared in Yomiuri, May 3, 1967.)

¹²² On the afternoon of March 26 P'eng Chen welcomed to Peking a delegation of the Japanese Communist Party led by its General Secretary, Kenji Miyamoto. The subsequent disagreement of Japanese and Chinese leaders over the issue of damping down the Sino-Soviet dispute in order to provide "united assistance" in Vietnam has led some analysts to connect P'eng's words of friendship and praise for the Japanese with his subsequent downfall. However, it should be remembered that Moscow has specifically identified P'eng as one of the foremost enemies of Sino-Soviet cooperation, and many of his statements over the years did indeed reflect a decidedly anti-Soviet bias. Moreover, the proliferating Maoist charges against P'eng have not, to date, included allegations of improper connivance with the Miyamoto delegation. More recently, Japanese Communist Party (JCP) sources have claimed that a joint CCP/JCP communiqué was actually prepared (some say it was also signed) after discussions at Peking in which trusted supporters of Mao -- including Chou En-lai and K'ang Sheng -- participated though Liu Shao-ch'i and Teng Hsiao-p'ing did not. While the contents of this draft communiqué have not been revealed -- and it may well have

Early in April, newspaper attacks against Wu Han resumed after a lull of several weeks. For the first time, the Party organ Jen-min Jih-pao joined in condemning Hai Jui Dismissed from Office, calling it a "poisonous weed," and the critics freely alleged that Wu Han had actually intended to exonerate P'eng Teh-huai. Meanwhile, the army's Chieh-fang Chun Pao stressed the responsibility of those in positions of leadership -- including, rather pointedly, secretaries of Party committees -- for the errors of their subordinates, and called for a renewal of self-criticism even among veteran and highly-placed cadres. On April 14 Kuo Mo-jo, president of the Academy of Sciences and perhaps the best-known intellectual in the regime, made a groveling and extravagant confession of error, condemning all that he had ever written as "worthless" in the light of Mao's pristine standards and suitable only for burning. Two days later, the newspapers of the Peking Municipal Party Committee, Peking Jih-pao and Ch'ien-hsien, published abject self-criticisms in which they reproached themselves for having printed not only the objectionable works of Wu Han but also articles by Teng T'o and Liao Mo-sha, who had not been previously condemned.

been an innocuous document -- both Japanese and Chinese sources agree that it was subsequently scrapped on Mao's personal orders when the Miyamoto delegation visited him in Shanghai. If so, it would indicate that Mao continued to wield supreme power in the regime well before the purges of the Cultural Revolution. Japanese accounts of the affair were published in the JCP organ Akahata on November 4 and 7, 1967, in articles by Ichiro Sunama and Junichi Konno, respectively.

IV. THE FIRST PHASE OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

On April 18, 1966, an editorial in Chieh-fang Chün Pao in effect publicly ushered in the first phase of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, although it made no formal announcement of a new campaign and even spoke of a "socialist cultural revolution" as having developed over the preceding three years.¹²³ Tracing the "struggle of two roads" in Party history from Mao's 1942 criticism of Wang Ming forward, the editorial noted the intensification of that struggle which began after the Tenth Plenum (September 1962) and was subsequently manifested in the reform of the Peking opera. The article then called for a new upsurge of Maoist ideological study and mass criticism that would foster a proletarian outlook and eliminate the bourgeois vestiges in Chinese culture (notably, the "superstitious reverence" for the liberal literature and art of the 1930s).¹²⁴ The

¹²³Periodization always tends to be arbitrary, but it can be a useful device for organizing historical phenomena. Thus, the author is not disposed to quarrel with an editorial of the Shanghai Wen Hui Pao (September 30, 1967) which has dated the "first stage" of the cultural revolution as beginning with the Maoist attack on Wu Han in November 1965 (possibly to call attention to the significance of Wen Hui Pao's role in the attack). His position in the present analysis, however, is that, even though dissension and conflict first rose to the surface in the fall of 1965, the concerted and publicized drive to launch an unprecedentedly sweeping and profound "cultural revolution" came only in April of the following year.

¹²⁴"Hold High the Great Red Banner of Mao Tse-tung's Thought and Actively Participate in the Great Socialist Cultural Revolution," Chieh-fang Chün Pao, April 18, 1966. Subsequently, Chou Yang and other figures active in the "national defense literature" of the 1930s were to be linked to Wang Ming, as rightists who opposed the "proletarian" line of Mao and Lu Hsiün.

leading role and authoritative manner assumed by Chieh-fang Chün Pao in this and other editorials, in May and June of 1966, made it apparent that Mao looked to the PLA (or, at least, its General Political Department) and Lin Piao to carry out the Cultural Revolution, although it was admitted that some elements in the army had opposed this assignment. The militant tone of these articles, as reflected in such titles as "Never Forget the Class Struggle" (May 4) and "Open Fire on the Black Anti-Party and Anti-Socialist Line!" (May 8), portended a violent and thorough purge, which would go beyond literary and art circles to strike at "bourgeois" elements in the Party and army and thereby to achieve a basic ideological "rectification" touching all of society.

THE PURGE OF P'ENG CHEN

Meanwhile, there was intense political maneuvering behind the scenes as the Peking Party Committee tried desperately to withstand the Maoist assault. The April 16 self-criticism of the Peking newspapers under the Committee's control was rejected by the Maoists as a fraud, though this was not revealed until the publication of a withering editorial in Chieh-fang Chün Pao on May 8. During most of the critical period of March 26 to April 19, Liu Shao-ch'i was traveling abroad (except for a brief return to Sinkiang in the first days of April) on a trip that turned out to be much more extensive than originally announced. On April 21, two days after Liu's unceremonious return to China, Mao, who was vacationing with Lin Piao in Hangchow, is reported to have sent a blunt letter criticizing P'eng Chen to a meeting of the Politburo Standing Committee

chaired by Liu. According to the same source, a "central conference" of the leaders in Hangchow had already "fatally" censured P'eng.¹²⁵ When he thereupon attempted to evade responsibility by shifting the blame for errors of the Peking Committee to Teng T'o, Mao again denounced him. A Red Guard account of the backstage maneuvering in late April stresses the role of Liu Jen (Second Secretary of the Peking Committee and Political Commissar of the Peking garrison), who allegedly spread the story that P'eng Chen's only mistake was in regard to the aforementioned "Outline Report" of the Group of Five, released in February 1966.¹²⁶

These and other defensive maneuvers were interpreted by the Maoists as exposing the "revisionist nature" of P'eng and his associates, who were described as having crawled out of their holes like "poisonous snakes" under the increasingly rigorous test of ideological loyalty.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ This information is from a Peking wallposter put up on April 25, 1967, and summarized in Mainichi on April 27, 1967. Earlier, the Red Guard newspaper Chan Pao (February 24, 1967) had referred to "documents" criticizing P'eng Chen and the Peking CCP Committee which were sent to it by Mao on April 21, 1966.

¹²⁶ Chan Pao, February 24, 1967. Liu Jen was also accused of conspiring secretly with other members of the Peking Party Committee (notably, Cheng T'ien-hsiang) to thwart Mao's criticism, and of later burning compromising documents of the Committee to evade censure.

¹²⁷ See, for example, the sensational exposé entitled "Thoroughly Criticize and Repudiate the Revisionist Line of Some of the Principal Leading Members of the Former Peking Municipal Party Committee" in Hung Ch'i, No. 9, July 1966.

Apparently, some of Mao's followers still did not fully grasp the extent of Mao's suspicions and the depth of his determination to purge the Party leadership.¹²⁸ These became clearer in early May, as Chieh-fang Chün Pao and the Shanghai Party newspapers launched a series of increasingly violent attacks against the Peking CCP press, Teng T'ao, and finally the "black gang" in the Municipal Party Committee. P'eng Chen's days were numbered.

The axe fell at an enlarged conference of the Politburo that was convened by Mao some time in May, probably around the middle of the month. It is entirely possible that the meeting did not take place in Peking. At least, Mao appears to have entertained a visiting Albanian delegation elsewhere early that month (perhaps at Shanghai on May 5 -- three days before Chieh-fang Chün Pao had publicly rejected the self-criticism of the Peking Party press).¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Thus, in a speech on April 30, 1967, Ch'i Pen-yü recalled that, when Mao, on April 30, 1966, had exclaimed that Khrushchevites were all around "being raised as our successors" while the people slept, "we could not understand what he meant." At that time, Ch'i continued, traitorous elements still had a strong hold on the Party Central Committee and its propaganda and organization departments as well as on government offices. (A résumé of Ch'i's speech was published in Mainichi, May 12, 1967.) It may be significant that Mao's unpublicized remarks of April 1966 came two days after Liu Shao-ch'i had addressed a visiting Albanian delegation in a major speech in which, though he delivered a scathing attack on Soviet "revisionism," he neglected to mention Mao, to praise his thought, and to refer to the Cultural Revolution.

¹²⁹ On May 10 Radio Peking announced that Mao had met earlier with the visiting Albanians led by Mehmet Shehu and had hosted a banquet in their honor (date and place unspecified). It was his first public appearance in nearly six months. On May 11 Jen-min Jih-pao and other newspapers

Whatever the precise date and site of the fateful Politburo conference, we are now told that Mao used the session to launch an open attack directly against P'eng Chen and others of "the counterrevolutionary clique."¹³⁰

Mao's indictment received the official endorsement of the Party in a Central Committee Circular of May 16, 1966, which (1) dissolved the Group of Five and its offices, (2) revoked the controversial "Outline Report" which P'eng

gave prominent coverage to the event, featuring a banquet photograph that showed Mao with most of his top lieutenants and the Albanian guests. Interestingly enough, Teng Hsiac-p'ing was seen seated immediately on Mao's right, flanked by Chou En-lai and, in third place, Lin Piao (who had also been out of the public eye for several months). Liu Shao-ch'i, who was not present -- although he entertained the Albanians during both their earlier and later visits to Peking -- had presumably remained in the capital. While we cannot be absolutely sure from present evidence just when or where the banquet occurred, the best guess would be that it was held at Shanghai on the afternoon and evening of May 5, since we know that Teng, Chou, and others listed as present were there with the Albanians on that day, and since the visitors' announced schedule would have permitted a lengthy talk and evening banquet then -- but not so easily on other days of their itinerary. Had the banquet been held in Peking, it seems unlikely that Liu Shao-ch'i would have been absent from it.

¹³⁰ This information, which comes from a recent Red Guard booklet (Chiao-yu Ko-ming, JPRS, No. 41,932), identified other members of the "clique" as Lu Ting-i, Lo Jui-ch'ing, and Yang Shang-k'un. This may exaggerate the scope of Mao's concept of "the counterrevolutionary clique" at that time, although the four men have been linked in subsequent Red Guard accusations. The focus of Mao's attack probably was P'eng Chen and the Peking Party Committee. The relatively less powerful leaders Lu, Lo, and Yang managed to elude public humiliation for a month or more after P'eng's downfall -- although Lo, at least, had probably been secretly suspended some months before the May conference.

Chen had rashly circulated on February 12, and (3) established a new group, directly under the Standing Committee of the Politburo, to carry out the Cultural Revolution.¹³¹ Besides calling upon the CCP to "criticize and repudiate" what were termed the anti-Party, antisocialist "so-called academic authorities," the Circular warned that "representatives of the bourgeoisie" had sneaked into Party, government, army, and cultural spheres and that they must be either removed or transferred to other positions:

Some of them we have already seen through, others we have not. Some we still trust and are training as our successors. There are, for example, people of the Khrushchev brand still nestling in our midst.

"Above all," said the Circular, such people must not be entrusted with leading the Cultural Revolution. However, it assumed that "many" were still assigned to such tasks, thereby creating an "extremely dangerous" situation.

¹³¹ The May 16 Circular, which was not published for a year (NCNA, May 16, 1967), was originally sent to all CCP regional bureaus, all committees of provincial and equivalent level, all departments and commissions under the Central Committee, all leading Party members and groups in state and mass organizations, and the PLA's General Political Department. Moreover, it directed that these recipients send copies of both the Circular and the erroneous "Outline" of February 12 down to Party committees at the hsien (county) level in the civil administration and at the regimental level in the PLA. Radio Peking, in commenting on the significance of the May 16 Circular a year later, declared that it had "for the first time . . . systematically presented the theory, line, principles, and policy of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" (NCNA, May 17, 1967).

The dismissal of P'eng Chen was belatedly revealed in an announcement, on June 3, 1966, that the Peking Party Committee had been reorganized some time before under a new first secretary, Li Hsdeh-feng.¹³² In all likelihood the purge of the CCP's central propaganda apparatus began at about the same time, although the replacement of Lu Ting-i and Chou Yang was not publicly announced until July. Significantly, the central Party organ, Jen-min Jih-pao, rather abruptly assumed an extreme Maoist tone in a series of editorials published in the first week of June. Afterward, the army's Chieh-fang Chün Pao -- until then the leading voice of the press in the Cultural Revolution -- went to some lengths of deference to affirm the authoritative nature of these statements.

THE WIDENING STREAM OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

Meanwhile, Mao and other top leaders were publicly and privately explaining the nature and objectives of the "great revolution that touches people to their very souls." On May 1, 1966, Chou En-lai told a Sino-Albanian friendship meeting in Peking:

A socialist cultural revolution of great historic significance is being launched in our country. This is a fierce and protracted struggle of "who will win," the proletariat or the bourgeoisie, in the ideological field. We must vigorously promote proletarian ideology and eradicate bourgeois ideology in the academic, educational and journalistic fields, in art, literature and in all other

¹³²In keeping with the regime's usual practice of refraining from public attacks on disgraced Politburo members, P'eng Chen's name was not mentioned in the official press (as opposed to unofficial sources such as Red Guard posters) until the publication of the May 16, 1966, resolution in May 1967.

fields of culture. This is a key question in the development in depth of our socialist revolution at the present stage, a question concerning the situation as a whole and a matter of the first magnitude affecting the destiny and the future of our Party and country.¹³³

A few days later, on May 7, Mao issued an unpublicized directive pointing toward the ultimate goal of this ideological revolution -- the new Communist man, imbued with proletarian consciousness and able to act in all social roles. He declared that persons in all walks of life -- soldiers, laborers, peasants, intellectuals, Party cadres, and others -- should be trained in politics, culture, and military affairs so as to become useful in industry, agriculture, and warfare, or wherever else needed.¹³⁴

Other authoritative statements pointed out, however, that before these objectives could be realized it was necessary to uproot all "bourgeois" elements standing in opposition to socialism and the thought of Mao Tse-tung: "Without destruction, there will be no construction."¹³⁵

Thus, as the Cultural Revolution unfolded, during late May, June, and July of 1966, spreading out from Peking into the provinces, its main fire was directed against the presumed agents of "bourgeois" ideology on the cultural

¹³³NCNA, May 1, 1966.

¹³⁴The content of Mao's May 7 directive was publicized a year later in articles celebrating the anniversary of its drafting. (See, in particular, Jen-min Jih-pao, May 8, 1967.) In education, Mao foresaw an end to the traditional domination of "bourgeois intellectuals" (i.e., specialists or professionals) by such means as reduced curricula and a broadened, albeit more superficial, scope of studies.

¹³⁵Jen-min Jih-pao, June 4, 1966.

front -- educators, writers, and artists as well as their official supervisors in the CCP propaganda apparatus. Concentrating initially on institutions of higher learning -- notably universities in Peking, Nanking, Shanghai, and Wuhan -- the humiliation and purging of academic officials extended downward through the entire educational system; the attack culminated in an announcement, on June 13, of a six-month suspension of all regular schooling to permit the formulation of new and ideologically purer criteria for student admission.

At the time, the main instruments for implementing the purge at the local level were "work teams" that the Party committees sent out to the schools and universities under their jurisdiction. Ultimate control evidently was vested in an ad hoc group within the regular central Party apparatus dominated by Liu Shao-ch'i and Teng Hsiao-p'ing.¹³⁶ The phenomenon of the work teams, which effectively put local Party officials in charge of directing and supervising the Cultural Revolution, was not a new organizational

¹³⁶ It will be recalled that the May 16, 1966, Circular of the Central Committee called for the establishment of a new group, directly under the Politburo Standing Committee, to take charge of the Cultural Revolution -- replacing P'eng Chen's Group of Five. We may infer that Mao, as Chairman of the Standing Committee, approved this arrangement, which, until he himself chose to play a more active and direct role in Peking, gave over-all responsibility for guiding the Cultural Revolution to Liu and Teng. Presumably this would have been the case even though, as we shall see below, on July 9 Ch'en Po-ta was revealed to be the "leader of the group in charge of the Cultural Revolution."

device, having been employed earlier in the "socialist education campaign." In the absence of new, specific directives on how to carry out the Cultural Revolution, the teams used the techniques developed in previous rectification drives, which included the selective application of violence and terror, always carefully limited and kept under tight Party control. Such concern for order and discipline was, of course, diametrically opposed to the prevailing atmosphere of militancy, intolerance, and suspicion engendered by the Maoist ideological revival and the consequent denigration of formerly venerated teachers and officials.

The inevitable clash between Party authority and the revolutionary "left" occurred toward the end of May, when Nieh Yüan-tzu, a philosophy instructor at Peking University, and six of her students, purportedly on their own initiative, posted a ta-tzu-pao directly criticizing the university's president and CCP Committee. The newly reorganized Peking Municipal Party Committee, apparently sensing the potential danger in such unauthorized attacks, ordered the poster taken down. At this point the matter was brought to the attention of Mao (perhaps by Chiang Ch'ing), who on June 1 personally ordered that the poster be published throughout China.¹³⁷ It appeared in Jen-min Jih-pao the following day, a portent of the future direction of the Cultural Revolution and testimony to Mao's ultimate power. In approving this "first Marxist-Leninist poster," as it is now called, Mao emphasized his determination to "go to

¹³⁷ See speech by K'ang Sheng on September 8, 1966, in Current Background, U.S. Consulate General, Hong Kong, No. 819, March 10, 1967.

the masses." His action, according to later assessments, "kindled the flames of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and set in motion the mass movement."¹³⁸

Moreover, Mao's curious reference to the poster as the "declaration of the Peking People's Commune in the 1960s" is now cited as evidence that he foresaw the emergence of a "new form" of state organization -- one which, elaborating on the model of the Paris Commune of 1871, would mobilize China's huge population to smash the old order, seize power from "the handful" of Party authorities "taking the capitalist road," and create an entirely new revolutionary situation and a proletarian dictatorship.¹³⁹

THE LEADERSHIP OF LIU SHAO-CH'I AND THE PARTY APPARATUS

Although Mao evidently overruled the new Peking CCP Committee on the unauthorized posting of ta-tzu-pao, he gave no open hint of a general or profound dissatisfaction with the leadership of the Cultural Revolution at the time, and left the regular Party apparatus in charge of it through June and July. It was subsequently charged, however, that during this period "one, two, or even several responsible

¹³⁸ See New Year's editorial entitled "Carry the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution Through to the End" in Jen-min Jih-pao, January 1, 1967. Chou En-lai later referred to Mao's order for publication of the poster as "the first signal" of the Cultural Revolution. (See his speech to a Congress of Red Guards of Peking Universities released by NCNA on March 2, 1967.)

¹³⁹ These claims of Mao's foresight were made in an editorial entitled "On the Struggle of the Proletarian Revolutionaries To Seize Power," published in Hung Ch'i, No. 3, February 3, 1967.

persons in the Central Committee" seized upon Mao's absence from Peking to attempt to sabotage the Cultural Revolution. They allegedly tried to impose a "bourgeois dictatorship" on all sectors under their control, advancing a "bourgeois reactionary line," "clamping down on different views," and carrying out a "white terror" to suppress the revolutionary activists.¹⁴⁰ More specifically, according to the later indictments, the CCP apparatus under Liu Shao-ch'i and Teng Hsiao-p'ing hurriedly dispatched work teams throughout the country without consulting Mao, who "as early as June" had urged that the teams "not be sent out hastily."¹⁴¹ It might be more accurate to say that Liu and Teng sent the teams in response to a rising number of calls from organizations and schools for an investigation and purge of their leaders, and that the moderateness of this response was in keeping with the practice employed in the earlier Ssu-ch'ing ("four clearances") campaign. An alternative, the critics later pointed out, would have been for the Party apparatus to give the left activists

¹⁴⁰ Jen-min Jih-pao, January 1, 1967.

¹⁴¹ See November 28, 1966, speech of Chiang Ch'ing at Peking rally of literature and art workers, excerpts of which appeared in Hung Ch'i, No. 15, December 13, 1966. In a speech by T'ao Chu in December, publicized in a Peking ta-tzu-pao posted on December 14, 1966, Liu and Teng were publicly named as leaders of the plot to sabotage the Cultural Revolution (during Mao's absence from Peking in June and July). (The Washington Post, December 15, 1966.) According to one Red Guard source, Liu dispatched the work teams despite the fact that, during a conference held at Hangchow on June 9, 1966, Mao had warned against sending them out. (Ching-kang-shan, February 1 and 8, 1967.)

in local organizations free rein to promote spontaneous and uncontrolled "revolution."¹⁴²

Whatever may have been the intent behind their dispatch, the work teams seem to have acted with less than all-out enthusiasm on encountering the raging mass criticism and the purging of prominent intellectuals and Party officials. Faced in many places with a situation rapidly approaching anarchy, they tried to maintain some semblance of order and Party control. As a militant young kindergarten teacher later complained,

The work team was the fire-extinguishing team. Upon its arrival [at the school], it immediately urged us to "calm down, and not be excessive." It, in fact,

¹⁴²On August 22, in an address at Tsinghua University, Chou En-lai declared that, when local organs requested that work teams be sent to them ("according to the requirement of the 'four-clearances' campaign"), the Party Central and Peking Municipal CCP Committee could have employed either of two measures: "One was to send the work team which would seize the power of the black gang, or suspected black gang, or the capitalist authoritarian elements. . . . The alternative was to let the people of the particular unit promote the revolution themselves and throw everything into confusion for a period." In the latter case, he took it for granted that "the people would rise up themselves to promote the revolution under the call of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and follow the revolutionary path," an assumption that Liu, Teng, and other Party regulars apparently were unwilling to make. Chou complained that the Party authorities failed to "experiment" with both courses of action, electing only to send out the work teams. Moreover, the teams were not clearly instructed as to "policy and tasks" and inevitably made mistakes. (See the text of Chou's speech, as translated from a collection of materials on the Cultural Revolution published in Canton on October 28, 1966, in JPRS, No. 41,313, June 8, 1967.)

encouraged the bourgeois authoritarians
and discouraged the revolutionary masses.¹⁴³

As the struggle deepened, pitting individuals and groups against each other all of whom claimed to be for Mao and revolution, distinctions between "true" and "false" revolutionaries became increasingly subjective and debatable. As the work teams had not been given clear criteria for judgment, they tended to procrastinate and to damp down student extremism. For example, the team that Mme Liu Shao-ch'i (Wang Kuang-mei) led to Tsinghua University on June 21 began, as she later allegedly confessed, by demanding "adequate preparation" before anyone could level accusations at individuals. Terming its critics "false leftists" and "troublesome schemers" (a charge not without some foundation), the team maneuvered to prolong the debate, thereby "leading to a situation in which students struggled against students, and the battlefield was enlarged." Ultimately, according to Mme Liu, "We could no longer control the situation and therefore resorted to

¹⁴³ See article by Hsü Chien-hua in the Red Guard periodical Hung-se Chih-kung (Red Staff Members and Workers), No. 3, January 29, 1967. (Translated in JPRS, No. 41,107, of May 22, 1967.) Hsü had posted ta-tzu-pao attacking her kindergarten principal in early June, and this apparently had resulted in the dispatch of a work team to the school. She was speechless with anger when the team overrode her criticism and suggested that those resisting its decision were "counterrevolutionary." However, her protest to the newly reorganized Peking Municipal CCP Committee was ignored, and, because of her persistent efforts to purge the principal, she was subsequently branded an "ambitious individual" (which may not have been far from the truth).

strong political repression."¹⁴⁴ Thus, what may have begun as a normal, if not perfectly legitimate, concern of the CCP's "organization men" for discipline and stability ended in alienation of the "revolutionary leftists," who -- even in the absence of any coercion -- would likely have viewed the "work teams" as part of a plot to sabotage the Cultural Revolution.¹⁴⁵

All this is not to say, of course, that Liu and the Party apparatus were totally blameless. Their support for Mao's increasingly radical campaign of indoctrination and purge was at best lukewarm, and they evidently were bending every effort to bring it under firm Party control. While Liu continued to play a very prominent political role after his return from the extended spring trip to South and Southeast Asia -- he presided at the May Day fete at Tien-an-men, entertained State visitors, and, as late

¹⁴⁴ An account of Mme Liu's confession, said to have been written in October 1966, was published in The Washington Post, December 28, 1966.

¹⁴⁵ It would, of course, be difficult, if not impossible, to identify and weigh precisely all the varied motives driving the "revolutionary leftists." Their opposition almost certainly sprang from a range of mixed motives, personal and psychological as well as ideological. Some probably were congenital radicals and malcontents; at least a few nourished real or imagined grievances against the established authorities; some may have acted primarily from considerations of personal ambition, while others were sincerely driven by an uncompromising idealism or rigid, puritanical zeal. In any event, it would seem reasonable to suppose that in the prevailing unstable, iconoclastic atmosphere, and given an ill-defined -- almost open-ended -- mandate to criticize, many students were likely to be disposed toward extremism.

as July 22, 1966, was keynote speaker at a massive Vietnam war rally -- he remained strangely quiet on the burning topics of Mao's thought and the Cultural Revolution, in contrast even to such "moderates" as Chou En-lai. Jen-min Jih-pao on July 1 quoted approving references to Mao's thought by Liu and Teng Hsiao-p'ing, as well as by Chou and Lin Piao, but did not substantially increase the public commitment of the Party apparatus to the increasingly fanatical leftward course prescribed by Mao.¹⁴⁶

Some of the most damaging evidence against Liu Shao-ch'i for his role in this period has been supplied in his own alleged confessions (none of which, however, has been accepted by the Maoists to date). According to these, Liu presided over the CCP Central in Mao's absence from Peking and was in charge of the Cultural Revolution for approximately fifty days after June 1, 1966. During this period he acknowledged having made mistakes of policy, notably in the dispatch of work teams which suppressed the revolutionary masses, instituted local news blackouts, and forbade street demonstrations or the posting of ta-tzu-pao. This, according to Liu's reported admission, led to a situation, beginning in Peking, in which students were set against students, true "revolutionaries" (a small minority in most cases) were accused of being

¹⁴⁶ Among other things, this editorial (celebrating the CCP's 45th anniversary) attempted to establish a criterion for separating "true" from "false" revolutionaries. It declared: "One's attitude toward Mao Tse-tung's thought is the yardstick distinguishing the genuine revolutionary from the sham revolutionary and the counter-revolutionary, the Marxist-Leninist from the revisionist."

counterrevolutionary, student clashes erupted, and an "atmosphere of terror" prevailed in many schools.¹⁴⁷

Other sources have indirectly confirmed Liu's efforts at this time to retain some measure of discipline and Party control over the rapidly spreading conditions of chaotic, violent struggle in the universities and other institutions. For example, at Liu's suggestion a "Socialist Institute" was established outside Peking, where

¹⁴⁷ In his first self-criticism (delivered at a Party meeting in October 1966 but reported only on December 26, 1966 -- in a Red Guard poster), Liu maintained that the work teams were initially dispatched to schools and organizations in the capital, through the reorganized Peking CCP Committee, in response to "very active" requests by important officials of departments under the Central Committee and by the central headquarters of the Communist Youth League. This would help explain the subsequent violent criticism against the new Peking Party Committee (under Li Hsueh-feng). Liu went on to explain that, after news of the dispatch of work teams to Peking institutions was published, requests flooded in for the sending of such teams to many other parts of the country. The content of Liu's first confession was reported in Asahi, December 27, 1966, and Mainichi, January 28 and 29, 1967. Lengthy extracts later appeared in Current Scene, May 31, 1967.

In a second self-criticism (said to have been written for a group of Peking Red Guards on July 9, 1967, and reported in Mainichi on July 31), Liu repeated that in June and July of 1966 he had made errors in "policy line and direction" when he sent out work teams which then proceeded to suppress the "revolutionary teachers and students." He added that this mistake was compounded in early August, when for three days he went to the Peking Architectural College to direct the activities of the Cultural Revolution, in company with Li Hsueh-feng, Liu Lan-t'ao, Ku Mu, and Ch'i Pen-yü. In this position Liu restricted the posting of ta-tzu-pao and punished as "counterrevolutionaries" students who tried to distribute bulletins from Peking University -- actions that were admittedly in "violation" of the May 18 Central Committee Circular (and, as

some 500 prominent artists, writers, teachers, and cultural officials who had been attacked were sent for criticisms and reform under protective custody, thus saved for a time from bodily injury by uncontrolled and increasingly hysterical mobs of student activists.¹⁴⁸ Similarly, Liu Shao-ch'i and T'ao Chu are now said to have mitigated the proposals for reform of the educational system in July, which called, among other things, for the reconvening of primary and middle schools in the fall. The proposals later were attacked as part of a dark plot to "strangle" the development of the Cultural Revolution in the schools.¹⁴⁹

Such evidence of moderation and reticence in the face of a runaway Cultural Revolution should not obscure the very substantial "reforms" that were being carried out under the over-all leadership of Liu and the Party apparatus.

we shall presently see, of Mao's proposal of July 24 that work teams be recalled).

¹⁴⁸The celebrated violinist Ma Ts'e-ts'ung, who was President of the Central Music Academy in Peking before he fled the Mainland, later recounted his fifty-day incarceration at the Socialist Institute. The program of criticism and thought reform was far from mild, but it was conducted under the disciplined supervision of army men. However, the inmates were subjected to much greater abuse and personal danger when, occasionally, they were sent back to their respective schools for mass criticism. When Ma and his companions arrived at the Socialist Institute in mid-June of 1966, they were told that they would be there from eight to twelve months, depending on their progress in reforming. On August 9, however, they were suddenly returned to the hostile environment of Peking, perhaps an indication of Liu Shao-ch'i's loss of power at that time. (See Ma Ts'e-ts'ung's story in Life, June 2, 1967.)

¹⁴⁹"Chronology of the Two-Road Struggle," JPRS, No. 41,932, p. 52.

As early as June 9, 1966, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions called upon its constituent organs to place the Cultural Revolution "in the topmost position of all work" and regard it as "the center of current trade union work" (although emphasizing that it was to be carried out under firm CCP guidance).¹⁵⁰ Simultaneously with these intensified efforts to mobilize mass support for the Cultural Revolution, the purge of high-level Party and government officials was stepped up. In early July, after a barrage of public attacks against Chou Yang and Lin Mo-han, important changes were revealed in the leadership of several key Party organs: "T'ao Chu was named head of the Central Committee's Propaganda Department, a post previously held by Lu Ting-i; he and Yeh Chien-ying were appointed to the Secretariat (Yeh presumably replacing Lo Jui-ch'ing in that body); and Ch'en Po-ta, Mao's trusted political secretary, was referred to as "leader

¹⁵⁰ Kung-jen Jih-pao, June 10, 1966. The June 9 notice instructed trade union organizations to act "under the leadership of Party committees at all levels" and to strive to be "competent assistants to the Party." It viewed the Cultural Revolution primarily in ideological terms, as "a struggle between Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tse-tung's thought, on the one side, and capitalist and revisionist ideology, on the other." It summoned trade unionists to develop "a high degree of revolutionary fervor," unite with the masses, take an active part in criticizing bourgeois intellectual "authorities," unmask the anti-Party "black gang" (destroying the "three-family villages" and sweeping away all "monsters"), wipe out the influence of "black lines" in the trade unions, and eradicate the "four olds" (old ideology, culture, habits, and customs). Regarding Mao's thought as "the supreme directive for all work" and "never forgetting the class struggle," the trade unions were to become "schools for creatively studying and applying Chairman Mao's works."

of the group in charge of the Cultural Revolution."¹⁵¹
It has been estimated that, by the end of July, at least 165 prominent literary figures, professors, and officials responsible for cultural and propaganda work had been purged.¹⁵²

Despite these accomplishments, Mao appeared to be dissatisfied. In part, his displeasure may have resulted from unrealistically high expectations for the Cultural Revolution following the purge of P'eng Chen and the inauguration of a new leadership for the Revolution in mid-May.¹⁵³ By any standard, however, there were grounds

¹⁵¹ See NCNA dispatches of July 7, 9, and 10, 1966. Possible factors in T'ao Chu's sudden elevation from regional to national leadership were suggested on p. 106 above. The puzzling story of his equally precipitous fall from power in late December 1966 lies beyond the scope of the present study. Despite the subsequent Maoist attempts to link him with the alleged crimes of Liu Shao-ch'i, in June and July 1966, it would seem more likely that T'ao was not regarded as having erred until some time after August, when his political star reached its zenith.

¹⁵² See Chün-tu Hsüeh, "The Cultural Revolution and Leadership Crisis in Communist China," Political Science Quarterly, June 1967, p. 178. While the vast majority of Hsüeh's total were purged in the public phase of the Cultural Revolution after mid-April 1966, he apparently also included among the 165 the handful of prominent officials dismissed during the earlier stages of the "socialist education campaign." On the other hand, the Hong Kong-based American journalist Robert Elegant has estimated that, during the two months of June and July alone, "more than 300 senior propagandists and educators were purged." (The Los Angeles Times, April 9, 1967.)

¹⁵³ The following October, in his speech to a Party work conference, Mao recalled his profound dissatisfaction at the lack of attention paid to articles and Central Committee announcements publicizing the Cultural Revolution in the period from January to May. Presumably, he expected

for disappointment, as the local work teams, unclear as to their mission, stirred up a storm of resistance among "revolutionary leftists." At Peking University the team was itself purged by radical activists. At Tsinghua University, where Mme Liu's team successfully stemmed the opposition for a time, a minority of students in the affiliated middle school organized into a militant combat group -- precursor of the Red Guards -- dedicated to rebellion against the "revisionist leadership." Moreover, there is evidence that in some places PLA political cadres assigned to the work teams worked at cross purposes with the Party leadership, actively encouraging the rebellious elements. (However, this alone would not justify the inference of some analysts that Mao was conspiring with Lin Piao to sabotage the efforts of the teams so as to discredit and entrap top CCP leaders like Liu and Teng.)¹⁵⁴

much more from the new leadership prescribed in the Central Committee Circular of May 16.

¹⁵⁴ An article in Hung Ch'i, No. 5, of 1967, tells of the participation of three PLA political cadres on the work team sent to carry out the Cultural Revolution at Nanking University. Beginning in late June, they covertly played an independent role, disagreeing with and then opposing the provincial CCP Committee's orders and encouraging student attacks on high university officials. These activities were all the more serious as one of the three men was deputy political commissar of the Kiangsu Provincial Military District.

In assessing the significance of this story it should be noted that such reports of PLA sabotage of the Party-led work teams have not been widespread. Even in this single case, moreover, there is no indication that the PLA trio acted on higher orders from the military establishment (i.e., Lin Piao). Indeed, the deputy commissar might have been acting in direct opposition to the wishes of his superior (whose position on the matter was not revealed). The history of the PLA in the Cultural Revolution is

MAO'S ENTRY INTO DIRECT LEADERSHIP

On July 18, 1966, two days after his celebrated swim in the Yangtze,¹⁵⁵ Mao returned to Peking, where from then on he was to play a more active role in the leadership of the Cultural Revolution. His influence was dramatically manifested only six days later, on July 24, when the Party decided to recall the controversial "work teams" and to convene a Central Work Conference.¹⁵⁶ Shortly thereafter,

replete with examples of bold deputy commissars who were promoted for daring to "rebel." Thus, the Hung Ch'i article, far from substantiating a Mao/Lin plot to sabotage the work teams (much less to entrap Liu and Teng), may be no more than the account of a single case of three especially zealous -- or unscrupulously ambitious -- PLA cadres who sought to spark student unrest and refused to abide by the provincial CCP Committee's order to cool things down (an order that may have been supported by the commissar of the Military District).

¹⁵⁵ According to official accounts released nine days after the event, Mao swam a distance of almost 15 kilometers in the Yangtze (downstream, presumably) in the incredible time of one hour and five minutes. He was accompanied by Wang Jen-chung, Second Secretary of the CCP Central South Bureau, First Secretary T'ao Chu having previously departed for Peking. For an account of the controversial swim see Michael Freeberne, "The Great Splash Forward," Problems of Communism, November/December 1966. More recently, Red Guard sources have suggested that not all Chinese leaders appreciated Mao's marathon feat, an attitude which later got some into difficulties. Teng Hsiao-p'ing is quoted as having expressed the rash view, doubtless in private, that "Everyone suffers from subjectivism, Mao Tse-tung also. Thus, many people did not want him to go for a swim, but he completely ignored them." (Quoted from Hsin Pei-ta, January 30, 1967, in The New York Times, January 31, 1967.)

¹⁵⁶ See Liu Shao-ch'i's self-criticisms of October 1966 and July 1967, Mainichi, January 28 and 29, and July 13, 1967. In his second confession, as noted earlier, Liu admitted having continued to support the work team at the Peking

on August 1, the Eleventh Plenum of the CCP Central Committee convened in Peking, the first such meeting in nearly four years.¹⁵⁷

Architectural College as late as the beginning of August 1966.

¹⁵⁷ According to a sensational press report from Peking, first published in the Yugoslav journal Politika and later reprinted in other periodicals, Liu Shao-ch'i and his adherents had attempted earlier to call a plenary session of the Central Committee, on July 21, to impeach Mao during his absence from Peking. This was said to be in retaliation for Mao's PLA-backed seizure of mass media in early June and for the purge of P'eng Chen -- who was now busily traveling in the northwest and southwest lobbying for the support of Central Committee members. By mid-July, with half of those members in Peking and anti-Mao troops on the way from Shensi, the chances of impeachment looked good. However, says the report, on July 17 and 18 Lin Piao moved forces into strategic points around Peking and Tientsin and proceeded to take over the capital garrison, arrest Lo Jui-ch'ing (allegedly Liu's ally), and restore Mao's position. In these circumstances Teng Hsiao-p'ing, the CCP Secretary-General, changed his mind and refused to call the plenary session of the Central Committee that Liu had requested. With the situation firmly under control, Mao returned to Peking in triumph on July 28.

As Gene T. Hsiao has pointed out (Asian Survey, June 1967), this account is of doubtful validity, for the overwhelming weight of evidence indicates that Mao returned to Peking on July 18 and that Lo Jui-ch'ing was not arrested until December 1966 (although he had been dismissed from office months earlier). While it can be argued that these facts do not necessarily contradict the essential elements of the "impeachment theory," other aspects of the situation would tend to do so. For example, Liu was the most prominent leader in evidence at a massive Vietnam war rally in Peking on July 22, the day after the planned impeachment plenum was to have taken place. Indeed, Liu seems to have retained his power until the August plenum convened. Moreover, it seems doubtful that Liu and his friends desired to restore P'eng Chen -- much less had any realistic hope of doing so -- after the general condemnation of the Peking "black gang" in May, June, and early July. One could also

Even before its work had been concluded, pushing the Cultural Revolution to a new stage of development, Mao had further revealed his objectives and his determination to induce sweeping changes. On August 1, Chieh-fang Chün Pao in its Army Day editorial quoted excerpts from Mao's previously unpublicized directive of May 7, in which he exhorted the PLA to become a "Great School" where soldiers mastered politics and culture as well as the military arts."¹⁵⁸ The new Maoist vision revealed in this statement was of a pure, utopian Communist society, in which all individual interests and occupational differences (such as those between industry and agriculture, mental and manual work, and urban and rural concerns) would have been eliminated and the ideal of a completely selfless and interchangeable man realized. Mao evidently viewed this goal as attainable only through complete commitment to the regenerative process of all-out ideological struggle, and, by implication, to the total social mobilization needed to carry out such fundamentally transforming criticism and political study (with primary emphasis on the thought and example of Mao himself). Those previously entrusted with the leadership of this enterprise -- initially, P'eng Chen;

question whether the alleged troop movements around Peking (which have not been corroborated elsewhere) would have been necessary, inasmuch as Mao had apparently censured P'eng Chen effectively from Hangchow, or that they would have intimidated dissident Central Committeemen, dissuading them from assembling. Until more persuasive evidence can be adduced, the "impeachment theory" remains interesting but improbable.

¹⁵⁸ As indicated above, the date and context of the quoted statements by Mao were not made public until May 1967.

later, the regular Party apparatus under Liu and Teng -- had failed to demonstrate their unreserved faith in or commitment to this goal by not pursuing it with the enthusiasm, speed, and efficiency demanded by an increasingly impatient and inflexible Mao.

In word and action, therefore, Mao now began to reveal that he intended to withdraw the mandate for directing the Cultural Revolution from the Party officialdom and to confer it directly on the "masses," which meant, ultimately, on the activating "left revolutionaries" among them. He hinted at this in a letter to the nascent Red Guards at Tsinghua commending their steadfast revolutionary orientation and promising support for all who shared it elsewhere in the country. On August 4, Mao reportedly sent Chou En-lai to Tsinghua so that he might personally reverse the censure and end the disciplinary measures taken against rebellious students by the work team under Mme Liu Shao-ch'i.¹⁵⁹ That the busy Chou and other top

¹⁵⁹ An indication of the immature and often petty and personal nature of the student rebellion may be seen in the later testimony of Chu Teh-i, one of its leaders at Tsinghua. On April 10, 1967, Chu spoke at a mass Red Guard rally of how he had attempted suicide (and sustained a permanently disabling foot injury in leaping onto railroad tracks) after Mme Liu's work team had confined him to dormitory and ordered him to write a self-criticism. This punishment, hardly grounds for attempting suicide to any normal personality, does not seem to have been excessive in view of Chu's own account of his behavior. Was he being condemned for some lofty defense of Maoist principles? He made no such claim. Rather, in the din of "democratic" discussion he apparently had played the petty role of troublemaker, raising accusations against fellow-students who came from the families of high officials (they included a daughter of Liu Shao-ch'i and a son of Ho Lung), charging that they were "sitting on the same bench as the work team," and even

leaders should have been compelled to occupy themselves seriously with the sophomoric antics and feuds of local university students is indicative of the bizarre revolution in priorities that Mao and his supporters sought for the regime.

Although by then the Eleventh Plenary Session of the Central Committee was well under way, Mao was not content to confine his views to its precincts -- perhaps because, initially, he was unable to win decisive support for them there. He continued his extracurricular activities by personally writing a ta-tzu-pao, on August 5, entitled "Bombard the Headquarters, My First Big Character Poster." It began by reiterating the importance of the May 25 Peking University wallposter by Nieh Yüan-tzu and her group of students, and then called upon all comrades to reread it along with the accompanying commentary that Mao had ordered printed in Jen-min Jih-pao on June 2. Despite the publication of these "well-written" messages, he complained,

. . . in the last 50 days or more, certain leading comrades from the Central Committee to local districts have taken the opposite road, have adopted a reactionary, bourgeois standpoint, have implemented a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, have struck down the great stirring Cultural Revolution movement, have confused right and wrong, mixed up black and white, attempted to exterminate the revolutionaries, suppressed divergent views, implemented a White Terror, have spread the power of the bourgeoisie with an air of

suggesting that Liu had sent his wife to conspire with the team. (See David Oancia's dispatch in The New York Times, April 14, 1967.)

self-satisfaction and destroyed the spirit of the proletariat.¹⁶⁰

He went on to imply that these mistakes were related to unspecified rightist tendencies in 1962 (before the Tenth Plenum?) and to "left-in-form-but-actually-rightist" deviations in 1964 (perhaps a reference to the intensified Ssu-ch'ing campaign). Once again, Mao, frustrated by the failure of the ideological revolution to keep up with his rising expectations, sought an explanation, or rationalization, in the hidden motives of those he had entrusted with its leadership -- motives to be gleaned from a tortuous, arbitrary, and at times paranoid reinvestigation of their previously accepted statements and actions.

THE ELEVENTH PLENUM

The Central Committee's meeting in the first twelve days of August 1966 was billed as a "plenary session," but attendance evidently was spotty, and the participants were a very mixed lot. Although no complete list of those present was announced, important provincial leaders are known to have been absent. Moreover, the later sessions appear to have been packed with "revolutionary" students and teachers from Peking institutions. The resistance to the decisions of the meeting that subsequently became widespread within the Party apparatus, and the open Maoist attacks against the vast majority of Central Committeemen (by deed, if not always by name) suggest either that the

¹⁶⁰Text taken from the Tsinghua Red Guard paper Ching-kang-shan of April 6, 1967, as it appeared in Current Scene, May 31, 1967.

Plenum did not have a quorum when the critical resolutions were passed or that those voting misunderstood the nature and implications of Mao's proposals.¹⁶¹ It is also possible, of course, that the participants were temporarily mesmerized by Mao's pretensions of authority or were intimidated -- within the limits of legality -- by the kibitzing "revolutionary" masses. In any event, under Mao's personal direction the Eleventh Plenum proceeded to adopt a program of historic import for the Chinese revolution and to effect the most far-reaching changes in the Party's top leadership since its rise to power in 1949.

The sixteen-point "Decision Concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," adopted on August 8, termed the campaign in progress "a great revolution that touches people to their very souls" and a new, broader, and deeper stage of China's "socialist revolution."¹⁶² It charged that, although the bourgeoisie had been overthrown in the earlier stages, representatives of that class were "still trying to use old ideas, culture, customs, and habits of the exploiting classes [the "four olds"] to corrupt the masses, capture their minds, and endeavor to stage a come-back." To counter this "ideological"

¹⁶¹This may have been hinted at later in Chiang Ch'ing's speech of November 28, where she insisted that concern for the legal niceties of "minority" and "majority" were less important than one's class viewpoint and true espousal of Marxism-Leninism and the "correct" Maoist line. (See excerpts of the speech in Hung Ch'i, No. 15, December 1966.)

¹⁶²"Decision of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party Concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1966.

challenge, the document declared, the proletariat must do the exact opposite, employing new imperatives -- styled as the "four news" -- in order to "change the mental outlook of the whole of society." The present objective was

. . . to struggle against and overthrow those persons in authority who are taking the capitalist road, to criticize and repudiate the reactionary bourgeois academic "authorities" and the ideology of the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes and to transform education, literature and art and all other parts of the superstructure not in correspondence with the socialist economic base. . . .

In pursuing this goal, the Decision averred, "the only method" was for "the masses to liberate themselves." This meant that the Party leadership "at all levels" (presumably, however, only the levels below the Mao-dominated Central Committee) must dare boldly to "arouse the masses" -- making the "fullest use" of ta-tzu-pao and great debates "to argue matters out" -- "distinguish right from wrong," "criticize the wrong views, and expose all the ghosts and monsters."¹⁶³

¹⁶³In pointed reference to the work teams previously dispatched to universities and other institutions by the Party apparatus, the August 8 Decision (Article 7) warned against unnamed persons who had organized "counterattacks" against the masses of those who put up ta-tzu-pao, and had advanced such slogans as "opposition to the leaders of a unit or a work team means opposition to the Central Committee of the Party . . . means counterrevolution." It deplored the fact that "a number of persons who suffer from serious ideological errors" (especially some of the anti-Party rightists) were taking advantage of inevitable mistakes and shortcomings in the mass movement to "spread rumors," agitate, and brand some of the masses as "counter-revolutionaries."

To give practical leadership to the struggle (which, because of the ingrained "four olds," would take "a very, very long time"), the Decision of August 8 specified that "cultural revolutionary groups, committees, and congresses," already emerging, be permanently established in educational institutions, governmental organs, "factories, mines, other enterprises, urban districts, and villages." These leading groups, themselves subject to higher Party authority, were to be elected in "a system of general elections like that of the Paris Commune," their members chosen from lists of nominees submitted by the "revolutionary masses," who could also criticize and recall them.

Despite the militant general exhortation to carry out "daring" mass criticism and the ideological struggle, the document of August 8 exhibited a certain moderation and balance less evident in subsequent Maoist statements and behavior. It assumed that "the great majority of cadres" were "good or comparatively good" and ordered that "strictest care" be taken to distinguish errant comrades (who should be exposed and persuaded to reform) from "the handful" of anti-Party rightists in power. The latter, after being repudiated and overthrown, were still to "be given a chance to turn over a new leaf." In the contention of views inevitable in mass debates, in which nonantagonistic contradictions "among the people" would find expression, reason and persuasion should be emphasized, rather than coercion and force; the minority was to be allowed to argue its case and reserve its views, and care was to be exercised to prevent a situation of the masses' struggling among themselves rather than against erring or counterrevolutionary elements. The Party leadership was urged to

discover, strengthen, and rely on the "revolutionary left," isolate the "reactionary rightists," and strive to "win over the middle and unite with the great majority." But, even so, it was expected that unity with 95 per cent of the cadres and masses would only be achieved "by the end of the movement."¹⁶⁴

Other evidence of moderation included the stipulations that press criticism of individuals be cleared with higher Party organs; that "patriotic" and productive scientific and technical personnel be helped "gradually" to transform their ideological viewpoint and work style; that the armed forces be allowed to carry out the Cultural Revolution independently (under the CCP's Military Affairs Commission); and that the campaign "to revolutionize people's ideology" not stand in the way of developing economic production ("take hold of the revolution and stimulate production"). These concessions to reality may have been exacted by the more pragmatic Party leaders as a price for their acquiescence in the broader decisions. They may have been the bait with which the Maoists sought to trap suspected opponents. Or, they may have been deliberately inserted by a militant but still rational Mao as a means either of ensuring the ultimate success of the Cultural Revolution or of facilitating a "fall-back" position in times of tactical retreat (the "zigzags" of the "revolutionary road").

¹⁶⁴ It is interesting to recall that regime spokesmen had previously used the figure of 95 per cent as descriptive of that proportion of the population already united in loyalty and devotion to the socialist revolution. See, for example, Chou En-lai's speech to the National People's Congress in December 1964, which appeared in Peking Review, No. 1, January 1, 1965.

The final "Communiqué" of the Eleventh Plenum, adopted on August 12, 1966, was in some ways a more radical document, reflecting the decisive triumph that Mao and his supporters scored at the session.¹⁶⁵ One conspicuous feature was its emphatic praise of Mao, which suggested ever stronger efforts to foster unquestioning belief in his omniscient leadership:

Comrade Mao Tse-tung is the greatest Marxist-Leninist of our era. Comrade Mao Tse-tung

¹⁶⁵It is possible that Mao succeeded only in the last few days of the Plenum in securing a complete victory and crushing all effective resistance within the Central Committee to his radical cultural revolutionary program, with its stress on the Mao cult. Such an hypothesis would help explain an otherwise mysterious incident involving Mao which occurred on August 10-11, shortly after approval of the sixteen-point "Decision" with its minimal concessions to moderation. On the evening of August 10, Mao made his first public appearance in Peking in nearly nine months, reportedly greeting a crowd of devotees at "the place of the Party Central." The first edition of Jen-min Jih-pao on the following day carried news of the event, recording a few innocuous words by Mao (such as "Comrades, How Are You?") but emphasizing the god-like effect of his presence on the people ("Come quickly and touch the hand that has just been shaken by Chairman Mao"). Almost as soon as the edition made its appearance, it was suddenly and inexplicably withdrawn from circulation. The second edition, which was published that afternoon, did not contain the worshipful account of Mao's public appearance. The story did, however, appear in the August 12 Jen-min Jih-pao. One may speculate -- and no more -- that, in the interval, dissident Central Committee members had objected to the story (or certain aspects of it), perhaps from a broader basis of opposition to further Mao-ization of the Cultural Revolution, and had then been crushed by the Maoist juggernaut, which made the most of his mass appeal, demonstrated once again, and of his personal prestige among the "revolutionary" Peking students and teachers who now packed the plenary session.

has inherited, defended and developed Marxism-Leninism with genius, creatively and in an all-round way, and has raised it to a completely new stage. Mao Tse-tung's thought is Marxism-Leninism of the era in which imperialism is heading for total collapse and socialism is advancing to worldwide victory. It is the guiding principle for all the work of our Party and country.¹⁶⁶

The Communiqué stressed that the intensive study of Mao's works by all Party members and the entire nation in the Cultural Revolution was an event of "historic significance." A year later, an official reassessment of the Eleventh Plenum would conclude that its greatest historical contribution was to be found in the "scientific exposition" of the place of Mao's thought in the development of Marxism-Leninism, and the resulting consolidation of his "absolute authority."¹⁶⁷

POWER, POLICY, AND IDEOLOGY AT THE ELEVENTH PLENUM

The August plenum resulted in extensive changes in the top Party leadership. As later information (such as order of appearance at mass rallies) was to confirm, Lin Piao replaced Liu Shao-ch'i as second in command under Mao. Lin's was the only name other than Mao's to appear in the published documentation of the Plenum, and recent accounts

¹⁶⁶"Communiqué of the Eleventh Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China," Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1966.

¹⁶⁷See editorial entitled "A Great Milestone" in Jen-min Jih-pao, August 8, 1967.

have revealed that he was accorded the title of "deputy supreme commander" of the Party and called Mao's "closest comrade-in-arms."¹⁶⁸ According to Liu Shao-ch'i, who fell from second to eighth place in the (unofficial) rankings, the meeting elected a new Politburo Standing Committee.¹⁶⁹ Subsequent evidence suggests that the membership of the committee was enlarged from seven to ten or, possibly, eleven. After Chou En-lai, who retained third place in the leadership, T'ao Chu was spectacularly catapulted into the fourth position, followed by Ch'en Po-ta, Teng Hsiao-p'ing, K'ang Sheng, Liu Shao-ch'i, Chu Teh, Li Fu-ch'un, and, possibly, Ch'en Yün.

Available evidence, however, does not point to a classic power struggle as the main cause of these developments. The changes in the order of power and succession, significant as they were in the historical context of a

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. Red Guard ta-tzu-pao posted in Peking in the late fall of 1966 purported to give the text of a terse speech by Lin Piao at the Eleventh Plenum. In it Lin bluntly declared that Mao had chosen him to be his chief lieutenant and to implement his orders without compromise. However, Lin also indicated that he would retain some discretion in the implementation, saying that he would neither interfere with Mao on major matters nor bother him about minor ones.

¹⁶⁹ See his self-criticism of October 1966 (Mainichi, January 29, 1967). In an undated wallposter purporting to give Mao's speech to the closing session of the Plenum (on the afternoon of August 12), he noted that there had been a "readjustment" among the memberships of the Politburo, its Standing Committee, and the Secretariat.

theretofore extraordinary continuity, do not suggest the clash of organized factions or drastic purge of losers characteristic of the classic power struggle, in which considerations of policy and ideology are ruthlessly subordinated to the prime goal of seizing or protecting personal power. This is not to say, of course, that such concerns were absent, but they were not the dominant factor.¹⁷⁰

Nor did the August 12 Communiqué, which (in contrast with the earlier sixteen-point Decision) dealt with the whole range of China's domestic and foreign policy problems, give any hint that the Eleventh Plenum had been called primarily to rectify past policy errors. Indeed, on two issues that some analysts have considered the root causes of the Cultural Revolution -- economic policy and Vietnam strategy -- the Mao-dominated Plenum voiced specific approval of past decisions, promised no sweeping changes,

¹⁷⁰It will be recalled that the August 8 Decision had called for the complete discrediting and overthrow of "those within the Party who are in authority and are taking the capitalist road," and at one point had termed this "the main target of the present movement." Moreover, Lin Biao, in his major speech, reportedly promised that the Plenum would "dismiss erring leaders." Liu, in his October confession, revealed that during the second half of the plenary session his errors had been discussed and he had submitted to discipline.

It should also be noted, however, that the Eleventh Plenum placed emphasis on ideological reformation ("treat the illness in order to save the patient"; "unity, criticism, unity") and that the critical leaders were not actually dismissed, although some were in effect demoted and the inner circle of top officials was enlarged to include more militant Maoists.

and gave no indication of having had to overcome disagreement. Thus, the Communiqué went beyond perfunctory general approval to applaud specifically the successful implementation of "the policy of readjustment, consolidation, filling out, and raising of standards" adopted after the collapse of the Leap Forward, and it also put the plenary session on record as agreeing "fully" with "all the measures already taken and all actions to be taken" in support of the Communist effort in Vietnam.

It would seem, therefore, that the division within the leadership which had led to the calling of the Eleventh Plenum was due to something much more profound and immediate than substantive policy differences. Though such differences no doubt existed, they were not the primary force that precipitated and accelerated the crisis.

Rather, at the heart of the crisis which the Eleventh Plenum had been called to resolve was the conflict over ideology and basic orientation -- or, as it had come to be more narrowly focused, over the scope, implementation, and leadership of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. From the Maoist point of view, until these issues were resolved -- thereby permitting the total indoctrination, purification, and mobilization of Chinese society -- questions of foreign and domestic policy would remain of secondary importance, if not largely irrelevant. So, too, the issue of who should rule and succeed Mao was, in the first instance, a problem of ideological attitudes and behavioral orientation. This was borne out by the statements of Lin Biao, the new heir apparent (whose elevation may be ascribed primarily to his diligent and effective espousal of the Maoist vision), at the plenary session of

August 1966: In calling for organizational changes in the Party leadership, Lin defined the criteria for dismissal or promotion as one's attitude toward the thought of Mao, one's cooperation with ideological work and, in particular, the Cultural Revolution, and one's possession or lack of "revolutionary zeal."

In the first phase of the Cultural Revolution, the regular Party apparatus under Liu Shao-ch'i and Teng Hsiao-p'ing had failed the test of leadership. At the Eleventh Plenum the increasingly utopian aspirations and fundamentalist requirements of the mission, as defined by Mao, were further clarified and the task of accomplishing it was transferred to other hands. In the months following, however, the new leadership of Mao, Lin, Chou, and the "cultural revolutionary groups" -- backed (somewhat uncertainly) by the PLA, prodded by Chiang Ch'ing, and served by the rambunctious and destructive Red Guards -- was to prove no more successful than its predecessors at coping with the inner ambiguities and contradictions, resolving the deepening political crisis, and effecting the ideological transformation of China so insistently and unrealistically demanded by Mao.

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| 10. ABSTRACT An analysis of the sequence of events that culminated in Communist China's Great Cultural Revolution and the implications of the present upheaval for Chinese domestic and foreign policy. Hypotheses have tended to focus on one or a combination of three elements: power, policy, and ideology. There is unquestionably a close interaction among these three elements; however, the chronology of events suggests that the Great Cultural Revolution may be viewed as an attempt by Mao to push China toward new and unprecedented heights of faith and fervor. Mao's increasingly utopian aspirations and fundamentalist concepts of the revolutionary mission were manifest in the 1966 reorganization of leadership. Instability seems destined to continue so long as Mao and those designated by the Cultural Revolution to succeed him dominate the scene. Mere changes in leadership or alterations of particular domestic and foreign policies will not suffice to realize their revolutionary goals, which aim at a fundamental transformation of Chinese society and ideology. Disorder is likely to increase if those in opposition are ever able to join forces for a counter-attack. | | 11. KEY WORDS China Communism Foreign policy Economics--foreign Politics Government Policy analysis Asia | |