

THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION IN CHINA:

LESSONS FROM CLASS STRUGGLE UNDER SOCIALISM

By the Committee for a Proletarian Party

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SECTION I:

Class Struggle Under Socialism

The defeat of the Marxist-Leninists in the People's Republic of China and the consolidation of political power by a new state bourgeoisie represents a tremendous setback for the international communist movement. The ascendancy of the Liu Shao-chi faction within the Chinese Communist Party has been part of a general trend of rising revisionism which had already turned the USSR and the People's Democracies of Eastern Europe onto the capitalist road.

The rise of revisionism has coincided with the continuing strength and staying power of the world imperialist system coming out of the redivision of the world effected by World War II. During this period of relative capitalist stabilization, the principal movements against the imperialist system were the national liberation struggles in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. The People's Republic of China represented the first and most significant victory achieved by these revolutionary national movements, and this helps to explain China's rise as a new center of world revolution during the decline and disintegration of the socialist camp.

Although the struggle of the Chinese Marxist-Leninists eventually suffered defeat, the example they set provides much of the platform, strategy, and tactics for ushering in a new and higher stage in the struggle for socialism. One of the basic reasons that they provided such an example was that they were really the first to genuinely comprehend the critical weaknesses of communism's ideological legacy and begin to strain at its limits. Hence, it is our belief that the revolutionaries who will be able to lead the struggle for socialism to a higher stage will be those who have inherited the legacy of Mao Tsetung and the revolutionary left in the Chinese Communist Party and attempted to deepen those lessons in their practice and sum up the roots of revisionism not only in the Chinese revolution but also in the experience of the international communist movement as a whole.

This paper represents a modest effort to begin to identify the nature of this new revolutionary legacy still in the formative stages of development. The historical focus for this effort is the critical period of the Cultural Revolution in China, and our specific purpose is to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the line that the Marxist-Leninists developed to wage class struggle under socialism and combat the rise of revisionism.

Socialism is a transitional society spanning a whole historical epoch in which intense and protracted class struggle determines whether the proletariat will be able to lead the advance towards communism or the bourgeoisie will effect a retrogression to capitalism. Initially, socialism is weaker than capitalism because of its embryonic or immature nature, and bears many of the birthmarks of bourgeois society. Only over time is it able to strengthen itself as the proletariat learns to hold state power and build a socialist economic base and superstructure. The victories of socialism are doubly difficult when the proletariat holds state power in isolated countries surrounded by the world imperialist system, which is able to exert tremendous ideological, political, and economic pressure on the young and undeveloped socialist societies. Added difficulties face poor and underdeveloped countries, such as China, which have experienced decades of imperialist exploitation and lack many of the material prerequisites for a stable socialist society.

Given such objective conditions, there is no room for complacency about the inevitability of the victory of socialism over capitalism. Such a victory is the result of resolute and persistent struggle on the part of the proletariat and its communist party, the consolidation and strengthening of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the continual revolutionization of all aspects of society. The strategic task of the whole socialist period, as stated by Marx, is to lead to "the abolition of class distinctions generally, to the abolition of all the relations of production on which they rest, to the abolition of all the social relations that correspond to these relations of production, to the revolutionizing of all the ideas that result from these social relations." 1

Socialist societies such as those in the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China have only just taken the beginning steps in accomplishing this strategic task. Even given their unquestionable successes, these countries faced a long and tortuous road in bringing this task to completion. Learning from their defeats gives us a more sober awareness of the length and difficulty of the road to be traversed and an ability to carry us that much further along that road when the next advance in socialism inevitably occurs.

By the late 1950's Mao Tsetung himself became increasingly aware of the length and difficulty of the socialist road. By 1956, the decisive turn towards socialist forms of ownership had been made, with the expropriation of the national capitalists and the collectivization of agriculture, but for Mao this turn did not signify that classes or class struggle ceased to exist. As early as 1957 Mao was already theoretically clear enough about the problem to make the following classic analysis of class struggle under socialism:

Class struggle is by no means over. The class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the class struggle between the various political forces, and the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the ideological field will still be protracted and tortuous and at times even very sharp. The proletariat seeks to transform the world according to its own world outlook, and so does the bourgeoisie. In this respect, the question of which will win out, socialism or capitalism, is not really settled yet.²

Mao understood, along with Marx before him, that the continuation of the revolutionary process under conditions of socialism demanded constant struggle to transform all of the basic levels of society -- the economic base, the social and political institutions, and the ideological superstructure. In his later years, Stalin had begun to lay out the theoretical framework for understanding the basis in socialism for the contradictions between the relations of production and the productive forces,³ but it was left essentially to Mao and the revolutionary left in the Chinese Communist Party to thoroughly explain the material basis for these contradictions, as well as the contradictions between the economic base as a whole and the superstructure of society.

Besides, Stalin was a prime mover in establishing the orthodox view of socialism which placed inordinate emphasis on the development of the productive forces and regarded this development by itself as decisive for revolutionizing the relations of production and the superstructure resting on these relations of production. By contrast, Mao constantly attempted to "put politics in command", encouraging the masses to grasp the key link of waging class

struggle. For Mao, the productive forces were liberated primarily by leading the masses to grasp revolution. Mao believed that in general, the level of development of the productive forces conditions the revolutionization of the relations of production, but the decisive component of the productive forces is the working people themselves, and the key link for-unleashing their creative energy is their political awareness and organization. When Marxism is grasped by the masses, it becomes a material force which can radically transform the objective conditions.

The revisionist theory of the all-importance of the productive forces, which was fully developed under Krushchev, denied this active, creative role for the politically conscious masses. It asserted that the productive forces are the most mobile, revolutionary component of the economic base and that the relations of production should passively tail after and conform to the given level of development of the productive forces. Moreover, this theory negated the relative independence of the superstructure from the economic base under socialism. What this meant was that it advanced a mechanical cause-and-effect concept of the relation between the superstructure and the economic base, and in effect denied that the political institutions of the superstructure could function as the "leading" element in socialist society in the sense of being the lever for transforming all other aspects, including the productive forces.

This revisionist theory belittled the need for the waging of class struggle to restrict the sphere of operation of bourgeois right in the relations of production. Bourgeois right denotes the remaining capitalist features of the relations of production; these capitalist features, which can only be eradicated over a long period of time, supply the material foundation for the creation and rise of new bourgeois elements under socialism. As Lenin stated, "On the ground cleared of one bourgeois generation, new generations continually appear in history, as long as the ground gives rise to them, and it does give rise to any number of bourgeois." ⁴ What we owe Mao and the revolutionary left in the CPC is a clarification of the nature of bourgeois right as this "ground" for new bourgeois generations, and also the policies necessary to restrict and eliminate step-by-step these remaining capitalist features.

Bourgeois Right in the Relations of Production

It took some time for-Mao and the other Chinese Marxist-Leninists to be able to understand the problem of bourgeois right fully enough in order to pose a correct solution to it. Marxist theory on bourgeois right has undergone a marked development since the time Marx first wrote about it, and this development has been based primarily on the concrete practice of waging class struggle in socialist societies like the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. In his Critique of the Gotha Programme Marx elaborated the original basis for understanding the nature of bourgeois right:

What we have to deal with here is a communist society, not as it has developed on its own foundations, but, on the contrary, just as it emerges from capitalist society; which is thus in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it emerges... Here obviously the same principle prevails as that which regulates the exchange of commodities, as far as this is exchange of equal values. ... The right of the producers is proportional to the labour they supply; the

equality consists in the fact that measurement is made with an equal standard, labour... But one man is superior to another physically or mentally and so supplies more labour in the same time, or can work for a longer time; and labour, to serve as a measure, must be defined by its duration or intensity, otherwise it ceases to be a standard of measurement. This equal right is an unequal right for unequal labour. It recognizes no class differences, because everyone is only a worker like everyone else; but it tacitly recognizes unequal individual endowment and thus productive capacity of the worker as natural privileges. It is, therefore, a right of inequality; in its content, like every right. ⁵

Marx's remarks focus on the forms of distribution, which constitute only one aspect of the relations of production. Generally, the relations of production can be analyzed into three basic components: 1) the forms of ownership of the means of production, 2) the division of labor or mutual relations among producers, which are dependent on the forms of ownership, and 3) the forms of distribution, which are dependent for the most part on the other two components.

In China, the most progress was accomplished in eliminating bourgeois right in the forms of ownership. However, even in this sphere bourgeois right still exerted itself insofar as the People's Republic fell short of raising all the basic means of production to the level of the common property of the whole of society. For one thing, private ownership still partially existed in industry, agriculture, and commerce.

In agriculture, the property structure was based on more primitive or lower-level forms of socialist ownership. There was socialist collective ownership but not yet socialist ownership by the whole people, as in China's industry. And even the socialist collective ownership was split up into three different levels -- the communes, the brigades and the teams. Although the property structure may have varied some from commune to commune, the lowest level, the team, was generally regarded as the basic accounting unit and the owner of the lion's share of the fixed assets.

The property structure in agriculture was, hence, still clearly "stamped with the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it emerge(d)". Even though nominally collective, the ownership system in China's countryside was still relatively immature and allowed a considerable sphere to exist for the operation of commodity production and the influence of the law of value. The primitive property structure in agriculture was a reflection of, and a contributor to, the Great Differences between town and country, worker and peasant in Chinese society. These basic cleavages or inequalities represented the big birthmarks or inheritances from the long history of class societies. As long as they existed, classes and class struggle would not cease to exist, and the consequent separation of the state from society could not be abolished.

Despite some remarkable advances in the collectivization of Chinese agriculture, which reached their highwater mark with the movement of the People's Communes in 1958-59; the institution of the three-level form of collective ownership with the team as its foundation signified a retreat to a position which could not decisively tip the balance in favor of socialism. The retreat that the Marxist-Leninists were forced to make in the early 1960's during the

period of retrenchment after the Great Leap Forward turned out to be more than temporary. Although the Cultural Revolution made great leaps in radicalizing many areas of Chinese society, it never mounted a direct challenge to the three level property structure in agriculture. The policies of Liu Shao-chi continued to hold sway in agriculture without Liu, and bourgeois right remained deeply imbedded in the agrarian relations of production. The vulnerability of the socialist infrastructure in the Chinese countryside was not to bode well for the ability of the Marxist-Leninists to cap the Cultural Revolution with success.

In contrast to the situation in agriculture, much of the industry in China had already been raised to the level of ownership by the whole people. The crucial goal for the revolutionary left was to now ensure that the working class not only held title to the industrial means of production through the vehicle of the state, but that it also directly controlled these means of production within the country's enterprises. This meant that the Marxist-Leninists had to focus their sites on revolutionizing the division of labor, and the most important division of all, of course -- that between mental and manual labor. Along with the contradictions between town and country and worker and peasant, the division between mental and manual labor was one of the three Great Differences that the Chinese revolutionaries recognized they had to overcome to be able to eventually move on to communism.

This division between mental and manual labor does not just imply that there are differences between those who use their hands and those who use their heads, but it goes to the heart of determining who really exercises effective power, control, and authority in the industrial enterprises. Without corresponding changes in the power, control, and authority in the enterprises, the changes in the ownership structure would remain relatively formal or juridical, and therefore more vulnerable to being overturned. As Chang Chun-chiao expressed this idea, "Whether the ideological and political line is correct or incorrect, and which class holds the leadership, decides which class owns those factories in actual fact." ⁶

The charter which inspired the struggle of the Chinese Marxist-Leninists in attempting to revolutionize the division of labor in China's factories was developed by Mao Tsetung as early as 1960, basing himself on the experience of the Great Leap Forward. Called the "Anshan Constitution", after the model developed by the workers at the Anshan metallurgical combine, this charter stressed three major policies: 1) put politics in command in the factories, 2) allow participation of workers in management, and 3) demand that cadre spend some time in manual labor. ⁷ These were the policies that were intended to tip the balance in favor of the Marxists and the working class in the management of the industrial enterprises, and they became the focus of struggle throughout the period of the Cultural Revolution.

The ownership of the means of production lays the definitive foundation for a socialist society and plays a leading role historically in relation to the other aspects of the relations of production, the division of labor and forms of distribution. But given the particular stage of development of a socialist society, the other two aspects can play the leading role in revolutionizing the relations of production as a whole. In China's industry, transforming the division of labor played such a decisive role during the period of the Cultural Revolution. The transformation of the division of labor, which reflected real power relations among classes, was the key task

which, in turn, determined the development of the third component of the relations of production, the forms of distribution.

While bourgeois right had supposedly "in the main" been done away with in the forms of property ownership, but still seriously influenced the mutual relations or division of labor among the producers, it continued to play the dominant role in the forms of distribution. This third component of the relations of production is the slowest to change and requires a protracted struggle to transform. As Mao explained, "Our country at present practices a commodity system, the wage system is unequal too, as in the eight-grade wage scale, and so forth. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat such things can only be restricted." 8

To the extent that the revolutionization of the property structure and the division of labor gets bogged down or is sabotaged, bourgeois right becomes more and more strengthened in determining how the social wealth is distributed. The effect of the dominance of bourgeois right can be seen clearly in the Three Great Differences, between town and country, worker and peasant, mental and manual labor. Here, we are really talking about overcoming the material basis for fundamental class distinctions. It is one of the strategic tasks of Marxist-Leninists to fight to narrow the wide pay differentials and differentials in the basic standards of living between the laboring masses on the one hand, and the managers, state functionaries, Party members, and the intelligentsia generally, on the other hand.

As well, in China especially, where the great majority of the population are still peasants and live in the countryside, overcoming the differences between peasant and worker, and countryside and town is critical for advancing the socialist revolution. The very political power exercised by the dictatorship of the proletariat in such a country is based on the worker-peasant alliance. When this alliance becomes severed, the dictatorship of the proletariat is bound to fall. To strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat and continue the advance towards communism, the countryside has to be raised to the level of the towns, not just in terms of the income paid to peasants and to workers, but more generally in terms of the basic standards of living, which encompass the access to the social, cultural, political, and ideological resources of the society.

In their understanding of the nature and functioning of bourgeois right under conditions of socialism, Mao and the other Chinese Marxist-Leninists were able to progress significantly beyond the level of theoretical understanding of both Marx and Lenin, who were not in a position to conclusively sum up the historical struggle to build socialism and recognize the material basis for the inevitable rise of new bourgeois elements. What the Chinese Marxist-Leninists learned was that even after socialist forms of ownership have in the main been achieved, a strong material foundation for the engendering of a new state or bureaucratic bourgeoisie still exists and reproduces itself as bourgeois right in all three components of the relations of production.

The two-line struggle in the Chinese Communist Party which culminated in the division into a proletarian headquarters and a bourgeois headquarters during the Cultural Revolution ultimately can be traced to the basic policy on whether to restrict and overcome bourgeois right in the economic base or oppose

restriction and allow it to expand. The Liu Shao-chi grouping emerged as a clear bourgeois headquarters which represented the most powerful patrons of the policy which sought to oppose restriction of bourgeois right. Mao and others coalesced as a proletarian headquarters which sought to restrict bourgeois right and continue the revolutionization of the relations of production.

Within the proletarian headquarters an ultra-left trend arose, with significant influence, which sabotaged restriction of bourgeois right by advocating its rapid and artificial elimination. As is usually the case, this ultra-left trend only served to strengthen the hand of the revisionists who opposed restriction. Often, the bourgeois headquarters itself would attempt to inflame this ultra-leftism to sow confusion, discredit the genuine left, and serve its own reactionary purposes.

For a number of reasons, the initiatives of the revolutionary left to transform the relations of production during the period of the Cultural Revolution bore little lasting fruit. As mentioned, the Marxist-Leninists did not really challenge the agricultural property structure established by Liu's policies in the early 1960's. In addition, although masses of workers succeeded in taking power in their enterprises and struggled to implement the Anshan Constitution, historically durable changes in the division of labor were not achieved. These setbacks in carrying through the Cultural Revolution at the level of the economic base were integrally related to the kind of struggles waged in the political superstructure.

The Struggle to Integrate the State Apparatus with Society

The fundamental differences on the general line for revolutionizing the economic base had to inevitably find their reflection in opposed programmes for the political superstructure. The most important components of the political superstructure are the Communist Party itself and the state form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Although the Cultural Revolution, as its name would suggest, began initially with an attack on bourgeois ideology and the educational and cultural institutions which foster it, the essence of this revolution was political; and the heart of the class struggle between the proletariat and bourgeoisie had to center on the question of political power --- the effective wielding of state power by the proletariat and the leadership of Marxists in the Communist Party.

The Liu-Shao-chi grouping - as Liu's own book, How To Be a Good Communist, revealed - regarded the Party as basically another Confucian elite which would rule benevolently in the name of the proletariat. Mao Tsetung's proletarian headquarters in the CPC recognized that one of the most fundamental guarantees for preventing the Party from turning revisionist was the continuous practice of the mass line, which would allow the masses themselves to supervise the Party and strengthen the Party as the leading core or most advanced detachment of the proletariat. The ultra-left trend advocated anarchist spontaneism which pitted the masses against the Party and promoted a form of state power, the commune, which downplayed the necessity for the leading role of a Communist Party and weakened the ability of the dictatorship of the proletariat to combat counter-revolution.

The relative separation of the political superstructure from society as a whole is an inherent feature of socialism as a transitional, class society.

Under socialism there are still contradictions between the state and society as a result of, and in conjunction with, bourgeois right in the economic base. Thus, state ownership of the means of production does not necessarily entail real ownership and control by the working class as a whole over the means of production. Even under socialism, the working class initially is an owner of the means of production only through the intermediary of the state. Nationalization, or the institution of "state" property, is a crucial first step in consolidating a socialist regime, but it is really only the beginning of a long process in which the working class struggles to become the uncontested direct appropriators of the means of production.

Although it may sound paradoxical, it is nonetheless true that "state" property no more automatically transcends the horizons of bourgeois property than the socialist principle of remuneration "to each according to his work" transcends the inequalities of bourgeois right in the economic base. As Lenin remarked, we are still dealing for a time with a "bourgeois state without the bourgeoisie" and thus we are left no grounds for complacency about the continuing revolutionary character of the dictatorship of the proletariat. What is decisive over the long run is the relation of the working class to the levers of state power. Nationalization of the commanding heights of the economy is no guarantee that the working class will not remain divorced on the whole from the state apparatus, and that a form of "state" socialism will not become consolidated and display an inevitable tendency towards bureaucratic deformation. This degeneration of the dictatorship of the proletariat sets the stage for the eventual retrogression to a form of state capitalism.

Part of the solution to this historical problem is to constantly struggle to make the working class as a whole, and not just its vanguard, the real masters of the state. To the extent that the vanguard rules primarily through the leadership of the Communist Party, without at the same time real power being wielded by the masses from below, the political superstructure is still not altogether sound and can be more easily usurped by a new state bourgeoisie. It is unavoidable that the headquarters of any newly engendered bourgeoisie under conditions of socialism will originate in the state apparatus, because of the pre-eminence of "state" property.

Of course, the dominance of "state" property corresponds with the deterministic intervention of a central plan in the socialist economy. There was little struggle by the Chinese Marxist-Leninists during the Cultural Revolution to change the relatively decentralized form of the planning apparatus. Beginning in 1957 China had decentralized much of its planning authority to provincial bureaus in order to help cut down the growth of a highly centralized, bureaucratic state administration. The Marxist-Leninists did not challenge this decentralization, but instead focussed their attack on Liu Shao-chi's proposed system of national trusts, which would have curtailed the power of the provincial planning bureaus. The programme of the revolutionary left was not to re-integrate the provincial bureaus with the old central ministries, but to emphasize the content of the planning structure. This content involved a proletarian ideological and political line being in command in making planning decisions and the mobilization of the direct input of the masses of working people into the planning at the factory level, the provincial level, and lastly the national level.

The success of the revolutionary left in transforming the content of economic planning was tied, of course, to their success in radically reforming

the state apparatus in its entirety. But during the Cultural Revolution the Marxist-Leninists in China still did not possess a great deal of clarity on how exactly the state should be integrated with society. Ultra-democratic forms like the Shanghai Commune were allowed to emerge early in the revolutionary struggle before the principle of the centralization of political authority was reasserted by Mao and others in the Proletarian Headquarters. Although the three-in-one revolutionary committees were instituted as the preferred mass form for the reform of the state apparatus, the leadership of these committees became a great focus of struggle. Eventually, the People's Liberation Army became the hegemonic force within the committees, and this political fact eliminated, for all intents and purposes, the ability of the committees to embody the all-around revolutionary mobilization of the masses from below.

This paper undertakes a critical examination of many of the weaknesses of the Cultural Revolution in order to explain what part these weaknesses played in the eventual defeat of the Marxist-Leninists in China. But this critical examination is not meant to detract from our general evaluation which ranks the positive accomplishments of the Cultural Revolution as unquestionably its main aspect. The Cultural Revolution should be upheld by all proletarian revolutionaries as an outstanding and an historically innovative example of Marxist Leninists struggling together with the masses to develop the forms and the methods to continue the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The successes achieved and the many "socialist new things" created by the Cultural Revolution represent unparalleled advances for the whole international communist movement. In some significant respects the Cultural Revolution may not have been clear enough about its direction or have gone far enough in its initiatives, but it nonetheless surpassed any prior advances accomplished by the working class in its long and tortuous struggle for socialism.

Before focussing our attention on the class battles concentrated in the Cultural Revolution, we should briefly review the stages of the Chinese revolution since the proletariat seized power in 1949 in order to lay the basis for better understanding the fundamental issues involved and the historical context surrounding this momentous Revolution under conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Transition to Socialism in the People's Republic of China: (1949 - 1957)

In October, 1949 the People's Republic of China was formally established. With the remainder of the Kuomintang's army taking refuge on Taiwan, the main task of the Chinese Communist Party was to convert military victory into political and economic consolidation of the People's Democratic Dictatorship.

Economic recovery was of critical importance. Production had come to a virtual standstill, and food was scarce in the cities. Government had not functioned effectively for about twenty years. The objective difficulties that the Chinese people faced were formidable: the industrial base of China in 1949 was about half that of the Soviet Union in 1918, whereas the Chinese population was over four times as large as the 1918 Soviet population.

During this period of economic recovery and consolidation of the basic organs of political power, the CPC did not advocate transforming the relations of production of New Democracy. First on the agenda in the cities was the clearing out of counter-revolutionaries and the nationalization of the large financial

and industrial holdings of the bureaucrat capitalists. In the countryside, the property of the landlords was confiscated, and the peasants were mobilized to carry out land reform.

The Chinese communists encountered immediate problems in the urban areas. The CPC had very few cadre with significant experience in the administration of large scale industry. The branches of the Party operating in the occupied areas where most of the country's industry was concentrated had been relatively small and been forced to function underground. Hence, the CPC was obliged, as had been the Bolsheviks, to rely on whatever technical and administrative experts from the old regime were willing to cooperate with the People's Republic. In addition, it had to solicit the cooperation of certain patriotic sectors of the national bourgeoisie and the bourgeois intelligentsia in order to take advantage of their cultural, scientific, and business expertise.

As well as dealing with these internal contradictions, the Chinese revolution had to continue waging sharp struggles against foreign imperialism. The Kuomintang army on Taiwan posed a constant menace of invasion and U.S. imperialism helped the Kuomintang organize a blockade of the mainland. Starting in 1950 the Chinese people clashed directly with the imperialist powers in the Korean War.

Faced with this external pressure from the imperialist powers and its own internal difficulties, the People's Republic benefitted greatly from the socialist aid of the Soviet Union. Many Soviet economic and industrial advisors were sent to China, and they provided a powerful counterweight to the CPC's reliance on Chinese bourgeois and petit-bourgeois forces. With Soviet financial assistance, the Chinese undertook the rebuilding of their devastated economy. In these early years, the material foundations were being laid for beginning the construction of a socialist society.

It was in this historical context of the early years of the People's Republic that the first major battle within the Chinese Communist Party occurred on the subject of the transition to socialism. The struggle centered on the question of whether there would be a protracted period of the consolidation of New Democracy or the immediate mounting of the offensive to begin the transition to socialism. Mao Tsetung favored moving rapidly into the transition to socialism, while Liu Shao-chi represented the wing of the party which advocated prolonging the period of the politics and economics of New Democracy. Prolonging New Democracy would have tended to strengthen the class position of the rich peasants in the countryside and the national capitalists in the cities.

Mao argued that halting at the stage of New Democracy would encourage capitalist tendencies in the countryside and cities, weaken the political hegemony of the proletariat, and undermine the worker-peasant alliance on which the political power of the People's Democratic Dictatorship rested. The transition to socialism had to be launched, or a retrograde motion back to capitalism would be the inevitable result. Although the struggle continued in the party for a few years, Mao eventually won over a decisive majority of the central committee.

By 1952, the period of New Democracy, strictly speaking, had come to an end. Henceforth, the rich peasants and the national bourgeoisie became targets of the Chinese socialist revolution. By 1953 the victory of Mao's line culminated in the formal adoption by the party of the "General Line for the Transition Period", and the main point of struggle shifted to an evaluation of the pace of development of transition and the length of its duration. Liu Shao-chi constantly pointed out that the transition would cover a fairly long period of time and

that although the strategic objective was now to liquidate the national capitalists and the basis for individual peasant economy, completion of this objective would take many years. Mao envisioned a considerably shorter period for the socialist transformation of ownership in industry, agriculture, and handicrafts, and the broad masses of the working class and the poor and landless peasants took up Mao's call for a rapid transition to socialism.

In the early 1950's a third major grouping began to emerge more closely associated with the Soviet model of socialist construction than the groupings around either Mao or Liu. This wing of the party was led by Kao Kang, secretary of the party bureau of Northeast China. Manchuria, China's greatest industrial center, was part of the Northeast region. In this province Kao patterned economic development strictly on the model of the Soviet Union. 80% of the Soviet aid and 40% of its experts went to Manchuria to help build up China's heavy industry.⁹ And what was established in Manchuria was heralded by Kao and his supporters as the example for the rest of the country to follow.

With regard to the question of power or decision-making within its industrial enterprises, Manchuria adopted the Soviet model of one-man management. This meant that real power rested in the hands of the factory manager, who arrived at his decisions customarily after consultation with a panel of technical personnel. The rank and file workers had no genuine voice in this top-down structure of authority. Besides being deprived of any responsibility for how the factory was run, the workers were also subjected to a whole system of rewards and punishments, in the form of piecework, bonuses, and material incentives. Moreover, the Communist Party, the representative of the working class' political interests, tended to be reduced within this framework to more or less an advisory body to the factory manager.

By 1952 Kao and his grouping began to rise rapidly in the party. Already a vice-chairman of the Military Affairs Committee under Mao and chairman of the Sino-Soviet Friendship Association, Kao in that year was called to the center and appointed chairman of the new State Planning Commission. At this time the Planning Commission was equal in status to the State Council, and Kao potentially wielded as much power as the Premier, Chou En-lai.¹⁰ By 1951 Kao had already succeeded in instituting a vertically integrated planning system in the Northeast faithfully copied from the Soviet experience. This was the blueprint for a national planning system which was to be implemented by 1953. Thus, Kao played a central role in formulating China's first Five-year plan, which established fairly rigid guidelines for China's economic development.

Other key members of Kao's grouping included his friend Jao Shou-shih, party head of the East China region. Hence, Kao could count on powerful support from two out of the six administrative regions of the country, the East and the Northeast. The rivals of Kao and Jao in the party began to accuse them of building "independent kingdoms". At the center Kao apparently was able to build ties with the Minister of Defense, Peng Teh-huai.¹¹ Peng was a champion of the Soviet model of a modern professional army based on the most advanced military science and techniques, conscription and a complex system of ranks, orders, and decorations. Under such a system, the role of the political commissar declined in importance. As happened with Kao's proposals for enterprise management and national economic planning, politics was no longer in command in Peng's professional Soviet-style army.

The growing power of Kao's grouping in the party tended to pit it against Liu and his supporters even though on some points of policy, such as the rich-peasant line, the two wings shared similar views. Unlike Liu, Kao had built up

his power in the Red base areas and had close working relations with the Soviet Union. In 1953 the CPC Politburo instituted a policy of "collective party leadership" at all levels, and this reform seemed directed at Kao's grouping, which had warm relations with Stalin before his death. ¹²

By early 1953 the Kao grouping was being accused of splitting the party by trying to form its own headquarters and take over supreme power in the party and state. The leading members of the group were arrested, and the purge of their supporters extended even into the People's Liberation Army. Peng Teh-huai apparently did a self-criticism and was not demoted. ¹³

It was not until March 1955 that the public announcement of these purges was made. Although the issues of this major line struggle within the party were never made entirely clear, it is apparent that the struggle reflected serious differences between the Chinese leadership and the leadership of the Soviet party on the policies governing the transition period. On the surface, one of the key points in the struggle involved strengthening the leading role of the party. There was an implicit criticism of the cult of the individual in instituting collective party leadership. The six regional party bureaus which apparently allowed Kao and Jao to build up independent kingdoms were abolished. ¹⁴ And at the same time as the purge of Kao and Jao, a campaign was begun against one-man management, although the attendant system of material rewards and punishments to enforce "labor discipline" was left unchanged. By the Eighth Congress in 1956 this system of one-man management had been modified to become factory-manager responsibility "under the collective leadership of the factory Party committee."

Although the Liu grouping came out objectively on the side of strengthening party leadership in the struggle with Kao Kang, the policies that it was advocating the party should pursue were relatively conservative. During the transition period, from roughly 1952-3 to 1956-7, Liu argued against any rapid or aggressive socialist transformation of agriculture, industry, and handicrafts. In the countryside, this line put Liu on the side of the rich and well-to-do middle peasants, while Mao's policies represented the class interests of the poor and landless peasants, who comprised 70% of the rural population. The poor and landless peasants supported the official Party line to form producer cooperatives, and in numerous cases the formation of these cooperatives preceded party directives.

Under Mao's leadership, the CPC moved to develop collectivization of agriculture immediately upon the completion of land reform, which had distributed the expropriated land of the landlords to the peasantry. Mao maintained that unless collectivization was initiated, a rich peasant economy would flourish on the basis of individualized land holdings as it had in the Soviet Union during the NEP period. The most rudimentary form of producer cooperative was the ad hoc mutual aid team which pooled the labor of a small number of peasant households during harvest time. These units evolved into permanent teams which pooled labor on a year-round basis.

The next major stage in collectivization was the formation of Agricultural Producer Cooperatives (APC's) of the less advanced type. These collective units usually comprised between 30 and 50 households, frequently corresponding to a small village, and pooled most machinery, draught animals, and land holdings. The annual net product was distributed among the households based on the labor of each and the percentage of private holdings they had originally collectivized. ¹⁵ Through the party apparatus, Liu Shao-chi tried to implement a go-slow approach to advancing to the stage of APC's. He tended to emphasize the need for

mechanization to accompany and lay the basis for forming cooperatives. Arbitrary taxes were levied on the cooperatives; and many, once formed, were dismantled by the state bureaucracy.

Despite the opposition of Liu's grouping, by 1954 the mass movement of the peasants to form cooperatives began to accelerate. The wealthy middle peasants, as well as the rich peasants and landlords, were excluded from the peasant associations. By the end of 1955 63% of peasant households were already in these first-stage APC's. ¹⁶ Mao provided a powerful stimulus to the movement for collectivization in the middle of 1955 when he gave his famous speech "On The Cooperative Transformation of Agriculture". With collectivization reaching its high tide, the opposition of the rich and middle peasants was effectively broken.

Once the wealthy middle peasants were brought to heel, the drive to advance to the higher stage cooperative, similar in structure to the Soviet collective farm, was quickly begun. This Agricultural Producers Cooperative of a more advanced type, which embodied more strictly socialist forms of ownership, distributed collective income solely on the basis of labor contributions, not on any previous land holdings, and its size averaged 200 - 300 households. By 1957 93% of all previously existing mutual aid teams and lower-stage APC's had been amalgamated into the producer cooperatives of the more advanced type. The first major stage of the socialist transformation of agriculture had been, for the most part, successfully completed. ¹⁷

In the cities, the nationalization of industry and commerce followed a very similar pace of development. The main task of Mao and his supporters in the CPC was to mobilize the working class to prepare the conditions for the liquidation of the national capitalists. During the period of the Korean War, when U.S. imperialism was organizing an embargo against China, the national capitalists were given some freedom because of the priority for war production. But by 1952 Mao's grouping began to promote a move against this class. The San Fan (three-anti) and Wu Fan (five-anti) campaigns were initiated to strike hard at the national capitalists and their supporters within the Chinese Communist Party. These movements were very popular among the masses who took up the call to expose the national capitalists for bribery, tax evasion, theft of state property, cheating on government contracts, and stealing of economic information. The three-anti campaign was the first movement inspired by Mao which attempted to mobilize the masses from below to supervise and criticize Party members -- in this case, those cadre who were conspiring with the national capitalists and becoming bureaucratic and corrupt.

These early mass campaigns broke through the main resistance of the national capitalists and their political supporters like Liu Shao-chi, who voiced the concerns of this class that socialist restrictions on their activities would hamper production. By mid-1955, in conjunction with the accelerated transformations in China's agriculture, Mao called for the speeded-up nationalization of the middle capitalists. United front organizations were formed in industry and commerce for these businessmen, and they were encouraged to voluntarily choose to be bought out by the state. There was little overt opposition, and by 1957 practically all of China's industry was transformed into either government-owned firms or joint public-private enterprises. These capitalists could continue, if they wished, as salaried employees of the bought-out enterprises, and they were paid dividends on their former assets and interest on their money (this practice lasted until 1966).

With the additional grouping of artisans into cooperatives, socialist forms

of ownership had displaced private ownership in the overwhelming majority of China's industrial enterprises and handicrafts. Taking into account the radical changes in property relations in the countryside, it can be asserted that the major hurdle of instituting some basic socialist forms of ownership throughout the country had been, for the most part, overcome. This transformation of the capitalist property relations has customarily been linked with the decisive turn in carrying out the completion of the transition to socialism. Most of the major rudiments of an embryonic socialist society, such as socialist forms of ownership, rational planning of the national economy, and the basis for remuneration according to labor not property, had been established. As we shall see, completion of this first major task involved in constructing a socialist society occasioned an immediate struggle over the nature of the road forward.

FOOTNOTES

1. "The Class Struggles in France" in Marx and Engels Selected Works, Vol. 1, pg. 282 (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969).
2. "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People", Mao Tsetung, Selected Works, Vol. V, pg. 409 (Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1977).
3. Cf. J.V. Stalin, Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR (FLP, Peking, 1972).
4. "Report on the Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government", Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 27, pg. 300 (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1972).
5. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Vol. 3, pgs. 17-18.
6. "On Exercising All-Round Dictatorship Over the Bourgeoisie" in And Mao Makes Five, Ed. Raymond Lotta, pg. 214 (Banner Press, Chicago, 1978)
7. Charles Bettelheim, Cultural Revolution and Industrial Organization in China, pgs. 70-71 (Monthly Review Press, New York, 1974).
8. Chang Chun-chiao, Op. Cit., pg. 209.
9. Han Suyin, Wind in the Tower, pg. 49 (Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1976).
10. Bill Brugger, Contemporary China, pg. 92 (Barnes & Noble Books, New York, 1977).
11. Suyin, pg. 62-63.
12. Brugger, pg. 101.
13. Suyin, pg. pgs. 63-65.
14. Brugger, pgs. 101-102.
15. Alexander Eckstein, China's Economic Revolution, pg. 70 (Cambridge University Press, London, 1977).
16. Ibid., pg. 71.
17. Ibid., pg. 70-71.

SECTION II:

The Great Leap Forward and Retrenchment (1957 - 1962)

For some time, there had been considerable struggle within the Chinese Communist Party about the value of the Soviet model of socialist development. The purge of the leading cadre of the Kao Kang grouping was an early sign of this struggle. By the late 1950's China was already experiencing some of the effects of the Soviet-inspired First Five Year Plan. It was becoming increasingly clear to a growing number of cadre in the CPC that if China continued to uncritically follow the Soviet model, already-serious contradictions would become exacerbated.

Faced concretely with some of the fruits of the Soviet model as witnessed in China's own course of development, Mao joined with others in the CPC to reassess the legacy left by the international communist movement on the nature of the transition period and the character of class struggle under socialism itself. By 1956-7 Mao and others in the party began to put forward the ideological rudiments of an alternative path for constructing a socialist society. The more consistent Marxist-Leninist forces in the Chinese Party like Mao were faced with a complex situation. In the Soviet Union the Khrushchev revisionist clique had become dominant and posed a direct challenge to Marxist-Leninists throughout the international communist movement and the socialist camp. But, even before the rise of Khrushchev revisionism, Chinese Marxist-Leninists had been asking serious questions about the applicability of the Soviet model developed during Stalin's leadership of the CPSU. Moreover, the more conservative forces within the CPC, like the Kao grouping and the Liu Shao-chi grouping, seemed to rely a great deal ideologically on the historical precedent established by the Soviet Union.

This historical precedent provided powerful backing for the accepted, orthodox line on building socialism that was originally elaborated by the CPSU during Stalin's lifetime. This line inferred that there was no real need for class struggle between the working class and sectors of the intelligentsia; it concentrated investment in heavy industry to the detriment of light industry and agriculture, and exacted a "tribute" from the peasantry to underwrite such investment; it advocated that the dictatorship of the proletariat take the form of a highly centralized state apparatus; in the factories it left power in the hands of managers and not the workers, and attempted to motivate worker productivity primarily through material incentives.

In 1956, of course, it was no longer really a case of the Chinese being inspired by a Soviet model of socialist development, carried through by Stalin and other Marxist-Leninists in the CPSU, which posed serious problems for the Chinese comrades in trying to apply; it was now a clear case of the Soviet state and party being taken over by revisionists led by Stalin's former close colleague, Nikita Khrushchev. The differences with the CPC which had reflected contradictions in policies between the Soviet Union and China, both policies being meant to follow a Marxist-Leninist course and build socialism, were in the process of being transformed into a major contradiction between Marxism-Leninism and revisionism. This changed situation set the ideological backdrop for the eventual fracturing of the Chinese Communist Party into antagonistic factions after the Great Leap Forward.

With the purge of Kao Kang and his allies in 1954, the Liu Shao-chi grouping became the wing in the CPC whose policies most paralleled those of

the Soviet Union. But even in the late 1950's it was still not altogether clear-cut that the Liu grouping was pursuing a consistently revisionist course. The Liu grouping pursued its own independent course in relation to the concrete reality of the Chinese socialist revolution, and still paid some homage to the Soviet model of development inspired by Marxist-Leninists like Stalin as well as borrowing some of the revisionist innovations of the Khrushchev clique. The more consistently Marxist-Leninist wing in the CPC led by comrades like Mao had not yet drawn clear lines of demarcation with Khrushchev revisionism nor seriously undertaken a thorough reappraisal of Stalin's leadership in the international communist movement.

One of the first public signs of this reappraisal was a speech given by Mao within the party in April, 1956, which was published much later under the title "On the Ten Major Relationships". This speech pointed out that "particularly worthy of attention is the fact that in the Soviet Union certain defects and errors that occurred in the course of their building socialism have lately come to light." ¹ This speech seriously questioned the orthodox line on building socialism which was developed during Stalin's lifetime, and it did so from a number of different angles, e.g., the relation between heavy industry and the rest of the economy, between central and local political authority, between the party and the masses, and between right and wrong both in the party and in society.

This speech, which continued the direction provided by earlier efforts by Mao and others, such as the document "On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", was not yet firm and clear enough in its criticism of the direction taken by Khrushchev revisionism. As a result, the Liu Shao-chi grouping was given significant room to maneuver, especially since it was able to gain in strength at the expense of the purged leaders of the Kao Kang grouping. At the Eighth Congress in September, 1956, Liu gave the Political Report, which promoted the idea of the dying out of class struggle by asserting that the expropriated capitalists, the managers, and technical experts had been proletarianized and posed no real threat to the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialism. As he said, "in China, the question of which wins out, socialism or capitalism, is already solved." In addition, he objectively promoted a theory of the productive forces when he maintained that the principal contradiction in China was between "the advanced socialist system and the backward productive forces". Hence, Liu's line for building socialism based itself on the assumption that with the change in the forms of ownership from private to state or cooperative, the material basis for assuring the victory of socialism in the relations of production already existed. This line gravely under-estimated the strength of bourgeois right in the other two aspects of the relations of production, the division of labor and forms of distribution, and thus slackened the party's ability to continuously eradicate the basis for capitalist restoration.

At the Congress the Liu grouping was able to press home its advantage as well on the question of strengthening collective party leadership. Having wielded this weapon against Kao Kang, Liu now turned it on Mao himself and implicitly criticized the cult of the individual around the Chairman. As a result of his efforts, "Mao Tsetung Thought" was no longer linked with Marxism-Leninism as the guiding ideological line of the party. The New Party Constitution referred exclusively to "Marxism-Leninism", not "Marxism-Leninism Mao Tsetung Thought".² Although the criticism of the cult of the individual had a correct aspect, this effort by Liu was just an early example of how the more reactionary forces within the CPC, taking a cue from Khrushchev, used the issue of the cult to further

their own ends.

In line with this concept of strengthening collective leadership, Mao agreed to the division of the Politburo Standing Committee into two lines. Mao expected to gradually remove himself from the day-to-day policy decisions of the Standing Committee and retire to a "second line". Greater responsibility would thereby be given to the party leaders in the "first line", which assumed more of a day-to-day executive function. This line at first included Liu Shao-chi, Chou En-lai, Chu Teh, Chen Yun, and Teng Hsiao-ping, and later added Lin Piao. Mao's withdrawal from an active role in the daily affairs of the party accorded well with the wishes of the more conservative party leaders, and the post of "honorary chairman" was created, which Mao was expected to eventually assume.³

Mao was undeterred by the increasing strength of the Liu Shao-chi grouping in the party and continued to intensify his struggle against the more conservative, orthodox line on building socialism which had originated in the Soviet Union. By 1957 he wrote "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People", in which he forthrightly rebutted the line of the Congress by stating that "the question of which will win out, socialism or capitalism, is not really settled yet."⁴ By the Third Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee late in the year, Mao had again gained the upper hand and the CC reversed in effect many of the basic policy decisions enacted by the Congress.⁵

Mao's basic line on building a socialist society, which he had begun to develop in "On the Ten Major Relationships", was adopted at the Plenum and laid the theoretical basis for launching the Great Leap Forward in the following year. Succinctly stated, this line was: "To carry out the technological and cultural revolution simultaneously with the socialist revolution on the political and ideological fronts; to develop industry and agriculture simultaneously with priority development of heavy industry; to develop central and local industries simultaneously under central leadership, overall planning and in coordination; and to develop large, medium and small enterprises simultaneously. To build socialism faster, better and more economically by exerting efforts to the utmost and pressing ahead consistently."⁶

The Great Leap Forward was the first major attempt, on a mass scale, to chart a course for the building of socialism that would avoid the errors of the orthodox Soviet model. Rather than the "disaster" that it has been portrayed by revisionist and bourgeois writers, it in fact led to many important gains for socialism in China. Indeed, the terrible natural disasters of 1959 and 1960, and the sudden withdrawal of Soviet aid in July of 1960, would have been much more devastating had not the policies of the Great Leap been implemented.

The Great Leap was a direct response to the fact that the policies of China's First Five-Year Plan, from 1953 through 1957, had begun to reveal some serious contradictions. An over-concentration on heavy industry and the development of the productive forces, instead of weakening bourgeois right, actually seemed to strengthen it in significant respects, especially as manifested in the intensification of the Three Great Differences -- between mental and manual labor, worker and peasant, and town and countryside. If a complacent attitude had been adopted about the achievements of socialist transformation and the necessity for continuing class struggle had been forgotten, then the basis for capitalist restoration would have increased. Mao made it clear that he stood for continuous revolution, in both the economic base and the superstructure: "In making revolution one must strike while the iron is hot -- one revolution must follow another, the revolution must continually advance. The Hunanese often say

'Straw sandals have no pattern -- they shape themselves in the making'."⁷

Some of the severest contradictions of the Chinese revolution were developing in the countryside. Although tremendous gains had been made in cooperativization, over-all investment in the agricultural sector had been low: roughly 6% of the state budget during the First Five Year Plan.⁸ However, unless there were dramatic increases in agricultural output, sufficient revenues would not be generated to continue financing industrialization. The only other major alternative was to rely more heavily on foreign trade and indebtedness to other states, but this approach would have severely jeopardized China's political independence. A Great Leap in agricultural production, without the benefit of widespread mechanization, was the only feasible solution. China had to learn how to "develop industry and agriculture simultaneously" or, as one of the major slogans of the Great Leap Forward stated it, "Walk on Two Legs".

Out of this necessity developed the mass movement to establish People's Communes in China's countryside. The Communes represented a new leap to a higher form of the relations of production in agriculture. But the Communes signified a development which was broader and more complex than the elevation of the property relations to a new level. Chen Po-ta, the editor of the Central Committee's new journal Red Flag, had used the term "commune" to describe the desired fusion of the functions of industry, agriculture, commerce, education and the militia into a single unit.⁹ What this model advanced was a radical approach to the relation between state and society under socialism.

By the middle of 1958 communes were already getting organized in Honan province. When Mao took a tour of the communes in August and replied to a reporter's question that the communes were indeed a good idea, the movement quickly spread to the rest of the country.¹⁰ In the same month an enlarged Politburo meeting at Peitaiho gave its formal endorsement to the commune model. The announcement it released stated:

The establishment of people's communes with all-around management of agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, side occupations and fishery, where industry (the worker), agriculture (the peasant), exchange (the trader), culture and education (the student), and military affairs (the militiaman) merge into one, is the fundamental policy to guide the peasants to accelerate socialist construction, complete the building of socialism ahead of time and carry out the gradual transition to communism.¹¹

One of the major objectives of the People's Communes was to lay a basis for resolving the "Three Great Differences". They were proposed as a means to eliminate the differences between town and country by bringing industry, culture, education, and social services like medical care of the towns to the countryside, while serving agriculture and national defense by building up a dispersed system of self-reliant communes able to apply the latest scientific knowledge to agriculture. They would help to eliminate the differences between worker and peasant by making workers out of the peasants during slack agricultural periods, and by having workers participate in agricultural production. They would serve to eradicate the differences between manual and mental workers by educating workers and peasants to bring them up to the level of cultured working people with professional skill and all-around qualification, as well as by bringing technical and economic experts and students from the cities to work in

the commune, at manual as well as mental tasks.

Another vital role played by the People's Communes was to deal with another "Great Difference", the inequality between men and women. The Communes facilitated the entrance of large numbers of rural Chinese women into social production for the first time. Combatting deep-rooted feudal tradition, women took over many agricultural tasks from men, as well as working in the newly formed Communal industries. This development directed the Communes to deal with problems of childcare and food preparation, which had previously been taken care of on an individual basis by women. Communal dining halls, childcare facilities and homes for the aged freed women from household slavery, and dramatically increased the labor force available to the Communes. Though many of these innovations were jettisoned in later periods, they still stand forth as historical monuments of socialist development.

Another significant development which intertwined with the formation of the People's Communes was the revitalization of the people's militia. During the period of the First Five-Year Plan, the militia had been allowed to atrophy while emphasis was placed on the building up of a modern, professional standing army. Such a standing army, in which technical expertise and professionalism took precedence over ideological and political line, became a power base for the more conservative forces within the party. The grouping around Mao attempted to counter this tendency towards bureaucratic separation of the army from the people by popularizing the slogan of "everyone a soldier" and reorganizing the militia. By early 1959 approximately 220 million people were militia members.¹² And the militia provided much of the initial organizational structure for establishing the Communes in the countryside. The movement to revitalize the militia was part and parcel of the whole concept of the rural commune as a vehicle to overcome the divorce of a centralized state apparatus from the people. It was based on the assumption that the real military power of any proletarian dictatorship must ultimately rest on the strength of "the entire armed people", not solely on a standing army.

Another major socialist breakthrough during the Great Leap Forward worth special note, besides the formation of People's Communes in the countryside, was the beginning transformation of the division of labor, especially between mental and manual labor, in China's industrial enterprises. This effort was inspired by one of the other central slogans of the Great Leap Forward, "Be Both Red and Expert".

The new system of factory-manager responsibility under "the collective leadership of the factory party committee" had been encountering difficulties. When the Party Committee took over much of the basic policy responsibilities of the factory managers, it also inherited a huge bureaucratic control and administrative structure which closely regulated production in each of the enterprises. Without radically revamping this structure, the party committee merely became a political appendage clumsily grafted onto a management system which remained fundamentally unchanged. Collective party leadership in and of itself did not necessarily narrow the gap between mental and manual labor, between managers and production workers. Those who were deemed to be "red" merely became new additions to the elite ranks of the "experts".

The real way to resolve this contradiction was to be found in new institutions of "mass management", in which the production workers themselves would be brought forward to become the masters of the factories. Instead of being given just an indirect role in decision-making through the party committee,

workers were being organized during the Great Leap to demand more direct control of management, technological innovation, and planning.

Workers in the Chinghua Machine Tools Plant and the Chienhua Machinery Factory in the industrial heartland of Heilungkiang province were the first to begin to experiment with transforming the role of managers and introducing more worker participation in management decisions.¹³ What was clear was that in order to consolidate the gains of the Chinese socialist revolution, it was not sufficient to merely effect state ownership of the means of production; the working class had to be involved directly in the control of production. What was at stake was the fundamental division between mental and manual labor and the specific divisions between workers, cadre, technicians, and managers.

The innovations that were taken up throughout the country involved the regular participation of administrative cadre in manual labor, the participation of the production workers in some of the everyday administration of the factories, and the reform of irrational rules and systems. What was being demanded, in effect, was the implementation of the mass line in revolutionizing the relations of production so that there would be increased reliance on the political consciousness and creativeness of the masses of workers. In implementing the mass line, triple alliances were formed between cadre, workers, and technicians to give leadership to the production process and unleash technical innovation. These changes were summed up as the policy of "two participations, one reform and triple combinations".

When the production workers were mobilized to become masters of the production process instead of its objects, the systems of material incentives immediately came under review. One of the biggest achievements of the Great Leap Forward in China's factories was the abolition of piecework. In its place there was instituted a policy of hourly wages plus bonuses (primarily for groups of workers rather than for individuals), and these bonuses took the form mainly of social honors and only secondarily of cash rewards. This new policy combated the previous tendency accentuated by piecework which fostered inequalities among workers and emphasized competitiveness and individual material incentives.

A third major slogan of the Great Leap Forward worth mentioning was to "Catch Up with Great Britain in 15 Years". This slogan embodied the deep-felt desire of the Chinese people to exert their efforts to the utmost to build their country into a powerful, modern, industrialized society which would be strong enough to successfully combat any relation of dependency on the world imperialist system. This desire was nurtured by the decades of imperialist plunder of China by the capitalist countries and was built to some degree on patriotic feelings which cut across class lines. It was this goal of a leap in the level of the productive forces which provided a common point of unity among the different groupings within the Chinese Communist Party. The differences centered on how exactly this leap was to be carried out. As it became increasingly clear over the next decade, the supporters of Liu Shao-chi and Teng Hsiao-ping were enthusiastic about the line of accelerating China's industrialization, but their method for accomplishing this goal, popularized later as the "four modernizations", proposed, in effect, to develop the productive forces at the expense of the socialist system itself.

The struggle among the different groupings within the CPC was sharpened up precisely because a combination of factors came together to destroy the early successes of the Great Leap Forward. First of all, China was severely affected by natural disasters in 1959 and 1960. Over half of the country's cultivated land was hit by drought and floods. In Shantung, for example, the

drought was so bad that the Yellow River dried up for more than a month. These natural disasters were a tremendous blow to China's agricultural production, and a serious food shortage resulted.

The second major reason for the failure of the Great Leap Forward was the sudden withdrawal of Soviet technical, economic and industrial aid in July of 1960. This act alone set back Chinese industrial production by several years. For all practical purposes all large industrial construction came to a halt, and was only started up again with great difficulty and on a much smaller scale over the succeeding years. Some of the plants left unfinished by the Soviets have still not been completed to this day.

The third major reason was internal. In the initial enthusiasm of the Leap, there were instances where one crop was concentrated on to fill a quota, to the exclusion of other crops. Also, there was a widespread practice of "padding" local reports to make them look good, thereby hurting the ability of the central bodies to make realistic plans. In addition, there was a significant ultra-left trend, which had considerable influence, which attempted to put into practice policies which would eradicate bourgeois right all at once, long before the necessary material and ideological basis had been established.

Without clear guidance from the Center, many of the early communes grew excessively large. And a number of them attempted to institute a partial free-supply system, based on the communist principle of "to each according to need". The resolution from the Peitaiho meeting, however, stressed that communes should stick to remuneration "according to work", as this policy was consistent with the socialist stage of development where conditions buttressing bourgeois right could not be immediately superceded.

Most noteworthy, however, was that Liu Shao-chi's grouping, which hitherto had opposed its right opportunist policies to the line of Mao, now took up the tack of carrying out the initiatives of the Great Leap Forward to ultra-left extremes. Liu put himself forward as a bold champion of the Great Leap Forward and began making declarations that "Communism is near at hand". Under his leadership, lower-level cadre were made reluctant to criticize ultra-left bambast for fear of being castigated as rightists. The effect of the extreme policies advocated by Liu was to undercut and discredit the Great Leap Forward itself and set the stage for an inevitable political reaction.¹⁴

Mao and others criticized the ultra-leftism as the whipping up of a "communist wind". In the communes this "communist wind" promoted radical egalitarianism among individuals and production brigades and concentrated too much accounting and actual ownership at the level of the commune when the accounting and ownership should have been shared more with the brigades and teams.¹⁵ In other words, the relations of production in agriculture were being pushed to too high a level, before the peasants in their majority would be ready to accept them and before the material prerequisites for such centralization had been provided.

Because of these ultra-left excesses, significant numbers of peasants were beginning to turn against the People's Communes movement. The peasants in the more well-to-do production brigades and teams resented the institution of a free-supply system, which they thought lowered their own standard of living and catered to the poorer brigades and teams. In the free-supply system, many communes provided free food, and others even supplied free clothing and housing. Also, some communes tried to do away with personal property and began expropriating the peasants' houses, furniture, small farm tools and domestic animals,

and seizing their deposits in banks and credit cooperatives.¹⁶

The free-supply system and ownership and accounting concentrated at the level of the commune were worthy strategic goals that the masses of peasants should have been mobilized to achieve. But there had to be a number of stages of development through which the peasants would pass and that would span a number of years, even decades. The efforts by ultra-left forces to attain these goals all at once alienated masses of peasants from the communes. Soon, the state was encountering great difficulty in procuring agricultural products as peasants concealed their production outputs and divided any surpluses up among themselves. Unrest developed among the peasantry in a number of areas over shortages of food grains, pork, vegetables, and other necessities.¹⁷

Given this situation, it was inevitable that rightist opposition to the Great Leap Forward would emerge from within the CPC. Peng Teh-huai, one of the most pro-Soviet of the Chinese leaders, began attacking the Great Leap Forward as "petit-bourgeois fanaticism", a charge which was echoed by the Khrushchev revisionist clique. At the 1959 Lushan meeting of the central committee Peng challenged Mao and the revolutionary left within the party. In an open "Letter of Opinion" addressed to the chairman but provocatively circulated throughout the party before it reached Mao, Peng stated:

Petty-bourgeois fanaticism causes us easily to commit 'left' errors. In the course of the Great Leap Forward of 1958, I, like many comrades, was led astray by its achievements and the ardour of the mass movement. 'Left' tendencies developed to an appreciable extent. All the time one wanted to leap into communism in one bound.¹⁸

Other influential leaders such as Tao Chu and Wu Han, deputy mayor of Peking under Peng Chen, had uttered similar criticisms of the Great Leap Forward. The reason that Peng was put on the defensive was that there was reasonable suspicion throughout the party that he was operating in league with Khrushchev. Peng had just returned from a trip to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe where he was warmly received by Khrushchev even though he was bearing the message that China had rejected Soviet plans for joint defenses between China and the Soviet Union. Just before the Lushan meeting Khrushchev attacked the Great Leap Forward in language strikingly similar to that of Peng. Even though other conservative forces within the CPC sympathized with Peng's views, they could not allow themselves to be implicated in any collusion with a foreign power, especially a power like the Soviet Union which was attempting to bring Albania to heel and threatened to try the same tactics with China.¹⁹

Mao counter-attacked skillfully, linking Peng with the earlier Kao Kang grouping. He concentrated his attention on the basic question of ideological line. Although Mao had definitely endorsed the setting up of the People's Communes, he had not been the prime mover behind their emergence. The ideological inspiration for their formation had come directly from other comrades within the party such as Chen Po-ta, and they were first formed without directives from the Center under the leadership of party officials in provinces like Honan and Hopei. Although many of the "socialist new things" established by the early communes were too advanced, nevertheless the important point that had to be made was that the creative initiative and enthusiasm of the masses for socialism had been unleashed, and this in itself was a powerful force for radical change. In his speech at Lushan Mao directly refuted Peng's charge:

How should we look upon such enthusiasm for communism? Shall

we call it petit-bourgeois fanaticism? I don't think we can put it that way ... We must not pour cold water on this kind of broad mass movement. We can only use persuasion and say to them: Comrades, your hearts are in the right place. When tasks are difficult, don't be impatient. Do things step-by-step. When you eat meat you have to do it one mouthful at a time; one bite won't make you a fatty.²⁰

Mao went on to do considerable self-criticism and took personal responsibility for many of the errors of the Great Leap Forward even though he may not have been directly involved. He made the following over-all assessment of the Great Leap Forward:

Have we failed this time? All the comrades present say there have been gains; it is not a complete failure. Is it mainly a failure? No, it's only a partial failure. We have paid a high price. A lot of "communist wind" has blown past, but the people of the whole country have learned a lesson... The chaos caused was on a grand scale and I take responsibility. Comrades, you must analyze your own responsibility.²¹

This quote illustrates clearly enough that Mao was fully aware of the limitations of the Great Leap Forward. The battles waged by the Chinese masses under the leadership of Mao and other Marxist-Leninists in the CPC were historically unprecedented, but this revolutionary movement quickly bolted beyond its objective limitations and ended up turning many of its initial successes into failures. The enthusiasm of the Chinese masses for socialism was genuine enough, but the ultra-leftists among the party leadership squandered this enthusiasm in a struggle for unattainable goals, and these ultra-left excesses were whipped up and magnified by rightists like Liu Shao-chi.

It was clear to many in the party that Mao was no wild-eyed ultra-leftist and that he had earlier stepped in to calm down "the communist wind" threatening to break up the advances of the Great Leap Forward. The center forces grouped around the Premier, Chou En-lai, backed Mao at the Lushan meeting; and the Liu grouping kept its distance from Peng's clique because supporting Peng at that time would have only weakened its own position.

Mao had already succeeded in undermining Peng's position when in May, 1958 he had Lin Piao appointed a member of the Standing Committee of the party and also vice-chairman of the Military Affairs Committee. This put Lin in a position of authority over Peng within the party structure, while Peng, as Minister of Defense, was still nominally Lin's superior in the military line of command. In the summer of 1958 the Military Affairs Committee under Lin's direction engaged in a long and bitter struggle with Peng Teh-huai in which his policies for the professionalization of the PLA were repudiated.

At Lushan Peng was dismissed as Minister of Defense for his attack on the Great Leap Forward and he was replaced by Lin Piao. What was remarkable was that Peng was allowed to retain his membership on the Politburo. Also dismissed along with Peng were Huang Ko-cheng, the PLA Chief of Staff; Chou Hsiao-chou, first Party secretary of Hunan province; and most importantly, Chang Wen-tien, vice-minister of Foreign Affairs. Chang was one of the twenty-eight Bolsheviks who returned to China from the Soviet Union in the 1930's and took control of the party. A strong supporter of Wang Ming, Chang became general secretary of the party in that period, and later served as the ambassador to the Soviet Union. Chang is

thought to have had a big hand in helping Peng pen his "Letter of Opinion" which precipitated the struggle at Lushan.

Peng's struggle with the General Line at Lushan reflected more than the fact that Khrushchev was attempting to exert an influence within the Chinese Communist Party by propping up the more conservative forces. The struggle also reflected that there was considerable opposition within the PLA to the policies of the Great Leap Forward, and Peng was subsequently accused of trying to create a separate "army party". In addition, the line struggle within the party demonstrated that there was significant opposition among the masses of peasantry to rapid communization. The relations of production in agriculture had taken an extraordinary leap in the span of just a few short years: at the end of 1955 only 63% of peasant households were organized in lower-stage cooperatives, with the number of higher-stage cooperatives being negligible, whereas by 1958 99% of the households were technically organized into communes.²² The alienation of strata of the peasantry was intensified by the heavy-handed methods used by a significant number of party leaders to expropriate their personal property and the property of the brigades and teams.

Given this opposition and the fact that by 1959 China was being hit by droughts and floods which caused a severe food shortage, it is understandable why a period of retrenchment became a political necessity. Mao endorsed the decentralization of some powers to the brigade and team levels which began in 1959. But beginning in the middle of 1960 the more reactionary forces within the party grouped around Liu Shao-chi began pressing home their advantage and effectively established the team as the basic unit of account under the nominal commune system. This policy was officially endorsed at the Ninth Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee in January, 1961.²³

The Liu grouping was on the offensive, as it had been at the time of the Eighth Congress in 1956. In the middle of 1961 Liu issued his "Sixty Articles on Agriculture", which represented a sharp reversal of the policies of the People's Communes and the Great Leap Forward. One of the central changes was the fixing of the team as the basic accounting unit. The team had previously corresponded to the old lower-stage producer cooperative and encompassed roughly 40 households, but by 1961 the size of the teams was averaging 20-30 households.²⁴ The leadership at the team level tended to be more conservative, and was often dominated by well-to-do middle peasants. The small enterprises in the countryside were put under the leadership of the teams, and they operated relatively autonomously, being evaluated primarily on the basis of profit and losses.

Liu's old policy of the "four freedoms" was circulated among the party cadre for study (freedom to buy and sell land, to hire tenants, to select crops to plant, free markets and pricing). His Sixty Articles were consistent with his earlier policies and their basic thrust served objectively to strengthen capitalist tendencies in the countryside. Liu's policies came to be known as the "three guarantees and one reward". Reportedly, the land for private plots increased from 5% of the cultivated land to 15 or 20%.²⁵ In some provinces, such as Kweichow and Szechwan, this policy eventually led to a situation where there was more private than collective tilling.

With peasants allowed to sell the produce from their private plots, rural free markets naturally began to flourish, and many of them turned into black markets. These free markets were effectively outside any party or government control. Increasingly, the links between industry and agriculture became subject primarily to the market, and not to any real planning system. As far as

any central planning was concerned, state loans and technical aid were targeted mainly for the richer areas that could promise "returns" on investment.

Under Liu's policies, with the team as the basic accounting unit, there was little potential for the accumulation of surplus funds to be distributed to other units or to the state. The effect of all these policies was to pass on disproportionate wealth to the rich and well-to-do middle peasants, and, in addition, widen the gap between the cities and the countryside, between worker and peasant.

During this same period in industry, Po I-po, minister of Heavy Industry and Liu's cohort, issued his Seventy Articles, which promoted profit as the universal yardstick for evaluating all enterprises and re-instituted piecework and individual material bonuses as the primary basis for motivating workers. Under Po's system the factory manager again emerged as the real authority in the plants, and the administrative and supervisory departments within the factories, which had been reduced in size and importance during the Great Leap Forward, were built up again. The party committee was removed from overseeing the day-to-day operation of the enterprise and directed more to concern itself with extra-enterprise relations, such as with other enterprises and the state.

Cadre participation in labor and worker participation in management, two of the central innovations of the Great Leap Forward, were scaled down. Instead, worker congresses were reformed as the main vehicle through which workers could influence management decisions. The congresses met periodically, being convened by the trade union organization under the leadership of the party committee. A lot of the discussion in these meetings centered on welfare, discipline, and production targets. Many of the congresses met only on a quarterly basis, and some met no more than once a year.²⁵ Even those congresses which met on a monthly basis or more frequently did little to change the real balance of power between the managers, administrators, technicians, and cadre on the one side, and the production workers on the other side.

Under Po's system, the energy and initiative of the rank and file production workers were shackled under "ten thousand rules of bureaucracy". By re-instituting the old management system, Liu's grouping was attempting to consolidate its base among the more skilled, highly paid workers, the technical and scientific personnel and administrators, the enterprise managers, and the trade union and party representatives who worked to serve the interests of these strata instead of the broad masses of the workers.

During this same period, often called the period of re-adjustment, in which industry and agriculture were being re-organized, Mao's visible power within the party began to be curtailed. For example, Liu's How to Be a Good Communist, with its sharp criticisms of ultra-leftism, was re-issued and got wide distribution, while the works of Mao became more and more difficult to obtain. During this period Mao was leading in drafting the polemics against Soviet revisionism, but the day-to-day functioning of the party fell to the party leaders in the "first line", in which the Liu grouping was dominant.

As a result, Mao was experiencing difficulty in even getting his articles printed in Party papers. Meanwhile, barely concealed attacks were being mounted on Mao and the policies of the Great Leap Forward in a series of newspaper articles, "Evening Chats at Yenshan" and "Notes from a Three-Family Village" by Teng To, former editor of People's Daily, and in plays such as The Dismissal of Hai Jai by the Vice-Mayor of Peking, Wu Han, which dealt disapprovingly with the demotion of Peng Teh-huai. On the defensive since 1959, but clearer now than ever on the

nature of class struggle under socialism and its reflection in the party, Mao was preparing his counter-attack.

The Socialist Education Movement: The Lines Are Drawn (1962 - 1965)

By the tenth plenum of the central committee in 1962, Mao was ready to launch an offensive against the rightists within the party. Through the polemics with the CPSU, Mao had deepened his analysis of the political and ideological basis for right opportunism within the Chinese party. As he stated in a major speech at the plenum, "I think that right-wing opportunism in China should be renamed; it should be called Chinese revisionism".²⁷ Thus, Mao was establishing new battle lines for the continuing struggle to advance the Chinese socialist revolution. It was becoming clear to Mao and his supporters in the party that the battle they were waging now was against an actual bourgeois headquarters, a headquarters that was gaining in strength and was threatening to usurp full power within the CPC and proceed to overturn the dictatorship of the proletariat and implement a capitalist restoration. As Mao warned at the plenum:

We must acknowledge that classes will continue to exist for a long time. We must also acknowledge the existence of a struggle of class against class, and admit the possibility of the restoration of reactionary classes. We must raise our vigilance and properly educate our youth as well as the cadres, the masses and the middle and basic-level cadres. Old cadres must also study these problems and be educated. Otherwise a country like ours can still move towards its opposite.²⁸

It was only in this period of retrenchment following the Great Leap Forward that it is accurate to characterize the Chinese Communist Party as being fully factionalized. There was a minority grouping within the party in the 1950's led by Kao Kang and Peng Teh-huai which consolidated into a faction and began conspiring with the Soviet Union. But this was the exception, not the rule, for the character of the inner-party struggle before and during the Great Leap Forward. This is not to deny that serious line differences did not become crystallized or that different groupings or wings did not advance sharply opposed policies.

Given the history of the CPC during the revolutionary struggle preceding 1949, democratic centralism was practiced according to somewhat looser norms than in a number of other parties. Regionalism was always a persistent problem, with military struggle in the countryside being the main focus of the revolutionary movement. Nevertheless, the major struggles between Mao's grouping and Liu's grouping in the 1950's did not assume the form of antagonistic clashes between factions such that party discipline became superceded by loyalty to a particular headquarters within the party. Rightists like Liu and Teng Hsiao-ping exhibited a somewhat checkered history, at times taking up reactionary positions, at other times supporting Mao's line, and sometimes going to ultra-left extremes. It was only in the process of summing up the momentous struggles of the Great Leap Forward that two completely irreconcilable positions on carrying out class struggle under socialism were consolidated and full-blown factions formed to defend these opposed lines and programmes.

During the period 1962 through 1965 Mao and the revolutionary left in the CPC began launching a number of mass movements to stem the revisionist tide being led by the Liu faction. With Mao's supporter, Lin Piao, as Minister of Defense, a rectification campaign was begun in the People's Liberation Army to

study Mao's little Red Book, put politics in command, and promote the army as as model in serving the people. This campaign, which was initiated by the PLA General Political Department under the leadership of Hsiao Hua, helped to strengthen the political role of the army and train its members to play a leading role in the mass movements being organized in this period, particularly the Socialist Education Movement.²⁹

The Socialist Education Movement, which was launched the same month as the tenth plenum, September, 1962, was designed to counter the spontaneous drift toward capitalism and the breakdown of political authority in the countryside. Although the rightists in the party were as concerned as the revolutionary left about the corruption and low morale among party members in the countryside and the lack of peasant support for party policy, they proposed a significantly different solution. They pinned the blame for these problems on the Great Leap Forward, whereas the revolutionary left pointed to the revisionist policies governing agriculture since the Great Leap Forward. The rightists tried to contain the rectification movement and channel it from the top down, relying heavily on party-led work teams, whereas the leftists sought to build a mass movement from the bottom up, concentrating on organizing Poor and Lower-Middle Peasant Associations.

The Liu headquarters seemed to have achieved a stranglehold on the party apparatus, so that the leftists in the CPC often had to resort to the PLA as the main political vehicle to spark the Socialist Education Movement. Through the efforts of the leftists in the CPC and the PLA, the people's militia was again revitalized, and this organization served as the basis for the formation of the Poor and Lower-Middle Peasant Associations.

By May of 1963, Mao and the other leftists were successful enough in their efforts to have their line ratified at a central work conference. The document coming out of that conference was entitled the "Draft Resolution of the Central Committee on Some Problems in Current Rural Work", usually referred to later as the "Early Ten Points". The Draft re-iterated Mao's theme about the centrality of class struggle, formally proposed the formation of the Poor and Lower-Middle Peasant Associations, advocated the participation of cadre in productive labor, and advanced the idea of the "four clean-ups" (cleaning up accounts, granaries, properties and work-points).³⁰ An important part of the "four clean-ups" was the campaign to organize the masses in criticism and exposure of party cadre who had become corrupt. This campaign was part of Mao's general policy of instituting supervision of the party "from below", with rectification being carried through among the masses and with their direct help.

The Liu faction countered with its own document issued from the Party center in September-which came to be known as the "Later Ten Points". This document served to blunt the nature of the class struggle in the countryside. According to the directives in this document, the work-teams were given control over the peasant associations, and the well-to-do peasants were removed as targets of struggle. The document advised that people should not be branded as "rightists" and that the contradictions in the countryside were non-antagonistic and the subject for restrained criticism but not real struggle.³¹

From 1963 through 1965 Mao and the other revolutionary leftists in the party were in the process of deepening the ideological and political basis of the Socialist Education Movement while struggling to have their policies implemented. In early 1964 they started a campaign to "Learn from the People's Liberation Army" as a means to circumvent the party apparatus under the control of Liu's headquarters and give the SEM some political direction. In the middle of the

same year Mao published "On Khrushchev's Phoney Communism and its Historical Lessons for the World", which was the Ninth Comment on the Open Letter from the CPSU. While the subject was the nature of socialism in the Soviet Union, the programme that this article developed applied just as well to China. Mao was now aware that in struggling against Liu Shao-chi, he was doing political battle with "China's Khrushchev". The contradiction had clearly become an antagonistic one between Marxism-Leninism and revisionism, between the socialist road and the capitalist road.

In December of 1964, at the Third National People's Congress, Chou En-lai gave the main report, which defined the "four clean-ups" as "politics, economics, ideology, and organization".³² No longer were the tasks of the Socialist Education Movement to be narrow and pragmatic in scope. Now the movement was to take up the question of antagonistic contradictions and seek out as its targets "the persons in authority taking the capitalist road". Once an early critic of the Great Leap Forward, the Premier had been won to Mao's line. The struggle within the party was crystallizing into two sharply delineated lines, and the center forces were lining up on one side or the other. The party was in the process of being fully fractured into a proletarian headquarters and a bourgeois headquarters.

Although the revolutionary left was making some headway during this whole period, with its organizational vanguard being the PLA and not the party itself, it was also encountering innumerable difficulties. The Liu Shao-chi faction seemed to have firmly entrenched itself within the party apparatus and developed enough power to effectively thwart and derail much of the revolutionary initiative developed by the Left. The actual situation appeared to have developed to the point of a strategic stalemate between the Marxist-Leninists and the revisionists within the party. The Marxist-Leninists needed to accumulate enough strength to make a dramatic breakthrough in this stalemate, prevent the party from changing political color, and safeguard the proletarian dictatorship and consolidate the gains of the socialist revolution in both the economic base and the superstructure.

The real strength of the Marxist-Leninists lay outside the party among the poor and lower-middle peasants and the broad masses of the urban working class. To dislodge the revisionists from political power, the Marxist-Leninists had to appeal directly to the masses and mobilize them to criticize and rectify the party from below, from the bottom up. As long as the revolutionary left contained its struggle within the party apparatus, the revisionists were bound to eventually win out since they appeared to have achieved fairly secure control of the party's organizational levers. As happened in the Socialist Education Movement, any revolutionary directives issuing from the party would be gutted of their essence by a strictly regulated, top-down implementation. Hence, a simple rectification movement in the party would not suffice to definitively tip the balance in favor of the Marxist-Leninists.

FOOTNOTES

1. Mao Tsetung, Selected Works, Vol. V, pg. 284.
2. Brugger, Contemporary China, pg. 137.
3. Ibid., pgs. 138-9.
4. Mao, SW, Vol. V, pg. 409.
5. Suyin, Wind in the Tower, pg. 106.
6. Ibid., pg. 124.
7. Mao Tsetung, "Speech at the Supreme State Conference" in The People's

- Republic of China, Ed. Mark Selden, pg. 383 (Monthly Review Press, New York, 1979).
8. Brugger, pg. 161.
 9. Ibid., pg. 178.
 10. Suyin, pg. 129.
 11. Selden, pg. 402.
 12. Brugger, pg. 177.
 13. Selden, pg. 441.
 14. Suyin, pgs. 130-131.
 15. Mao, "Speech at Chengchow" in Selden, Op. Cit., pg. 470.
 16. Ibid., pg. 472-3.
 17. Ibid., pg. 470.
 18. Brugger, pg. 203.
 19. Ibid., pg. 200-203.
 20. Stuart Schram, editor, Chairman Mao Talks to the People, pg. 133, (Pantheon Books, New York, 1974).
 21. Ibid., pg. 146.
 22. Alexander Eckstein, China's Economic Revolution, pg. 71.
 23. Brugger, pg. 217.
 24. Ibid., pg. 221.
 25. Suyin, pg. 183.
 26. Stephen Andors, China's Industrial Revolution, pg. 124 (Pantheon Books, New York, 1977).
 27. Schram, pg. 192.
 28. Ibid., pg. 189.
 29. Jaap van Ginneken, The Rise and Fall of Lin Piao, pgs. 37-38 (Avon Books, New York, 1977).
 30. Brugger, pg. 247.
 31. Ibid., pgs. 252-253.
 32. Ibid., pg. 269.

SECTION III:

The First Stage of the Cultural Revolution: November, 1965 to August, 1966

A prime example of the power of the revisionists could be found in Peking itself, which was under the leadership of Politburo member Peng Chen, who was its mayor and first party secretary. It was from this power base that the revisionists had launched their boldest attack on Mao and the policies of the revolutionary left which had guided the Great Leap Forward. This attack had been led publically by Peking's deputy mayor, Wu Han, and other prominent publicists in the city like Teng To and Liao Mo-sha. These second-echelon figures operated under the protection not only of Peng Chen, but also with the tacit approval of Lu Ting-yi, director of the party's propaganda department, and Chou Yang, its deputy director and principal party spokesman on cultural policies.

At a meeting of the Politburo in September, 1965 Mao brought up the case of Wu Han's play, The Dismissal of Hai Jui, and pointed out that the play was using a literary allegorical form to press home a political point, i.e., that Peng Teh-huai had been unjustly dismissed from office in 1959. A Group of Five, which had recently been appointed by the Politburo to guide the new "cultural revolution", was given the responsibility of investigating the matter. This Group, which was responsible to the Politburo, was directed by none other than Peng Chen, and included his allies, Lu Ting-yi, Chou Yang, and Wu Leng-shi, director of the New China News Agency. The fifth member was a close ally of Mao, Kang Sheng.¹

The first public salvo fired by the revolutionary left, which is usually referred to as the inauguration of the Cultural Revolution, was the publication in November, 1965, by Yao Wen-yuan of his article, "On the New Historical Play The Dismissal of Hai Jui". Endorsed by Mao, the article was published in the Shanghai newspaper, Wen Hui Pao, as a rebuttal and exposure of Wu Han's play, and it immediately became the focus of a raging debate. Perceiving full well that the article represented the beginning of a big offensive against his Peking organizational stronghold, Peng Chen responded accordingly.

As the head of the Group of Five, Peng Chen took the shrewd tack of attempting to deflect the political points of Yao's article into an academic dispute on the historical merits of Wu Han's play. Instead of letting the issues become dividing lines among the party leadership, Peng tried to channel it into a debate among historians. Peng was moderately successful until the Group of Five came out with its "Outline Report" on the matter in February, 1966. Mao had been monitoring the Group of Five's activities through Kang Sheng, and now he was prepared to close the trap that had been laid for Peng and his allies.

Mao had with good reason chosen the important area of literature and art as the staging area from which to set the Cultural Revolution in motion. This is one of the critical arenas where the masses' world outlook is shaped, where "public opinion" is created. Although the struggle was initiated in the area of ideology or culture, the real stakes, as Mao understood, were political: the real issue was the question of political power and specifically which class was to wield it, the proletariat or the bourgeoisie. In his speech to the Tenth Plenum in 1962 Mao had pointed out the relevance of carrying out revolutionary work in the realm of ideology:

Writing novels is popular these days, isn't it? The use of novels for anti-Party activity is a great invention. Anyone wanting to overthrow a political regime must create public

opinion and do some preparatory ideological work. This applies to counter-revolutionary as well as revolutionary classes.²

One of Mao's first thrusts against Peng Chen was from the former's base of support in the People's Liberation Army. In February, 1966, the PLA held a forum on literature and art led by Chiang Ching. The forum took a clear stand upholding Mao's proletarian line on literature and art and charged that these ideological areas had been under "the dictatorship of a black anti-Party and anti-socialist line".³ In April Mao assailed the Propaganda Department under Lu Ting-yi, labelling it the "palace of the King of Hell".⁴ In the same month Chi Pen-yu, a party theoretician working with Red Flag, renewed the public attack on Wu Han with his article "The Truth About the Reactionary Nature of Hai Jui". Wu Han, Teng To, and Liao Mo-sha were now all being attacked by name.

This offensive culminated in May at an enlarged meeting of the Politburo. Peng Chen's "Black Gang", as it came to be called, was broken up, with Peng Chen, Lu Ting-yi, Chou Yang, Teng To, Wu Han, and Liao Mo-sha being dismissed. Another prominent member of Peng's Black Gang, Yang Shang-kun, member of the party secretariat and head of the secret police, was also relieved of his responsibilities. Issuing from the meeting was the famous "May 16 Circular", reportedly penned by Mao himself. The Circular castigated the "Outline Report" of the Group of Five for attempting to cloud the real political issues behind the debate on Wu Han's play, attacked the bourgeois concept the report advanced on how "everyone is equal before the truth", and targetted the "counter-revolutionary revisionists" in the party, government, army, and cultural superstructure as the main threat to the dictatorship of the proletariat. It charged that some of these revisionists were still unmasked, "persons like Khrushchev, for example, who are still nestling beside us".⁵

Another significant development of this period was the purge of Lo Jui-ching, the army chief of staff since 1959. In April, 1966 the Liberation Army Daily had carried an article entitled "Hold Aloft the Great Red Banner of Mao Tsetung Thought", in which it had described the PLA as "the most loyal tool of the Party and of the people, the mainstay of the dictatorship of the proletariat"⁶ But this description tended to disguise the divided nature of the PLA. At this time an intense struggle was taking place within the PLA on what to do about the Vietnam War. The bombing of North Vietnam by the United States necessitated an escalation of support from the socialist camp, but most especially from the Soviet Union and China. Under the new leadership of Brezhnev and Kosygin, the Soviet Union proposed "unity of action" between the USSR and China in the defense of North Vietnam and asked for the right to fly weapons to Vietnam over China. What was involved was not only the issue of "unity of action" with the Soviet Union, but also the nature of the war in Vietnam. The Soviet Union viewed the war in more conventional terms, with outside military aid being a decisive factor; while the revolutionary left in the CPC regarded the war as a People's War which would defeat U.S. imperialism primarily through its own efforts.

Within the CPC, Lo Jui-ching was an advocate of the more conventional military view of the Vietnam War, which accorded with that of the Soviet Union.⁷ He proposed that the Chinese army be put on a war footing and implied that unity within the party at this time of a military threat was of paramount importance. His views were expressed in a well-publicized article in Red Flag in May, "Commemorate the Victory Over German Fascism. Carry the Struggle Against U.S. Imperialism Through to the End!" Lo's views were consistent with a powerful grouping

of top military leaders, among whom were the famous Marshall Ho Lung of the First Field Army and Chu Teh, the founder of the PLA and member of the Politburo Standing Committee.

Later unsubstantiated rumours emanating from the Red Guards accused military leaders like Ho Lung and Lo Jui-ching of having conspired with Liu Shao-chi and Peng Chen to stage a coup d'etat in 1965.⁸ Lin Piao had set the climate for such rumours in May, 1965, at the time of the purge of Peng Chen's Black Gang, when he had made a bold and unprecedented speech to the enlarged meeting of the Party Politburo, stating provocatively that for the Chinese socialist revolution "the greatest problem is the prevention of a counter-revolutionary coup d'etat".⁹ Although Mao and other leaders of the CPC revolutionary left disagreed with Lin's focus on the military question of coup d'etat instead of the political and ideological issue of revisionism, nonetheless Lin's speech was an indication of the feared strength of the rightists within the PLA. Besides Lin's speech at the enlarged Politburo meeting, his most important contribution, as well as his most well-known, was his article Long Live the Victory of People's War, which was a rebuttal of Lo's commemorative speech on the surrender of Nazi Germany and other articles from the rightists in the PLA like Ho Lung's On the Democratic Tradition in the PLA.

Lo Jui-ching and the rest of Peng Chen's "Black Gang" were shrewdly picked by Mao as the first targets for the revolutionary offensive. Mao was keenly adept at dividing up his enemies and defeating them one by one, and he understood full well that the reactionaries did not really constitute a united or monolithic bloc. Some of the sharpest differences among the rightists centered on the question of how to relate to the Soviet Union. Kao Kang and Peng Teh-huai were well-known representatives of a minority faction within the CPC which had long been suspected and sometimes directly accused of colluding with the USSR. The revolutionary left had defeated this faction in earlier years because it could be more easily isolated. Many of the other reactionaries in the party were reluctant to defend this faction because they could be tarred with the same brush, as agents of a foreign power. This helps to explain, for example, the stance that Liu Shao-chi adopted at Lushan in 1959 when Peng Teh-huai came under fire. Once Peng had been implicated in collusion with the Soviets, Liu was unwilling to support him regardless of their agreement on a host of other fundamental issues.

Liu and Teng Hsiao-ping adopted a similar position in relation to Peng Chen's faction at the start of the Cultural Revolution. Unlike the members of the Liu/Teng faction, Peng Chen and his supporters, such as Wu Han, had openly called for the re-instatement of Peng Teh-huai. In contrast, Liu was willing to bring back only those who had supported Peng Teh-huai's criticisms of the Great Leap Forward, but not those who, like Peng and Chang Wen-tien, had conspired with a foreign power. Likewise, Liu and Teng would have weakened their own position by openly defending Lo Jui-ching, whose military strategy entailed rapprochement and alliance with the Soviet Union.

Concurrent with the struggle in the PLA and in the arena of literature and art, the cultural revolution was gathering momentum in China's universities. Groups were forming among teachers and students in response to Mao's call to reform university education along proletarian lines. By March of 1966, Lu Ping, the Chancellor of Peking University and a close associate of Peng Chen, was under attack for fostering a bourgeois system of education which was geared to cultivating a bureaucratic and technological elite. Peng's Peking Municipal Party Committee therefore had been coming under considerable pressure from yet another source.

On May 25, the struggle at Peking University became widely publicized when a young philosophy instructor named Nieh Yuan-tzu led seven people in posting a big-character poster critical of Lu Ping and the Municipal government for suppressing the Cultural Revolution on campus. Hailed as the "First Marxist-Leninist big-character poster", it was recommended by Mao for broadcast over the radio and publication in the newspapers. This incident served as a tremendous catalyst in galvanizing the struggle of the students to question the bourgeois academic authorities and carry forward the Cultural Revolution in the country's educational system. By June the Communist Youth League was dissolved because of its cooperation with the bourgeois academic authorities.

After the purge of Peng Chen's Black Gang in May, Mao retired to the Yangtze region to let the contradictions of the Cultural Revolution develop more fully. As became obvious later, he was letting "China's Khrushchev", Liu Shao-chi, have free rein in order to more clearly expose the latter's fundamental opposition to the Cultural Revolution. During the period of Mao's absence, which became known as "the fifty days", Liu Shao-chi and Teng Hsiao-ping utilized their control over the daily operation of the state and the party to try to bring the cultural revolution in the universities under control.

In June they dispatched party work-teams to the schools and universities to nip the mass movement in the bud, and many young revolutionaries were suppressed and their mass base of support became confused and disoriented. The students were pitted against one another, and their attention focussed on minor academic authorities and teachers. At first the work-teams were greeted with great joy and few suspected that they were not carrying out Mao's revolutionary line on education. But soon student leaders like Kuai Ta-fu at Tsinghua University came out in opposition to them, although they were told that "to oppose the work-teams is to oppose the Party center".

The Peng Chen faction centered in Peking had been disbanded, but Liu Shao-chi moved in his own supporters to fill the vacuum. Li Hsueh-feng was appointed by Liu as acting mayor of Peking, and Tao Chu, the first secretary of the Southern China bureau, was called to the center to take over the Propaganda Department.¹⁰ But just as Mao was able to maneuver Peng Chen into a position, as the leader of the Group of Five, where he would expose himself, so Mao was biding his time while Liu made his stand clear on the direction forward for the Cultural Revolution. On July 16, Mao took his famous, symbolically-important swim in the Yangtze river and the next day he returned to Peking to settle accounts with the Liu faction in the party. On July 20, Mao convened a central work conference where he declared that "youth is the great army of the Great Cultural Revolution! It must be mobilized to the full...It is anti-Marxist for Communists to fear the student movement".¹¹ On August 5, Mao put up his own big-character poster entitled "Bombard the Headquarters", assailing the actions of the party apparatus operating under the guidance of Liu and Teng Hsiao-ping. Why youth was relied on as the "great army" and was encouraged to "Bombard the Headquarters" is a question we will take up later in this paper.

The struggle came to a culminating point at the Eleventh Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee, in early August, 1966, the first plenum since the Tenth in 1962. Little is known directly of the actual proceedings of the Plenum, but the outcome of the struggle there represented a decisive turning point in the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution", as it was now called. The Plenum was an enlarged session in which a considerable number of PLA representatives and "representatives of revolutionary teachers and students" were present. The few members of the Peng Chen faction who were present were not allowed to vote.¹² Under

the heat of the attack from Mao and the revolutionary left for its suppression of the student movement, the Liu headquarters began to break up. As a result of the Plenum, Tao Chu rose to the fourth position in the Politburo, and this feat he accomplished apparently by championing a "middle course" in dealing with the opponents of the Cultural Revolution. According to Tao's formula, the attack was to be pressed home against the Peng Chen clique, but the activities of Liu and Teng were not to be publically criticized.¹³

As an outcome of the Plenum, a number of Mao's supporters also rose to positions of great power. Lin Piao, already a standing committee member and Minister of Defense, became designated now as Mao's "close comrade-in-arms". A new "Group in Charge of the Cultural Revolution" was officially constituted with Chen Po-ta, Chiang Ching, and Kang Sheng all playing leading roles in it.

By the end of the Plenum, Mao and his supporters were able to carry the Central Committee by a narrow majority. Both Liu and Teng were demoted, although no public criticisms of them were aired. On August 8, the Plenum issued an historic document entitled "Decision of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party Concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution", also commonly referred to as the "16-Point Decision". This document became, in effect, the charter of the GPCR.

As a consequence of the Eleventh Plenum, the Cultural Revolution moved into high gear. On August 18, a gigantic rally was held at Tien-an-Men Square at which Mao donned the Red Guard's arm band and gave his full support for the new upsurge of the revolution in China's universities. On the agenda in this new stage of the GPCR was the seizing of power from the revisionists and the striving for thorough victory.

The Composition of the Revolutionary Alliance

By August of 1966, the tide was definitely running against the Liu Shao-chi faction in the party. But it had not been decisively beaten yet, and a number of its members began to maneuver—and look for political cover. With Peng Chen broken and Liu and Teng on the run, other supporters like Tao Chu began to bend with the wind and strike a militant pose for the sake of self-protection. Where open rightism no longer had a hearing in the party, indulging in ultra-leftism could serve the same reactionary purposes in an indirect way.

The revolutionary alliance which Mao had helped build to carry out the Cultural Revolution was definitely not a homogeneous grouping either. The contents of the 16-Point Decision coming out of the Eleventh Plenum, which in critical places tended to be cautious or vague, reflected the limited unity binding together the members of the alliance. Had the members of the alliance been a relatively solid bloc which pursued a consistent ideological and political line throughout the course of the Cultural Revolution, the historical results could have been qualitatively different. However, they represented diverse class interests and conflicting lines, and an analysis of their real composition reveals some of the underlying weaknesses inherent in the Cultural Revolution and the necessary limitations placed on its development.

Mao's left alliance included a number of the leaders of the state apparatus. The Premier, Chou En-lai, was the chief representative of these government functionaries. The second most powerful figure, who escaped any serious challenge to his position during the Cultural Revolution, was Li Hsien-nien, the Minister of Finance. Other prominent members of the State Council who also survived were Li Fu-chun, chairman of the State Planning Commission, Nieh Jung-chen, chairman of

the Scientific and Technological Commission, and probably the most battered, Chen Yi, the Foreign Minister, who eventually died in 1972. When Mao undertook the offensive against the Liu faction in the early 1960's, it was Chou En-lai and a number of his ministers in the State Council who played a key role in the struggle by coming over to Mao's side.¹⁴ At the critical Eleventh Plenum in 1966, it appears that they played a similar role.

This body of administrators associated with the State Council came under considerable fire during the Cultural Revolution from the Red Guards, and these officials often exerted themselves mainly in opposition to what they considered to be the "excesses" of the mass movement. Taken as a whole, this grouping represented more of a center or middle force. They were a valuable ally, but not reliable because of their marked conservatism based on their functions in the central state apparatus. During the later stages of the GPCR, when consolidation, rebuilding, and centralization were the primary aspects of the political agenda, this grouping gained in influence, and Mao appeared to lend them his support. After the death of Mao in 1976, a number of these leading administrators played important roles in purging the remnants of the revolutionary left from the party.

Closely linked with the administrators in the State Council and the Premier, Chou En-lai, were a number of top-ranking military leaders who were part of the central army apparatus. Chen Yi and Nieh Jung-chen were two of the ten Marshals of the People's Liberation Army. Included in this group was another Marshal, Hsu Hsiang-chien, who rose to become a vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission, a member of the party Politburo, and temporary head of the All-Army Cultural Revolution Group. A fourth Marshal in this grouping was Liu Po-cheng, who was a member of the standing committee of the Central Military Commission and President of the Higher Military Affairs College, and became a party Politburo member. One of the most important of these military leaders was Yeh Chien-ying, who like Hsu Hsiang-chien was a vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission, and also rose to become a Politburo member in 1966. Both Mao and Chou En-lai had been closely associated with almost all of these men for 30 or 40 years.

Another component of the revolutionary alliance following Mao's leadership came from the security apparatus. Kang Sheng, a security specialist in the CPC going back to the 1930's, was the most notable member of this grouping. Kang rose to membership in the Standing Committee of the Politburo and was primarily responsible for international contacts with other Marxist-Leninist parties. When the Group in Charge of the Cultural Revolution was established, Kang was designated as its principal advisor. During the Cultural Revolution Kang faced virtually no criticism and was regarded as a trusted ally of Mao, although he appeared to serve, to a degree, as a bridge to the Chou En-lai grouping in the State Council.

Also a leading member of the security apparatus was Hsieh Fu-chih, Minister of Public Security and a Vice-Chairman of the People's Republic of China. With the purge of the Peng Chen clique, Hsieh became Chairman of the Peking Revolutionary Committee. Less prominent members of the security apparatus were Chi Teng-kuei, who became a vice chairman of the Honan Revolutionary Committee in 1968 and an alternate member of the Politburo in 1969; and General Wang Tung-hsing, who joined Chi as an alternate Politburo member in 1969, was vice-minister of Public Security, and was directly responsible for Mao's personal body guard. In 1972 when Hsieh Fu-chih died, a relative unknown named Hua Kuo-feng was called to the Center from Hunan and replaced Hsieh as Minister of Public Security, a post he held until 1976.

In 1976 Hua, Wang and Chi all played vital roles in suppressing what remained of the revolutionary left, principally the Shanghai grouping. However, they came under attack from a re-ascendent Teng Hsiao-ping, and at the Fifth Plenum of the 11th Central Committee in 1980 both Wang and Chi resigned from all party and state posts, along with Wu Teh, the mayor of Peking, and Chen Hsi-lien, vice-premier and regional military commander of Shenyang. By November, 1980 the CPC Central Committee had posthumously expelled Kang Sheng and Hsieh Fu-chih, as part of the process of reversing the verdicts on the Cultural Revolution and apparently continuing the effort to undercut Hua Kuo-feng himself.

Another base of the Left alliance was a group of Peking theoreticians, propagandists, and party activists led by Chen Po-ta. Chen was long associated with the Propaganda Department of the party and became the first editor of its theoretical journal, Red Flag. Formerly a personal secretary to Mao, Chen was nonetheless a leading theoretician in his own right and eventually became a member of the five-person Standing Committee of the Politburo. His supporters in Peking included Wang Li, Kuan Feng, Chi Pen-yu, Lin Chieh, and Mu Hsin, all of whom became active in the Group in Charge of the Cultural Revolution. Wang Li was a member of the CC's Propaganda Department and vice-governor of Hopei. Kuan Feng was a philosophy teacher at Peking University who became an editor of Philosophical Studies and Red Flag. Chi Pen-yu was deputy editor-in-chief of Red Flag and became well known for his articles criticizing Wu Han's play and the Peng Chen clique.

Lin Chieh and Mu Hsin were the members of Chen Po-ta's group who were most closely linked with the university sector, and in particular the Department of Philosophy and Social Sciences of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. They became implicated as leaders of the so-called "Fourth Headquarters" of the Red Guards, whose main base of support was found in the elite colleges in Peking where cadre for the departments and ministries of the state apparatus were educated.¹⁵ This was the base which gave rise to the organization "the May 16th Corps", which was denounced as a counter-revolutionary, conspiratorial clique in late 1967. By 1968 all of Chen's supporters had been purged for their links with the ultra-left "May 16th Corps", and in 1970 Chen himself was deposed from his leading position in the Party at the Second Plenum of the Central Committee. Labelled a "left" deviationist, Chen took the brunt of the attack from the forces which were moving to topple Lin Piao. The class base of Chen Po-ta's grouping was the intelligentsia, and his grouping came to represent the political wing of this base which, with the gathering momentum of the Cultural Revolution, propelled itself into the more extreme, ultra-left positions.

Working with Chen Po-ta's grouping on the Group in Charge of the Cultural Revolution (GCCR) was another major component of the Left Alliance, the Shanghai grouping. Based in Shanghai, China's largest and most developed industrial city, this wing of the party included Chiang Ching, Mao's wife, who had become famous for initiating the revolutionary movement in Peking opera and ballet and had become an advisor to the PLA on cultural work. Originally, the Shanghai grouping had been led by Ko Ching-shih, the first party secretary and mayor of Shanghai until he died in 1965. Upon Ko's death, the leading revolutionary in Shanghai became Chang Chun-chiao, who became chairman of the Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Committee during the Cultural Revolution and a member of the Politburo. Also a member of the grouping was Yao Wen-yuan, a young propagandist who led the public attack on Wu Han's play and eventually became editor-in-chief of People's Daily during the Cultural Revolution. The fourth major member

of the grouping was Wang Hung-wen, a young security worker in a Shanghai cotton mill who led in founding the Shanghai Workers Revolutionary Rebels Headquarters in 1967. In the GCCR the Shanghai grouping led the Literary and Art Unit headed by Chiang Ching, while the Chen Po-ta grouping led the Propaganda Unit.

Although this grouping was responsible for some of the "leftist" errors during the Cultural Revolution, such as the formation of the Shanghai Commune, these four also became major party spokespeople opposing ultra-leftism and appeared to follow a fairly consistent line which seemed closest to that of Mao himself. During the GPCR they were in the vanguard mobilizing the Chinese working class to exercise leadership over all spheres of society. Their direct base of support was the Shanghai workers, who represented the largest concentration and most politically advanced sector of the Chinese working class. With the fall of both Chen Po-ta's and Lin Piao's groupings, the Shanghai grouping played a leading role in opposing capitalist retrenchment in the 1970's. Despite the general weakening of the revolutionary left in the early 1970's, the Shanghai wing was still able to carry out struggle because of its continuing strong base of support in Shanghai and its close ties to Mao. In 1976, after Mao's death, the reactionaries in the party moved quickly to have them arrested and began a campaign to discredit them as an ultra-left "Gang of Four".

The last major wing of the Left Alliance was the grouping around Lin Piao in the People's Liberation Army. A contradictory grouping, it carried out many genuinely leftist policies before and during the Cultural Revolution and operated for a while as a powerful bastion of the revolutionary left. But it also had a much more conservative bent than either the Shanghai grouping or the Chen Po-ta wing in the party, and this tendency seems attributable ultimately to the contradictory nature of a standing army in a revolutionary socialist society. For a while, Lin Piao was accused mainly of ultra-leftism, but this charge was changed to being labelled a die-hard rightist who wanted to subject China to a military dictatorship and capitalist restoration.

Lin's more well-known supporters in the central military apparatus were Hsiao Hua, head of the General Political Department of the PLA; Liu Chih-chien, deputy head of the GPD, member of the GCCR, and head of the All-Army Cultural Revolution Group; Yeh Chun, Lin's wife, who became a Politburo member; and later Huang Yung-sheng, the military commander of Canton who became army chief of staff in 1968. In 1967 both Hsiao and Liu were purged from their powerful positions in the General Political Department, and the main public charge against them was ultra-leftism. In 1971 Lin Piao reportedly died in a plane crash, accused of attempting to assassinate Mao and overthrow the dictatorship of the proletariat. In connection with this incident, sixty of the top leaders in the military were purged, and the expulsions reached even into the regional military organizations.

As this brief recounting of the components of the revolutionary alliance demonstrates, Mao was in leadership of a coalition which broke up during the Cultural Revolution and split into different warring camps. A significant problem with the ability of the revolutionary left to carry through its struggle against revisionism was the strength of ultra-leftism within its own ranks. As with the Great Leap Forward, ultra-left policies helped to sabotage much of the promise of the Cultural Revolution and served to strengthen the power of the Rightists.

In addition, a number of the forces associated with Chou En-lai, who had been considered center forces in the Left alliance, progressively degenerated and ended up moving to the right and bolstering the forces of counter-revolution.

Carrying out the suppression of the last leftist base in 1976, these forces played an episodic, transitional role in transferring real political power back again to a rebuilt bourgeois headquarters now led by Liu's pragmatic lieutenant, Teng Hsiao-ping. Having performed this historical function, these forces linked with Chou En-lai have found themselves cast one by one into political purgatory by the Teng grouping.

As Mao remarked during the Cultural Revolution, "apart from uninhabited deserts, wherever there are groups of people, they are invariably composed of the left, the middle, and the right. This will be the case for ten thousand years."¹⁶ But the left, middle, and right are not abstract fixed categories, but undergo concrete, historical transformation through the course of political struggle. With the elimination of the old Right forces, forces from within the middle may separate off and emerge as a new Right. Those who come forward as the left at the beginning of a political movement may very well degenerate into ultra-leftism, and the genuine left develop only through the course of the class struggle. One of the reasons is that opposition to the main danger represented by right opportunism or revisionism can provide a cover for the growth of ultra-leftism.

These general laws help to explain on an abstract theoretical plane how the Left Alliance disintegrated into different camps despite its initial success in overthrowing the top leadership of the Liu Shao-chi grouping in the party and state. What we will be examining in the rest of this paper will be more of the political and ideological particulars of how this development occurred.

The Charter of the Chinese Cultural Revolution

The actual composition of the Left Alliance which Mao had assembled to lead the Cultural Revolution helps to shed light on the contents of the document which served as the charter of that revolution, the 16-Point Decision of the Eleventh Plenum of the Central Committee. The 16-Point Decision was an historic document whose over-all thrust was clearly revolutionary, and it provided a powerful ideological impetus to the development of the GPCR. However, it could not go beyond the parameters of the unity acceptable to the different groupings making up the Left Alliance, and where differences were potentially sharp the document tended to maintain a diplomatic ambiguity. Moreover, as advanced as the thinking of the revolutionary leftists like Mao was, their orientation still contained a number of weaknesses and limitations. It is these limitations of the document which we will turn our attention to because they had a significant effect on a full and vigorous development of the Cultural Revolution.

The first point of the 16-Point Decision describes the Cultural Revolution as a new stage in the Chinese socialist revolution whose ideological focus is the task of combatting the old customs, ideas, culture, and habits of the exploiting classes and bringing about a revolutionary transformation that will touch people "to their very souls". The document explains the over-all strategic aim of the Cultural Revolution as follows:

At present, our objective is 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, so as to facilitate the consolidation and development of the socialist system.¹⁷

This objective was summarized in the formula "struggle-criticism-transformation". First of all, the objective does not point out a critical importance in revolutionizing the economic base itself, specifically the capitalist features still embedded in the relations of production. The Cultural Revolution, as the name implies, is mainly concerned with radicalizing the superstructure, and in particular the institutions of the superstructure dealing with the propagation of ideology. These institutions of the superstructure and the ideas, habits, and customs which they reinforce are, of course, the slowest to change. One Cultural Revolution would not be sufficient to insure the dominance of proletarian ideology.

The document places little stress, in reality, on seriously revamping the political institutions of the country, which must be considered the revolutionary heart of the superstructure as a whole. The specific political objective of the Cultural Revolution is to "struggle against and overthrow those persons in authority who are taking the capitalist road." What is not specifically addressed in this charter is the question of actual bourgeois political relations which would tend to bureaucratize the state apparatus and the communist party, no matter how many capitalist-roaders were purged. The basic point that needs to be made is that unless the question of the mass line as an institutional contradiction is resolved in the way the state and the party relate to the masses, bureaucratization of these apparatuses will inevitably engender new capitalist-roaders.

In a general sense, these bourgeois political relations, which tend to distort the dictatorship of the proletariat, will continue to exist and reproduce themselves as long as the capitalist features of the relations of production which ultimately support them are not eradicated. In other words, the working class will not be able to exercise its political dictatorship so long as it is not mobilized and educated to become the master of the economic base. The revolutionization of the working class' ideology is not an end in itself, but is intended to prepare it to exercise political and economic power under socialism so that continual progress towards a classless society can be made. Hence, if the Cultural Revolution is not designed to culminate in the working class' greater ability to exercise such power, then it is falling short of fulfilling its most appropriate historical ends.

Point Fourteen of the document tends to reinforce this belief that the Left Alliance is placing certain limits on how far the Cultural Revolution need be developed in terms of revolutionizing the power relations among classes involved in the process of production. What this point emphasizes is not the transformation of the division of labor at the point of production, but the development of the productive forces as a result of the radicalization of working people's ideology:

The aim of the great proletarian cultural revolution is to revolutionize people's ideology and as a consequence to achieve greater, faster, better and more economical results in all fields of work...
The great proletarian cultural revolution is a powerful motive force for the development of the social productive forces in our country.

This orientation leaves itself too open to the maneuvers of the revisionists, who constantly attempt to control and regulate class struggle on the justification that its main purpose is to raise the level of the productive forces. The 16-Point Decision accommodates this kind of manipulation by not going straight to the heart of the question, and that is revolutionizing the relations of production,

especially the differences between mental and manual labor. The reason that this issue is left at the level of ideology and is not brought down to the level of dealing with the division of labor is that the general perspective guiding the document bases itself on the assumption that the economic base as a whole is a relatively stable component of the socialist system, while the main inroads of the bourgeoisie have been initiated in the superstructure.

On the vital question of overhauling the dictatorship of the proletariat from below, by increasing the democratic participation of the working masses in the organs of political power, the 16-Point Decision is relatively vague. In Point Nine mention is made of the new cultural revolutionary groups, committees, and congresses that are being established by the masses in this stage of the Cultural Revolution. These forms of organization are described as "an excellent bridge to keep our Party in close contact with the masses. They are organs of power of the proletarian cultural revolution." They are to be regarded as "permanent, standing mass organizations" because, it is explained, carrying out the ideological struggle will require a very long period of time. In addition, Point Nine explains that "it is necessary to institute a system of general elections, like that of the Paris Commune" for electing members of these new bodies.

These organizations are described as "organs of power", but the exact nature of their power is not really clarified. Their relation to the existing organs of political power represented by the state apparatus is likewise left unanswered. The implication of Point Nine seems to be that these bodies exercise power in the sense that they are responsible to carry out the revolution in the ideological sphere of the superstructure. Ambiguity on such a critical question as the nature of state power and the role of the Cultural Revolution in reforming this state power led to unnecessary confusion and misdirection.

With some justification, some of the left forces seized on the idea of the Paris Commune mentioned in the 16 Points and took concrete initiatives to set up an actual commune form of government. Hence, we can witness the declaration of the Shanghai Commune in January, 1967, which was almost immediately changed into the form of a revolutionary committee upon Mao's direct recommendation. We will examine this problem in greater detail later in this paper.

Part of the problem was that there were conflicting views on how the masses should participate in the political superstructure. This conflict was related, in turn, to differing views on how to implement the mass line. The right opportunist view on the mass line regarded the party as a more or less self-regulating elite, which may take criticism from the masses, but does not boldly arouse and mobilize the masses to take a direct role in rectifying the party. This was the basic view of Liu Shao-chi, who carried out party rectification campaigns primarily from above, with careful regulation and control of the mass movements which the party initiated and led. It is no wonder then that Liu's book How To Be a Good Communist came under severe criticism for promoting Confucian self-cultivation among party cadre, whom he promoted to stand apart from and above the masses. Despite the demotion of Liu at the Eleventh Plenum, there was still considerable support for such views within the party, the army, and the central government.

Such elitist views flew in the face of Mao's search for "a form, a method, to arouse the broad masses to expose (the party's) dark aspect openly, in an all-round way and from below."¹⁸ Point Four of the 16-Point Decision itself makes it very clear that "in the great proletarian cultural revolution, the only method

is for the masses to liberate themselves, and any method of doing things in their stead must not be used...Trust the masses, rely on them and respect their initiative. Cast out fear. Don't be afraid of disturbances." According to the perspective of the revolutionary left in the CPC, when the Party rules in the name of the working class and does not take systematic measures to implement the mass line to educate the working class to effectively exercise state power, then it is bound to eventually degenerate and turn the proletarian dictatorship into a new form of bourgeois dictatorship.

While these correct measures were advocated to overcome Confucian elitism and bureaucratic degeneration of the state and the communist party, what was not as well guarded against was an anarchist distortion of the mass line which over-estimated the role of the masses and assigned them a leadership function over the communist party itself. In the long run, the only real solution is for the "masses to liberate themselves", but during the protracted period of the socialist transition it is not possible for the masses to move closer to liberation without the leadership of a vanguard party. It is anarchism to believe that the masses are inherently politically wise and can spontaneously achieve their own liberation.

The masses should definitely be trusted, but primarily in the sense that they will tend to follow political leadership which serves their genuine interests when such leadership is presented as a viable historical alternative. When the masses are in revolutionary motion, actively seeking a way out of their oppression, leaders will always come forward to attempt to guide that motion. But a relatively stable and authoritative core of tried and tested political leaders as can be found in a communist party, cannot be expected as a spontaneous product of the mass movement. We will examine these points further in the light of the ultra-left trend which flourished during the Cultural Revolution and preached spontaneism as a means to derail the masses from the achievement of their revolutionary objective and undermine the leading role of the communist party.

While the 16-Point Decision may be interpreted as over-estimating the role of the masses, it also tends to under-estimate the strength of the enemy. For example, in targetting the capitalist-roaders in authority as the object of political struggle, it narrows down too much the scope of the attack. As Point Five recommends, "concentrate all forces to strike at the handful of ultra-reactionary bourgeois Rightists and counter-revolutionary revisionists...so as to isolate them to the maximum." In line with this tactic of maximum isolation, Point Eight categorizes party cadre into four sets: "1) good; 2) comparatively good; 3) those who have made serious mistakes but have not become anti-Party, antisocialist Rightists, and 4) the small number of anti-Party, antisocialist Rightists."

Besides describing the anti-Party Rightists as a small handful, the document even suggests that they be given "a chance to turn over a new leaf". Apparently, revisionists like Teng Hsiao-ping were ready to turn over any number of new leaves just in order to maintain themselves in power. A more complicated problem that the document does not attempt to deal with is the distinction made between the die-hard revisionists and those cadre who have just made serious mistakes. In effect, what appeared to happen was that the leading reactionaries such as Liu Shao-chi, Tao Chu, and Teng Hsiao-ping were allowed to do self-criticism while their cases were separated off from their supporters in the lower echelons of the party who were categorized only as people who had made serious mistakes. While the justification given was to maximize the isolation of the die-hard leaders, the historical results of such a lenient policy appear to

confirm the view that a strong base of support for revisionism was allowed to maintain itself in the party even when the leading revisionists were forced to step down. With such a base of support intact, bourgeois reactionaries like Teng Hsiao-ping could always make a comeback at the most opportune time. The revolutionary left over-estimated the efficacy of the self-criticism performed by the leading capitalist-roaders while it under-estimated the base of their support throughout the party.

One of the reasons for this approach was that the Chinese Marxist-Leninists were reacting to what they perceived as an arbitrary exercise of political power by Stalin. As an over-reaction, they tended to deviate towards organizational leniency, and one of the early results of this policy was the artificial separation of ideology from organization. This took the form, as we have stated before, of the division of the communist party into two basic lines of authority. As Chairman, Mao retained ideological authority over the party, while leaders like Liu and Teng were given great power over the day-to-day organizational functioning of the party apparatus.

Such a policy allowed the revisionists to increase their power over the party and thwart and block any major ideological campaigns initiated by Mao and the revolutionary left. As Mao explained in 1966, "What I'm responsible for is the division into first and second lines. Why did we make this division into first and second lines? The first reason is that my health is not very good; the second was the lesson of the Soviet Union... I never imagined that things might move in the opposite direction."¹⁹ At the tenth plenum in 1962 this division into first and second lines of authority was formally abolished, but the damage done by under-estimating the importance of organizational line had already been allowed to take place: during the period of the two "lines" the Liu grouping had increased its power to the point where it threatened to exercise an organizational hammerlock on the party. The Chinese Marxist-Leninists were often fond of remarking that "political and ideological line decides everything", but this can be assumed to be true only when it is conjoined with the concrete organization to effect its implementation. This was a bitter lesson learned by the revolutionary left in China and the effects of this general organizational laxness and leniency had a telling effect on the left's ability to consolidate the gains of the Cultural Revolution.

Since Liu Shao-chi held so much power in the party apparatus, Mao and the revolutionary left turned to the PLA as a vehicle for revolutionary transformation of Chinese society. In the early 1960's the General Political Department was set up in the PLA and this was meant to be the political soul of the military. Insofar as the PLA was held up as a model for the rest of Chinese society, the General Political Department was in a position to exercise a powerful influence far beyond the confines of the PLA itself. But, while the PLA was enjoined to play a leading role in the Cultural Revolution, the Cultural Revolution was never fully carried out in the PLA itself. This was a curious contradiction in Mao's policy, which was willing to dip the communist party into the baptism of fire of the Cultural Revolution, but was reluctant to do the same with the PLA. Although the revolutionary left may have had a significant foothold in the PLA, through the Minister of Defense Lin Piao and the General Political Department, there was little reason to believe that the military apparatus was more immune to revisionist influence than the party. In fact, it seems evident now that the revisionists always had a powerful base of support in the military establishment.

The laconic nature of Point Fifteen of the 16-Point Decision belies the

significance of the restrictions placed on the development of the Cultural Revolution in the armed forces: "In the armed forces, the cultural revolution and the socialist education movement should be carried out in accordance with the instructions of the Military Commission of the Central Committee of the Party and the General Political Department of the People's Liberation Army." In other words, the established organs of the party and army would have full power to guide the Cultural Revolution in the armed forces and prevent it from getting out of control. As long as these organs were under the control of the revolutionary left, the fruits of the Cultural Revolution were not in danger. But, since the PLA had inordinate power in the later stages of the Cultural Revolution and was increasingly relied on as the arbiter of the struggle, once Marxist-Leninists were no longer in control of these organs, the fate of the GPCR was placed in doubt.

The Working Class Takes the Lead: The "January Revolution", 1967

Following the Eleventh Plenum and the giant rallies in Peking in support of the Red Guard movement, the Cultural Revolution entered a whole new stage. The major event which marked this second period of the Cultural Revolution was the entrance of the working class onto the political stage. The immediate culmination of this new leading role for the working class was the January Revolution in Shanghai in 1967. The leaders of this working class revolution were Chang Chun-chiao, Yao Wen-yuan, and Wang Hung-wen. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was no longer being waged merely in the name and interests of the working class, but the working class was appropriating the movement as its own.

The immediate political catalyst for the upsurge in Shanghai, China's largest industrial city, was the Red Guards. Student leaders like Nieh Yuan-tzu and Kuai Ta-fu were dispatched to Shanghai to exchange experiences with the revolutionary-minded members of the industrial proletariat, who came to be called Red Rebels. Soon an intense debate was in full swing in Shanghai's factories which focussed on questions like the management system, piecework and bonuses, the role of the trade unions, and temporary contract labor. Like the students, the workers started to split into two major camps of radicals and conservatives. The radicals in Shanghai formed themselves into a mass organization called the Shanghai Workers Revolutionary Rebels Headquarters. The radicals not only led the workers to challenge the managers of their factories, but they were soon mobilizing support city-wide to denounce the Shanghai Municipal Committee, which had been taken over by conservatives after the death of the city's revolutionary mayor, Ko Shing-shih, in 1965. The conservatives responded by forming their own mass workers organization, which was initially larger than that of the radicals, and was interestingly enough called the Detachment of the Red Defense of Mao Tsetung.

There were noticeable contradictions among the leaders of the Left Alliance about whether the working class should be fully mobilized and activated in the Cultural Revolution. The center forces like Chou En-lai, who had control of the State Council, were counseling restraint. Through their influence, the workers were instructed that carrying out the Cultural Revolution should not interfere with maintaining production. In other words, the factories should not stop production in the way that the universities ceased to function. The workers were further encouraged to maintain the standards of the "four clean-ups" which had been part of the Socialist Education Movement, and involved keeping material and equipment in good order, maintaining stocks, and organizing production teams. In addition, the workers were told to remain in their own workplaces in carrying

out the Cultural Revolution and mainly concern themselves with the situation in their particular shop.

These guidelines represented the center forces' interpretation of Point Fourteen of the 16-Point Decision, which was popularized by the phrase "Grasp Revolution, Promote Production". The Center forces tended to read the phrase as "Grasp Revolution in order to Promote Production", or alternatively as "Don't Grasp Revolution if it Disrupts Production". Nevertheless, despite these restrictions, the workers were given encouragement by the revolutionary left to form their own organizations and fully express their opinions in meetings, leaflets, and big-character posters. The Fall of 1966 in Shanghai was a time of great revolutionary ferment, as semi-literate workers were emboldened to take up the pen to write their first public statements and challenge the managers, administrators, and technicians for the control of production in their own factories.

Soon the Chinese trade union federation was under attack for having functioned as a shackle on the working class by operating hand-in-hand with factory management. The trade unions had become bureaucratized as top-down "transmission belts" from the party apparatus and the management elite instead of actively representing the interests of the rank and file workers to the management and in the party. The leftists in the Group in Charge of the Cultural Revolution like Chen Po-ta and Chiang Ching encouraged the Shanghai workers to seize power in the trade union federation, which they did in December. Immediately, the revolutionized trade union federation condemned the contract labor system which brought peasants from the countryside to work in the cities on a temporary contract basis. The wages of these workers were considerably lower than those of the regular urban industrial workers, and the revolutionary left considered this kind of contract labor as a form of exploitation which exacerbated the differences between town and countryside, worker and peasant.

Soon after the revolutionized trade union federation had denounced contract labor, Chou En-lai over-ruled the proposal for pay raises to these temporary workers, citing the authority of Mao Tsetung.²⁰ The demand for equal pay for temporary workers was part of a general trend of grievances among the Shanghai workers for higher pay and shorter hours. But the Cultural Revolution did little to effect any changes in these areas. The 8-grade wage scale, for instance, remained pretty much the same throughout the GPCR.²¹ What did get eliminated was the reliance on bonuses and piecework, which had been condemned for conditioning workers to pursue narrow self-interest.

Instead of opposing the mass demands of the Shanghai workers for reforms in wages and hours, the reactionaries among the Party and Municipal leadership cleverly put themselves forward as the "economist" champions of these demands. These reactionaries attempted to disrupt and derail the revolutionary movement of the Shanghai workers by promoting a backward economist, narrowly corporatist attitude among them. In some industries wages were suddenly raised, foremen were given expensive traveling accounts, and banks were instructed to honor drafts presented by any workers on their enterprise funds.²² In addition, among certain critical sectors of the economy such as the docks and public services, the conservative party leaders and their allies among the old trade union leaders instigated strikes. These tactics were meant to put the revolutionaries on the defensive by forcing them into the role of the guardians of production.

The Revolutionary Rebels Headquarters responded to these provocations by seizing control of the city's major newspapers and exhorting the workers to return to work -- to repudiate economism and "grasp revolution, promote

production". Mao and the Proletarian Headquarters in Peking intervened directly in the struggle, throwing their public support to Chang Chun-chiao and the Revolutionary Rebels Headquarters. Relatively quickly, the resistance of the more backward workers was broken. But as a direct result of this momentous struggle, what immediately thrust itself into the forefront was the central question of political power. It was obvious that political power in the hands of reactionaries gave them a tremendous weapon to try to beat back and break up the revolutionary movement of the working class. It was no longer sufficient to criticize reactionary party and state functionaries from below and expect them to rectify their errors; power had to be seized from their hands.

On January 22, 1967 a major editorial appeared in People's Daily declaring that "Power of every sort controlled by the representatives of the bourgeoisie must be seized...the (masses of revolutionary rebels) are seeing ever more clearly that the reason why the revolution suffered setbacks is due precisely to the fact that they did not seize in their own hands the seals of power."²³ Complicated negotiations among the different revolutionary organizations lasted through January, but finally a Grand Alliance was formed of the worker organizations making up the Revolutionary Rebel Headquarters, the student Red Guards, and revolutionary cadre from the old Municipal Committee. As a consequence, the Shanghai Commune was formally established on February 5.

The Shanghai Commune: The Struggle to Reform the State Apparatus

In the year preceding the January Revolution articles had been appearing in the party's theoretical journal Red Flag, under the direction of Chen Po-ta, extolling the virtues of the Commune form of government. The electoral principles of the Paris Commune were explained in some detail without also pointing out the negative lessons to be learned from the 1871 Revolution. On February 3, just two days before the declaration of the Shanghai Commune, the latest of these articles in Red Flag appeared, again praising the principles of the Commune.²⁴

What was not completely clear at the time of these articles was that the commune form of government was not a model endorsed by all members of the revolutionary left. As the articles in Red Flag indicated, the ideological fountainhead responsible for advocating the immediate application of the principles of the Paris Commune to China was the Chen Po-ta grouping.

Very soon after the formation of the Shanghai Commune, Mao asked Chang Chun-chiao and Yao Wen-yuan to come to Peking and had several talks with them laying out his objections to the commune. The revolutionaries in Shanghai were motivated by good intentions to make a radical rupture with the old bureaucratized state apparatus, but many of the ideological assumptions underlying the effort to constitute the Commune were essentially anarchist. Mao explained: "The slogan of 'Doubt everything and overthrow everything' is reactionary. The Shanghai People's Committee demanded that the Premier of the State Council should do away with all heads. This is extreme anarchism, it is most reactionary."²⁵ The assumption that all the old party and state authorities should be overthrown implied that the dictatorship of the proletariat no longer really existed and that therefore a thorough-going second political revolution was necessary.

According to Mao, however, the dictatorship of the proletariat still did exist in China, and what was needed was not to completely transform the form of government of this dictatorship but to purge the bourgeois reactionaries from their positions of power and reform the state apparatus by strengthening

the democratic participation of the masses. Under socialism there is an inevitable separation of the state apparatus from the working class, which is related to the historical nature of the state itself, but when this separation becomes such a gulf that the proletariat is effectively severed from the levers of political power, then the dictatorship of the proletariat in its essential features no longer exists. This had not become the case in China although the state apparatus had been allowed to become increasingly divorced from the laboring masses.

Mao was interested in the reformation of the socialist state apparatus and saw no need for a second political revolution. As he is quoted stating during the Cultural Revolution, "The most fundamental principle in the reform of state organs is that they must keep in contact with the masses".²⁶ The central problem with the commune was that while it formed the new state organs on the basis of democratic control from the masses, it undermined the centralized aspects of the state which are inherent in it as the dictatorial form of class rule by the proletariat.

As the course of the struggle during the Cultural Revolution was to dramatically illustrate, the masses cannot always be expected to distinguish revolutionaries from hidden counter-revolutionaries who "wave the Red Flag In Order To Oppose the Red Flag". The ultra-democracy intrinsic to the Commune form assumed too high a political level among the masses and therefore gave too much maneuvering room for reactionaries. Without the centralized leadership of a recognized Marxist-Leninist core, the revisionists could easily manipulate the Commune form for their own reactionary ends. Mao went to the heart of the matter in his talks with Chang and Yao: "Communes are too weak when it comes to suppressing counter-revolution."²⁷

While Mao was expressing his objections to the communization of the state apparatus, Chen Po-ta and his supporters were openly calling for the formation of communes throughout China. But what was implicit in their position was that a thorough-going political revolution was necessary. Such a position involved a number of troublesome theoretical as well as practical problems. If the radical measure of forming communes everywhere in China was indeed necessary, then did this not imply that the old state apparatus had become hopelessly degenerate and bureaucratized and that the revisionists had achieved political dominance within it? Such a radical transformation of the nature of the Chinese form of government naturally left open the question of the character of the Chinese socialist revolution. Had, for instance, the dictatorship of the proletariat really been established for the last 17 years since liberation? The typically utopian perspective of an anarchist ideologue would have answered that China had not been ruled by "an association of free producers", but by an authoritarian, bureaucratic elite.

A number of ultra-left organizations formed during this period were less circumspect in drawing out the necessary consequences of the commune position than the Chen Po-ta wing of the CPC. Sheng-wu-lien, a large, influential organization in Hunan, for example, openly declared that China was ruled by a class of "Red" capitalists and that the old state machinery that this class wielded for its own purposes had to be completely smashed.²⁸ Trotskyite organizations like the Progressive Labor Party in the United States took up a very similar position and threw their support to organizations like Sheng-wu-lien as the real "leftists" of the Cultural Revolution.

Mao's own position was qualitatively different from, and opposed to, the perspective that either openly stated or implied that China was already ruled

by a capitalist class. As he stated to Chang and Yao, "There is a slogan in Honan, 'The present-day proletarian dictatorship must be completely changed.' This is a reactionary slogan."²⁹ The Cultural Revolution was a revolution under proletarian dictatorship. Taking the 17 years since Liberation as a whole, the revolutionary line of Mao and his allies had been dominant in the Communist Party and the People's Republic. The reason that this kind of Cultural Revolution needed to be carried out was that the revisionists like Liu and Teng had assumed significant power within the organs of the proletarian dictatorship and these organs were beginning to lose their revolutionary ties with the masses.

A critical shortcoming of the Shanghai Commune that needs to be emphasized was that it undercut the need for a Communist Party as the leading political core of the working class. The Commune was an ultra-democratic, essentially anarchist form which, in effect, tended to question all relatively permanent political authority. Its basic operational assumption was that all party cadre in responsible positions of authority would eventually degenerate and would have to be overthrown. At this stage of the Chinese socialist revolution, Mao made it clear that Marxist-Leninists needed to consistently oppose the ultra-left current which had arisen in anarchist defiance of the leading role of the Communist Party. He asked Chang and Yao rhetorically whether a communist party was still needed, and he answered, "I think that we need it because we need a hard core, a bronze matrix, to strengthen us on the road that we still have to travel. You can call it what you like, Communist Party or Socialist Party, but we must have a party. This must not be forgotten."³⁰

It was inevitable that such a semi-anarchist current would arise within the Chinese Communist Party, just as it arose several times within the CPSU (B), with such factions as the Workers Opposition. Such political currents arise in response to the relative separation of the broad working masses from a position of direct and immediate control over their state apparatus. This relative separation is unavoidable historically because it is grounded in the objective material and cultural conditions bequeathed by capitalism. The broad masses of laborers develop as the real masters of socialist society in an all-round political, economic, and ideological sense only through a protracted process of struggle and education. They cannot achieve this mastery through one or two Cultural Revolutions, and it is political Utopianism to operate on such an assumption.

The Chen Po-ta grouping within the Chinese Communist Party did not proselytize for communization without being able to refer to the writings of Marx himself for a supposed endorsement of such a position. In his works such as The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte and The Civil War in France Marx clearly takes the position that the military-bureaucratic state machine constructed by bourgeois society cannot be wielded by the proletariat for its own political purposes, but must be smashed and destroyed. For Marx, the harbinger of the dictatorship of the proletariat was the short-lived Paris Commune. The Commune was a radical historical break with "the centralized State power, with its ubiquitous organs of standing army, police, bureaucracy, clergy, and judicature -- organs wrought after the plan of a systematic and hierarchic division of labor."³¹ One of the first decrees of the Paris Commune, for example, was the suppression of the standing army, and its replacement with "the armed people".

Historical experience, however, has confirmed that Marx's projection of the state form of the dictatorship of the proletariat could only be premised

on the material foundations of an advanced capitalist country. In relatively backward countries like Russia and China where the proletariat has been successful in leading revolutions, attempting to institute a Commune form of government in the early stages of the consolidation of the organs of proletarian dictatorship would amount to utopianism. In such countries which are in the beginning stages of industrialization, destroying the centralized state apparatus would disorganize the unity of the nation. Such a State power is an historical necessity within a national framework in which the proletariat is a decided minority and the great bulk of the population has not transcended the rural fragmentation of an essentially peasant economy.

Such a centralized State power can be reformed, but it cannot be replaced as long as the peasantry has not been proletarianized and the urban working class has not become the master of the means of production in more than the formal sense of property ownership effected through the state itself. And this is the basic reason that revolutionary movements like the GPCR are so essential to mobilize the masses "in an all-round way and from below" to educate themselves to wield greater power over the political superstructure. But the immediate target of struggle for such revolutionary mass movements is not the centralized state power itself, but its bourgeoisification, which transforms the state functionaries into a leading wing of a new ruling class.

The tendency towards bourgeoisification is an inherent aspect of the state apparatus. And this is because the relative separation of the state from society is a reflection of the strength of bourgeois right. The heart of the problem is not to attempt to revolutionize the state primarily from within the political superstructure, but to struggle to eradicate bourgeois right and its manifestation in the Three Great Differences, between town and country, between worker and peasant, and between mental and manual labor. Lenin was acutely aware of the conservatizing functions which are an integral part of the state even under socialism. Speaking of "communism" in its lower stage, which we commonly refer to as socialism, Lenin explained the link between the state and bourgeois right:

Of course, bourgeois right in regard to the distribution of consumer goods inevitably presupposes the existence of the bourgeois state, for right is nothing without an apparatus capable of enforcing the observance of standards of right. It follows that under communism there remains for a time not only bourgeois right, but even the bourgeois state, without the bourgeoisie!"³²

To paraphrase Marx, the standards of right enforced by the political superstructure can never be higher than the relations of production conditioned by the development of the productive forces, and the general cultural or ideological level achieved by the ruling class of the society. In the case of China, the proletariat had the added problem of contending with the ideological reservoir left by a 4,000-year-old civilization which had been dominated by Confucianism. During this time China had been ruled by an Emperor in conjunction with a powerful central bureaucracy of Confucian scholar-officials. This bureaucracy was based in the towns and cities and was legitimated ideologically by a strictly hierarchical social division of labor in which the division between mental and manual labor was a central contradiction. An axiom by Mencius, a disciple of Confucius, sums up the Confucian attitude on mental and manual labor: "Those who labor with their minds govern others; those who labor with their strength are governed by others".³³

Without transforming the economic base in industry and agriculture, the state apparatus under socialism would inevitably begin to replicate the features of the Confucian bureaucracy. This replication would occur because the material conditions which sustained it for 4,000 years had not yet been fully transcended. Eradicating these material conditions was one of the central historic tasks of the socialist transition period and would involve a protracted and complicated class struggle waged over a period of decades. Attempting to smash the centralized State power in the early stages of this historical struggle, as the ultra-leftists during the Cultural Revolution tried to do, and replace it prematurely with an ultra-democratic form like the Commune would only disorganize the revolutionary process and strengthen the forces pushing for capitalist restoration.

The goal of the commune form of government itself was not being called into question by Mao and other members of the revolutionary left, for such a form would surely correspond with a more advanced stage of the necessary withering away of the state. But what Mao was struggling against was the premature advocacy of such a form because such a policy reflected an objectively anarchist line on the socialist transition period. Marxists agree with anarchists on the goal of a state-less society under communism, but they part company on the means to reach such a society. During the socialist transition period, Marxists advocate a strong proletarian dictatorship which combines mass democracy with strict centralization of political authority. At the stage of the Chinese socialist revolution represented by the Cultural Revolution, another model besides the Shanghai Commune had to be found to embody the legitimate need for greater democracy without sacrificing the necessary centralization of authority.

During the same time as the formation of the Shanghai Commune, the struggle for political power in Heilungkiang province (formerly called Manchuria) took on a significantly different form. One of the most important developments of this struggle was that the old party leadership, led by party secretary Pan Fusheng, joined forces with the rebel mass organizations and even led them against tank battalions commanded by the reactionaries in the province. This event confirmed Mao's opinion that distinctions must be made between different party cadre, and that many of them could be won over to actively support the Cultural Revolution.³⁴

In late January, 1967, a "Revolutionary Committee" was set up in Heilungkiang which represented a new "three-in-one combination", with the rebels of the revolutionary mass organizations joining together with the old party cadre and representatives of the People's Liberation Army to form a new provincial government. Mao's proletarian headquarters hailed this Revolutionary Committee as the model for the whole country, and Shanghai itself quickly followed suit.

The specific, concrete form of state power had apparently been found for this stage of the Chinese socialist revolution. It was a form which did not seek to eliminate the vital role of the old party cadre. It could combine the experience and political maturity of these cadre and the PLA representatives with the revolutionary enthusiasm and daring of the young rebels. It could be a valuable framework for training these young revolutionary successors, who at this point lacked the experience to run the government. As Mao said, "a university student cannot become a university president for he has not graduated yet..."³⁵

Although the form, the revolutionary committee, had been decided on, there was still tremendous struggle to follow over the actual membership of these

committees and the extent of the political role that they would play. There was still great distrust of the party cadre by the young rebels, but what became of more central importance was the role of the People's Liberation Army, which had remained one of the few relatively stable institutions of the People's Republic during the Cultural Revolution. Already during the January Revolution in Shanghai there were objections raised by the rebel organizations to the directives of the State Council ordering the PLA to take control over the broadcasting stations and the main airfield. This development presaged the terms of the struggle among the forces leading the Cultural Revolution in the subsequent stages of the GPCR.

FOOTNOTES

1. Jean Daubier, A History of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, pg. 36-37, (Vintage Books, New York, 1974).
2. Schram, Chairman Mao Talks to the People, pg. 195.
3. Suyin, Wind in the Tower, pg. 269.
4. Ibid., pg. 269.
5. Daubier, pg. 295.
6. Suyin, pg. 271.
7. Ibid., pg. 259-261.
8. Jean Esmein, The Chinese Cultural Revolution, pgs. 75-78, (Anchor Books, New York, 1973).
9. van Ginneken, The Rise and Fall of Lin Piao, pg. 58.
10. Brugger, Contemporary China, pgs. 287-8.
11. Ibid., pg. 291.
12. Suyin, pg. 287.
13. Daubier, pg. 88.
14. Suyin, pg. 213-4.
15. van Ginneken, pgs. 128-9.
16. Quoted in People's Daily, "Make a Class Analysis of Factionalism", April 27, 1967.
17. All references to the 16-Point Decision below are from Jean Daubier, A History of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, pgs. 297-305.
18. "Report to the Ninth Party Congress".
19. Schram, pg. 266.
20. Esmein, pg. 182.
21. Stephen Andors, China's Industrial Revolution, pgs. 218-219.
22. Suyin, pgs. 302-3.
23. Daubier, pg. 133.
24. van Ginneken, pgs. 89-90.
25. Schram, pg. 277.
26. K.H. Fan, editor, Mao Tsetung and Lin Piao: Post-Revolutionary Writings, pg. 282 (Anchor Books, New York, 1972).
27. Schram, pg. 278.
28. Brugger, pgs. 331-334.
29. Schram, pg. 277.
30. Quoted by Chang Chun-chiao, Survey of Chinese Mainland Press, No. 4147, March 27, 1968, pg. 7.
31. "The Civil War in France" in Marx and Engels Selected Works, pg. 217.
32. "The State and Revolution" in Lenin's Collected Works. Vol. 25, pg. 476.
33. Andors, pg. 27.
34. Suyin, pg. 306.
35. Quoted by Chang Chun-chiao in SCMP, March 27, 1968, pg. 19.

SECTION IV:The Ultra-Left Offensive: January, 1967 to September, 1967

Once the broad masses of the workers, peasants, and soldiers began to assert themselves as the main force in the revolutionary process, the Cultural Revolution entered a whole new stage of development. The students and the intellectuals who had acted as a catalyst for the Cultural Revolution now receded into a subsidiary position. The political effects of the shortcomings of these unstable strata, however, continued to manifest themselves following the January Revolution. During 1967, when the main task became to build Great Alliances and Triple Combinations, the ultra-leftism characteristic of many of the student activists posed a serious problem.

By the middle of July of 1967, Mao is quoted making some telling remarks about the successes achieved in consolidating the Great Alliances and building durable revolutionary committees:

Although the broad masses of the workers and peasants gave an impulse to the great alliances, and although the Central Committee also hoped that great alliances would be rapidly achieved...the petty-bourgeois and bourgeois ideology that was in full spate among the intellectuals and the young students, however, wrecked this situation. Each class still wants to express itself stubbornly. As the laws of class struggle can't be changed in accordance with men's subjective wills, we have been unable to form alliances, and the alliances that were formed have split apart very quickly and don't hold together any more. We will have to slow our pace somewhat.¹

Since the Eleventh Plenum in August, 1966 the Red Guard Third Headquarters had opened up a barrage of public criticism of Liu Shao-chi and Teng Hsiao-Ping and it received support for its efforts from leaders of the Cultural Revolution Group like Chen Po-ta and Chiang Ching. As head of the Propaganda Department of the CC, Tao Chou had become one of the Cultural Revolution's pre-eminent leaders, but his "middle course" of criticizing Peng Chen but protecting Liu and Teng was becoming discredited. In the Fall of 1966, as the masses began to trace the source of their oppression to the Liu headquarters, Tao jettisoned his "middle course" and switched tactics to take up an extremist, ultra-left stance, advocating that everyone was suspect and should be criticized. Having failed to protect Liu and Teng directly, Tao tremendously widened the scope of attack and increased suspicion and confusion so that Liu and Teng were indirectly let off the hook. The case of Tao is interesting because he represents one of the clearest examples of how rightists would resort to ultra-leftism to achieve their reactionary purposes. But by December of 1966, Tao's wily maneuvers had become exposed by the Red Guards, who attacked his policy of sending "liaison agents" to the universities to control the mass movements there. He was purged from his powerful position in the party and his name became linked with that of Liu and Teng in public criticisms of the bourgeois headquarters.²

While Tao was purged, his policy of widening the scope of attack for the Cultural Revolution was taken up by the members of the Chen Po-ta grouping who had leading positions in the Group in Charge of the Cultural Revolution -- Wang Li, Kuan Feng, Chi Pen-yu, Lin Chieh, and Mu Hsin. With the fall of the

Peng Chen clique and the fate of Liu and Teng already sealed, these forces turned to what they considered to be the next major obstacle standing in the way of advancing the Cultural Revolution -- Chou En-lai and his leading ministers in the State Council. What this new attack implied was that all the leading administrators and top state personnel had to be overthrown if the gains of the Cultural Revolution were to be safeguarded. Such an extreme position seemed to follow from the previously discussed assumption involved in advocating the formation of communes -- that the state apparatus was operating as a dictatorship over, not of, the working class.

Moreover, what the attacks on Chou En-lai and his ministers involved was, in effect, an attack on the basis of unity of the Proletarian Headquarters itself. Such an assault could have only one desired result: the splitting and disintegration of the Left Alliance which had been established at the start of the Cultural Revolution. And with such a split, the Rightists who had been knocked down would have the first major opening they needed to begin to stage a comeback.

In early 1967, the ultra-leftists in the GCCR tried to put Chou En-lai on the defensive by initiating a whole series of attacks on Chou's Vice-Premiers: Hsieh Fu-chih (public security), Nieh Jung-chen (strategic industry and Academy of Sciences), Chen Yi (foreign affairs), Tan Chen-lin (agriculture), and Li Hsien-nien (finance).³ During this time, a number of Ministers and their deputies were apprehended by the rebels, beaten up, and paraded through the streets. The Minister of Coal died of a heart attack, apparently because of mistreatment at the hands of the rebels, and the Minister of Railways disappeared altogether.

The attack on Chou En-lai and the Ministers of the State Council was integrally related to a beginning assault on the conservative forces within the People's Liberation Army. In early 1967 the PLA was being instructed to directly intervene in the Cultural Revolution in a number of different ways: in January it took control of civil aviation and by February the organs of public security were put under its control; PLA representatives began to be sent to the factories, and military control commissions were set up at the provincial level and below as a basis to form revolutionary committees.⁴ However, in a number of the provinces the PLA was not supporting the revolutionary left, but was actively abetting the reactionaries. By being directed to intervene in the Cultural Revolution, the PLA had its own internal contradictions intensified and revealed to public view. A sharp struggle began to develop among the members of the Left Alliance about the supposed revolutionary character of the PLA.

Throughout the first half of 1967 the struggle escalated over the evaluation of the role of the State Council and the People's Liberation Army. By July, China appeared to be moving towards the brink of civil war. This danger was revealed dramatically by the Wuhan incident in that same month. In the city of Wuhan, the military commander of the region, Chen Tsai-tao, had thrown his support to the mass organizations set up by the supporters of Liu Shao-chi and Tao Chu; and fighting intensified between the revolutionary mass organizations and the reactionaries backed up by the regional commander. Increasingly alarmed that full-scale armed conflict would break out, Chou En-lai dispatched Wang Li and Hsieh Fu-chih to the city to investigate the situation and prevent a violent clash between the two rival factions.

When these two emissaries threw their support to the revolutionary mass organizations, the regional commander had them arrested and mobilized his army units and the reactionary mass organization called the Million Heroes to launch a violent attack on the revolutionaries in the city. Wang Li was beaten up and paraded through the city's streets as a sign of this open defiance of the central state and party authorities. Peking had to quickly dispatch troops to the city to quell this reactionary rebellion.

With both Wang and Hsieh returning to Peking as heroes after their release, Wang tried to utilize his new political capital to advantage by advocating a campaign to drag out the revisionists in the army. Wang Li told his cohort, the student leader Kuai Ta-fu, "The central task of this coming period is to drag out of the army a small handful of capitalist-roaders who have usurped military power."⁵

The immediate effects of this new ultra-left offensive were felt in Canton, where the regional commander, Huang Yung-shen, had dissolved the revolutionary committee set up by Tao Chu's forces and supported the committee's opponents. In taking such measures, Huang had the explicit backing of Chou En-lai. The campaign launched by the ultra-left "to drag out the handful of capitalist-roaders in the army" seemed perfectly suited to the purposes of the Tao Chu forces, who tried to use it as a pretext to topple Huang. Huang was not loath to use force to defeat his opponents, and by August the conflict had accelerated to full-scale armed struggle, as the opposing groups attacked and counter-attacked with submachine guns.⁶

As the events in Wuhan and Canton showed, the ultra-left offensive against the capitalist-roaders in the army had the potential of sparking a civil war. There is no denying that there were powerful reactionaries in the PLA, especially among the regional military commanders. But once the campaign to drag out the capitalist-roaders in the army had been sanctioned by the Proletarian Headquarters, the PLA was bound to split up into rival factions, as had done the students and the workers. With both the party and state apparatus in disarray, the Red Guard organizations displaying severe problems with factionalism and ultra-leftism, and the working class not yet fully mobilized to play a cohesive and stabilizing political role, unleashing the ultra-leftists to drag out the capitalist-roaders in the army could have had dire consequences for the fate of the Cultural Revolution.

During the same period as the struggle over the role of the PLA, the ultra-leftists had been intensifying their attacks against the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chen Yi. By such attacks, they intended to cast discredit on Chou En-lai and the foreign policy that the People's Republic had been following for a number of years. While Chou En-lai had been forced to relinquish his support for other ministers like Tan Chen-lin during this period when the ultra-leftists were gaining in strength, he did not flinch from backing up Chen Yi, probably because the fall of the Foreign Minister could have had such immediate consequences for China's relations with other countries.

One of the most vocal critics of Chen Yi had been Yao Teng-shan, who had been expelled as the Chinese charge d'affaires from Indonesia in May, 1967, and had been greeted home in Peking as a national hero. Yao immediately began to lay the debacle in Indonesia at the doorstep of Chen Yi, accusing the Minister of having pursued a reactionary, conciliationist foreign policy. By August,

1967, with the encouragement of Wang Li, Yao and his supporters were bold enough to seize power from Chen Yi and take over the Foreign Ministry. In his rise to power, Tao was aided by the American Sidney Rittenberg, who took over control of Peking Radio.⁷

Following upon this seizure of power by the ultra-leftists, a series of ultimatums to foreign governments were issued as well as directives to revolutionary movements in countries like Burma, Nepal, and Cambodia to overthrow their governments. Train shipments from the Soviet Union which had previously been allowed to pass through China to Vietnam were now intercepted. Foreign embassies became centers for public political agitation and demonstrations against the governments of the respective countries. Finally, on August 23, Yao and Wang instigated a demonstration at the British Embassy in China which ended up with the burning down of the Embassy building and attacks on the diplomatic staff.⁸

Chou En-lai reacted immediately, deposing Wang Li and Yao Teng-shan from the Foreign Ministry and putting it directly under his control. When Mao returned to Peking in September, he wasted no time in endorsing Chou En-lai's action. Mao commented that "Wang Li has made more mistakes in the last forty days than Chen Yi in forty years."⁹ Mao expressed his full confidence in the PLA and made a point of giving his specific support to the regional commander in Canton, Huang Yung-shen.

Soon afterwards, Wang Li, Kuan Feng, Lin Chieh, and Mu Hsin were all purged from the Group in Charge of the Cultural Revolution. They were accused of having formed a semi-secret counter-revolutionary organization called the "May 16th Corps", which apparently had its main base among the student rebels at the elite universities in Peking.

The Danger of Bourgeois Ideology Under a "Left" Cover

In summing up the course of the Cultural Revolution in 1967, Mao Tsetung gave an analysis of the weaknesses manifested by the intellectuals and students who in the early stages of the Revolution had assumed a vanguard role:

If revolutionary intellectuals want to carry revolution through to the end they must continually reform themselves through labor. This is because the education that they, including the young students, have received over several decades is basically bourgeois; bourgeois thinking has blended into their bloodstream, and unless they make big efforts to change their world outlook things will start turning into their opposites.¹⁰

In a number of ways, the leadership of many of the prominent rebel students was in the process of turning into its opposite by 1967. When in the early period it was necessary to lead in struggling against the capitalist-roaders and attacking their revisionism, the rebels played a basically revolutionary role. When the Cultural Revolution moved into the stage of transformation and rebuilding, however, their ultra-left excesses became a roadblock to the consolidation of the gains of the GPCR, and these excesses threatened to degenerate into outright counter-revolution. The underlying reason for such degeneration was that much of their attack against revisionism represented only a superficial political opposition and really proceeded from an ideological platform which was still essentially bourgeois.

Bourgeois ideology can assume many forms, and during a revolutionary period it invariably takes on a "left" cover in order to establish a basis of credibility. This does not signify, however, that only hidden bourgeois agents are responsible for pushing revolutionary movements to extremes. The nature of the classes and strata involved in the struggle, the character of their ideological preconceptions, and the tasks to be accomplished in the concrete historical situation will all play significant roles in determining the strength of ultra-leftism.

The Left Alliance built by Mao at the start of the Cultural Revolution was an amalgam of different political tendencies, as this paper has tried to point out before. Under the heat of political battle, these different tendencies sharpened up and more clearly delineated themselves. From within the Left Alliance a clear Left, Center, and Ultra-Left differentiated themselves out. They differentiated themselves out not because of a lack of success in attaining the immediate stated political objectives of the Cultural Revolution, namely the routing of the Peng Chen and Liu Shao-chi factions in the Party and State. The Left Alliance broke up over the questions involved in how wide the target should be and how far the revolution should be carried.

On the question of how far to carry the revolution, we have already talked about the advocacy of the Commune form of government by Chen Po-ta and his supporters and the inherently reactionary nature of the slogan calling for thoroughly transforming the dictatorship of the proletariat. The sharpest differences arose among the Left Alliance over the question of the character of the state apparatus -- how to evaluate the functioning of the State Council under Chou En-lai and the strength of the capitalist-roaders in the standing army. We will examine these issues further in subsequent sections of the paper.

One of the distinguishing traits of the ultra-left current which reached its full strength in the Summer of 1967 was an anarchist over-estimation of the revolutionary role of the masses. In typical anarchist fashion, the masses were regarded as being inherently revolutionary, whereas the representatives of the masses who exercised centralized political authority were regarded as inherently corrupt, bureaucratic, and revisionist. When Mao stated that "the masses are the real heroes, while we ourselves are often childish and ignorant"¹¹ he was very deliberately attacking the Confucian assumption, which had blended into the blood stream of the Chinese intelligentsia, that real wisdom and virtue were concentrated in an educated elite, and not in the masses. However, the ultra-leftists who were active in the Cultural Revolution interpreted such an orientation as a justification for spontaneism and ultra-democracy. As the earlier discussion on the question of the commune demonstrated, the ultra-leftists belittled the necessity of the leading role of the communist party. They assumed that in a revolutionary situation such as that of the GPCR, genuine leaders would emerge more or less spontaneously to meet the demands of the mass movement. As the history of the constitution of communist parties shows, however, such spontaneous generation is not sufficient to construct and sustain a vanguard organization of tested and steeled professional revolutionaries.

Following from their anarchist ideology which regarded political leadership as inherently corrupting, the ultra-leftists in the Cultural Revolution objectively put out a political line of "suspecting all and overthrowing all". What this line really accomplished was to confuse friends with enemies, take the heat off the real revisionists, and drive the more moderate or conservative cadre into the arms of the Right. The ultimate effect of ultra-leftism is to build up the strength of the Right, and the Cultural Revolution was no exception.

This line highlights another basic trait of ultra-leftism --sectarianism. Sectarianism is just a form of elitism or "I am the core" kind of thinking. Under the influence of ultra-leftism many of the mass organizations of the Cultural Revolution became wracked with factionalism, and this situation provided a convenient cover for counter-revolution. Mao explained how it is possible to be revolutionary without being sectarian:

Revolution and protecting both have the strongest class nature. Revolutionary cadres must be protected, and protected with full justification and boldness. It is better to be left than rightist. Apparent "leftism" that is really rightism looks even more revolutionary on the outside than does being realistic, but we do not advocate it.¹²

It should not be surprising that the ultra-left's promotion of ultra-democracy should go hand-in-hand with a sectarian elitism, a super-revolutionary Confucianism. The mass line which binds the vanguard party with the class is severed by anarchism. The result is that on the one side you find the spontaneously revolutionary masses, and on the other side you find the hard core of heroes or saviors who try to demagogically manipulate the masses for their own elite self-interest.

The sectarianism of the ultra-leftists frequently degenerated into outright social-fascism. Many party cadre and state functionaries found themselves subjected to fierce personal attacks and physical assaults. This is the area where counter-revolutionaries were known to excel.

The social-fascist actions were not at all inconsistent with the ultra-left's calls for extended democracy. Historically, fascism has always tried to build a mass base through techniques of demagogic populism. The appeal for greater democracy from below only provides the disruptive cover for the seizure of power from the top. In this light, the hero worship, the quasi-religious cult of Mao Tsetung himself, can be recognized as an integral part of this social-fascist agenda. While the anarchist ultra-democracy could be attributed to the well-meaning zeal of the youthful activists of the Cultural Revolution, the accompanying elitism and social-fascism more clearly reveal the underlying bourgeois character of the ultra-left's political and ideological line.

One of the most damaging features of ultra-leftism in China was the widespread mindless, and often violent, sloganeering which accompanied the mass movements. Slogans can play a valuable role in motivating mass action but they should result from a scientific political analysis of the concrete situation and the best tactical road forward. They should not be allowed to become a substitute for such an analysis, but in the Cultural Revolution and among revolutionaries in other countries inspired by its example, this kind of distorted practice seems to have become popular. Mao had some comments to make on sloganeering in relation to the methods of struggle used by the youthful rebels in the Cultural Revolution:

Our methods of struggle should now be on a higher level. We shouldn't keep on saying, "Smash their dogs' heads, down with XXX". I think that university students should make a deeper study of things and choose a few passages to write some critical articles about.¹³

Mao Tsetung himself, however, is not altogether guiltless in fostering some of the anarchist deviations which were committed by the ultra-left groupings during the Cultural Revolution. The popularization of such slogans as "Bombard the Headquarters" and "It is Right to Rebel" seem easily manipulated to justify and inflame anarchist tendencies. It is definitely not right to rebel against revolutionary authority nor to bombard the Proletarian Headquarters, but this was actually the end result of much of the political activity of the ultra-left.

It was correct for Mao and the other Marxist-Leninists in the CPC to endeavor to fashion a method "to arouse the broad masses to expose our dark aspect openly, in an all-round way and from below", but the actual tactics that were used by the ultra-leftists in putting this method into practice led to many serious anti-party deviations. This method was intended to struggle against and expose the capitalist-roaders in the party, but not to struggle against and expose the party itself.

Struggle Intensifies in the People's Liberation Army: September, 1967 to March, 1968

The purge of the ultra-leftists from the Group in Charge of the Cultural Revolution was the first decisive, public victory in a protracted campaign by an emerging center-right coalition which had objective class interests in calling a halt to the Cultural Revolution.

This purge immediately and unavoidably called into question the leadership of Chen Po-ta, who was the Chairman of the GCCR and the recognized leader of the Peking grouping whose members had fallen. As Deputy Chairperson of the GCCR, Chiang Ching also began to witness her political authority wane. The remaining leadership of the GCCR was put on the political defensive, and their role in providing guidance to the Revolution up to this point was subjected to close scrutiny.

Mao himself left no doubt that he put his support squarely behind Chou En-lai and his allies in the State Council and behind the People's Liberation Army, but most notably the more conservative leaders in the central military apparatus and the regional commanders. In response to Lin Chieh's earlier editorial in Red Flag, which called for dragging out the handful of capitalist-roaders in the army, Mao had written "Save our Great Wall!", referring to the PLA.¹⁴ On National Day celebrations, October 1, 1967, Mao invited a number of the old Marshals and prominent regional commanders to join him on Tien An gate. Standing next to Mao were Chu Teh, Chen Yi, Hsu Hsiang-chien, Yeh Chien-ying, and Nieh Jung-chen -- men who had been violently denounced by a number of the Red Guard organizations in the previous months. Also present were regional commanders like Huang Yung-sheng, labelled by the Red Guards as "the butcher of Kwangchow", Hsu Shih-yu, of the Nanking military region, and Chen Hsi-lien, of the Shenyang military region. Mao's message was clear: he did not consider these men to be the "handful of capitalist roaders in the army".¹⁵

Mao had definitely pulled in the reins on the political activity of the students and intelligentsia who had served as a catalyst for the Cultural Revolution. At this point, when comparing himself to other leaders of the GPCR, Mao is reported to have described himself as a "center-leftist".¹⁶ This description accords with Mao's emphasis on consolidating the gains of the Cultural Revolution and seeking broad-based political unity. The ultra-leftists had threatened to plunge the Proletarian Headquarters into internecine warfare, and

Mao appeared busy in this period trying to rebuild the bridges to what he considered the center forces -- the state administrators, central military leaders, and the regional commanders. Ultra-leftism had become the main danger at this stage, and the purged members of Chen Po-ta's grouping were treated much more harshly than reactionary regional commanders who had already been discredited, like Chen Tsai-tao of Wuhan.¹⁷

While Mao was going out of his way to cement ties with the old Marshals and the veteran commanders in the Military Regions, Lin Piao's supporters in the military apparatus were not faring so well. Already for roughly a year, Lin Piao's grouping in the PLA had been under fire, although the struggle had not been widely publicized.

Soon after the Group in Charge of the Cultural Revolution was set up, it ran into difficulties in bringing the General Political Department of the PLA under its control. As far as the leaders of the General Political Department were concerned, such as its director, Hsiao Hua, and its deputy director, Liu Chih-chien, the GPD had distinguished itself admirably in the very early stages of the Cultural Revolution and it was fully capable of guiding the Revolution within the ranks of the PLA. In January, 1966, at a national PLA conference, Hsiao had enunciated the principle of implicit dual leadership by the party and the PLA: "The system of dual leadership by the military command and the local Party committees -- under the united guidance of the Central Committee of the Party -- must be enforced."¹⁸ It was the General Political Department which had first published Mao's little red book, beginning in 1964, and had attempted to popularize the study of Mao's quotations through a national campaign called "Learn from the People's Liberation Army".

When the party apparatus crumbled under the blows of the mobilized Red Guards and Revolutionary Rebels, the General Political Department continued functioning as usual. The leaders of the GPD, who were some of Lin Piao's principal allies in the armed forces, had always upheld the ideals of the Cultural Revolution, but they insisted that the methods utilized to carry out this Revolution had to be different within the PLA. They relied more on a disciplined approach of top-down mobilization of the rank and file soldiers, with a heavy emphasis on intensive study of the Thoughts of Mao Tsetung.

As the head of the All-Army Cultural Revolution Group, Liu Chih-chien was the first to come under attack for attempting to restrict the participation in the Cultural Revolution of PLA students in the various military academies. In January, 1967, he was replaced by the old Marshal Hsu Hsiang-chien as head of the All-Army Cultural Revolution Group and also purged from the Central Committee's Group in Charge of the Cultural Revolution. Chiang Ching was attached to Hsu as an advisor.¹⁹ Throughout 1967, the conflict intensified between Chiang Ching and the GCCR on the one hand, and Hsiao Hua and his supporters in the General Political Department like Chao I-ya, editor of the Liberation Army Daily, on the other hand.

Lin Piao's grouping in the PLA was in sympathy with the "drag-out" campaign spearheaded by the May 16th Corps, although it never openly sided with the ultra-left leaders of this assault. It was in this grouping's objective interests to see its opposition cleared out of the PLA, but it was not in unity with the methods of spontaneous mass mobilization favored by the May 16th Corps. Once the loosely-knit Red Guard organizations were geared up to attack the PLA capitalist-roaders, there was no guarantee that some of Lin Piao's own supporters

would not become primary targets. Through the General Political Department and the administrative apparatus of the army, the Lin Piao grouping attempted to engineer a Cultural Revolution under more tight control within the ranks of the PLA, and this approach tended to be reflected in how the grouping saw the character of the PLA's intervention in the Cultural Revolution at large.

This conflict between Lin Piao's grouping and the remaining leaders of the Cultural Revolution Group went to the heart of what kind of leadership the Cultural Revolution should be given and who should be the real leaders of it. One of the major reasons for the flaring up of this conflict was the directive from Mao in January, 1967 that the PLA go beyond exclusively military or administrative functions and actively support the Left in the Cultural Revolution. What this role often amounted to was that the PLA cadre were being enjoined to support and protect what they regarded as undisciplined and adventuristic Red Guard organizations in their attack on the Party apparatus.

Throughout 1967, the General Political Department came under increasing criticism from Chiang Ching and Chen Po-ta for unduly restricting the Cultural Revolution and not throwing their full weight behind the Left. By September of 1967, at roughly the same time as the exposure of the May 16th Corps, Hsiao Hua and Chao I-ya were purged from the GPD with considerably less fanfare.²⁰ The reason that less publicity was given to this purge was that it would have cast doubt on the role of Mao's "close comrade-in-arms", Lin Piao.

The ouster of the leaders of the General Political Department also satisfied the powerful regional army commanders. Replacing Hsiao Hua as director of the GPD was the regional commander of Anhui, Li Teh-sheng. Besides being to the liking of the other regional commanders, Li's appointment neutralized any opposition from the GCCR since he had tried sporadically to have working relations with the rebel organizations in his Military District.²¹

This purge of the General Political Department, however, did not end the three-way struggle between the regional army commanders, the Group in Charge of the Cultural Revolution, and the Lin Piao Grouping. Attention began to be focused on the role of the central army command, under the Chief of Staff, Yang Cheng-wu. Within the PLA, Yang had apparently been following a policy of systematically replacing the commanders of the Military Regions and Districts with his own appointees. This policy brought him into direct conflict with a number of the regional commanders, led by Hsu Shih-yu of the Nanking Region and Chen Hsi-lien of the Shenyang Region.²² The political position of these commanders had been immeasurably strengthened in September when Mao denounced the campaign to drag out the capitalist-roaders in the PLA and openly sought their support.

Apparently, the Lin Piao grouping sought to press home an advantage against Chiang Ching and the GCCR by seeking to discredit Chi Pen-yu, who survived the May 16th Corps purge in September through the intercession of Chiang.²³ Lin's grouping scored a victory in February of 1968 when Chi was finally purged for his continuing support of the ultra-left factions among the Red Guards. Through Fu Chung-pi, the garrison commander of Peking and a vice-chairman of the Peking Revolutionary Committee, Yang Cheng-wu and his PLA supporters also apparently attempted to engineer a movement to discredit the Chairman of the Revolutionary Committee, Hsieh Fu-chih.²⁴ Such an attack also implied a struggle by the PLA central apparatus to strengthen its power over the Public Security Bureau, of which Hsieh was Minister.

Yang had multiplied his adversaries through these different actions: the regional commanders, Chiang Ching and Chen Po-ta of the GCCR, Kang Sheng, the security chief and adviser to the GCCR, and Chou En-lai and his allies among the old Marshals of the PLA. In March, Yang was purged as Chief of Staff, along with Fu Chung-pi and Yu Li-chin, deputy commander and political commissar of the air force and member of the All-Army Cultural Revolution Group. Chou En-lai attempted to discredit Yang by linking him with the former Chief of Staff, Lo Jui-ching, under whom Yang had served as deputy from 1959 through 1966. Yang was replaced by one of the most notorious regional commanders, Huang Yung-sheng of Kwangchow. While Huang's appointment could easily placate the regional commanders, Lin Piao did not witness his own power base within the PLA being undermined since Huang was an old army associate of his.²⁵

Mao Rebuffs the Cult of Personality

When Mao approved of the purge of Yang, he concentrated his attack on the ideological question of the cult of personality. Lin Piao and the leaders of the General Political Department like Hsiao Hua had always been big advocates of the cult of Mao Tsetung. In his well-known speech to the party in May, 1966, Lin had declared that "Chairman Mao's sayings, works, and revolutionary practice have shown that he is a great proletarian genius. Some people don't admit genius but this is not Marxist."²⁶ Yang was following this PLA ideological tradition when he authored a well-publicized article entitled "Let Us Implant Ever More Vigorously the Absolute Authority of the Thought of Our Great Commander-in-Chief Chairman Mao Tsetung".

An unabashed promotion of the cult of personality, the article represented a clear case of idealist apriorism, which Mao apparently suspected was being used as an ideological cover for ulterior political motives. Earlier, Hsiao Hua had attempted to expand the ranks of the anointed by promoting a cult of Lin Piao.²⁷ In a letter circulated to other members of the Proletarian Headquarters, Mao gave a cogent reply to Yang's article:

1. The way in which absolute authority is presented is improper. There has never been any single absolute authority. All authorities are relative. All absolute things exist in relative things, just as absolute truth is the total of innumerable relative truths, and absolute truth exists only in relative truths.
2. The talk about "establishing in a big way" and "establishing in a special way" is also improper. Authority and prestige can be established only naturally through struggle and practice. They cannot be established artificially. Prestige established artificially will inevitably collapse.²⁸

This reply represented a significant rebuff to the promotion of the cult of Mao Tsetung. Seemingly, Mao had had some serious reservations for awhile about the manipulation of the cult of personality by certain forces among the revolutionary left. In a letter sent to Chiang Ching in 1966, Mao expressed some of his early misgivings about Lin Piao's participation in promoting the cult of personality:

I would never have thought that the few books I have written could have such magic powers. Now he has sung the praises of my works, the whole country will follow his example.... My friend and his colleagues have presented me with a fait accompli. It looks as if there is no other course left open to me than to give my approval.²⁹

Mao's attitude towards the cult of his personality, however, seemed to have been ambiguous from the start. In "Talks at Chengtu" in 1958, for example, Mao tried to differentiate between good cults and bad cults, with bad cults being fabricated with "no analysis, simply blind obedience".³⁰ He argued that leaders like Marx, Engels, and Lenin who represented or embodied the truth should be revered. In interviews with Edgar Snow Mao openly acknowledged that he had allowed the building up of a personality cult because during the early stages of the Cultural Revolution such a cult increased his ability to regain power within the Communist Party. In the later stages of the Cultural Revolution, Mao actively intervened to reduce the public trappings and expressions of the cult of his personality.³¹

In the later stages of the Cultural Revolution, as the struggle with Lin Piao and Chen Po-ta intensified, Mao initiated a major campaign to criticize their "theory of genius". Philosophically, such a theory was based on idealist apriorism. According to such a perspective, truth is supposedly embodied by certain outstanding historical individuals like Mao, and such individuals play a pre-eminent role in moving history forward. Hence, history is really made by heroes, not by the laboring masses. This theory represents the opposite of historical materialism. Also, instead of advancing the use of a dialectical method, such a theory promotes dogmatism, "the absolute authority" of a particular genius. Such dogmatism leads immediately to political sectarianism, since any opposition to the positions of such a genius, often liberally interpreted by his promoters, is tantamount to counter-revolution.

Mao hit the ideological nail on the head when he countered this theory of genius with a materialist approach to the question in 1971:

To be a genius is to be a bit more intelligent. But genius does not depend on one person or a few people. It depends on a party, the party which is the vanguard of the proletariat. Genius is dependent on the mass line, on collective wisdom.³²

This campaign against idealist apriorism was necessary to straighten out the verdicts on the forms and methods used during the Cultural Revolution to combat and defeat revisionism. Bourgeois ideology itself, no matter how militantly revolutionary its disguise, as with the Cult of Mao, cannot really combat bourgeois ideology. As in the case of the theory of spontaneism promoted by the ultra-left, Mao was in effect trying to undo the damage that he himself had contributed to creating.

In order not to dampen the enthusiasm of the masses, who rallied to the defense of Mao Tsetung as the symbol of the revolutionary line and launched into bold attacks on the capitalist-roaders, Mao allowed the twin theories of spontaneism and genius to spread their ideological influence. The political price that Mao and the other members of the revolutionary left had to pay was that many of the revolutionary gains of the Cultural Revolution soon ran into the danger of being turned into their opposite by the actions of the ultra-left.

For a Cultural Revolution whose avowed purpose was to combat the old "ideas, culture, customs, and habits" of the exploiting classes, the theory of genius and its political expression in the unrestrained cult of Mao Tsetung were phenomena which contradicted the Revolution's basic thrust. For example, the cult of Mao Tsetung increasingly took on blatantly feudal forms of adulation.

The phrase "Mao Tsetung wansu!", which was usually translated as "A long, long life to Chairman Mao!", literally meant "May he live ten thousand years!" and had been the standard salutation to the emperor in old China. This was so much true, that for centuries the emperor's nickname had been "Old Ten Thousand Years", old "wansui".

These feudal practices and ideas were deeply imbedded in Chinese culture. Thousands of years of feudal ideology could not so easily be overturned in the span of just a few years of revolution. The former landlords and rich peasants still numbered in the millions and represented a formidable reactionary force still propagating backward ideas, customs, and habits. Even with the elimination of these classes, feudal ideology would represent a powerful cultural current in Chinese society still exercising a significant influence over the masses' thinking, as exemplified in the cult of Mao. The continuing power of these reactionary traditions is sometimes belittled and this contributes to an idealist view of the extent of the progress the Chinese socialist revolution could make in each of its periods. In some of the national minority regions, for example, a slave system was not abolished until the middle of the 1950's. This objective situation is not being described to excuse the cult of Mao, but to provide a more realistic picture of the backward forces with which the Chinese Marxist-Leninists had to do battle, even as late as the Cultural Revolution.

One of the critical problems with this feudal cult of personality which elevated Mao above the masses was that it seemed to be used by other members of the Proletarian Headquarters to increase their own power and prestige. For example, the cult phenomenon culminated with the embarrassing feudal practice at the 9th Party Congress in 1969 of having Lin Piao annointed Mao's "close comrade-in-arms and successor" and having this succession officially written into the party's constitution. While in public Mao appeared to go along with Lin's appointment as his successor, this whole question of the cult and the bourgeois theory of genius became a major dividing line between the two leaders of the revolutionary left.

The Working Class Exercizes Leadership in the Superstructure: March, 1968 to October, 1968

Although the ultra-left had been dealt a decisive blow in September, 1967 when Wang Li, Kuan Feng, Lin Chieh, and Mu Hsin had been purged from the GCCR, the ultra-left leaders of the Red Guards, like Kuai Ta-fu, continued to wage a fierce and relentless struggle on the campuses. In late 1967 and early 1968, they had made the defense of Chi Pen-yu a rallying point for their trend, and when Yang Cheng-wu and his allies were purged in March, 1968, they intensified their activities in the hopes of making a new breakthrough in carrying forward the Cultural Revolution.

These ultra-leftists took heart in an important editorial in the People's Daily in April entitled "Make a Class Analysis of Factionalism", which used Mao as a source to condone factionalism as long as it was serving a proletarian purpose and was opposed to "bourgeois factionalism".³³ At Tsinghua University in Peking, Kuai Ta-fu took this line as a signal to launch a sectarian attack on his campus rivals. Most of the students had abandoned the campus while the few hundred hard core members of the two major rival Red Guard organizations engaged in armed clashes.

On July 27, the Cultural Revolution witnessed another historic action, as 6,000 workers from Peking, organized into a Mao Tsetung Propaganda Team under the auspices of the PLA, marched peacefully onto Tsinghua University to bring an end to the Red Guard factionalism. Chanting "Use Reason, not Force", the workers were fired on by the diehard rebels, five of the workers being killed and scores of others injured. Kuai Ta-fu and the other student rebels justified their resistance to the Propaganda Team by maintaining that it had been sent by the "Black Hand", a reference to reactionary forces like Liu Shao-chi who had earlier tried to suppress the Red Guard movement.³⁴

During the night of July 28, Mao summoned the five most prominent Red Guard leaders to a meeting with him. The five rebels were Kuai Ta-fu, Nieh Yuan-tzu, Tan Hou-lan from the Peking Normal School, Han Ai-ching of the Aviation Institute, and Wang Ta-pin of the Geology Institute. Beginning the conference with party leaders like Chen Po-ta, Chiang Ching, Kang Sheng, and Hsieh Fu-chih in attendance, Mao came right to the point: "I sent the workers' propaganda team, I am the Black Hand".³⁵ Mao explained that these "young generals" had performed a great service to the Cultural Revolution, but at this stage their tendency towards unrestrained factionalism and anarchism was leading in a reactionary direction. They were constituting themselves as roadblocks to the working class' assumption of leadership of the Cultural Revolution. With sadness, Mao stated: "You have let me down, and what is more, you have disappointed the workers, peasants and soldiers of China."³⁶

To celebrate the victory of the Workers Propaganda Team in bringing the fighting to an end at Tsinghua University, Mao presented it with a gift of mangoes that he had received from a visiting Pakistani delegation. Mao instructed that the teams should be stationed permanently on the country's campuses in order to carry through a genuine proletarian revolution in education. In August, Mao stressed the importance of working class leadership: "Our country has 700 million people and the working class is the leading class. Its leading role in the great cultural revolution and in all fields of work should be brought into full play."³⁷ Mao's new directive was supplemented by an important article by Yao Wen-yuan, one of the leaders of the politically advanced working class of Shanghai, entitled "The Working Class Must Exercise Leadership in Everything".

The tumultuous movement of the Red Guards was coming to an end. The major obstacles still standing in the way of consolidating Grand Alliances and Three-In-One Revolutionary Committees were being swept aside by the Workers Propaganda Teams and the People's Liberation Army. In October the Twelfth Plenum of the Central Committee was held: Liu Shao-chi and the other big revisionists were officially purged from their leading positions in the party, and preparations were begun for the Ninth Congress, a Congress of "Victory and Unity" to be held in mid-1969. At roughly this same time, with the People's Liberation Army operating as the motive force, the formation of all the provincial-level Revolutionary Committees had finally been completed, approximately nine months later than the scheduled deadline set by Mao.³⁸

The Cultural Revolution was clearly entering the period of order, consolidation, and rebuilding. Struggle and criticism had been carried out, and now apparently was the time for real and lasting transformation of Chinese society. Although there appeared to be considerable unity among the leaders of the Cultural Revolution, and many path-breaking gains had been registered by the

Revolution, beneath the surface the advances were not as solid as they may have appeared and the unity within the Proletarian Headquarters covered over fundamentally different lines on how to carry the Revolution to a successful conclusion.

The Cultural Revolution in China's Factories

One of the major areas where the gains of the Cultural Revolution were still tenuous was in the revolutionization of the division of labor within China's industrial enterprises. As has been mentioned before, Mao developed the official charter for the revolutionization of the relations of production back in 1960, following in the wake of the Great Leap Forward. This charter was called the Anshan Constitution because it summed up the radical changes in the enterprise power relations achieved by the workers of the huge Anshan Iron and Steel Works in Heilungkiang, China's first large modern industrial enterprise. Anshan grew to employ 100,000 workers and produce 25% of the nation's steel.³⁹

Even though Mao had hailed the achievements of the Anshan workers and presented them as a model for the rest of the country's working class, the Constitution was effectively shelved for many years since the Liu Shao-chi faction maintained considerable power over industrial policy. Even in the case of the Anshan enterprise itself, it took eight more years of intense class struggle before the revolutionary committee of the region adopted a resolution approving Anshan as a model even for that area.⁴⁰ The advance of the Cultural Revolution in the country's factories started late and was relatively slow and unspectacular, reaching its full momentum only by late 1967 and early 1968. The most solid advances, of course, were concentrated in China's few industrial centers, the old treaty-port cities like Shanghai and the Northeast.

One of the chief factors for slow progress in this area was the incredible opposition which developed to the transformations being proposed by the workers under the leadership of the revolutionary left. The main bastion of opposition, understandably, was the Liu Shao-chi revisionist clique. This clique favored the management principles developed in the USSR. These principles came to be known as the "Magnitogorsk Constitution" since they had been made famous by the Soviet iron and steel combine at Magnitogorsk.⁴¹

Under the Magnitogorsk Constitution, factories were run by a factory director in consultation with experts and specialists. Production was stressed as being primary over political orientation, and profits were the standard used to gauge the success of each enterprise. This line on management methods tended to enlist the support of powerful class forces, such as the enterprise managers, the technical and scientific elite, and many of the party cadre who had political responsibility for the operation of the industrial enterprises. Beyond this support, this line tended to create a base among the higher paid workers, who assumed the traits of a labor aristocracy protecting its privileged position granted by the complex system of piecework, bonuses, and other material incentives. In league with these class forces were the leaders of China's trade unions, who were supposed to represent the interests of the broad masses of the rank and file industrial workers, but instead took up the position of working hand-in-glove with the factory management in ensuring labor discipline and increased productivity.

The Anshan Constitution was intended to reverse the trend which concentrated more and more power in the hands of this elite while depriving the broad masses of the workers of any real power over economic decision-making. As Mao described the situation in the factories in 1960, and Anshan in particular:

Formerly, people there thought that their enterprise was a modernized one and there was no need for technical revolution. They were opposed to launching vigorous mass movements, to the principle of cadre participation in productive labor and worker participation in management, of reform of irrational and outdated rules and regulations and of close cooperation among cadres, workers, and technicians, and opposed to putting politics in command; they relied on just a few people working in seclusion.⁴²

These "few people working in seclusion" included the factory management, the engineers and technicians, the full-time party cadre, and the trade union leaders. These strata constituted the basis for the rise of new bourgeois elements in the country's enterprises. The policies of the Magnitogorsk Constitution provided the justification for the concentration of great power and privilege in the hands of this elite. If the degeneration of this elite were allowed to continue, in conjunction with the dominance of revisionist policies in the state planning apparatus, this elite would consolidate itself as a powerful sector of a new bourgeoisie, arising under conditions in which there was nominal socialist ownership of the means of production.

This real and present danger of counter-revolution corresponded to the lack of socialist consolidation in the economic base. And what this socialist consolidation entailed was the radical reforms in the social division of labor represented by the Anshan Constitution. The class forces opposing the bureaucratic elite nurtured by Liu Shao-chi's revisionist policies, and supporting the thrust of the Anshan Constitution, were significant numbers of the rank and file industrial workers, especially the younger workers, the Party cadre who worked at production jobs, and the worker-technicians who had been promoted during the Great Leap Forward. These forces were joined by many of the temporary contract laborers, who in some ways had less to lose than the regular industrial workers, and were often some of the more radical members coming out in opposition to the factory management.⁴³

Part of the core of the sweeping Anshan reforms was the "two participations", the principles of cadre participation in productive labor and worker participation in management. Until the Cultural Revolution, cadre often developed a communality of interest with the factory director, who himself was often the leading party cadre in the plant. Together, the factory management and the party representatives exercised power over the production workers, and often had very little direct contact with them. The factory director was not elected by the workers, but appointed by the central administration. In principle, the workers should have had a voice in selecting the party representatives, but often the latter owed their positions to the central party apparatus under the command of the Liu faction.

The "two participations" were designed to begin to break down these fundamental class differences that were forming and solidifying between the production workers and the party and administrative personnel. Cadre were required to do a certain amount of manual labor in order to familiarize them

with production and the working conditions of the class whose political interests they were supposed to be representing. This practice served to reduce the possibility of the cadre becoming divorced from the workers and developing into overlords.

Out of the other principle of worker participation in management, several organizational forms developed to give the production workers more direct input into management decision-making. One of these forms was the workers-management teams. These teams were organs directly elected by the workers themselves and they had the responsibility of checking into five major areas in the factories: 1) ideological and political work, 2) production work and technical revolution, 3) financial and material matters, 4) work safety, and 5) general welfare.⁴⁴ The workers management teams were supposed to put politics in command and act as a bridge between the masses of workers and the factory management, functioning as a form of control on management prerogatives. They were thus described as providing links "from the top down and from the base up." Overall they functioned as valuable mass organs which aided the revolutionary committee and later the party committee in providing political and ideological leadership.

Another major feature of the Anshan Constitution was that it followed the line of a three-in-one combination in attempting to unleash the technical creativeness of the masses of workers. Rank and file workers participated directly with cadre and technicians in developing technical innovations and investigating the rules and regulations governing the production process in each enterprise. The aim of such endeavors was the reform of irrational and obsolete rules and regulations which hampered the political initiative of the workers and constrained their ability to revolutionize the means of production.

All these reforms had an important impact on overcoming bureaucratization in industrial enterprises. There was a more flexible and direct system of communication between the different levels of factory organization. Under the slogan of "better troops and simpler administration", the middle-level managerial bureaus were significantly pruned. The formerly cumbersome administrative apparatus in each factory had been a necessary concomitant of a vertically-integrated central planning structure which relied heavily on rigid accounting and control. Thus, the reforms within the industrial enterprises had to be coordinated with changes in the operation of the socialist planning system and the central state administrative machinery.

Besides meeting with opposition from the Liu revisionist clique, the Anshan reforms also ran into difficulties in being subject to different implementations by the various groupings within the Left Alliance. For example, the proposals for reform of irrational and obsolete rules ran into opposition from ultra-left forces active in the Cultural Revolution. Attempting to build a base of support among the younger, more rebellious workers, the ultra-leftists advocated the extreme position of eliminating even basic rules and regulations governing attendance, safety, and quality control.⁴⁵ The objective results of such a line, which found its real class base in the petty bourgeoisie, disorganized production and mainly served to discredit the Cultural Revolution. As part of their campaign, the ultra-leftists even began to spread the anarchist idea that the 8-hour working day itself was a product of the old exploiting regime.⁴⁶ Instead of adhering to the slogan "Grasp Revolution, Promote Production" in a genuinely revolutionary way, these policies of the ultra-left

only acted to pit revolution against production, thus reinforcing the arguments of the reactionaries that the rebels were irresponsible anti-socialist elements.

On the other hand, the conservative center forces like Chou En-lai who were leading members of the Left Alliance had a marked tendency to construct restrictions on the development of the Cultural Revolution in China's factories. While the students in China's educational system were given a free hand to actively participate in the Cultural Revolution, the workers were instructed to not let the Cultural Revolution interfere with production. Thus, while all school classes ceased meeting and a full-blown revolutionary situation developed in China's schools, the character of the Cultural Revolution in the factories was much more restrained, regulated, and moderate. An example of the line of the center forces can be found in the following directive from the State Council issued in 1967 under the title "Letter to Revolutionary Workers and Cadre":

You should, in accordance with the regulations laid down by the Party's Central Committee, firmly adhere to the eight-hour working day and carry on the Cultural Revolution during the time outside the eight hours of work. During working hours it is impermissible to absent oneself without good cause from one's production or work post.⁴⁷

Apparently, organizing to overthrow the factory management and the revisionist party leaders in one's factories was not a good enough cause to leave one's work post. The assumption seems to be that either these forces do not really represent a class enemy or that they can be deposed easily enough by going through the regular organizational channels. What the center forces had in mind, of course, was a more moderate reform of the factory management system in which the more backward management and party members would be criticized, and possibly replaced, and the promotion of responsible rank and file workers to positions of authority could follow a fairly orderly process. For these center forces the Cultural Revolution was just what the name implied, a cultural transformation in the institutions of the ideological superstructure such as education, and not so much a revolutionary process that would effect radical changes in the political and economic spheres.

Over-all, the leadership that the People's Liberation Army exerted in China's factories followed the line of the center forces in the Left Alliance. After March 1967, the PLA teams sent into the industrial enterprises derived their authorization from the commanders of the Military Districts and Regions, and as a whole these commanders definitely did not represent the political vanguard of the GPCR.⁴⁸ These teams were primarily concerned with bringing an end to the struggle in the factories, setting up revolutionary committees under PLA leadership, and restoring order and administrative coherence. On the surface, these teams performed their function successfully enough, but the actual political and ideological content of their activities remains debatable. In general, the transformations in China's factories, while representing a remarkable path-breaking effort in the struggle for socialism, were either just nominal changes or were not solidly rooted enough to withstand the period of retrenchment which was to soon follow in the early 1970's.

The leaders of the Chinese proletariat were justifiably enough proud of their achievements during the Cultural Revolution. Following the same line

that was championed during the Great Leap Forward, they were successful in making some remarkable advances, surpassing anything else accomplished by other socialist countries. A major article in the Illumination Daily (Guangming Daily) in 1970 lays out their perspective:

The formulation of the revolutionary principle of "two participations, one transformation, and triple combinations" is a great pioneering act in the history of the international proletarian movement. In theory it enriches the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, and in practice it solves the question of "the working class must exercise leadership over everything."⁴⁹

Where the revolutionary left held the pre-eminent positions in the Party or the PLA, as they did in the city of Shanghai or Heilungkiang, the advances by the Chinese working class were genuine enough and not easily overturned. But in the country as a whole, the revolutionary left had been reduced to a minority faction by 1970-1971, and with the fall of the Lin Piao grouping, the process of retrenchment grew apace. By 1971-1972, the dismantling of the radical reforms in China's factories had already begun. The old technicians and engineers were back in positions of power and authority in many factories, and the primary aspect of industrial policy began to center more on labor discipline, a hierarchical regulation of production, and the evaluation of the production process according to the quantitative criteria of output quotas and norms.⁵⁰

This Cultural Revolution in China's factories received less attention than the more well-publicized activities of the Red Guards, who had been free to travel the length and breadth of the country to proselytize the revolutionary message; but in the long run the ability of the working class to become the masters of the economic base was decisive for the future of the Chinese socialist revolution. Although the advances achieved were remarkable in comparison to the experience of other socialist countries, they were still historically experimental and immature and their uneven distribution throughout the country's industry did not provide a strong foundation for the other political and ideological gains of the Cultural Revolution.

The Struggle for Socialist Planning and the Attack on Liu's Trust System

Complementing the struggle against Liu Shao-chi's advocacy of the Magnitogorsk Constitution as a model for factory management was the revolutionary left's attack on Liu's proposed planning system, which would be coordinated on the basis of national trusts organized according to industry. These trusts would represent a decentralization in relation to all-around coordination exercised by central state ministries, but an economic system of strict vertical integration would be maintained within which individual factories would be judged primarily on the basis of profit performance.

Liu's trust system was one proposed solution, reactionary as it was, to one of the central contradictions of the socialist economic system in China. According to the leftists, that contradiction involved trying to build up a unified economic planning system under central leadership without fostering a huge bureaucratic machine which would not only be tremendously wasteful but would provide the institutional framework for the consolidation of a new state bourgeoisie. In a territory as vast as that of China, with such a huge population, relying on

centralized authority without being able to bring into play local initiative and coordination may lead to nominal national coherence, but this superficial coherence would be founded on a bureaucratic and mechanical intervention in the actual economic life of the country.

In one of his major speeches to the Party, given in 1956 and later published as "On the Ten Major Relationships", Mao tries to find a solution to the problem of synchronizing central and local authority:

We want both unity and particularity. To build a powerful socialist country it is imperative to have a strong and unified central leadership and unified planning and discipline throughout the country; disruption of this indispensable unity is impermissible. At the same time, it is essential to bring the initiative of the local authorities into full play and let each locality enjoy the particularity suited to its local conditions.⁵¹

With the completion of China's First Five-Year Plan, a struggle developed on how the highly centralized planning system should be restructured. While the First Five-Year Plan was successful in developing China's heavy industry, imbalances and dislocations began to become apparent in the relation between heavy industry and light industry, and between the industrial sector and agriculture. In order to sustain the rigidly hierarchical and intricately articulated planning system modeled on that of the Soviet Union, China had to shoulder the burden of a huge urban economic bureaucracy. This bureaucracy began to differ little in some essentials from the old Mandarin bureaucracy which flourished under Chinese feudalism.

There seemed to be agreement among the major wings in the Chinese Communist Party that economic planning had to undergo a relative decentralization, but the exact character of this decentralization was still in dispute. Some of the leading economic authorities like Chen Yun, head of the State Capital Construction Commission, and Hsueh Mu-chiao, director of the State Statistical Bureau and vice-chairman of the State Planning Commission, favored the Liberman reforms which had become popular in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev.⁵² Yugoslavia had already pioneered in this direction of "market" socialism, in which central planning was dismantled in favor of market forces coordinating an economy and in which basic decision-making was left at the level of the unit of production or enterprise.

Instead of a decentralization to the enterprise level, which would lead China down the Yugoslavian path, the Party agreed in November 1957, on decentralizing considerable economic authority to the level of provinces and municipalities. With the exception of large-scale strategically important enterprises producing metals, chemicals, coal, power, oil, and machine tools, all factories were put under some form of local authority at the provincial level or below. The enterprises under local authority were subject to only four mandatory goals set by the State Council: the quantity of the main products, the total number of workers employed, the total wages, and the amount of profits.⁵³ Beyond these goals, the enterprise management was allowed considerable leeway, compared to the system of the First Five-Year Plan, in making key economic decisions on how its unit of production would function.

Under this new system, China's enterprises were integrated together one with the other less through administrative decrees and directives emanating

from a central planning bureaucracy, and more through the vehicle of the Communist Party, which brought badly-needed political and ideological integration. But the full contours of this new, more decentralized economic system were still not mapped out until the Great Leap Forward. What became clear during the Great Leap Forward was that the decentralization of authority down to the local and enterprise level was being combined with the all-important mobilization of the workers in the enterprises to participate directly in management decision-making. As mentioned before, this radical change took the form of the "two participations, one transformation, and triple combinations". Moreover, in agriculture, there was a dramatic centralization of economic authority represented by the formation of the People's Communes. Hence, those looking superficially at the question of decentralization solely from the perspective of the relation between the central state apparatus and the local authorities would have missed a great deal of the political substance of these reforms.

The significant point to make about Liu's trust system is not that it represented an effort at greater centralization in relation to the 1957 reforms, but that it was a direct attack on the political soul of China's new economic system. Liu attempted to institute his proposals in 1963, during the period of retrenchment, and they were based on the economic assumption that each enterprise should be regarded primarily as a unit of production, which would be evaluated on the basis of its profit margin, to be determined by prices assigned by the national trusts.⁵⁴ In accordance with the Magnitogorsk system, which was an integral part of Liu's trust proposals, the enterprise was no longer regarded from an ideological and political angle as a locus of class struggle, in which the production workers should be mobilized and educated to take over management. Labor was to be treated in many of the essential ways it would be under any bourgeois society: a dominated working force toiling for material rewards within a system over which it had no real economic or political control and from which it derived marginal benefits in relation to the total national wealth.

One of the most significant components of Liu's trust system was that it embodied a system of strict vertical economic integration. Prices were determined by centralized calculations of cost efficiency, and investments were allocated on the basis of the most profitable enterprises. This system was found to lead to great regional imbalances, with the poorer regions remaining underdeveloped, and the more prosperous regions receiving the lion's share of any trust investment.⁵⁵ In addition, it would also inevitably exacerbate the contradictions between agriculture and industry, since bringing agriculture up to the level of industry would prove a costly endeavor with limited returns on investment in the short term. Liu's trust system would thus reinforce and expand the Three Great Differences -- between town and countryside, worker and peasant, and mental and manual labor -- that the revolutionary movements of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution were organized to confront and gradually overcome.

What became clear through the course of years of struggle over the nature of the planning system in China was that the issues of centralization vs. decentralization, plan vs. market were not the central determinants of whether a society was moving in a socialist direction or in a capitalist direction. The experience of the Soviet Union as well as that of China pointed to the possibility that great centralization of the economy, in which a national plan was pre-eminent over market forces, did not necessarily guarantee that the proletariat

in actual fact was the ruling class of society. What had to be investigated was the character of the centralization and the class purposes that the plan objectively served.

The main standard that should be used to judge a planning system is whether it operates to ensure the political and economic hegemony of the working class. Under certain conditions, during limited historical periods, decentralization and/or the accomodation of market forces could meet this standard better than greater centralization and the broader intervention of a national economic plan. The period of the New Economic Policy in the Soviet Union is one historical example.

In the later stages of the Cultural Revolution, the central problem for the revolutionary left was not that too much economic power had been delegated to authorities at the provincial level and below. The major contradiction was that with the disintegration of the party apparatus, the decisive authority in many of the provinces, countries, and municipalities of China was being wielded by commanders of the People's Liberation Army. For the decentralized economic system of China to serve revolutionary proletarian purposes, the Party had to function as the chief vehicle providing guidance to the implementation of the plan. And to function as this kind of vehicle, the Party had to constantly practice the mass line to strengthen its revolutionary ties to the masses of working people. Under attack for having failed to practice the mass line, the Party apparatus had begun to crumble throughout China, and the People's Liberation Army had been called on to fill the vacuum. In effect, this meant the questionable political leadership of the powerful army commanders of the Military Districts and Regions. At this point, we need to take a closer look at what this leadership meant for the future course of the Cultural Revolution.

FOOTNOTES

1. Daubier, A History of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, pg. 309.
2. Ibid., pgs. 100-101, 106-107.
3. van Ginneken, The Rise and Fall of Lin Piao, pg. 129.
4. Brugger, Contemporary China, pg. 309.
5. van Ginneken, pg. 122.
6. Daubier, pgs. 206-7.
7. Suyin, Wind in the Tower, pg. 310.
8. Daubier, pg. 209.
9. van Ginneken, pg. 117.
10. Daubier, pg. 309.
11. "Preface and Postscripts to Rural Surverys" Mao Tsetung, Selected Works, Vol. III, pg. 12.
12. Daubier, pg. 312.
13. Schram, Chairman Mao Talks to the People, pg. 279.
14. David and Nancy Dall Milton, The Wind Will Not Subside, pg. 273, (Pantheon Books, New York, 1976).
15. Ibid., pg. 294.
16. Ibid., pg. 274.
17. Brugger, pg. 334.

18. van Ginneken, pg. 38.
19. Hong Yung Lee, The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, pgs. 184-5, (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1978).
20. van Ginneken, pg. 138.
21. Ibid., pg. 236.
22. Ibid., pg. 156.
23. Miltons, pg. 311.
24. Ibid., pgs 311-312.
25. van Ginneken, pg. 156.
26. Ibid., pg. 61.
27. Ibid., pg. 226.
28. Miltons, pg. 310.
29. van Ginneken, pg. 63.
30. Schram, pg. 99.
31. Edgar Snow, The Long Revolution, pgs. 65-71 (Vintage Books, New York, 1972).
32. Schram, pg. 293.
33. Daubier, pg. 247.
34. Miltons, pg. 319.
35. Suyin, pg. 330.
36. Brugger, pg. 339.
37. K.H. Fan, Mao Tsetung and Lin Piao, pg. 283.
38. Brugger, pg. 345.
39. Mark Selden, ed., The People's Republic of China, pgs. 591-2.
40. Charles Bettelheim, Cultural Revolution and Industrial Organization in China, pg. 71.
41. Ibid., pgs. 72-3.
42. Selden, pgs. 592-3.
43. Stephen Andors, China's Industrial Revolution, pgs. 165-168.
44. Bettelheim, pg. 23.
45. Ibid., pg. 115.
46. Jean Esmein, The Chinese Cultural Revolution, pg. 211.
47. Ibid., pg. 200.
48. Andors, pg. 172.
49. Quoted in Andors, pg. 230.
50. Andors, pgs. 230-1.
51. Mao Tsetung, SW, Vol. V, pg. 294.
52. Brugger, pg. 163.
53. Andors, pg. 61.
54. Ibid., pgs. 291-295.
55. Ibid., pg. 193.

SECTION V:

The Splitting of the Left Alliance and the Balance of Forces on the Eve of the Ninth Congress

While preparations were begun in the Fall of 1968 for the Ninth Party Congress, to be hailed as "The Congress of Unity and of Victory", the Left Alliance which had led the Cultural Revolution up to this point began to clearly re-align itself into two major opposing coalitions. The purges of the ultra-leftists in the GCCR and of Lin Piao's supporters in the PLA in 1967-68 were only the beginning rounds in a struggle that would eventually shatter the unity of the Proletarian Headquarters.

While the purges of supporters like Hsiao Hua and Yang Cheng-wu had come uncomfortably close to undermining Lin Piao's own powerful position in the central military apparatus, his grouping was still relatively intact. This grouping included his wife, Yeh Chun, Director of the General Office of the Ministry of Defense, Li Tso-peng, First Political Commissar of the PLA Navy, Wu Fa-hsien, Commander of the PLA Air Force, Chiu Hui-tso, Director of the General Logistics Department of the PLA, and the newest addition, Huang Yung-sheng, the Chief of Staff of the PLA. All of these supporters were to rise to the level of being Politburo members by the Ninth Congress.¹ It was at this Congress as well that Lin Piao was to be officially designated as Mao's "close comrade-in-arms and successor".

The Ninth Congress, however, was to give a false appearance of Party unity and acceptance of Lin as Mao's chosen successor. A powerful coalition was already in the process of being consolidated to contest with Lin Piao's grouping for leadership of the Cultural Revolution. This second opposing coalition was composed of three major wings: the regional military commanders, the central state administrators, and the old-line military leaders who held influential positions in the central PLA apparatus and in the Party and State.

At this point in the Cultural Revolution, the PLA held the key to its future development. With the Party and the State Administration having been disorganized, the army was the only stable institution left in the State Apparatus that could bring order and cohesion to China, whether that was revolutionary or not. As Lin Piao was to stress in his speech to the Ninth Congress, "From a Marxist point of view the army is the most important part of the state".² Whether one agreed with Lin theoretically or not, the actual situation in China at this time could lead to no other concrete conclusion. Hence, the political forces who controlled the army controlled the People's Republic of China, and the opposing leaders within the Left Alliance understood well enough where it was critical that they solidify their power.

Although there may have been widespread and well-publicized campaigns in the past to hold up the PLA as a model of revolutionary proletarian virtue, to which Mao himself contributed; the truth of the matter was that the army was far from a monolithic political force. After Lin replaced Peng Teh-huai as Minister of Defense in 1959, much of his influence was to be mainly exercised through the new General Political Department, which was directed by Hsiao Hua and Liu Chih-chien. Until the Peng Chen clique fell in 1966, for example, Lin faced direct opposition from the army Chief of Staff, Lo Jui-ching. In addition,

from 1959 the Vice-Minister of Defense had been Hsu Shih-yu, the conservative military commander of Nanking. With the purge of Hsiao Hua in 1967, effective control of the General Political Department had been wrested away from Lin's grouping when the military commander of Anhui, Li Teh-sheng, was appointed to replace Hsiao. Having exhibited some left-leaning pretensions earlier in the Cultural Revolution, Li won himself a big promotion to the GPD and became an alternate member of the Politburo in 1969 at the Ninth Congress.

Previously in the paper, we already made mention of the old-line military leaders who were aligned politically with Chou En-lai and the top administrators in the State Council. These included the former PLA Marshals, Chen Yi, Nieh Jung-chen, Hsu Hsiang-chien, and Liu Po-cheng, as well as Yeh Chien-ying, who seemed to wield the most decisive power among them all and eventually replaced Lin Piao as Minister of Defense. Chu Teh, the founder of the PLA and Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, was also a supporter of this grouping. There were close ties between these old military leaders and Chou En-lai, with these ties stretching back into the Civil War years, with some originating in the Whampoa Military Academy founded in Canton in 1924.³ There was significant overlap between the State Council and the military apparatus found in this grouping, with figures like Chen Yi and Nieh Jung-chen being Ministers under Chou. Although more conservative politically than Mao, this grouping still held the Chairman in great esteem for his past military and political accomplishments culminating in the liberation of China and its building up into a prosperous and independent socialist state.

The power base of these senior military leaders was not limited to the central army apparatus, but corresponded to some degree to the division of the PLA into five field armies. Lin Piao's main power base, for example, was to be found in his own Fourth Field Army. The First Field Army had been under the command of figures like Ho Lung and Peng Teh-huai. The Second Field Army had been commanded by Marshal Liu Po-cheng, and included other important commanders like Chen Hsi-lien and Li Teh-sheng. The Third Field Army had been commanded by Marshal Chen Yi, and it later was represented politically by commander Hsu Shih-yu. The Fifth Field Army, sometimes called the North China Field Army,⁴ had been commanded by Marshal Nieh Jung-chen.

In many ways the main roadblock holding back the deepening and broadening of the Cultural Revolution was not to be found primarily in these military leaders in the central army apparatus, but in the regional military commanders. Many of these commanders had come under fierce attack from the Red Guards, but their positions of power within the army were not seriously threatened. When the leaders of the campaign to "drag out the handful of capitalist-roaders in the army" were purged in 1967, and Mao defended the PLA as the "Great Wall", these regional commanders were given the green light to consolidate and expand their power.

The more well-known of these regional commanders were Han Hsien-chu, commander of the Foochow Military Region who became the chairman of the Fukien Revolutionary Committee in 1968; Yang Teh-chih, former chief of staff of the Chinese People's Volunteers in Korea, commander of the Tsinan Military Region, who became first vice-chairman of the Shantung Revolutionary Committee in 1967; Chen Hsi-lien, commander of the Shenyang Military Region who became the chairman of the Liaoning Revolutionary Committee in 1968; and Hsu Shih-yu, Vice-Minister of Defense, commander of the Nanking Military Region, who became

chairman of the Kiangsu Revolutionary Committee in 1968. Chen Hsi-lien and Hsu Shih-yu were the two most powerful of these commanders, and both of them were elected to the Politburo at the Ninth Congress in 1969.⁵

With the Party and State Administration in disarray, China seemed to be unraveling into a loose fabric of provincial power structures. And the army commanders of the country's thirteen Military Regions were clearly emerging as the dominant force in the provinces under their jurisdiction. Of the twenty-nine Provincial, Municipal, and Autonomous Regional Revolutionary Committees, which were finally formed in 1968, twenty-one of them were chaired by commanders of Military Regions and Districts or their respective political commissars. Even the eight exceptions had a strong representation from the military commanders, often as vice-chairmen of the Revolutionary Committees.⁶ Once these commanders had eliminated any viable political opposition to their power, they began to rehabilitate many of the conservative and reactionary party and state leaders who had previously been overthrown.

Objectively, the regional military apparatus represented the "Great Wall" up against which the Cultural Revolution had been pounding but which it could not break. There were a number of reasons that the regional commanders were able to emerge as a roadblock to the Cultural Revolution. One reason was that while they were given free rein to set the direction of the Revolution in the regions under their authority, no real Cultural Revolution was carried on throughout the ranks of the PLA that could have mounted an effective opposition from within their own power base. Despite the much-heralded revolutionary traditions of the People's Liberation Army, it was subject to the same objective contradictions that any regular standing army functioning under a socialist state would experience. As a pillar of the state apparatus, the standing army cannot fail to function in many respects as a protector of the political superstructure of which it is an integral part. A standing army by its very nature is a military structure standing apart from society. When this separation is combined with a hierarchical, authoritarian infrastructure which is designed to mold the army into a professional combat force, the historical basis for the political conservatism of the army can be understood.

This paper is not arguing that there was not a strong democratic tradition in the PLA which was originally forged in the Yen-an days. The revolutionary left in China was well aware of the dangers of the army becoming a bulwark of political reaction. And to combat this potential a number of measures were instituted to integrate the army with the masses. One of these was the policy of directly involving the PLA in production. Another was the PLA's training and developing of a people's militia. In carrying out this later measure, the PLA was actually creating its institutional successor that would transfer military power from a separate professional army into the hands of the armed people.

Beginning in the 1950's Lin Piao stepped forward as the champion of many of these radical reforms in the functioning of a standing army under socialism. But it was also in the 1950's, under the influence of the Soviet model, that a powerful counter-tradition arose which emphasized the advantages of sophisticated military technology and attempted to shape the army into more of a conventional, commandist professional military apparatus. Peng Teh-huai and Lo Jui-ching were prominent advocates of the more conventional and conservative view of how a standing army should operate in a socialist society. Despite their ouster, top military leaders at the Center and in the regional commands

continued to advance the conventional wisdom on professionalization of the PLA. During the course of the Cultural Revolution the power of these military leaders expanded rather than diminished, and their main adversary advocating a revolutionary line on military affairs, Lin Piao, was eventually toppled.

While the regional army commanders could operate as a negative force setting the limits of development of the Cultural Revolution, they were not enough of an organized bloc in themselves to establish a coherent political direction forward. The leading core of the emerging coalition, of which the commanders were an essential part, was the Party and State leaders grouped around Chou En-lai. Within the State Council and the administrative apparatus this included Chou's closest allies, such as Li Hsien-nien, Deputy Premier and Minister of Finance, and Li Fu-chun, the chairman of the State Planning Commission. Other administrators who rose in power during the Cultural Revolution also joined this group, such as Wu Teh, who was the vice-chairman of the Peking Municipal Revolutionary Committee, Second Secretary of the Peking Party Committee, and became Mayor of Peking.

These top administrators were members of the Proletarian Headquarters, but they always represented more of a center grouping than any consistently revolutionary force. As long as they remained in alliance with the revolutionary left, they could prove of service to the Cultural Revolution. They never had any great sympathy with the revolutionary thrust of the tumultuous mass movements of the GPCR, and they were most inclined to try to hem them about with numerous conditions and restrictions. They could not accept the GPCR's decimation of the Ministers and Vice-Ministers of the State Council; they could agree that their colleagues needed criticism from the masses, but this criticism had to be reasonable and did not require that most of these experienced and highly valuable administrators be overthrown. Thus, when the Cultural Revolution entered the stage of re-unifying and re-building the Party and State Administration, these top administrators were a strong voice calling for widespread rehabilitation of their deposed colleagues.

It is not difficult to understand why these leading state personnel were not a reliable revolutionary grouping. As administrators, they were enjoined to enforce the accepted inequalities associated with the legacy of bourgeois right. In this sense, they were still functionaries of a "bourgeois state", as Lenin used the term. They tended to accept the relative separation of the state from the masses of the working class because such a separation legitimized their own positions of power, prestige, and material benefit. Their day-to-day operations were based on the assumption that they had to rule in the interests of the masses because the masses were not yet capable of ruling themselves.

This grouping adopted a basic approach to building socialism which inter-mixed pragmatism with Marxism. They never really disagreed with the general line of "going all out, aiming high and achieving greater, faster, better and more economical results in building socialism". The problem was that they did not underline the importance of ideologically and politically mobilizing the masses to grasp the key link of class struggle in order to achieve such results. They had accepted, for example, the original concept of the Great Leap Forward, but more in the pragmatic, economist sense which was embodied in the slogan "Catch Up with Great Britain in 15 years". Later, in the 1970's they were to become united with the more reactionary forces in the Party led by Teng Hsiao-ping and joined by figures like Chen Yun that were championing a developmental

strategy labelled the "Four Modernizations". But, again leaders like Teng and Chen were able to undercut the Chou En-lai grouping by advocating more of a cautious, go-slow approach to modernization that would also accommodate a larger sphere of operation for capitalist features in the relations of production.

Of course, there is no lasting middle ground historically between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. During the years of the Cultural Revolution the Chou En-lai grouping operated as a brake on the revolutionary left, and during the period of retrenchment during the 1970's it tried to drag its feet on the campaign of the bourgeois rightists to carry out a retrogression to an historically degenerated form of state capitalism. Having lent their support at earlier times to the revolutionary left, the Chou En-lai grouping developed into more of a centrist political force hindering a thorough break with revisionism, and then finally moved into an explicit alliance with the rightists. It is not accurate to state that the members of the Chou En-lai grouping were direct representatives of the bourgeois forces in Chinese society and stood for capitalist restoration, but the role they played in preventing the Chinese socialist revolution from advancing to a new stage of development objectively served the interests of the bourgeoisie.

This grouping held a much harsher assessment than Mao or other members of the revolutionary left of the legacy of the Cultural Revolution, but nonetheless it was in no way inclined to completely reverse the verdicts on that historical experience. Irrespective of their wishes, to reverse the verdicts would have undercut their own political position since they had been supporters of the Cultural Revolution, albeit reluctant. Although Chou En-lai's grouping was hegemonic in the party and state for a while after the death of Chou and Mao, it was not possible, given their class base and policies, to wield power for long. These center forces ended up playing an inevitable role in handing power over to a rebuilt bourgeois headquarters now led by Teng Hsiao-ping. And having admirably performed this historical task, Chou's grouping has not surprisingly found itself being cleared out of positions of power by Teng's headquarters. The extent of their rout is one barometer of the degree to which the Teng faction is able to move towards a full-scale capitalist restoration.

It seems clear that beginning in 1967 Mao was obliged to throw in his lot with the Chou En-lai grouping. There were a number of reasons for this alliance: the threat of war and invasion from the Soviet Union, the agreement with the Chou grouping on the tactical alliance with U.S. imperialism, the desire to avoid a full-scale Civil War and bring the current Cultural Revolution to a close. In general, Mao seems to have over-estimated the danger of ultra-leftism during this period and under-estimated the possibilities of a new Center-Right Coalition arising to reverse the verdicts on the Cultural Revolution. Mao's long-standing problems with organizational leniency were now coupled with a failure to fully understand and guard against the internal class re-alignment that would be set in motion by the alliance with U.S. imperialism. Just as the alliance of the Soviet Union with the Western imperialist powers before and during World War II set the stage for the strengthening of revisionism, so China's alliance with the U.S.A. established an inevitable dynamic which enhanced the power of the bourgeois rightists. Within the PLA, Mao seemed confident that he could retain the loyalty, if not the revolutionary support, of the regional army commanders, whereas he grew increasingly suspicious of the unsatisfied ambitions of the left-leaning Lin Piao grouping.

Mao's description of himself as a "center-leftist" in the latter stages of the Cultural Revolution appears fairly accurate, judging from his actions. This political stance set the theme for the other members of the Proletarian Headquarters. Kang Sheng's grouping in the security apparatus appears to have followed the Chairman fairly closely in this new turn. As with the campaign against Hsieh Fu-chih in early 1968, the main attacks against this grouping came from the Lin Piao bloc within the PLA. When the struggle intensified with Lin Piao, Kang Sheng and his supporters stood firmly with both Mao and Chou En-lai. Hsieh was to die in 1972 and Kang in 1975, but two of their more youthful supporters rose in power during the latter half of the GPCR, Chi Teng-kuei and Wang Tung-hsing. Both of them became alternate members of the Politburo at the Ninth Congress, and later they were joined on the Politburo by Hua Kuo-feng, Chairman of the Hunan Provincial Revolutionary Committee and First Secretary of its Party Committee, who was called to Peking in 1972 to replace Hsieh as the new Minister of Public Security.

The Shanghai grouping, headed by Chang Chun-chiao, Yao Wen-yuan, Wang Hung-wen, and Chiang Ching, was not left with too many options, as the Left Alliance began to divide into two and Mao put out the clear signal that the "struggle" period of the Cultural Revolution had come to a close. This grouping had been associated with some of the ultra-left excesses committed by the youthful Red Guards and their sponsors in the GCCR, Wang Li, Chi Pen-yu, Kuan Feng, Lin Chieh, and Msu Hsin. Under the influence of Chen Po-ta's grouping, they had taken the wrong turn of declaring the formation of the Shanghai Commune, and had quickly been compelled to beat a retreat. They had had some sympathy with the campaign "to drag out the capitalist-roaders in the PLA", but were not directly implicated.

The fall of the ultra-leftists in the GCCR cast a cloud over their own leadership of the Cultural Revolution, and they were called upon to lead in the attack on the May 16th Corps. Chiang was obliged to re-interpret her own previous slogan "Attack with Words, Defend with Force", so that it could not be used to justify armed struggle by the masses.⁷ They were compelled to moderate their own more radical policies not only because of their close ties with Mao, but also because their base in the working class obliged them to do so. By 1968, they were brought more to the fore as the bona fide representatives of the working class, and Yao was to be given the assignment of penning the seminal article, "The Working Class Must Exercise Leadership in Everything". This article was one of the most important documents of the Cultural Revolution, establishing many of the political and ideological themes that the revolutionary left would pursue in the "transformation" stage of the Cultural Revolution.

During this same period, Chen Po-ta found himself in a somewhat precarious political position. His direct supporters in the GCCR had all been purged, while he himself, as their chief spokesman, had been left standing. Whatever independent power base he had commanded, such as in the propaganda organs of the party and among the more extremist organizations of the Red Guard, no longer really existed. Long-standing differences between himself and Mao, such as on the commune and the theory of genius, began to surface. Chen appeared to hold a much harsher view than Mao of the old party cadre, the state administrators, and the old-line military leaders. As far as he was concerned, the Cultural Revolution was being pulled up short of its goals. But he now lacked any power base and organizational vehicle to carry through his programs. It was at this point that he apparently threw in his lot with Lin Piao, and the two of them began fashioning the policies for a new "flying leap" in the Chinese

socialist revolution.

The Cultural Revolution in China's Countryside

One of the first major battles, and in some ways the most momentous, which was struggled out between the two opposed coalitions emerging out of the Proletarian Headquarters, involved the central issue of the nature of the Cultural Revolution in China's vast countryside. In the early stages of the GPCR, the Revolution had been concentrated in China's cities, with most of the peasants mobilized being those who lived in the areas surrounding these urban centers, such as Peking and Shanghai. But any Cultural Revolution which did not reach the peasants, the great majority of the population, was doomed to failure. And in order to have any lasting effect, such a Cultural Revolution not only had to "touch the peasants to their very souls", but it also had to decisively affect the character of the relations of production in agriculture.

Up until this point in the Cultural Revolution little effort had been made to even address the question of the relations of production in agriculture. In this regard, Liu Shao-chi's "Sixty Articles on Agriculture" had remained the official, uncontested policy in the countryside.⁸ And Liu's policies, which began to be implemented in 1961, had represented a sharp reversal on the policies in effect during the Great Leap Forward. Beginning in the middle 1950's the collectivization of agriculture had been taken up by the Chinese peasantry with breath-taking speed, so that by 1958 99% of the peasant households had been brought into communes. But, as this paper has already recounted, the period of retrenchment in the early 1960's led to the gutting of much of this initial progress in collectivization. A three-tiered system of ownership was instituted in which the lowest level, the production team, was constituted as the basic unit of accounting. The teams corresponded to the old lower-stage Agricultural Producer Collectives, and in many cases were no larger than the old Mutual Aid Teams. Being the basic unit of account, the production teams were responsible for planning and implementing agricultural production and devising the means for the distribution of any surplus. The teams were given ownership and control over arable land, cattle, agricultural equipment, engineering plants, workshops, and crops; while the production brigades, the second largest unit of ownership, controlled only the primary schools, nurseries, and local industry. The communes were left as mere shells of their former selves,⁹ with control only over public works, security services, and secondary schools.

In many parts of China, the admirable experiments undertaken by the Communes during the Great Leap Forward to establish communal nurseries, old people's homes, and messhalls were drastically reduced or scrapped altogether. The number of hours spent in political study was also considerably cut down.

The greatest threat to the collective economy in China's countryside, however, arose from the new policies in the early 1960's which officially sanctioned and encouraged the cultivation of private plots by the peasants, the raising of private livestock like pigs, and the selling of private produce and livestock in free markets where prices were regulated solely by supply and demand. This represented the fourth level of ownership in agriculture and the most backward. At the 10th Plenum of the Central Committee in 1962 the Liu faction attempted to expand the private plots, private livestock raising, and free markets, and also proposed that the basic unit of account be lowered from the team to the individual peasant household. The forces grouped around Mao

were able to defeat these proposals, but could do little at that time to effect a return to agricultural policies more in tune with the advances in collectivization achieved during the Great Leap Forward.¹⁰

In order to turn the tide, the revolutionary left had to be able to mobilize the peasantry, and this they attempted to do with the Socialist Education Movement. But thwarted by the party apparatus in the countryside, which was able to control and contain the movement through work-teams, the revolutionary left was unsuccessful in trying to directly mobilize the peasantry through the Poor and Lower-Middle Peasant Associations. While the revolutionary left could expect to find its support among the majority of the rural population, who were poor or lower-middle peasants, the Liu faction had been able to solidify its base among the rich and well-to-do middle peasants through its dismantling of the communes and promotion of private ownership. This was the situation in the countryside leading up to the Cultural Revolution: the Liu faction was still firmly in control, while the revolutionary left was struggling to organize its own mass base of support among the peasantry.

The 16-Point Decision of the Central Committee issued at its 11th Plenum in August, 1966 did little to push forward the Cultural Revolution in the countryside. It stated that "The socialist education movement now going on in the countryside and in enterprises in the cities should not be upset where the original arrangements are appropriate and the movement is going well, but should continue in accordance with the original arrangements."¹¹ The central problem was, who would determine whether the socialist education movement was going well. On this score, the 16-Point Decision left the authority in the hands of the local Party Committees, many of whom were under the control of the Liu faction or sympathetic with its policies.

On December 15, 1966 the Central Committee issued a directive entitled "The Directive of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and the State Council on the Proletarian Cultural Revolution in the Countryside", which maintained a very cautious, conservative approach to mobilizing the peasants to carry out the Cultural Revolution. Its first point stated, "Firmly implement the 'grasp revolution, promote production' directive proposed by Chairman Mao and the party center, lay firm hold on the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, promote revolutionization of one's mind, and move the agricultural production forward."¹² Despite the revolutionary verbiage, no mention was made of any proposed changes in the relations of production in agriculture. On the contrary, the impression was conveyed that the GPCR should be considered an ideological exercise devoid of real concrete political content, that would assume importance insofar as it raised peasant productivity. While the directive stated that the Cultural Revolution should be run by the Poor and Lower-Middle Peasant Associations, it was careful to caution the peasants to "exchange experiences" during the agricultural off-season, and it restricted the access of rebel students to the villages.

On March 16, 1967 the Central Committee and State Council moved to forbid all mass demonstrations not connected with agricultural production. Apparently, large numbers of peasants were utilizing the Chinese New Year, which corresponded with the Spring cultivation festival, to distribute out the seed grains and the savings and production funds to individual households.¹³ The PLA was instructed to intervene "to aid agriculture" at this time, and no doubt a major part of its role involved attempting to restore party and administrative authority in

the countryside.

The Directive issued by the Central Committee and State Council on December 4, 1967, roughly a year after its original 1966 Directive, did not depart from the direction established by its earlier policy statement. While the Directive spoke of the need to "combat self-interest and repudiate revisionism", it reassured all concerned that "the current system in the rural people's communes by which ownership is held at three levels with the team as the basis, and the system of private plots should not be changed as a rule..."¹⁴

During 1967, however, a counter-current within the Left Alliance began to surface which took a much more militant line on carrying out the Cultural Revolution among the peasantry. On November, 1967 a major article appeared in the People's Daily which roundly condemned the revisionist policies of "China's Khrushchev", Liu Shao-chi, in the area of agriculture. It put out a call to the poor and lower-middle peasants to "rely on the powerful strength of the people's dictatorship to consolidate and develop the socialist system of collective ownership, and to take the road of common prosperity."¹⁵ The contents of this article could be traced to the work of Chen Po-ta, who had made an important report on agricultural policy to a Central Committee work conference in October. During 1967 Chen had increasingly turned his attention to his old specialty, the collectivization of agriculture. During the 1950's Chen had become Deputy Director of the Rural Work Branch of the CPC, had been instrumental in working with Mao on the latter's "On the Co-operative Transformation of Agriculture", had worked on drafting the ambitious 12-year plan for agriculture, and had taken the lead in advocating the formation of People's Communes during the Great Leap Forward.¹⁶

While Chen was pushing for a campaign to reverse Liu Shao-chi's policies contained in the "Sixty Articles on Agriculture", he was losing his own base of support within the party. It was not until he joined forces with Lin Piao a couple of years later that he was able to muster enough organizational backing to try to implement his policies. Following the Ninth Congress, which was held in April, 1969, Chen and Lin began working together to inaugurate a new period of a "flying leap", reminiscent of the Great Leap Forward in 1958-9. In agricultural policy their proposals involved a concerted attack on private ownership and the upholding of the production brigade as the basic unit of accounting instead of the team.

Yao Wen-yuan's major article in August, 1968, "The Working Class Must Exercise Leadership in Everything" implied some basic unity with the line of Chen and Lin that the position of socialism must be strengthened in the countryside, but his article contained a somewhat different emphasis which indicated that Mao and the Shanghai grouping took a less aggressive, more defensive line on the collectivization of agriculture. Yao's article implied that the poor and lower-middle peasants were being successful in assuming leadership in the revolutionary committees in the communes and that the main goal of their movement was to maintain and solidify the old system of three levels of ownership--team, brigade, and commune.¹⁷ For Yao, and by implication the Shanghai grouping and Mao himself, the main threat came from the unrestricted growth of the private sector and the consequent capitalist inroads on the three-level collective system.

Chen and Lin, by contrast, took a more radical approach that questioned the nature of the three-level system itself. The cornerstone of their new "flying leap" policies was the promotion of the "Learn from Tachai" campaign which they re-launched in early 1970.¹⁸ Tachai was a production brigade in the mountainous county of Hsiyang in Shansi province. Under the leadership of its Party secretary, Chen Yung-kuei, Tachai had been a model brigade in the early 1960's, relying on its own efforts to convert its poor mountainous terrain into fertile farmland. When a flood in 1963 destroyed much of Tachai, the brigade members eschewed all help from the State and organized a successful self-reliant campaign to reconstruct the village. By 1965 Party propaganda organs like Red Flag were promoting Tachai as an example for the rest of the country, but this earlier campaign lost momentum with the beginning of the Cultural Revolution.

Chen and Lin revived the "Learn from Tachai" campaign in 1970, but with a somewhat different emphasis and purpose. For one thing, Tachai was being upheld because it was a brigade, rather than a production team, and because it had abolished all private plots. Moreover, Tachai had repudiated material incentives such as bonuses, which inflamed competition among brigade members; and instead, while maintaining the principle of equal pay for equal work, strove to inculcate the brigade members with greater ideological awareness and a spirit of hard struggle and personal self-sacrifice for the common good. Upholding these principles of Tachai as a country-wide model, of course, ran counter to the established agricultural policy.

The promotion of Tachai met with considerable resistance from the influential rich and well-to-do middle peasants throughout the country. It was inevitable, therefore, that political figures like the regional military commanders would come forward as the official spokesmen for this class resistance. No doubt, these commanders and the grouping around Chou En-lai in the central state administration and military apparatus saw the new offensive by Chen Po-ta and Lin Piao on the agricultural front as one of the major reasons that they had to be confronted at the Second Plenum of the 9th Central Committee held at Lushan, August, 1970. With the purge of Chen at this Plenum and with Lin Piao being put on the defensive, the regional commanders became more bold in their criticisms of the Tachai campaign. General Wei Kuo-ching, the Chairman of the Kuangsi Revolutionary Committee and First Political Commissar of the Kuangsi Military District, who was also the former secretary of the Communist Party's Central-South China Bureau, was one of the leaders of the attack on the Tachai model. Wei stressed that while the whole country could learn from Tachai, the production teams had to retain considerable flexibility in order to deal with differing local concrete conditions. In particular, Wei argued that the right of the peasants to private landholdings, private livestock raising, and part-time earnings should be safeguarded.¹⁹ Wei was joined by Politburo member and Vice-Minister of Defense, Hsu Shih-yu, who was one of the harshest critics of the Tachai model. In a speech he gave in early 1971, Hsu stated:

It is not necessary to make the rich and the poor equal in order to make a revolution... There are people who condemn private holdings and part-time earnings (of individual peasants) as hangovers of capitalism, although such practices are expressly accepted by Party policy. This type of thinking may be leftist in appearance, but its content is Right-wing... Under no circumstances in the future should there be the desire to accumulate the resources of the collective too quickly and, hence,

to the detriment of living standards.²⁰

Hsu ran little political danger in levelling such harsh criticisms of the Tachai-inspired policies of Chen Po-ta and Lin Piao. Soon after his speech, the Party Center appears to have brought the struggle on agricultural policy to a definitive close by re-affirming unequivocally that the then-current three-level system of collective ownership and the right to private plots and earnings in agriculture would not be changed.²¹ Liu's Sixty Articles stood unreformed and the agricultural property structure remained unchanged throughout the Cultural Revolution. Thus, the socialist economic base in the countryside remained relatively unconsolidated despite all the intense class struggle that had been waged through the long years of the Great Leap Forward, the Retrenchment Period, the Socialist Education Movement, and the Cultural Revolution. And as long as this unstable condition persisted, the proletarian dictatorship rested on weak class foundations.

The Fall of Lin Piao: April, 1969 to September, 1971

As well as agricultural policy, the issue of the reconstruction of the Communist Party revealed some important differences between Mao and other members of the revolutionary left on one side and Chen Po-ta and Lin Piao on the other side. As should be evident from previous sections in this paper, Chen had long-standing semi-anarchist leanings which would lead him to downplay the importance of the vanguard party and be more hesitant to rebuild it without a thorough purge of the old cadre. Lin was in no hurry to see the Party rebuilt since his main base of support was within the PLA. For Lin, the main task in this latter stage of the Cultural Revolution was to ensure the hegemony of his own grouping within the army, since the army would inevitably play the determinative role in reconstructing the party.

In line with this thinking, Lin implicitly questioned the undivided leading role of the Communist Party when he maintained that the PLA was the most important political center in the Cultural Revolution: "whether there will be a restoration or not of the bourgeois reactionary line in a restored Party structure depends on the army... The army is the most important of all sectors, the center of centers and the key of keys. As long as the army does not change its color, there are ways to cope with the Party, the government and the people. Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun."²²

During the Cultural Revolution, Lin appeared to develop a certain adeptness at giving somewhat one-sided interpretations to a number of quotes from Mao. While it is true, for example, that Mao made it clear that political power ultimately does rest on military power, he also stated emphatically that "our principle is that the Party commands the gun, and the gun must never be allowed to command the Party."²³ With the Chinese Communist Party dismantled and unable organizationally to play its leading role, there was a definite danger during this period of the Cultural Revolution that the gun would begin to command the Party. Lin Piao was locked in a struggle with the conservative regional commanders and the old-line military leaders at the Center over what political forces, in effect, would command the gun.

Following the Ninth Congress, Mao and the other members of the revolutionary left pushed for more rapid progress in rebuilding the CPC. With the central

organs having been formed by the Congress, the main task became to reconstruct the Party from the bottom up, starting with the level of the basic units. At the First Plenum of the Ninth Central Committee, Mao laid out his views on Party rectification:

Every branch needs to be rectified among the masses. They must go through the masses; not just a few Party members but the masses outside the Party must participate in meetings and in criticism. Individuals who are no good should be persuaded to get out of the Party, to withdraw. A very small minority may have to be disciplined.²⁴

The campaign to rebuild the Party, however, ran into innumerable difficulties. Many of the old Party cadre who had considered themselves wrongly overthrown during the Cultural Revolution were reluctant to resume any positions of responsibility. Many of the youthful rebels who arose during the Revolution were too immature politically to exercise authority. One of the measures that Chen Po-ta and Lin Piao implemented to overcome these problems in rebuilding the Party on the basis of worthy successors was the convocation of "Activists Congresses" in China's provinces. By the end of 1969 thirteen provinces had already held such Congresses. These Congresses consisted of seminars in the "living study and application of Mao Tsetung Thought" led by PLA propaganda units. The purpose of the seminars was to identify, train, and recruit a new generation of revolutionary cadre that would re-vitalize the Party.²⁵

These Congresses came under criticism from other members of the Left Alliance for the manner in which the PLA was being used to directly recruit for the Party. There was a fear on the part of Lin's opponents that he and Chen were using the Congresses as a vehicle to strengthen their own base of support in the rebuilt Party. The kind of factional in-fighting continued unabated throughout 1969, and the Party leadership had to give up on the idea of rebuilding the CPC by beginning with the formation of the basic units. The leadership changed course and began to concentrate its efforts on rebuilding the Party at the county level, but by the Fall of 1970 only forty-five out of the over 2000 counties in China had established new Party Committees.²⁶ Finally, the county level was temporarily abandoned, and the Party was to be reconstituted first at the Province level. In Hunan, in November, 1970 the first Provincial Party Committee was formed by a Provincial Congress, with Hua Kuo-feng elected as the First Secretary.²⁷

It would be wrong to lay the problems in Party re-building at the doorsteps solely of Chen Po-ta and Lin Piao. Objectively, Mao himself was responsible to some extent for the fanning of the anti-Party flames during the earlier stages of the Cultural Revolution. At the Ninth Congress and after Mao emphasized the importance of striving for unity, but this line contrasted with his policies during the "struggle" stage of the GPCR. At that time Mao was popularizing slogans like "Put Destruction first, and in the process you have construction". This slogan was true in the sense that it pointed out the revolutionary unit between construction and destruction when the revisionists in the Party were trying to artificially pit one against the other. But it still tended to create illusions, as the concrete course of the Cultural Revolution revealed, that construction would spontaneously take care of itself after the reactionaries were overthrown.

Mao was not altogether free of anarchist ideology himself. For example, he is quoted as stating that "Marxism consists of thousands of truths, but they all boil down to the one sentence, 'It is right to rebel'."²⁸ This kind of reductionism is questionable in itself, but such a quintessence of Marxism leaves it little basis to be distinguished from anarchism. It is right for the working class to rebel against reactionaries, but to carry this rebellion through to the end, it is necessary that the proletariat become the ruling class itself. Under conditions in which the proletariat is indeed the ruling class and is led by a genuine Communist Party, the right to rebel does not seem historically applicable.

During this period of reconstruction of the Party in 1969-70, the revolutionary leftists at the Party center were becoming increasingly divorced from any mass base of support in the provinces. This process of retrenchment not only weakened the leverage of leftist leaders like the Shanghai grouping, but it also increasingly put Chen Po-ta in an untenable position. Chen, of course, could see the handwriting on the wall, and this necessitated his tactical alliance with Lin.

By the end of 1970 the only administrative unit which remained under the control of the revolutionary leftists was Shanghai. The other leftist leaders in the provinces had been removed one by one during 1969-70, and the revolutionary mass organizations which gave them support were either disciplined or suppressed. In October, 1969, for example, the conservative military commander of Tsinan, Yang Teh-chih, was able to purge the leftist Chairman of the Shantung Revolutionary Committee, Wang Hsiao-yu. Although Mao in his speech to the First Plenum of the 9th Central Committee in April had described the contradiction between Yang and Wang as a contradiction among the people, Wang was accused of being a member of the ultra-leftist May 16th Corps. In April, 1970 General Li Yuan, the Chairman of the Hunan Revolutionary Committee who had worked with the radical Red Guards, was transferred to North-west China, and he was succeeded by the more conservative Party leader, Hua Kuo-feng. In May, 1970 even Pan Fu-sheng, the Party Secretary in Heilungkiang who had helped to establish the model of the three-in-one revolutionary committee, disappeared from public view.²⁹

This campaign against the revolutionary left provides a backdrop to the events that transpired at the Second Plenum of the Central Committee held in August, 1970. At the Plenum Chen Po-ta reportedly delivered an unexpected speech on the subject of the Chairman, or President, of the Republic, a position which had been left vacant by the fall of Liu Shao-chi. Lavishing praise on Mao as a great Marxist genius, Chen proposed that Mao be made the Chairman of the Republic. Apparently, this proposal, which utilized the theory of genius as its ideological justification, was an indirect way of either having Lin Piao appointed Chairman when Mao refused the post as he had many times in the past, or guaranteeing Lin's succession to the office if Mao was prevailed upon to accept it.³⁰

The position of the Chairman of the Republic was obviously a very powerful position, one which Liu had used to great advantage. The position would have given Lin Piao pre-eminent political authority, even over Chou En-lai, since the Chairman has the power to appoint and remove the Premier, and all the Vice-Premiers and Ministers of the State Council.³¹

Mao rejected Chen's offer, and went on to repudiate the theory of genius used to justify the maneuver. Already strengthened by its campaign against the remaining strongholds of the revolutionary left in the provinces, the coalition backing Chou En-lai seized the opportunity to topple Chen Po-ta who had to take the brunt of the attack for having initiated the proposal on the Chairman's position. The Lin Piao grouping had to beat a hasty retreat to minimize its losses, and Chen Po-ta was purged.

One of the chief reasons that Mao turned against Chen and Lin at the Second Plenum was that "they made a surprise attack and carried out underground activity".³² They were carrying out splitting activities when, according to Mao, the unity of the Party was of paramount importance. Despite some serious differences among the different members of the Left Alliance, Mao was counseling that Party unity must be guarded in order to achieve any further victories. When Mao emphasized that "We must not put on airs; warlord ways must be rooted out",³³ the immediate target of his remarks seemed to be the Lin Piao grouping, but the criticism could just as well be applied to the regional military commanders.

It seems clear at this point that Mao did not consider Chou En-lai and the regional army commanders as members of a new bourgeois headquarters. Instead, he was more inclined to see the Lin Piao grouping in this light. As he stated during a Provincial tour right after the Plenum:

In my view, behind their surprise attack and their underground activity lay purpose, organization and a programme. Their programme was to appoint a state chairman, and to extol "genius" ... A certain person was anxious to become state chairman, to split the Party and to seize power. The question of genius is a theoretical question. Their theory was idealist apriorism.³⁴

In the months after the Plenum, Mao moved to "undermine the wall" of the Lin Piao grouping. One of his principal moves was to re-organize the Peking Military Region, which was under Lin's control. Two of Lin's supporters were purged in December, 1970: Cheng Wei-shan, the commander of the Peking Military Region and Vice-Chairman of the Peking Revolutionary Committee; and Li Hsueh-feng, a former first secretary of the North China Party Bureau and supporter of Liu Shao-chi who had been called to Peking in 1966 to replace Peng Chen as First Party Secretary of the city. Li rose to become an alternate member of the Politburo at the Ninth Congress because of his alliance with Lin Piao, and at the time of his ouster, was the Political Commissar of the Peking Military Region.³⁵

The charges by Mao that the programme of the Lin Piao grouping was composed of the theory of genius and Lin's desire to be state chairman does not do justice to the important political differences that had emerged between Lin's grouping and the coalition forming around Chou En-lai. Mao himself could not be held guiltless for cultivating the cult of personality and therefore implicitly fostering the theory of genius, although in the later stages of the Cultural Revolution he made a conscious attempt to eradicate its harmful effects. Lin's supposed ambition to be state chairman cannot be evaluated apart from the gravity of the differences between his grouping and that of Chou En-lai.

When differences arose between Lin and Chou, Mao appeared to either side with Chou or to minimize the seriousness of the differences. When it came to a basic vision of the Chinese socialist revolution, there were significant differences between Mao and Lin Piao. Although seemingly more militant in his approach, Lin had a somewhat simplistic Marxist orientation which was heavily overlaid with military precepts. His imagination was fired by the vision of a China fueled with revolutionary ardor and highly disciplined which, under the leadership and organization of the PLA, would make a new "flying leap" in socialist construction and serve as a communist beacon for the world's oppressed peoples. Some of Lin's supporters in Kiangsu stated their views in this way: "700 million people, 700 million soldiers, and 10,000 million miles of rivers and mountains were to become a single military camp."³⁶

Lin's vision of China and the world ultimately led to some very sharp differences between himself on one side and leaders like Chou En-lai and Mao on the other side. These differences had existed for a number of years. In 1967, when the ultra-leftists led by the Peking grouping under Chen Po-ta were leading the assault against the "handful of capitalist-roaders in the army", Mao made it clear that he did not favor the expansion of the fierce class struggles of the Cultural Revolution into the PLA. There are a number of important considerations to take into account in assessing this decision by Mao. Tension with the Soviet Union was increasing with frequent border incidents later erupting in 1969 between Chinese and Soviet troops. The danger of war with the Soviet Union was an increasing possibility. Under these conditions, the prevention of the disintegration of the PLA into warring factions could be justified to some degree by the overriding concern to maintain national defense against a seemingly imminent threat from the USSR.

The threat of war and the pressure exerted on China by the two super-powers led to a major struggle within the Chinese Communist Party on foreign policy. The solution offered to China's quandary by Chen Yi and Chou En-lai and endorsed by Mao was the "Opening to the West". Lin's opposition to this new turn in foreign policy, which would end up altering China's whole strategic line for world revolution, was one of the pre-eminent issues at the core of the split between Lin and the other leaders of the Proletarian Headquarters like Mao and Chou.³⁷

Earlier during the Cultural Revolution Lin had advanced a much more optimistic view of the world revolutionary process than that implied by the "Opening to the West": "Mao Tsetung's Thought is Marxism-Leninism in an age when imperialism moves towards total collapse and socialism moves towards world victory."³⁸ One of the problems with this formulation is that it tended to separate Mao's contributions from Marxism-Leninism and lay the ideological foundation for viewing them as a new category of revolutionary thought. But Marxism-Leninism recognizes the advent of a new era, which necessitated a new strategic line, only with the October Revolution. And since the October Revolution, the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution has not fundamentally changed. Mao Tsetung was a Leninist first and foremost: his "Thoughts" did not constitute a qualitatively new and higher stage of Marxism which corresponded to a whole new era of world history.

Besides Lin's ideological confusion on this score, his formulation also tended to paint a complacent picture of the spontaneous collapse of the imperi-

alist system and the imminent triumph of socialism on a world scale. This idealist perspective had a debilitating effect on Marxist-Leninists throughout the world who looked to the Chinese political leaders for strategic and tactical guidance. In essence, this perspective represented the theory of spontaneism applied to strategy and tactics for world revolution, and it conditioned the Chinese leadership to assume a position of political passivity relative to the revolutionary movements around the world. This theory could represent one main reason among others that the CPC did not undertake vigorous efforts to reconstitute a new Communist International, which could give direct, unified leadership to the world revolutionary process.

The exact basis for Lin Piao's opposition to the "Opening to the West" still remains shrouded in mystery. The charge that he sought to collude with the Soviet Union does not appear consistent with his general strategic approach; but in view of the other alternative, conciliation with U.S. imperialism, Lin's approval of a tactical alliance with the USSR does not appear implausible. At least an alliance with the Soviet Union would not so obviously fly directly in the face of the national liberation movements, as China's alliance with the USA did.

Given the rapid degeneration of China's foreign policy which became enshrined in the form of the reactionary three worlds theory, there was considerable justification on Lin's part to question the new turn towards alliance with U.S. imperialism. As on a number of other major issues which related to the successful consolidation of the Cultural Revolution, Lin Piao stood objectively opposed to a clear Rightist current. However, many of the policies which he advocated and which corresponded in places with those of Chen Po-ta and his Peking grouping could not successfully oppose and defeat the Rightist current. On the contrary, the ultimate objective effects of the theory of spontaneism, the cult of genius, the communization of the state apparatus, and the sectarian maneuvering were to disintegrate and discredit the revolutionary left, drive the center forces allied with the left into the arms of the right, and hand over the political initiative to the rebuilt Bourgeois Headquarters which became resurgent in the early 1970's under the leadership of Ten Hsiao-ping.

By 1971 Lin Piao's grouping had clearly lost the struggle on the future course of China's foreign policy. Already in July of that year, U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger had made a secret trip to Peking to prepare the ground for China being able to implement the "Opening to the West".³⁹ This represented one last defeat in a whole series of setbacks for Lin's grouping, and its position was being increasingly undermined. The conclusion to this major struggle within the Left Alliance occurred in September, 1971, with the death of Lin Piao in a plane crash, along with his wife Yeh Chun and his son Lin Li-kuo. Lin was accused of having plotted a counter-revolutionary coup d'etat and assassination of Mao Tsetung, and a big purge followed to remove Lin's supporters in the People's Liberation Army. Approximately sixty of the top military leaders in the central military apparatus were removed, along with a number of commanders and political commissars of the Military Regions and Districts.⁴⁰

Conclusion

The biggest beneficiary of the purge of the Lin Piao grouping was the emerging center-right coalition headed by Chou En-lai and composed of state administrators, central military leaders, and regional commanders. Having been allied

with the revolutionary left, these forces were moving step-by-step to the right, and now became the chief proponents of the rehabilitation of many of the leaders of the Liu Shao-chi grouping. Those leaders like Teng Hsiao-ping who did self-criticism and pledged their allegiance to the new policies of rapid modernization of China and alliance with the Western imperialist powers were now brought back into positions of great power and authority in the Party and State. With the rout of Lin Piao's grouping, the leftists in the Chinese Communist Party no longer had enough power and influence to forestall the rise of the center-right coalition.

The fall of Lin Piao was decisive for the eventual defeat of the Cultural Revolution, but the remnants of the revolutionary left, now based mainly in Shanghai, carried out a valiant and ideologically significant struggle in the early 1970's to oppose the reversal of verdicts on the Cultural Revolution. They made invaluable theoretical contributions, such as Chang Chun-chiao's "On Exercising All-Round Dictatorship Over the Bourgeoisie", in pointing the way to a deeper analysis of the basis for class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie under socialism. Backed by Mao in this endeavor, they continued to exercise a significant influence in the CPC with their control of many of the propaganda organs.

In the country as a whole, however, most of the organized base of support of the revolutionary left in the mass organizations, the revolutionary committees, the Party, and the PLA had already been wiped out. In essence, the Shanghai grouping was fighting a rearguard action against an increasingly powerful center-right coalition which was progressively taking over control of the Party and State. Not only did this coalition now include reactionary leaders of the old Liu grouping, the conservative regional commanders, and the old center forces around Chou En-lai, but it also extended its influence over Party leaders who could have nominally been considered center-leftists, such as Chi Teng-kuei and Wang Tung-hsing. With the death of both Chou En-lai and Mao Tsetung in 1976, whatever tenuous unity that had existed in the Party was severed, and the dominant center-right coalition under the leadership of figures like Hua Kuo-feng, Yeh Chien-ying, Li Hsien-nien, Chen Hsi-lien, Chi Teng-kuei, Wang Tung-hsing, Wu Teh, and Hsu Shih-yu moved quickly to arrest the Shanghai grouping.⁴¹ The long period of the Cultural Revolution had officially come to an abrupt close.

There are many complex reasons for the defeat of the revolutionary left and the eventual reversal of verdicts on the Cultural Revolution. There were powerful objective factors which posed difficult political and ideological tasks for the Chinese Marxist-Leninists. China was still a socialist society which had not progressed beyond an embryonic or immature stage of development; on this basis alone, the Marxist-Leninists were obliged to pursue a vigorous and persistent struggle to combat inevitable tendencies to capitalist restoration. Moreover, the revolutionary left was struggling within an objective environment in which the material foundations for an advanced socialist society were sorely lacking: China was a vast country with a huge population, poor, underdeveloped, and having been subjected to a long period of imperialist oppression. The proletariat, although one of the most politically advanced in the world, was a relative minority compared to the large peasant population whose economic fragmentation stood as a principal roadblock to any socialist advance.

These were the enormous objective difficulties with which the Marxist-Leninists in the CPC had to grapple, and the line and policies that they were able to develop never provided any easy or clear-cut solutions to these deep-rooted problems. As we have pointed out in this paper, the collectivization of agriculture never really progressed beyond an historically early and unconsolidated stage of development. The initial collectivization of agriculture had been the most rapid and successful in the socialist camp and had made spectacular and unparalleled advances in 1958-59 during the People's Commune movement. But these advances were quickly turned around and pushed back to a stage of development achieved prior to the Great Leap Forward, and the Cultural Revolution never effectively challenged this reversal to a more primitive collective property structure. On the contrary, many of the leaders of the Proletarian Headquarters took as their main goal the beating back of capitalist inroads into agriculture by preventing the growth of private ownership and individual peasant economy and its undermining of the initial advances in collectivization, such as they were.

In industry, while the property structure was nominally more advanced than that found in agriculture, the predominant relations of production in the country's factories still accommodated a large sphere of operation for bourgeois right. The Marxist-Leninists did mount a challenge to the social division of labor in China's workplaces -- the relations of power, control, and authority between the production workers, the engineers, scientists, technicians, and the managers and other administrative personnel. The leadership of the Party representatives and the trade union functionaries also came under severe criticism. But, while this attack on bourgeois right in the division of labor, the most critical component of the relations of production in industry at this stage of the Chinese socialist revolution, achieved path-breaking advances for the international communist movement; the Cultural Revolution was ultimately unsuccessful in consolidating these advances. As Mao himself pointed out as late as 1969 in a speech to the First Plenum of the Ninth Central Committee:

You should study the problems of various factories. It seems essential that the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution should still be carried out. Our foundation has not been consolidated. According to my observation I would say that, not in all factories, nor in an overwhelming majority of factories, but in quite a large majority of cases the leadership is not in the hands of true Marxists, nor yet in the hands of the masses of the workers.⁴²

While the Cultural Revolution failed essentially to maintain many of the significant advances in the economic base of socialist China, it also left an uncertain legacy of achievements in radically reforming the political superstructure. The Chinese Marxist-Leninists were never able to master and implement a revolutionary relationship between the state apparatus of the dictatorship of the proletariat and society as a whole. In the late 1950's they had experimented with the decentralization of the functions of the State administration, such as economic planning, but this decentralization was critically dependent for its political success on the revolutionary leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. But with the increasing power of the Liu Shao-chi faction in the Party apparatus, such leadership was lacking.

During the period of the Cultural Revolution, the charter of the movement, the 16-Point Decision, provided little clarity on the transformations desired by the revolutionary left in the State apparatus. This lack of clarity led to the false start represented by the Shanghai Commune and allowed a whole semi-anarchist trend to gain considerable strength over the mass movements. When the official structure was eventually prescribed for the reform of the State apparatus, the revolutionary committee, the revolutionary left found in practice that such a structure left inordinate influence in the hands of the People's Liberation Army. And with the decline of the Lin Piao grouping, the real power in the PLA was to be wielded by the more conservative regional commanders and old-line military leaders in the central PLA apparatus. In the later stages of the Cultural Revolution, China was devolving into a loose-knit network of Provincial power centers in which the regional military commanders exercised decisive influence.

One of the chief reasons for the reversal of the Cultural Revolution can be found in the contradiction that the PLA was called upon to intervene and give political leadership to the Revolution while the Revolution was never allowed to be carried out within its own ranks. As a result, the hold of the conservative and full-blown reactionary military leaders in the PLA was never seriously challenged. This political failure stemmed ultimately from an inability to fully understand and appreciate the inherent conservatizing tendencies in a standing army under conditions of socialism. Despite the unquestioned revolutionary traditions of the PLA, the Chinese Marxist-Leninists were unsuccessful in overcoming the tendency to convert the PLA into a modernized professional combat force which stood apart and divorced from society as a whole and grew independent of the leadership of the Communist Party.

The independence of the PLA took a qualitative leap when the Party was disorganized during the Cultural Revolution. In common with the history of other countries in the socialist camp, the party apparatus of the CPC displayed an increasing tendency to become bureaucratically separated from the masses. This bureaucratic separation coincided with the political ascendancy of the Liu Shao-chi faction. The past theory and practice of the Chinese socialist revolution had already provided the basic theoretical solution to the progressive bureaucratization and degeneration of the party apparatus -- the concept of the mass line. But the forms and methods of struggle with which the Cultural Revolution experimented were never able to fully embody in practice the mass line concept. The immediate solution offered to Party bureaucracy was the mobilization of the masses from below to attack Party cadre and dismantle the apparatus. An anarchist ideological and political line was the inspiration for much of this early activity, which found its main class base among the students and intelligentsia.

When the Marxist-Leninists eventually attempted to reconstruct the Party, from the bottom up, they were thwarted by the political disorganization and factionalism which was the result of such an anarchist line and the resistance of the bourgeois forces in the Party and society. Under the influence of the center-right coalition which formed in the later stages of the GPCR, the Party ended up being effectively rebuilt more from the top down, starting at the Ninth Congress with the central organs and then moving first to the provincial level, instead of to the basic unit level as had been originally intended.

At the level of political alliances and policy, the Chinese Marxist-Leninists had always been hampered by the fact that they were part of a Left Alliance which was a loosely-united bloc of heterogeneous political leaders representing diverse and conflicting class forces. From the beginning, the Left Alliance was composed of three distinct wings: the center, the ultra-left, and the left. The ultra-left helped to destroy much of the early promise of the Cultural Revolution, while the center deserted the Left Alliance to seek unity with the resurgent bourgeois reactionaries. Under the heat of the intense class struggle initiated by the Cultural Revolution, the Left Alliance inevitably divided into two, with the Proletarian Headquarters standing decimated and the new Bourgeois Headquarters represented by the center-right coalition growing in strength.

All along, the center forces had helped to block a vigorous revolutionization of the relations of production in agriculture and industry. They acted as well to thwart the functioning of the revolutionary committees as effective vehicles to reform the state apparatus, where the center forces held much of their power. The center forces came forward to represent the interests of the classes who were being threatened with the loss of power and material privileges in the Cultural Revolution -- the well-to-do middle peasants in the countryside, and the higher-paid production workers and administrators, technicians, and engineers in industry. Responding to the resistance of these classes and strata, the center political figures functioned more or less as a brake or drag on the full development of the Cultural Revolution. Characteristically, they were unable to really champion a coherent ideological and political line. They expressed their support of the Cultural Revolution, but always with reservations. What they wanted was a Cultural Revolution which could be contained at the ideological level and not so directly related to the critical questions of political and economic power. Moreover, for them the main justification for the revolutionization of people's ideology was that it would tend to liberate and develop the productive forces. They were fully behind the "Opening to the West" in foreign policy and saw nothing politically wrong with the promotion of the "Four Modernizations". The emergence of such political leaders in the Party and State was inevitable given the underlying class motion and pressure in society, but what was critical was that they should come under the hegemony of the revolutionary left. In the early stages of the Cultural Revolution such hegemony existed, but this hegemony was dissipated by the weakening of the revolutionary left, and the center switched its allegiance to the newly ascendent political force in China, the Right.

From within the Left Alliance, a strong ultra-left current quickly emerged in the early stages of the Cultural Revolution. In the early years of the Revolution, such a trend was not easily distinguishable from the genuine left because the political agenda mainly called for attacks on the capitalist-roaders and resolute struggle with revisionism. But, in the later stages of the GPCR, when the role of the students and intelligentsia receded in importance, the policies and practice of the ultra-left became a major stumbling block to the consolidation of the gains of the Revolution. Not easily exposed in the "struggle" period of the GPCR, ultra-leftism revealed clearly its splitting, reactionary nature when the times called for unity, rebuilding, and genuine revolutionary transformations. The ultra-leftists, who were best represented in the leadership positions of the Revolution by the Chen Po-ta grouping, were unabashed advocates of the theory of spontaneism and the cult of personality.

They displayed serious problems with sectarianism, and some of their followers even degenerated into social-fascism. As the Shanghai Commune demonstrated, they proposed that the state apparatus in China be communized. In foreign policy, they were militant champions of uncompromising People's War. If we sum up and try to make sense of the different policies that the ultra-left proposed during the Cultural Revolution, we find that we are dealing with a clear semi-anarchist ideological trend.

Although the Lin Piao grouping shared some of the same ultra-left tendencies with the Chen Po-ta grouping, the former represented a more complex, contradictory formation. The Lin grouping was an early promoter of the cult of Mao Tsetung and the militant line of People's War to guide the world revolution. But, while it may have benefitted from the mass spontaneity of the GPCR insofar as it was directed against its political opponents, the Lin grouping had a vision of China organized as a revolutionary "military camp" which stood in direct contradiction with the theory of spontaneism. Inspired by a military model of organization, the Lin grouping did not favor ultra-democratic structures for the Communist Party or the State Apparatus. On major line questions such as those dealing with the collectivization of agriculture and a revolutionary foreign policy, Lin Piao came out in opposition to a Rightist current, but his own programme, based to a degree on military elitism, and his under-handed style of struggle only served to isolate his grouping and thereby weaken the ability of the Proletarian Headquarters to carry through on the initial advances of the Cultural Revolution.

The more consistent revolutionary leftists, like Mao, Kang Sheng, and the Shanghai grouping, were not free of significant errors themselves. Mao had basically endorsed the political practice associated with the cult of personality and the theory of spontaneism because his own ideological and political line accommodated certain aspects of anarchism ("Bombard the Headquarters", "It Is Right to Rebel", "Put Destruction First..."). Mao ended up repudiating the more harmful, reactionary effects of anarchism because it was a political necessity to do so to advance the Cultural Revolution, but he never made a clear break theoretically with either the cult or spontaneism.

A more serious error, and one which received little rectification during the Cultural Revolution, was the revolutionary left's organizational leniency and a generally lax or liberal organizational line. This leniency was based on an under-estimation of the strength of the class enemy and an over-estimation of the commitment to socialism by the center and conservative forces in the Party and State. These center and conservative forces represented real class forces in society which maintained themselves on the basis of the continuing strength of bourgeois right in the relations of production and its reflection in the political superstructure.

The current revisionist leadership of China is emphasizing the "excesses" of the Cultural Revolution and this line is naturally being echoed by the bourgeois media and its scholarly commentators. There was a strong ultra-left force in the mass movements of that period which was responsible for much of the violent attacks on, and humiliation of, party cadre, intellectuals, and other Chinese citizens. But the end-result of these ultra-left excesses was the strengthening of, and increasing sympathy and support for, the rightists. Although Mao must bear some historical responsibility for allowing the Chinese

ultra-leftists to gain such influence, still his own errors during this period and over-all are clearly much more linked with organizational leniency.

Ever since the early 1940's the basic policy of the Chinese Communist Party has consistently deviated towards organizational leniency. The case of Peng Teh-huai is just one such example. Having been linked with the Kao Kang faction in the early 1950's, Peng was allowed to do self-criticism and retain his power. Even when he attacked the Great Leap Forward in 1959 at Lushan and was replaced as Minister of Defense, he still kept his position on the Politburo. Even in dealing with Teng Hsiao-ping it appears that Mao and his supporters always tried to differentiate Teng's case from that of Liu Shao-chi. As long as Teng made moves to desert Liu, he was treated more leniently, and the possibility was held out that he would eventually be brought back into a leadership position in the party. Teng, apparently, made full use of this opportunity offered him to "turn over a new leaf" and he is now reaping the full rewards of being able to bend shrewdly with the winds.

Although the revolutionary left knew full well that it was battling a bourgeois headquarters in the Party and State, it was not really until the early 1970's that it began to clearly understand and fully appreciate the material basis for the strength of this bourgeois headquarters and the concomitant pressure on the center and conservative political forces to succumb to revisionism. By this time, however, the revolutionary left was not in an organizational position to implement its understanding. Moreover, the mistaken tactical line in foreign policy which Mao and others advocated and which led to the alliance with U.S. imperialism did not lessen the external pressure from the world imperialist system, but instead tended to tap, strengthen, and embolden the more reactionary, pro-imperialist political forces in China.

The different groupings in the Left Alliance and the policies they advanced, of course, were a reflection of the underlying motion of the class forces who took part in the Cultural Revolution. As has been well publicized, much of the early support for the GPCR came from the students and intelligentsia, and the youth in general. As Mao exclaimed in July, 1966, "youth is the great army of the Great Cultural Revolution". Excusing Mao to some degree for a bit of hyperbole designed to give heart to the mass movements on the country's campuses which the reactionaries were viciously attacking at that time; still, nonetheless, this army did not have the strength nor the basic class inclination to carry the GPCR through to success.

Having served as an invaluable catalyst in galvanizing broader sectors of the Chinese people into action, the students and intelligentsia eventually constituted themselves as a major roadblock to the advance of the revolution. Analyzing the two aspects of their early activities in attacking the Party and the State apparatus from below, we have to conclude that much of the objective impact of their actions ended up serving the interests of the rightists. Although the leadership of the Peng Chen clique and the Liu Shao-chi faction seemed to have been toppled easily enough relying on the students and the intelligentsia as the main battering ram, the programme and the methods of struggle used by their youthful opponents created sympathy for these reactionaries among a significant spectrum of classes and strata in China.

This underlying swing to the right among the masses helps to explain the purge of leading members of Chen Po-ta's grouping and the decline in influence

of Chiang Ching and her comrades in Shanghai by the second half of 1967. Through the Group in Charge of the Cultural Revolution, Chen Po-ta and Chiang Ching had linked themselves fairly closely with the more radical Third and Fourth Headquarters of the Red Guard movement. With the degeneration of these Red Guard forces, in some cases into conspiratorial cliques like the "May 16th Corps", the GCCR stood very much discredited and ceased to play a leading role by 1968.

Chiang Ching and the Shanghai grouping continued to exercise a significant influence over the future course of the GPCR because of their base in the most politically advanced wings of the Chinese working class. Along with Mao, these were the figures who most consistently championed the leading role of the working class. The culmination of their efforts occurred in the summer of 1968 as thousands of workers moved peacefully onto the country's campuses to bring an end to the factional in-fighting of the students and structure the educational institutions to serve proletarian class interests.

Although these actions by workers in Peking, Shanghai, and other major urban centers were widely hailed as a prime example of the line that "the working class must exercise leadership in everything", the general results of attempting to bring this leading role into full play in the GPCR were very uneven. The working class itself was split into big factions, with the rightists still commanding a sizeable following. Moreover, the working class could not really exercise its influence through an appropriate organizational vehicle with the Communist Party an object of attack and in disarray. Where the working class did step actively onto the political stage, it was often the PLA which provided the organizational catalyst for such activity.

Less inclined to extremes, the country's industrial workers were repelled by much of the sectarian and semi-anarchist activity of the Red Guards. Instead of directing the workers to, in effect, mop up after the Red Guards on the campuses, the revolutionary left should have provided clearer directives on mobilizing the workers to expand their power in the country's industrial enterprises and also to directly intervene in the reforming of the political superstructure. By 1968 the most-publicized actions of the working class were those designed to re-assert control over the Red Guards, but this hardly should have been the defining characteristic of how the workers were to play a leading political role.

The revolutionary left provided confusing leadership to the working class, and the abortive Shanghai Commune is but one of the most glaring examples. As a result, the working class was not fully mobilized to achieve the necessary political, ideological, and organizational gains that would have helped to guarantee the successes of the GPCR. Thus, although knocked down, the reactionaries could still count on significant support among sectors of the working class, and the inability of the revolutionary left to pursue a decisive victory allowed the Rightists the breathing room to begin to mount a comeback.

Although less discussed, what may have been even more telling for the eventual defeat of the Cultural Revolution was the inability of the working class to cement an active political alliance with the poor and lower-middle peasants. Ever since the period of retrenchment in the early 1960's when Liu

Shao-chi's "Sixty Articles" became the official agricultural policy, the revolutionary left had been attempting to re-mobilize the peasantry. In the late 1950's, and especially during the Great Leap Forward, the Chinese peasantry had responded in an almost phenomenal fashion to the revolutionary call to collectivize agriculture. But the ultra-left excesses of the GLF combined with the natural calamities in the early 1960's eroded this base of support for the revolutionary left.

In 1969-70 Chen Po-ta and Lin Piao attempted to mobilize support among the peasantry with their new "Learn from Tachai" campaign, but the results of their activities seemed to have met with little real success. Of all Chinese classes, the numerically huge Chinese peasantry played the most politically inactive role. No really serious challenge was mounted against the reactionaries in the countryside, who mainly based themselves on the support of the rich and well-to-do middle peasants, had significant influence among the middle peasants as a whole, and were able to neutralize any revolutionary initiatives coming from the poor and lower-middle peasants. Unlike the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution never met with any remarkable success in the countryside. The status quo in collectivization, which harked back to the advances prior to the GLF, remained in force; and thus the over-all political power of the revolutionary left remained constructed on a narrow and fragile class base.

With significant sectors of the broad masses of the workers and peasants not being the most whole-hearted supporters of the Cultural Revolution, the circumstances in the later stages of the GPCR dictated a tactical retrenchment by the revolutionary left. It was already becoming clear that the center political forces, represented mainly by the Chou En-lai grouping, were moving progressively to the right because the class forces they tended to represent were coming out more as active opponents of the Cultural Revolution. Moreover, the divisions among classes and strata over the internal questions of the Cultural Revolution were becoming inter-twined with the question of what basic stand to take against the increasing threat of imperialist aggression against China.

Already by 1968, with the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, Mao seemed to have come to the conclusion that the Soviet Union, as a social-imperialist great power, was posing more of an immediate threat to China than that represented by the U.S.A. This orientation gained greater backing in 1969 with the increasing Soviet-Chinese border clashes. Thus, Mao and other leaders like Chou En-lai joined forces to lobby for a new tactical turn in foreign policy represented by the "Opening to the West". Not only did this new tactical turn contradict an aggressive line on supporting People's War in the underdeveloped colonial and semi-colonial countries dominated by U.S. imperialism, but it also served to pull the rug out from under much of the domestic revolutionary initiatives of the Cultural Revolution. The need to solidify "national unity" came to predominate over the desire to deepen class struggle.

Thus, the Cultural Revolution began to grind to a halt already by the early 1970's not only because of the lack of a broad class base of support, but also because of the need to tailor domestic class struggle to the exigencies of foreign policy. The purge of Chen Po-ta and the Lin Piao grouping in 1970-1 was the political reflection of this general turn to the right. The decimation of the revolutionary left, which contributed to its own demise through inter-

necine, factional warfare, was a direct result of its failure to achieve a broad class base of support. As the Left Alliance proceeded to devour itself, the reactionaries were gathering the necessary class support and political momentum to stage their comeback. Already by 1971, following the rout of the Lin Piao grouping, the basic fate of the Cultural Revolution was sealed.

The above represents, we believe, some of the major reasons attributable to either the objective conditions in China or the state of the subjective factor which led to the eventual overturning of the Cultural Revolution. But despite the defeat of the revolutionary left in China, we firmly believe that Marxist-Leninists throughout the world owe them a tremendous political debt. During a critical time historically, they marched forward to become the leading force in launching a world anti-revisionist movement. They have immeasurably aided us all in being able to carry forward the revolutionary struggle for socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat. In order to advance further in this struggle, we need to begin by scaling the platform that they constructed for us and learn the lessons of their revolutionary experience. This experience, both positive and negative, would not be available to us had the Chinese Marxist-Leninists not dared to scale the heights, "to storm the heavens", and heroically do battle with revisionism. Only by pursuing such a course, based on a deep appreciation for their revolutionary spirit, courage, and steadfastness, can we hope to succeed where they fell short of the goal.

There are many opportunist forces among the left in this period who are jumping out to negate the outstanding contributions of the revolutionary left in China and blacken with scorn the momentous struggle embodied in the Cultural Revolution, which was most timely and necessary to combat revisionism. Independent of their will, their efforts in launching such unprincipled attacks only serve to sabotage the real revolutionary struggle for socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat and lengthen the period of decline and disintegration of the world imperialist system.

FOOTNOTES

1. van Ginneken, The Rise and Fall of Lin Piao, pgs. 176-7.
2. Ibid., pg. 172.
3. Chien Yu-shien, China's Fading Revolution, pgs. 161-171 (Centre of Contemporary Chinese Studies, Hong Kong, 1969).
4. Jurgen Domes, China After the Cultural Revolution, pgs. 43-44, (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1977).
5. Brugger, Contemporary China, pg. 334.
6. Tai Sung-an, Mao Tsetung's Cultural Revolution, pgs. 163-187, (Pegasus, New York, 1972).
7. Miltons, The Wind Will Not Subside, pgs. 285-6.
8. Brugger, pg. 363.
9. Domes, pg. 107.
10. Ibid., pg. 108.
11. Daubier, A History of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, pg. 304.
12. Selden, The People's Republic of China, pg. 619.
13. Esmein, The Chinese Cultural Revolution, pg. 246.
14. Selden, pg. 624.
15. Esmein, pg. 254.
16. van Ginneken, The Rise and Fall of Lin Piao, pg. 340.

17. Esmein, pg. 257.
18. Domes, pgs. 109-110.
19. Ibid., pgs. 113-4.
20. Ibid., pg. 114.
21. Ibid., pgs. 114-116.
22. Suyin, The Wind in the Tower, pg. 324.
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42. Schram, pg. 283.

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