3. The Army During Its Period of Neutrality

The army played a very important part in the Cultural Revolution. As it had been ideologically prepared, Mao Tse-tung was able to rely on it as his main support in his dealings with the Party, whose apparatus was not yet under his control. The peasants were still too short of political awareness; and the industrial workers, as beneficiaries of somewhat opportunistic policies, had tended to drift away from politics.

Mao Tse-tung could depend on the army as a means of putting pressure on the 'authorities' in the Party and the government who, in their unwillingness to understand his ideas, were entrenched in the old order and refused to come to terms with him. He could depend on the army to prevent the country from being paralyzed if the troubles got out of hand, and could hold it in reserve while the students were active.

The army was on no account to become involved in the Cultural Revolution itself. Its reactions to what took place could not be allowed to threaten its unity. It was liable to be called upon to take over public services if the economy ground to a halt or civil war loomed; and the escalation of the Vietnam war was threatening China.

At the outset the army was not supposed to need a revolution within its ranks. It was a thing apart, dedicated to serving the people and keeping clear of the disputes of committee politics.

All these reasons probably explain why what happened within the army took place before and after the initial flare-up during which the students were the shock troops. When the Red Guards were on the rampage the army gave the impression that the disturbance had passed it by and that it maintained complete control over itself. To be sure, something had happened in its ranks before that, either because some purges were thought necessary to get the army well under control before the envisaged troubles broke out; or, more probably, because the new turn taken by the Vietnam war had brought into the open disagreements over the role the army should play in a time of crisis.

Everything changed after the initial flare-up. The army had to be called in to keep control and maintain order. Although its unity depended on an understanding among its leaders that the army would not involve itself in the struggles, it was gradually drawn into the Cultural Revolution at the request of the Maoists. Once this principle was cast aside there was a clash of differing political views, and it became very hard to restrain agitation within the army itself.

The Cultural Revolution in the provinces developed differently from Peking. The revolutionary movement was submerged by a flood of declarations of faith from all sides. Everyone, even opponents, called themselves Maoists; it was poorly organized; and it was misunderstood by many Chinese. The masses it was trying to reach had for long known only Party-run movements; it may have been difficult for them to realize that this time the Revolution was not being controlled from above.

The military leaders in the provinces must have been appalled by the news of the revolution in Peking. To many of them the young agitators must have seemed like heretics. They doubtless wanted to maintain order and preserve the Party's achievements by keeping the agitation within bounds. In so doing they drew criticism on the army from the revolutionaries and hastened the spread of the Cultural Revolution to the army.

After Korea: the peasant army's new image

The Chinese army is essentially an army of peasants. It is trained not only for 'military work'—armed combat—but also for 'ideological work' and 'productive work.' Its peasant roots are enough to explain the sympathy its men had for the Maoist movement.

In 1930 Japan also had an army of peasants; and its officers, often of the same stock as the men, reacted like the countrymen they were to the problems of domestic policies. They felt that city life was corrupt. In their eyes the political parties were either, like the Marxists, alien to the spirit of Japan, or corrupted by money, like the liberals. The Japanese army is known to have intervened in politics several times. As the leaders raised the stakes they were led to a complete seizure of power, in which the real interests of the peasants were forgotten. But the starting point had been a lively concern for a countryside suffering from the post-war crisis, and resentment at the towns, whose expansion was of benefit only to their own citizens.

It would be wrong to suggest that the situation in China was identical. All the same, with the peasantry living in backwardness while the cities enjoyed twentieth-century conditions and political awareness, peasants sent into the cities on garrison duty were greatly struck by the differences they encountered; and it was quite natural that a movement favouring austerity should win their support. Such a movement might begin by taking a critical view of urban political morality. From this point of view, an economic development strategy which concentrated on the polarization of industrial development could evoke a mass reaction strong enough to shake the power structure. This is a phenomenon frequently encountered in countries where the social status of the peasantry has historically been higher than that of other labouring classes. China did not introduce military conscription until 1955. The Chinese army underwent the ordeal of the Korean War with volunteer manpower and organizational methods

inherited from the Liberation War, by which the Party committees in the army discussed strategy as well as the execution of military actions. There were no ranks as such for officers or NCOs. The system of Party committees in the army, which had survived fundamentally unchanged ever since the Sanwan Reorganization,[1] was built up from the base of a committee for each battalion and a Party branch in every company. As the little red book says[2] 'The Party branch is organized on a company basis; this is an important reason why the Red Army has been able to carry on such arduous fighting without falling apart.'

An important series of reforms in 1955[3] introduced new methods of recruitment and a regularized system of ranks and privileges for officers. The army now began to modernize its structure. There were indications that the discussions of the lower-level committees now carried less weight; but the reforms did not necessarily imply a change of attitude. This was no doubt why a compromise could be found between the supporters of Party committees in the army and those who advocated that authority should be vested in the General Staff.

However, disagreements apparently developed rapidly in 1958 and 1959 between the Party's radicals and the officers in charge of the army's organization. The latter, grouped around Marshal P'eng Te-huai, the Minister of Defence, had the unpleasant experience of being criticized by the Central Committee when it met at Lushan in Sep-

[1] October 4, 1927, at the end of the Autumn Harvest Uprising. See *Jimmin Chūgoku,* November 1967, pp. 40–41.

[2] English edition, p. 136.

[3] The 1955 documents include a law on military conscription, regulations on auxiliary services in the PLA, and a State Council order converting the security forces in *hsien* and Special Districts into armed People's Police. Fourteen ranks were created for officers and three for NCOs. It was said that the change from a voluntary system to one of conscription would bring changes in the relationship between officers and men, and that if specialists were needed for modern weapons it was as well to give them some sort of special treatment (see *Chūgoku Kenkyū Geppō,* no. 242, Tokyo, April 1968, p. 25).

tember 1959. The radicals were later to list the errors of P'eng Te-huai:

> He gave first place to military technique and denied that political and ideological work is the primary factor in the fighting ability of our army. He attempted to abrogate the absolute leadership of the Party in the army and the system of collective leadership through the Party committee, and tried instead to push through the system of 'one-man leadership'. . . . P'eng Te-huai opposed the strategic principle of active defence put forward by Chairman Mao. He adopted a completely passive attitude towards preparations for dealing with American imperialist aggression. He did not proceed from the standpoint of combat readiness for eventual war. Instead he adopted the opportunist attitude that 'War is impossible, or improbable.'[4]

P'eng Te-huai and several other military leaders lost their jobs in the army command, but not their full or candidate membership of the Central Committee.[5] Their condemnation was not unanimous. Some of their ideas were still accepted by members of the Party and they still retained some support in the army. They were known as the exponents of the primacy of weapons.

Lin Piao, the new Minister of Defence, undertook a purge of the army. The systematic study of the works of Mao Tse-tung seems to have begun in 1958 in some units. Mao Tse-tung himself had taken up his pen when P'eng Te-huai was condemned and on three occasions put forward his point of view.[6] The movement for a general and

[4] Li Hsin-kung, 'Settling accounts with P'eng Te-huai . . .' *Peking Review*, no. 36, September 1, 1967, p. 15.

[5] Resolution of the 8th Plenary Session of the 8th C.C. concerning the anti-Party clique headed by P'eng Te-huai, *Peking Review*, no. 34, August 18, 1967, pp. 8–10 (excerpts only).

[6] 'How Marxism should correctly be applied to mass revolutionary struggles' (August 15, 1959). 'The history of the machine gun, the mortar, and other subjects' (August 16, 1959), 'Two letters to the editorial department of the Poetry Publishing House' (September 1, 1959). See *Chūgoku Kenkyū Geppō*, no. 242, 1968, p. 13.

intensified study of the Thought of Mao Tse-tung was the method chosen for remedying military deviation. Particular stress was laid on the 'Four First' and the 'Three-Eight Working Style,' slogans that had been given to the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army many years earlier.[7]

Until 1958 the study of Mao Tse-tung's Thought in the army had been confined to his military ideas. From then onwards the whole of his thought was to be studied. In the development of this movement, 'the absolute authority of the Thought of Mao Tse-tung' became established in the army, in which exemplary morality, strict discipline, great austerity and a strong sense of mission were all fostered.

It is easy for a body trained to think in a particular way to become remote from the rest of the people, who do not share its demanding principles and lack its sense of mission. The army's leaders were on their guard to preserve it from risks of contamination. When the Cultural Revolution spread, soldiers were seconded to the revolutionary committees with responsibilities that were new to them. Others were put in charge of factories. Some were influenced by civilian scepticism or joined in quarrels be-

[7] The 'Four Firsts': Priority of men over material; of political work in its relation to other activities; of ideological work over other aspects of political work; and of lively ideas over academic thinking in ideological work.
The 'Three-Eight Working Style' refers to the 'Three Main Rules' and the 'Eight Points for Attention.'
The Three Main Rules were originally: Obey orders, take nothing from the masses, not even a needle and a thread, and hand all captured goods over to the authorities.
The Eight Points: Speak politely; pay a fair price for your purchases; return what you borrow; give compensation for any damage you do; do not beat or insult people; do not trample on crops; do not importune women; do not mistreat prisoners. (See J. Guillermaz, *Histoire du parti communiste chinois*, p. 188.)
The movement for the study of Mao Tse-tung's Thought later adopted the Three-Eight Working Style, formulated by Mao Tse-tung into three points and eight characters, recommending: steadiness of mind, enthusiasm, directness, flexibility in strategy and tactics, unity, energy, seriousness of purpose, and application.

tween different interest groups, forgetting their own mission.

Political cadres were aware of such risks, as 'the army does not exist in a vacuum.'[8] When soldiers were demobilized they were the objects of special attention from their comrades and the political commissars of their units. 'Fighters should be told about the problems that may arise in their families,' recommended a unit in Canton.[9] Thus the army took its own course, guided by the Thought of Mao Tse-tung but not sheltered from influences coming from the people. Its command in particular came under the influence of the Party machine, as the Party in the army was the same Party as in civilian circles, differing only to some extent in its appearance.

P'eng Te-huai and the advocates of the theory of the primacy of weapons had been removed from the control of the army, but with the support of the Party machine their resistance continued. Liu Shao-ch'i apparently said at an enlarged work meeting of the Central Committee in January 1962 that the struggle against the P'eng Te-huai group had been taken too far. In June the dismissed Minister of Defence himself produced an essay of 80,000 characters demanding that his case be re-examined.[10]

The withdrawal and reaction of the advocates of weaponry

Marshal Lin Piao, Minister of Defence since 1959, was convinced that the Maoist minority had to take action, by urging the masses to overthrow the Party machine. It is the law, he said,

> with all things, correct or incorrect, that if you do not attack them, they will attack you; if you do not strike them, they will strike you; if you do not strengthen your resistance to them, they will strengthen their resistance to you. It is therefore necessary to mobilize the masses

[8] *PLA Daily*, April 16, 1966.
[9] *People's Daily*, November 8, 1966.
[10] See *Chūgoku Kenkyū Geppō*, no. 242, Tokyo, 1968, p. 17.

> for the struggle. If they do not struggle we risk being dispersed; it will then be impossible to ensure unity.[11]

Lin Piao reorganized the Central Committee's Military Commission, of which he was the first vice-chairman, and one can assume that it was still chaired by Mao Tse-tung himself even after the Wuhan Plenum. It is hardly surprising therefore that it was through the Military Commission that he was later to recover control of the government. The new Military Commission met three times in 1960, and at its third session, in September and October, it approved 'intensive, repeated and prolonged' publicizing of the Thought of Mao Tse-tung, carrying out the 'Mass Line,' and 'the expansion of democracy.'[12] In the operational control of the army Lin Piao replaced Huang K'o-sheng, dismissed at the same time as P'eng Te-huai, with Lo Jui-ch'ing. We have seen how after the Lushan Plenum of 1962 Mao Tse-tung set about reconquering lost ground. Behind him he had the army which, trained in his Thought, had struggled against the theory of the primacy of weapons and now stood, more unified than before, around Lin Piao. Next the Socialist Education Movement was launched in the countryside, and after February 1964 extended to all walks of life throughout the country in the campaign to 'Learn from the PLA.' The army put itself in the vanguard of the Party, not only for an ideological movement but also for a political campaign. A silent struggle was developing between the entrenched views of the Party machine and the radical tendencies supported by the army. The latter scored with the publication of the Twenty-three Points, dealing with the application of the Socialist Education Movement in the countryside.

[11] *Tungfanghung*, Wei-Jenmin Chantoutui of Peking Engineering University, February 23, 1967. Speech by Lin Piao to a meeting of senior cadres of the whole army in February 1960. This speech also refers to the major themes of the unity of opposites of 'the division of one into two' and of activism, all of which were to be basic to the tactics of the Maoists throughout the Cultural Revolution.
[12] See *The Politics of the Chinese Red Army*, ed. J. Chester Cheng, The Hoover Institution, Stanford, 1966.

But the movement was carried out in the countryside by cadres under the orders of the Party machine. The army could not do it itself. The army made exhortations, distributed tracts, found models, and planned campaigns around such heroes as Lei Feng; but the class struggle which the radicals wanted never developed on a large scale, and the 'authorities' in the Party kept their grip on the countryside. The gap between the Party machine and the army widened, while the soldiers who believed in the primacy of weapons were not yet entirely powerless, which was to lead to further purges in the future.

Documents published later revealed that the militarists had begun their counter-attack in 1964, before the big escalation in Vietnam. In that year, according to the *People's Daily* of May 30, 1968, 'Lo Jui-ch'ing formed his plan to reverse the policy adopted for the development of our army.'[13] Lin Piao reacted with his customary vigour:

> At the end of 1964 Vice-Chairman Lin Piao gave the important directive that first place was to be given to proletarian policies and that ideological and political work were to be strengthened. . . . Lo Jui-ch'ing's great military plans came to nothing.[14]

Minor rectifications—i.e. a limited purge—were ordered, but 'Lo Jui-ch'ing did not permit the experiment of minor rectifications to proceed.'[15]

The army thus had a difficult time, with the Minister of Defence and his Chief of Staff at loggerheads on the question of purges. When the bombing of North Vietnam began, many Chinese expected the war to extend to their own country. As Han Suyin has written:

> 'China herself foresaw that the threatening and provocative *cordon sanitaire* of the previous seventeen years,

[13] 'Men Ho, a good cadre, endlessly faithful to the Thought of Chairman Mao,' *People's Daily*, May 30, 1968.
[14] 'La 9e compagnie rouge,' New China News Agency (French language), no. 050907, 1968.
[15] *Ibid.*

> now aggravated by the presence on her doorstep of half a million American troops in Vietnam and an aerial armada out of all proportion to the local requirements, was the prelude to an attack on her. She accepted the challenge.'[16]

In the state of alert before a possible war military men gained more freedom of speech, and the 'weapons first' theory could now be more openly expressed. Speaking at meetings commemorating the victories over Germany and Japan, Lo Jui-ch'ing repeated the orthodox view that an 'active defence' was necessary, but added that there was no need to wait until the enemy attacked first.

Lin Piao replied on September 3, 1965, with his famous article 'Long Live the Victory of the People's War.' The general drift of this was that while no concessions should be made to American imperialism a head-on conflict was not the right way to oppose it. He did not say that troops would be sent to Vietnam, or that it would be necessary to enter the war against America in the near future. It was a question of carrying out an active strategy against America, and mobilizing all under-developed countries and oppressed peoples for the struggle. The dispute between Lin Piao and Lo Jui-ch'ing was between advocates of modern and guerrilla war, between supporters of joint action with the USSR and of independent action.

In the absence of statements of their positions by the militarists the reasons behind them can only be guessed at. There are two possible hypotheses, and surprisingly enough both pointed to a military alliance with the USSR. At first sight, the 'weapons first' advocates, allied as they were with the Party apparatus, appear to have stressed the imminence of the danger and argued in favour of taking the offensive. This would have been intended to create a tense atmosphere favourable to the declaration of a state of emergency, or at least to more power for the military leaders. As the latter believed that it was high time to strengthen the army's resources in heavy equipment and

[16] Han Suyin, *China in the Year 2001*, Basic Books, New York, 1967.

aircraft they would have been willing to act jointly with the USSR.

The other hypothesis is that, as tension grew between China and America, a military analysis of the situation confirmed the 'weapons first' advocates in their caution. While they wanted an easing of China's policy towards the USA, they were also prepared in the last resort to co-operate with the USSR if necessary. From what we know, Lo Jui-ch'ing seems to have taken the first line of reasoning and P'eng Te-huai, who was criticized for saying that war was unlikely, the second. Lo Jui-ch'ing had been criticized for saying that there was no need to wait until one was attacked before taking the offensive. P'eng Te-huai held back, while Lo Jui-ch'ing went too far. But both attitudes led towards a *rapprochement* with the Soviet Union, in the former case for the sake of power and in the latter out of prudence.

It may well be thought that the policy of Mao Tse-tung and Lin Piao led them to align themselves more firmly with Vietnam than did that of the 'weapons first' partisans.

The army reorganized and prepared

Lin Piao had the insignia of rank abolished in June 1965—a symbolic expression of his policy. Once again he decided to make a purge, not an easy thing to carry out when the threat of war put the army in the firing line. On November 18, 1965, he published his 'Directives for work in the army in 1966.' This concentrated on people's war, suitably enough for a situation in which China, finding herself encircled, was expecting an invasion of imperialist forces on her own soil.

A general conference on political work in the army met from the end of December to January 20, 1966. This conference, guided by the chief of the PLA's General Political Department, Hsiao Hua, gave 'priority to politics,' set the target of 'crushing the bourgeois line and bourgeois theories in the army,' and demanded 'a purification of the army in the political, ideological and organizational

spheres.' This last item indicated a purge. When the clean-up only affected organization, it involved nothing more than an administrative shake-up; but a requirement that everyone should go through the ideological mill meant that hard trials lay ahead.

The details of the purge that was to bring the army back under control are not yet known, but it is generally thought to have led to the incident known as the 'February *coup d'état.*'

The 'February *coup*' was an operation by which Lo Jui-ch'ing, the Chief of the General Staff, would have put his underlings in the key positions in the army. The Red Guards of Peking University and Jenta (the People's University of Peking), whose investigations claimed to include the first evidence of this *coup d'état,* insisted with great emphasis that the Peking 'authorities' moved troops in from the provinces to strengthen the capital's garrison. These troops were billeted in the universities. Liu Jen, secretary of the Peking Municipal Party Committee and Political Commissar of the Peking Military Region, apparently transferred troops from Shansi, Hankow[17] and Tientsin, wanting to have them at his disposal in Peking.

The Red Guards who made the investigations and reached these conclusions clearly wanted to expose a crime by the former municipal Party committee. After these revelations at the end of January 1967 the matter was taken up again in April by the revolutionary group that had seized power in the municipal committee and the organs of the Peking Party committee. The intention this time was to investigate thoroughly the services they had just taken over. They drew up an indictment in the style commonly used in the revolutionary public meetings during the period after the power seizures:

We of the justice department have investigated the plot

[17] See Konno, *Pekin Kono Ichinen,* Shinnihon Shuppansha, Tokyo, 1968, *op. cit.* Since Hankow was not in the area under Liu Jen's jurisdiction this should perhaps be Nankow, a town strategically situated at the foot of the pass of the Great Wall.

by Liu, Teng, P'eng, Lu, Lo and Yang, and demand that they be condemned to death for their crime.[18]

Their poster ended with this peroration. But other posters which went up at the same time reported that a telephone call from the Central Committee's Cultural Revolution Group had ordered that all posters dealing with the 'February *coup*' were to be pasted over. This amounted to disowning them.

Throughout the Cultural Revolution February, like July and August, was a disturbed month. References to February always had undesirable reactionary connotations: the Group of Five and the 'February *coup*' in 1966, the 'February Counter-current' in 1967 and in 1968. Official organs were later to refer to the events of February 1966 only as the 'February attempt to settle scores,'[19] thus using the affair of the Group of Five to cover up for the story of the *coup*, the truth of which Chou En-lai himself denied.

Whatever it was, the incident of the so-called *coup* involved a conflict among the military leaders that led to a purge. If we credit the investigations by the revolutionary group who made the indictment quoted above, P'eng Chen and his followers launched a public opinion campaign throughout China in 1965 and early 1966, saying that war was about to break out at any moment and that it was necessary to prepare for it.

> From March 1965 and throughout the autumn they burned many documents on the excuse of preparing for war, assembled supplies for war, organized the rear areas. . . . stockpiled material for strategic construction programmes and military factories. . . . Anticipating that Peking would be the base for a *coup d'état*, they intensified military training, selected over sixty students who had graduated from primary and secondary

[18] From posters put up in Peking after April 17, 1967, by the 'Army Corps for the destruction of the old regime' in organizations of the Municipal Party Committee. The six men were Liu Shao-ch'i, Teng Hsiao-p'ing, P'eng Chen, Lu Ting-yi, Lo Jui-ch'ing, and Yang Shang-k'un.

[19] *Pékin Information*, no. 37, September 16, 1968, p. 26.

> schools, trained them in radlio transmission, and supplied the militia with large quaantities of munitions. They formed various military uunits in the universities and higher schools. . . . In Octtober 1965 Liu Jen, putting his trust in a foreign counitry, set out a third line and made preparations for usimg foreign aid if things went badly.[20]

In addition, according to ean earlier poster denouncing the 'large military clique of ILo Jui-ch'ing,'[21] Lo had conspired with a number of geenerals to take power in the army high command. He eveen wanted to instal the 'anti-Party elements' Liu Chen and Chang T'ing-fa[22] in the air force, and dared to tell Lin Piao to make way.

Was there really a plot? Im February 1967 Red Guards cited statements attributed toɔ Lin Piao and K'ang Sheng to confirm that there had beeen.[23] Chou En-lai thought it useful to point out that theere was no need to see conspiracies everywhere.[24] The military preparations at the beginning of 1966 that had atttracted attention had nothing to do with a *coup d'état*, and whatever Lo Jui-ch'ing was to be blamed for it was nott that. It remains to be said that Lo Jui-ch'ing tried to kiill himself on March 18th by jumping out of a window, and was condemned on April 3, 1966, either by the Centre oɔr by the Central Committee's Military Commission.[25] The verdict against him was confirmed on May 16, 1966, whiich was therefore a significant date not only for the investiiture of the Cultural Revolu-

[20] 'Army Corps for the destrruction of the old regime,' April 17, 1967, *op. cit.*

[21] Poster of the Hsin Peita lRed Guards, January 28, 1967.

[22] Both were previously assiistants to the air force chief of staff.

[23] According to the Revoluutionary Rebels of the No. 1 Machine-Tool Factory, Pekingg, cited in Konno, *Pekin Kono Ichinen*, Tokyo, 1968, *op. cit.*

[24] See *Hsin Peita*, May 7, 1967.

[25] See *Chūgoku Kenkyū Geppō*, no. 242, 1968, p. 17. The 'Report of a Central Committeee Working Party on the question of the errors of Lo Jui-ch'ing' was approved on April 3, 1966, and confirmed on May 16th, prrobably by the Eastern Centre.

tion's new group in the Central Committee, but also for the army.

The preparations for war that had given rise to alarming rumours, and possibly misled the Red Guards of Peita and Jenta, had not escaped the notice of outside observers. That winter they saw the militia training in the fields and sometimes even in the streets of Peking at dawn. It was also learnt that factories had received instructions concerning the mobilization of their cadres, and that the Peking People's Committee had created a 'Third Bureau' in 1965 which was moving out supplies and building up stockpiles in the suburbs to the north and east of the city.[26]

The condemnation of Lo Jui-ch'ing was most effective in putting down the forces hostile to applying the ideas of Lin Piao. It could be said that it spared the army leadership from being split into two. The radical military leaders established their authority in Peking almost as well as they had done in Shanghai and Hangchow.

All indications suggest that the former marshals in the Central Committee's Military Commission supported Lin Piao and Hsiao Hua. They doubtless reckoned that their line on the Vietnam war was the most reasonable one at that time. When Lin Piao sent them what were later known as the 'Chiang Ch'ing Theses'[27]—as opposed to the 'February Theses'—the commission treated them both as an army document, and, acting in the name of the whole Party, as one of general policy.[28] Thus began the custom of addressing matters to the Military Commission instead

[26] According to the organs of the revolutionaries of the Steel Institute, April 12, 1967.

[27] Summary of the minutes of discussions of literary and art workers in the army. See *Mōtakutō no Chōsen,* p. 26. (See also *Peking Review,* no. 23, 1967, pp. 10–16: 'Summary of the Forum on the Work in Literature and Art with Which Comrade Lin Piao Entrusted Comrade Chiang Ch'ing'—translator.)

[28] However, there was no suggestion of this in the press before the Peking Municipal Committee was overthrown. The first references to the 'Forum' in the press date from June 30, 1966, when the *People's Daily* reported the working conference of the whole army on literary and artistic creation called by the General Political Department of the PLA.

of to the Party's other leading organs—the Political Bureau and its Standing Committee—which were now split.

As we have seen, the *PLA Daily* led the attack in the sphere of public opinion, in co-operation with the Central Committee's Cultural Revolution Group, in order that the academic discussions on the cases of Wu Han, Teng T'o and the historians should lead to intensified political struggles. The press bombardment of the 'bourgeois headquarters' opened the way to the violent phase of the Cultural Revolution. After the purge in the army, the ideas of Mao Tse-tung and Lin Piao on war in the prevailing circumstances were accepted with no further opposition. The *PLA Daily*'s May Day editorial reasserted that ultra-modern weapons were powerless against men with a high political awareness, an idea that was inseparable from the conclusions drawn from it: that in politics—that is, the organization of the masses from the base upwards—China enjoyed 'an absolute supremacy.'[29]

The army during the launching of the Red Guards

The careful preservation of the army's unity made it possible for the student movement to be launched with the protection of reserve forces strong enough to disturb anyone who might have wished to resort to force in defence of the threatened Party machine. From July to December the army remained powerful and calm, present but not involved, equally ready to intervene in the country to maintain order or to intervene abroad if the Vietnamese wanted it.

After the overthrow of the Peking Municipal Committee at the beginning of June came the period of the 'work teams' (later to be the subject of controversy) which had been intended by the Party to bring the Cultural Revolution in universities and offices under control. When Mao Tse-tung came back to Peking the students reacted against the 'work teams' and the Eleventh Plenary Session of the Central Committee was held. The author was present when

[29] *Takung Pao,* quoting the *PLA Daily,* February 19, 1966.

the Red Guards were called out, and at all eight mass meetings held from August to November for students to see the Chairman 'at close quarters.'

Throughout these events the 'commanders and fighters of the People's Liberation Army,' to use the language of the official press, 'stood guard to protect the young Red Guards when they launched themselves into the community. Their presence guaranteed the right of hundreds of millions of revolutionaries in towns and countryside to hold revolutionary debates and mass revolutionary criticisms.'[30]

The army was present without arms. It kept order at the meetings of the young demonstrators; it moved them away when there were fatal crushes in which those most eager to see the Chairman were suffocated. Detachments of soldiers watched from nearby when the Red Guards hunted down the bourgeoisie.

The only references to troops being deliberately used to influence a political decision appeared in the organs of the Japanese Communist Party after it made its analysis of the Chinese Cultural Revolution in April 1967. According to these sources Lin Piao used the army to prevent some members of the Central Committee from attending the Eleventh Plenum, and also to enable some students to take part although they had no right to do so.[31]

The military figures who were the most important politically were prominent at the mass rallies. On October 18th Yang Ch'eng-wu and Hsieh Fu-chih rode with Mao Tse-tung in the first vehicle of the motorcade while Hsiao Hua and Yeh Chien-ying were with Lin Piao in the second.[32] Moreover Mao Tse-tung and nearly all the top

[30] *Peking Review*, no. 36, September 1, 1967, p. 6.

[31] See in particular the May 1967 issue of the review *Zenei*, and the *Akahata* of April 29, 1967.

[32] Yang Ch'eng-wu: Acting Chief of the General Staff after the dismissal of Lo Jui-ch'ing. According to some rumours, Mao Tse-tung was indebted to him for keeping order in Peking on July 18th and 19th, the time of his return to the capital. Hsieh Fu-chih: Minister of Public Security, later Chairman of the Peking Revolutionary Committee.

political leaders, including Liu Shao-ch'i and Teng Hsiao-p'ing, wore military uniform for the big rallies. The sense of mission and the discipline of the army were held up as examples to the Red Guards in all sorts of ways.

The army could of course help the Cultural Revolution even while standing back from it. The movement had been given its directives in the Central Committee's Sixteen Points of August 8th, and it appeared to be aimed only at the 'authorities' in the Party machine, government, administration and education. The order that the army was not to be involved in the Cultural Revolution in civilian circles was confirmed by an urgent notice from the Military Commission on October 1st.[33]

But some repercussions among the troops were inevitable, and they probably occurred in the military academies. These were the army's most sensitive spots as, after all the encouragement that students in general had been given to join in the dispute, the staff and students in these institutions could not be kept free from the contagion of the universities. Ho Lung[34] took a hard line when addressing them in a speech on November 13th:

> We must neither take part in the Cultural Revolution in our locality nor interfere with it. We must not join in local bombardments of the headquarters (i.e. of the bourgeoisie), rebellion, confiscations of private property, or demonstrations.[35]

But by now this was no longer enough to prevent incidents from occurring; those that had already started had to be brought to an end. Party Work Teams had entered

[33] See Konno, *Pekin Kono Ichinen, op. cit.*, p. 121. On January 31, 1967, Liu Chih-chien, deputy head of the army's General Political Department, was accused of having added this passage to the urgent notice on his own authority.

[34] Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee's Military Commission, in charge of military education and sports commission.

[35] Speech by Ho Lung at a meeting for teachers, students and cadres from the whole PLA who had come to Peking for revolutionary exchanges. Distributed in leaflet form in Peking.

some military academies after the June incidents.[36] In these schools protesters who had come forward had been persecuted and labelled as 'anti-party' or 'rightists' for opposing the leaders of the Work Teams. In the next phase they naturally tried to take forceful revenge. The Military Commission decided to order a kind of amnesty to bring the quarrels to an end.

The former Work Teams, Party committees in the schools and other organic groups were urged to destroy all dossiers of criticisms that might have provided material for further struggles:

> All dossiers drawn up against the masses (against all non-Party people who had made criticisms) during the Cultural Revolution in the schools and universities must be declared invalid and burned in the presence of the masses . . . under the supervision of the heads of the leading organizations and representatives of the students of the schools involved.

Whether or not they had been already annulled, all files had to be destroyed. Copying them or disposing of them privately was forbidden, as this might 'cause errors to become ingrained.' All disputes that had arisen from these documents had to be settled by joint consultation in the spirit of the Sixteen Points. Discussion alone was permissible, violence never. Leading cadres who had made policy errors during the Cultural Revolution had to be dealt with according to Chairman Mao's policy on the correct handling of contradictions among the people. 'The ideological aspect must be clarified and comrades reunited.'[37]

Reading this document makes one wonder whether the Military Commission did not feel in October 1966 that the

[36] On the dispatch of Work Teams to the universities to hold back the students and organize a Cultural Revolution that would not infringe on Party discipline, see Chapter 4, *Students and Red Guards*, below.

[37] Urgent directive of the Military Commission and the General Political Department of the PLA ratified by the Central Committee on October 5, 1966. See *Tanjug News Agency* release, November 17, 1967.

Cultural Revolution had gone far enough towards its objectives, and that the time had come to put quarrels aside and return to the normal working of institutions.

But the students of the military schools could not be prevented from getting involved, Red Guard style, in revolutionary activities against those of their leaders who were being criticized. Twenty-seven organizations from military institutes rearrested Lo Jui-ch'ing on December 20th[38] in order to submit him to a public trial. A little later some regular soldiers took the rebel course. The paper *Mainichi* reported on January 14th that a PLA unit had forced a group of 'counter-revolutionaries' under the orders of Liu Chih-chien, deputy head of the army's General Political Department, to surrender. This unit also seized a large number of documents.[39]

The army's leaders also had worries on account of the armament and other industries under military control. When the Centre permitted workers to become revolutionaries, organizations appeared in the ministries that ran these industries.[40] The Seventh Ministry of the Mechanical Industry was paralyzed by a long strike that began on December 24th, and the rivalry between the two main revolutionary organizations that were formed there lasted a year. The Centre had to intervene to forbid outside elements from participating in the revolution in the ministries of the mechanical industry.[41]

In December the most radical elements in the Cultural Revolution intensified their pressure. We shall see below how organizations of 'revolutionary rebels' took control of the Trade Union headquarters from the 27th onwards. The same tactics doubtless also gave them control of some of the Public Security bureaus which had the function of

[38] See *Hsin Peita*, January 20, 1967.

[39] The unit was no. 750 (*Lan*). Liu Chih-chien was accused of adding the passage quoted above forbidding the army from intervening in the civilian Cultural Revolution to the October 1st urgent notice of the Military Commission.

[40] Some had been formed earlier. The organizations 915 and 916 of the Seventh Ministry (in charge of aircraft construction) were so called to commemorate September 15 and 16, 1966.

[41] Shanghai Radio, January 25, 1967.

police departments in the towns, and of the French gendarmerie in the countryside. In December many of the Public Security cadres were labelled as 'black elements' and replaced by soldiers.[42] Chiang Ch'ing even demanded at a meeting of the leadership on December 18th that all the police should be put under army supervision; and her idea was accepted by the Minister of Public Security, Hsieh Fu-chih.[43] But everything has its other side. As the police had to hold the revolutionaries back in a number of incidents, the revolutionaries found themselves up against an obstacle identifiable as connected with the army. The soldiers were thus intervening in the Cultural Revolution—but in the eyes of the revolutionaries it was on the wrong side. When, for example, revolutionaries wanting to arrest Cheng T'ien-hsiang to bring him before a criticism tribunal were unable to force their way into his home they demanded that the Public Security should hand him over.[44] Public Security refused. According to the revolutionaries the Peking police opposed a meeting when they were informed when and where it was to be held. In the last resort this criticism was directed against the army.

There had been several strikes in Peking from the middle of October onwards,[45] probably in protest against the intrusion of Red Guards into places of work. At times the Public Security forces had to intervene. On January 30th they clashed with a group of workers at the big Shihchingshan steel works. The incident stirred high passions in the capital. Policemen and soldiers put up posters everywhere demanding order and respect for the Public Security forces.

Although the army was being held in readiness for war,

[42] Lee Pat Lo, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, August 17, 1967.

[43] Hungarian News Agency Report. See also 'The Diary of the Cultural Revolution,' *Asahi Evening News*, Tokyo, May 1967, p. 20.

[44] This was the incident of January 6, 1967. See *Asahi Shimbun* (Japanese edition), January 10, 1967.

[45] The first was at the No. 1 Cotton Mill on October 15. ('The Diary of the Cultural Revolution,' p. 4.) Another took place in the Wangpingtun mine at the end of November.

some of its men had already been drawn into the revolution in Peking. In the provinces, where the art of making revolution by criticizing the 'authorities' in power was taught by students back from their 'revolutionary exchanges' in Peking, the army played a repressive role in some places. It should be added that what was known of the events in Peking must have seemed scandalous in many circles.

In the thinly populated provinces containing much virgin land, such as Sinkiang, Chinghai and Tibet, where conditions were hard and government, Party and army regarded themselves as being in active service to maintain a strategic defence, guarantee lines of communication, and keep alive the 'pioneer spirit,' the local leaders had to admit that something was happening in Peking but saw no need to change anything where they were.

In Szechuan, the army's rear base for Tibet, the same attitude seems to have prevailed. Revolutionaries from Peking complained of being repressed by the army.[46] In Canton the head of the military region's Cultural Revolution Group appears to have misunderstood his role. He wanted to prevent the revolutionaries from making searches and opposed them with armed soldiers. Casualties resulted in Kiangsi, which was closer to the Centre, when serious clashes between revolutionary organizations occurred from January 9th to 12th; the victims were mostly Red Guards from Peking. The army took no part at Nanch'ang, but one of the organizations on the conservative side was a group of army veterans and demobilized soldiers.[47]

According to some posters, conservative workers from Shanghai and Wuhsi entered the city of Nanking with the

[46] 'At K'angting, Luting, and Kangtzuchou in the Southwest the army has oppressed revolutionary rebels.' Appeal by the Proletariat of the Tibet Autonomous Region's Revolutionary Rebel High Command, January 22, 1967.

[47] Nanch'ang Radio, January 22nd, and a Peking poster of January 23rd, as reported in *Asahi Shimbun* (Japanese edition). The organization was the August First Combat Group of demobilized soldiers in civilian jobs in the city of Nanch'ang.

connivance of part of the army to fight against the revolutionaries. Deaths and injuries resulted. 'The T'ao Chu faction used the army and the Public Security forces to make house to house searches.'[48]

This incident in Nanking, combined with the Shanghai railway strike at the beginning of January, caused a break in rail communication between north and south China for several days.

Even in Shanghai, where it allowed Chang Ch'un-ch'iao[49] to bring off his master stroke of having Futan University militarily occupied in order to be rid of a conservative group, the army was not perhaps quite as sympathetic towards the Cultural Revolution as Lin Piao would have liked it to be. In fact the *PLA Daily* wrote on January 14, 1967, that 'the army's leaders must learn from the Shanghai revolutionary rebel group.' One is tempted to see this as advice to make a better job of imitating them.

In many sectors the army was already involved in the Cultural Revolution before the rebel high command ordered it to intervene everywhere where the left needed support. By January the whole of China was in the throes of struggle. On January 15th the theoretical journal *Red Flag* published an article urging revolutionaries to seize power everywhere.[50] On January 23rd the New China News Agency reported that power struggles were taking place in Shantung, Kiangsu, Chekiang, Fukien, Kiangsi, and Anhui. However, one ought not to suppose that all the army units were only concerned with maintaining public order irrespective of the course followed by the revolution. In Tsingtao it was only thanks to the initiative of several soldiers that the new 'revolutionary

[48] 'The Diary of the Cultural Revolution,' *op. cit.*, p. 28.

[49] Chang Ch'un-ch'iao, secretary of the Shanghai Municipal Party Committee, and member of the Central Committee's Cultural Revolution Group. See Neale Hunter, 'All the Way Rebels,' *Far Eastern Economic Review,* August 3, 1967.

[50] More indirect clashes resulted from this where revolutionaries wanted to seize control of public security bureaus. Events were particularly stormy in Changchun, Kirin province, on January 20th and 21st. See 'The Diary of the Cultural Revolution,' p. 42.

rebel committee' could be formed[51] and could sweep away the old committee structure.

The revolutionary command unified

In the long ordeal of these troubled days, even before it was ordered to play a political role, the army had been asked to take on such political jobs in some districts as guarding prisons, granaries, commodity stores and banks,[52] and, especially, taking control of radio stations. The January 19th order to guard prisons and depots was one of the first decisions to appear above the joint signature of the Central Committee, the Military Commission, the State Council, and the Central Committee's Cultural Revolution Group. It also came at practically the same time as the decision to unify the revolutionary command, of which more below. In Shanghai it was the order to hand over prison keys to the army that revealed who had taken them over.[53] In other words, the order took back from the revolutionaries a significant part of the power they had seized. The army's control of radio stations gave rise to the strongest of protests from revolutionaries in some places. The order was not given the same interpretation everywhere, for Lhasa Radio in Tibet was taken by the revolutionary rebels on January 16th.

Immediately after the decision giving the soldiers control over radio stations, and doubtless as part of the same series of measures, a major decision was taken: the whole army was to be subordinated to a unified revolutionary command. This decision shocked some of the army's leaders and shook its unity. The first intimation of this was when the army's Cultural Revolution Group was reorganized[54] and placed under the Central Committee's Cultural Revolution Group in addition to the Military Commission.

[51] On January 23, 1967.

[52] Central Committee decision of January 16th, reported by the Czech CTK agency, January 17, 1967.

[53] The request was broadcast by Shanghai Radio.

[54] January 12, 1967.

There was now a military Cultural Revolution group in the same position *vis-à-vis* the army as the Central Committee's group towards the rest of the Party and the government. Because of the army's special tasks and the threat of war it doubtless kept for itself a measure of independence. The group's new position in the power structure, however, meant that it was no longer able to decide to what extent the Cultural Revolution should be brought into the army.

Revolutionary events, particularly those of Shanghai, showed how urgently a single command was needed for the revolution and all other affairs of state. A reorganization took place in the Central Committee's Standing Committee, at that time divided, the Military Commission, which could not represent the Centre by itself, and the Central Committee's Cultural Revolution Group, which had become the Party's ideological body for the time being.

This reorganization was revealed on January 22nd, when Chou En-lai sent instructions to the army's Cultural Revolution Group via Ch'en Po-ta[55] and Chiang Ch'ing, the leaders of the Central Committee's Cultural Revolution Group. To explain this, Hsieh T'ang-chung, who passed on the instruction, added:

> The instructions for our millions of soldiers comes directly from the Defence High Command. The instructions of Chairman Mao and Vice-chairman Lin come from the same origin. . . . Comrades in national defence must act in accordance with the instructions of Chiang Ch'ing and Ch'en Po-ta.[56]

[55] Instructions by the Army Cultural Revolution Group on the organization of a meeting of representatives of revolutionary 'liaison posts' in units in the provinces.

Ch'en Po-ta, a candidate member of the Political Bureau before the Ninth Congress, since then a member of the Bureau's Standing Committee, and a leader of the Central Committee's Cultural Revolution Group, had long been Mao Tse-tung's secretary.

[56] See the January 23, 1967, circular of the Red Rebels of unit 160 (*Tsung*) of the PLA, distributed as a leaflet.

He was emphasizing that the command was now completely united, and that it included defence. But the army's provincial leaders did not always take full notice of this. Some of them believed that they could justify failing to obey implicitly the orders of the Central Committee's group on the grounds that it was a body with limited powers only.

> When Premier Chou and Acting Chief of the General Staff Yang said on September 26th that the Centre's Cultural Revolution Committee was the general staff of Chairman Mao's command, they attributed merely secretarial functions to it. The army command did not tell us (what it really was), and we did not see the Central Committee's Cultural Revolution Group for what it was.[57]

The new status of the army's Cultural Revolution Group meant that it had to be reorganized: its top leaders, Hsiao Hua and Liu Chih-chien, had been opposed to the change. Their hostility came to the knowledge of revolutionary organizations, who wanted to search their homes. They also wanted to search the home of Ho Lung, who probably had also voted in the Military Commission against the charges.

The revolutionaries tried to have them put on trial in public, but the leaders of the Centre opposed this.

> At an enlarged meeting of the Military Commission everyone helps each other. Besides, until Chairman Mao and Vice-chairman Lin have reached their conclusions the questions remain open. . . . Hsiao Hua's personal safety must be guaranteed, said Chou En-lai.[58]
>
> Some of those who have provided material against Ho Lung are honest, but others want to sow disorder in the army.[59]

[57] Statement by Ts'ai Ping-ch'en after being brought to Peking with Ch'en Tsai-tao in the consequence of the Wuhan incident of July 1967.

[58] Chou En-lai, in instructions passed on by Hsieh T'ang-chung on January 22nd (circular of Red Rebels of PLA unit 160 [*Tsung*] *op. cit.*).

[59] Quoted in *Yutien Fenglei,* February 12, 1967.

> It is not a matter of knowing whether Hsiao Hua as an individual is in full sympathy with the movement. These are still internal contradictions. There is no need to enlarge the matter or extend it any further.[60]

Although the Centre took seriously the threat weighing on the army's unity, it reversed the policy of suspending the movement in the army and forbidding it from joining in the civilian Cultural Revolution.[61]

It was on January 23, 1967, that the Centre took the crucial decision to commit the army on the side of the revolutionaries when they asked for its support.[62] We have seen above how the revolutionaries had often met with an unfriendly reception in the provinces. The army was no longer to be neutral towards them; it had to help them effectively when they were down. The decision authorized the army to use its weapons to combat counter-revolutionary elements and freed it from any obligation to obey political 'authorities' who had taken the capitalist road.

The Peking troops set an example from January 22nd onwards by occupying the Fangshan[63] offices of the

[60] Peking leaflet of January 22nd: 'Directives by Chou En-lai and Chiang Ch'ing issued at 2 a.m., on January 22nd.'

[61] Liu Chih-chien was criticized for his addition to the Military Commission notice of October 1, 1967 (see above). He lost his position in the Army's Cultural Revolution Group, which was from then on headed by ex-marshal Hsü Hsiang-ch'ien with the assistance of Chiang Ch'ing and Kuang Feng (a journalist who had made his mark in the *People's Daily* during March 1966), who were already members of the Central Committee's Cultural Revolution Group. See *Mōtakutō no Chōsen*, p. 221. The membership of the army's new group was given in the *People's Daily* of January 13. On Kuan Feng see 'Diary of the Cultural Revolution,' p. 44.

[62] Other posters in Peking dated this resolution to January 20th. It was foreshadowed by a speech of Chou En-lai's on January 21st in the Great Hall of the People quoted in *Asahi Shimbun* (Japanese edition). The text of the resolution is given in Konno, *op. cit.*, pp. 227–28.

[63] Fifty kilometres southwest of Peking. The source is a leaflet by the Tungfanghung Defence Group of the Electrical Laboratory of the Ministry of Hydroelectric Power.

Party, the Public Security, and the government, putting in a joint command of revolutionary organizations. The groups they pushed aside were young revolutionaries of the power laboratories and electrification school at Liukouch'iao.

It had to be made clear to the people that the army was not a threat, and precautions were needed to prevent revolutionary criticism from developing within the army so far as to weaken it. The ideological contradictions that had almost split the High Command on January 11th and 12th also had to be reduced. Finally, the frontier provinces and regions, where the local commanders reckoned that the engagement of the army domestically risked leaving gaps in the country's external defence, posed special problems.

A directive of the four Central bodies on January 28th dealt with the first two questions.[64] It laid down that in the army the Cultural Revolution should not go beyond the limits of each unit, in order to preserve intact obedience to the command structure. It also prohibited soldiers from arresting people and disgracing them by making them wear dunce's hats, and from requisitioning or seizing goods, thus reassuring the masses on the attitude the army would take, its new involvement notwithstanding.

On January 31st the positions taken by some military leaders during the month were examined.[65] Liu Chih-chien was criticized, which made it possible to resolve the open contradiction between the decisions of October 1, 1966, and January 23, 1967, one for and one against the army's entry into the revolution in civilian circles.

Fifteen days later it was learned that Mao Tse-tung had decided that the Cultural Revolution was to be conducted differently in the military districts where difficulties had arisen. He added that there was no need for the revo-

[64] See *Agence France Presse* despatch from Peking, January 28, 1967.

[65] At the Chinghsi Hotel in Peking. See *Konno, op. cit.*, p. 121. Yang Yung, commander of the troops in the Peking district, and Liao Hang-sheng, their political commissar, were criticized together with Liu.

lution to be conducted simultaneously throughout the army; it should be done by stages instead.[66]

The decision of the central bodies clearly concerned Sinkiang, Tibet, Inner Mongolia, Kwangsi and Fukien. Indeed, it has been reported that a poster appeared quoting another directive of Mao Tse-tung's to the army which urged it to strengthen precautions against war in the provinces along the frontier with the USSR.

The army managed to achieve a balance between its internal and external commitments. But its new internal responsibility was a grave one: identifying the good revolutionaries among all those who asked for its help. This could not be done without the assistance of the Centre's intelligence services.

[66] Poster of February 15th.

4. Students and Red Guards

For several years the radical Maoist minority in the Party tried to have their ideas adopted through the ordinary methods of discussion, persuasion and example. But when their enemies seemed to have gained the upper hand organizationally they decided to move on to a new kind of action. Their tactics, which had to fit Mao Tse-tung's ideas, were to appeal to the masses by exposing scandals that would shock them into joining forces with the minority to get the discredited leaders suspended from their duties. As long as the aim was only to criticize a few leaders—the proportion was arbitrarily fixed at 5 per cent for the top ranks—it did not, apparently, seem necessary to mobilize all of the masses.

The students might be enough. The workers and peasants had not been sufficiently awakened politically under the Party's rule, so that it would have taken them a very long time to get going. Their latter participation may well have been envisaged, but this involved the danger of large-scale disorders. There must certainly have been arguments for trying to interest the workers and peasants in the debate through the example of the students, who were more easily controlled.

The Maoists had also long wanted to ensure that the third generation of communists would be, and remain, 'red.' Back in 1963 one could have read in the *People's*