

At the other extreme, turning their backs on class problems, T'an, Yi and Ti made the most of the sole common heritage of the students, their freedom of speech, and chose a libertarian course. As we have seen, T'an Li-fu said and wrote a great deal, criticizing everyone, even Chiang Ch'ing, Ch'en Po-ta and Lin Piao. Perhaps he now thought it prudent to withdraw. He left for Canton but was summoned to come back if he did not want trouble with the Public Security. This police intervention made him much talked about.

Yi Lin and Ti Hsi had written an open letter criticizing Lin Piao for saying that Mao Tse-tung was greater than Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, adding that his conclusions ran contrary to historical evolution.⁸⁶ Ignoring the argument that Mao Tse-tung integrated the whole of Marxism when dealing with contemporary problems, they continued to act as 'theoreticians' and tried to win support for their views.

One should also mention the students who permanently left the universities to go among the workers and peasants and win them over for the revolution, insofar as the workers and peasants accepted them. But most of the students became students again. Those who enjoyed independent ideological activity returned to the scene when a swing to the left gave them their chance.

⁸⁶ See the *Revolutionary Liaison Journal* of the International Political Section of Peita, January 1967.

5. The Rebellion at the Head of the Party and the Rebel Leadership

From one anniversary of the Party on July 1, 1966, to the next on July 1, 1967, the Thought of Mao Tse-tung ruled supreme, but between the two dates its interpreters changed. In 1966 the official press designated Liu Shao-ch'i, Chou En-lai, Lin Piao and Teng Hsiao-p'ing jointly to celebrate it. In 1967 it was Lin Piao alone.

In the interval the revolutionary leaders had taken a major strategic decision: to throw the workers and peasants into the struggle. The Cultural Revolution was propagated among them, probably going deepest in the cities, but it had gone beyond any plan. The sheer weight of the working masses could have led the movement towards some social changes that were not envisaged in its original political aims. The social demands made by the workers, especially in Shanghai, were no easier to control than the anarchism of the students.

The Party machine continued to function for some time through those of its organs that still obeyed its orders. The Central Committee's Secretariat was thoroughly changed as a result of the Cultural Revolution, but to the revolutionary leaders its strong men were merely the new 'bosses.'

As one power seizure followed the next, the secretariat lost its territories. People in executive positions were perplexed, not knowing whether to obey the instructions coming from what remained of the Party machine or those that

the Red Guards passed on from the Central Committee's Cultural Revolution Group. The government too underwent its own power seizures, which affected the coherence of its activities, but the damage was less than that suffered by the Party as Chou En-lai ensured co-ordination between the State Council and the revolutionary leadership.

The new permanent organs of the Central Committee were challenged by the old machine, but within the new unified leadership they were backed by the Military Commission. It was important that all decisions of the Centre should be absolutely binding on both the cadres and the population as a whole. To this end they were all, from a certain date onwards, jointly signed by the Cultural Revolution Group, the Military Commission, the State Council and the Central Committee. The last of these, despite the manipulations it had undergone, remained the symbol of supreme authority.

These four bodies together constituted the leadership in this time of crisis. It was to some extent insurrectionary as it broke the Party constitution whenever it saw fit to do so (regarding it as obsolete and needing to be replaced by a new one at the end of the Cultural Revolution) and because it suspended officials without ratification by a new congress. The composition of the Party's new central organs resulted, in theory at least, from revolutionary initiatives, and was influenced by criticisms from the masses.

Two important conferences were held in the Central Committee during this period, in October 1966 and March 1967. Liu Shao-ch'i was criticized at both of them, but within limits. The most extreme of the revolutionaries would perhaps have liked Liu publicly tried and condemned—as Louis XVI was tried and executed—to open up the way to a general liquidation of the establishment. But the policy chosen was only to repudiate Liu Shao-ch'i and condemn his writings. To have set the masses on the Party might have been to drag it down into the grave.

It was a hard task to keep the Party in being while profoundly changing the composition and the policies of the ruling group. Some of the top leaders would doubtless

have been prepared to sacrifice Liu Shao-ch'i and then announce the end of the Cultural Revolution. These were the very people who were supposed to make their own self-criticism at the same time as Liu Shao-ch'i. The history of the Cultural Revolution revolves in large part around this problem: it was the struggle not of individual against individual, but of the individual against the majority.

In response to pressure to accelerate the pace of the Cultural Revolution, the moderates brought the cadres into a real participation in it. No durable organization could be set up without the participation of technicians and people with administrative experience. Campaigns were launched to encourage cadres alarmed by the revolution to participate boldly in the new institutions. Some of them probably made their self-criticisms when told to do so, and were then given important political jobs. Mao Tse-tung's policy was to implant the idea that there should be one big proletarian revolutionary family instead of factions divided among themselves. It was reiterated that the people to be removed were few in number, a 'small handful,' and that it was against this 'small handful' that everyone should unite.

The advocates of intensified revolution demanded a tougher line, giving the revolutionary committees and control committees special powers that would have made them like the Committees of Public Safety in revolutionary France. They later tried to exploit a number of serious incidents and to seize power in areas hitherto out of bounds, such as the army and the Foreign Ministry. The curb on these attempts marked the limits of the Cultural Revolution. Up to July 1967 the contradiction revealed by the extremist wing remained 'within the people,' and the image of its leaders was that of spokesmen for the rank and file.

The decline of the Secretariat

July 1, 1966, was the forty-fifth anniversary of the foundation of the Chinese Communist Party. The *People's Daily* ran the headline, 'Long Live the Thought of Mao Tse-

tung,' associating the Party's top leaders with this declaration of homage. Lin Piao, the Minister of Defence, had equal space in the paper's columns with Liu Shao-ch'i, the Chairman of the People's Republic, Teng Hsiao-p'ing, Secretary-General of the Party, and Premier Chou En-lai. The article had to say something about the purge that had just hit the Peking Municipal Committee and the propaganda machine:

Every time our Party has undergone a large-scale conflict we have purged a small handful of alien class elements who had infiltrated our ranks.

In these lines can be found the concept of the 'small handful' that was to be so extensively used by Mao Tse-tung's supporters. Beside it is another, non-Maoist idea: that certain elements were alien to the Party. Four days later the Party's theoretical journal *Red Flag* replied:

Comrade Mao Tse-tung has long told us that if there were no contradictions or struggles within the Party it would die. In some conditions contradictions within the Party change, and non-antagonistic ones can become antagonistic.¹

The Central Committee, meeting in plenary session from August 1st onwards, provided Mao Tse-tung with an enlarged audience, expanded with members from the Party's less senior bodies. A fair number of regular members of the Central Committee were absent; revolutionaries, probably representing student organizations for the most part, made up the group, so that it was possible for a new majority to emerge. Moreover, the entirely fresh enthusiasm of the masses attending the Central Committee for the first time afforded new opportunities to the speakers.

On the fifth day of the meeting Mao Tse-tung set the tone of the meeting by producing a poster in his own handwriting, in the manner inaugurated by Nieh Yuan-tzu at Peita University:

¹ *Red Flag*, July 4, 1966.

Let Us Bombard the Headquarters—
My First *Tatzupao*

How well-written was that first Marxist-Leninist *Tatzupao* to appear in China (at Peita), how excellent the wording of the transcription in the *People's Daily*! Comrades, please read them again. But in the last fifty days some leading comrades in the Centre as well as in the provinces have got it all wrong. Adopting the reactionary stand of the bourgeoisie, they have enforced a bourgeois dictatorship, repressed the surging movement of the great Cultural Revolution of the proletariat, turned it back to front, presented black as white, surrounded and attacked revolutionaries, stifled opinions differing from their own, imposed a white terror, encouraged the bourgeoisie, disheartened the proletariat, and felt very pleased with themselves. What a talent for harm they have yet again shown! Viewed in connection with the right-wing deviation in 1962 and the trend of 1964 which was Left-wing in form but Right in essence, shouldn't this make one wide awake?

Mao Tse-tung, August 5, 1966.²

This initiative was followed by the surprise appearance of the Chairman among the crowd on August 9th, when he had the gates of Chungnanhai opened. This had a considerable effect on the population of Peking. The official press had not been warned in advance and was apparently divided in its counsels when the *People's Daily* wanted to give the Chairman's mingling with the people the maximum publicity. Its confusion was such that the August 10th issue was withdrawn almost as soon as it had been put on sale in the morning.³ Another issue appeared at 5 p.m., hardly different from the first, and still making much of the event, which suggests that the Chairman's keenest supporters finally won the day.

It was in this overcharged atmosphere that the resolution that shaped the whole Cultural Revolution, the *Sixteen-Point Decision*, was passed on August 8th. It has

² Quoted by Konno, *Peking Kono Ichinen*, p. 222, *op. cit.*

³ See *Far Eastern Economic Review 1967 Yearbook*, p. 151.

since been reproduced and analyzed throughout the world.

According to this document the minority had to be protected on the grounds that truth was sometimes on its side (Point 6). Arguments should be reasoned and there was to be no constraint or coercion. The masses could only be liberated through their own efforts and no actions should be taken in their name (Point 4). They had to 'educate themselves in the movement.'

The cadres, it was stated, could be put into four categories: 'good; comparatively good; those who had made serious mistakes but were not anti-Party, anti-socialist rightists; and a small number who *were* anti-Party, anti-socialist rightists.' The movement was therefore directed against right-wing elements, but the great majority of the cadres fell into the 'good' or 'comparatively good' categories (Point 8).

This text also envisaged institutions of a new kind—cultural revolutionary groups, committees and congresses, comparable to the institutions that were supposed to develop in the Socialist Education Movement (Point 9): 'It is necessary to institute a system of general elections, like that of the Paris Commune. . . . The lists of candidates should be put forward by the revolutionary masses after full discussion. . . . The masses are entitled at any time to criticize (their representatives). . . . If these members or delegates prove incompetent they can be replaced through election or recalled by the masses after discussion.' (References to the Paris Commune of 1871 were popular during the first part of the Cultural Revolution, perhaps because Mao Tse-tung had called the first *tatzupao* at Peita 'the manifesto of the Peking People's Commune of the 1960s.')

The Central Committee resolution threatened a number of cadres who had committed errors, but apart from those who had already been condemned in May, and those who may have felt threatened by Mao Tse-tung's *tatzupao* because of their role during the fifty days, nobody knew who was going to be attacked. One thing, however, had been

⁴ See the editorial in *Red Flag*, no. 3, 1967.

gained: the two separate centres of the Party were combined again at last. The secretariat, now purged, may well have expected to regain the near absolute power it used to exercise between conferences. The secretariat had made big sacrifices: three of its members—P'eng Chen, Lu Ting-yi, and Lo Jui-ch'ing—had been dismissed.⁵

Teng Hsiao-p'ing reckoned perhaps that the organization of which he was the formidable head had thus paid its tribute to the Cultural Revolution, and was now going to be allowed to devote itself to the new politics, its workload increased by the current events. Even in its reorganized form the secretariat could still rely on its oldest members, T'an Chen-lin⁶ and Li Hsüeh-feng,⁷ as well as T'ao Chu.

T'ao Chu, whose sudden rise to the fourth rank in the hierarchy made him something of a star, seemed to have given sufficient proof of his Maoist spirit. He doubtless owed some of his reputation to having asserted the possibility of a direct transition from capitalism to communism, and maintained that class struggles would continue throughout the period of transition,⁸ a position that was to be stated again in the communiqué of the Central Committee's Tenth Plenum. He also attracted attention by organizing large-scale progressive campaigns (such as cadres going to live with the workers, or teach-ins on the Thought of Mao Tse-tung) in his old domain, south China, that were made much of by the propaganda machine.

But T'ao Chu's decisions in his new job at the Centre,⁹

⁵ On the composition of the Secretariat, see the article of C.H.: 'L'équipe dirigeante chinoise et la Révolution Culturelle' in *Notes et Études documentaires*, no. 3448-49, *La Documentation française*, Paris, December 26, 1967.

⁶ Vice-premier and Minister of Agriculture.

⁷ Li Hsüeh-feng could not have been appointed P'eng Chen's successor without the consent of Mao Tse-tung. He probably helped Teng Hsiao-p'ing to reorganize the Secretariat during May.

⁸ Article by T'ao Chu in the *People's Daily*, August 5, 1960.

⁹ Head of the Central Committee's Propaganda Department and in charge of the ministries dealing with culture. See Joan Robinson, *The Cultural Revolution in China*, pp. 141-42.

to judge by those that have been revealed, were not revolutionary. There was a festival of 'the criticized film,' which enabled audiences to see old films. Although the sale of writings by P'eng Chen, Lu Ting-yi and Chou Yang was forbidden, the stocks held by the bookshops were allowed on the market.¹⁰ Mao Tse-tung's swim in the Yangtse on July 16th was given the most extravagant publicity. The Great Socialist Cultural Revolution finally became the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

With few exceptions the main Peking papers were run by Maoists who had taken the initiative during the Cultural Revolution, but the provincial press was still under the control of provincial Party committees. The provincial Party committees continued to work with the Central Committee's Secretariat. As long as the Red Guards did not feel that they had the authority to push their investigations as far as the provincial committee level, cadres wishing to raise protests could only make them to the Secretariat.

In September 1966 a dismissed joint secretary of the Ipin Administrative Region in Szechuan came to Peking to lodge documents criticizing Li Ching-ch'üan, the First Secretary of the South-western Bureau of the Central Committee. He was unable to make contact with the leaders of the revolution. As he had been punished, the secretariat followed the usual procedure by sending him on to the Party's Control Commission. He was, however, protected from the emissaries whom his enemies had sent against him in Peking. He turned to the Red Guards of the Second Headquarters and the Peita Red Guards, only to be told that as he was not a student they could not take charge of his documents. It was not until early October that the Third Headquarters was prepared to take his problem in hand.¹¹ The Central Committee's Secretariat fought a rearguard action, but the students finally outflanked it.

A Central Committee Work Meeting began on October 8th. It was only intended to last three days, but it continued for seventeen, and was virtually a continuation of

¹⁰ See Red Guard paper *Peiching Hungse Hsüanch'uanping*, no. 4, May 10, 1967.

¹¹ *China News Analysis*, no. 670, July 28, 1967, Hong Kong.

the Eleventh Plenum.¹² After its conclusion the journal *Red Flag*¹³ repeated the threats made in July:

The contradictions between those comrades who committed errors of line on the one hand and the Party and the masses on the other are still contradictions among the people. . . . Nevertheless, these comrades must be sharply told that no matter who they are, and no matter how great their past achievements, if they cling to the erroneous line, the nature of the contradictions between them and the Party and the masses will change . . . and they will slide down the anti-Party and anti-socialist road.¹⁴

Both Teng Hsiao-p'ing and Liu Shao-ch'i made self-criticisms at the meeting. They both accepted that they were essentially responsible for the deeds criticized by Mao Tse-tung in his *tatzupao*: supporting rightists in 1962, distorting the Socialist Education Movement in 1964, and creating the Work Teams.¹⁵ Mao Tse-tung, however, was not satisfied with the sacrifice of a few scapegoats. He felt that the whole Central Committee should join in the self-criticism. New trials awaited the Secretariat. T'ao Chu was attacked in January 1967 and T'an Chen-lin scarcely two months later.

It is no longer possible to know exactly what T'ao Chu's political line was. One can only observe that his personal power made him almost a state within the state. As was related above, Red Guards had accused him of wanting to create a Cultural Revolution Group under his own orders. Could he possibly have used his connections to support dissident Red Guard groups with the aim of bringing them under the control of the Secretariat, as the Third Headquarters had done?

Red Guards published impressive lists of T'ao Chu's

¹² See *Mōtakutō no Chōsen*, Asahi Shimbun *Chōsa Kenkyūshitsu*, p. 39, and *Lin Piao chuan chi*, Hong Kong, 1970.

¹³ No. 14, November 1, 1966.

¹⁴ *Peking Review*, no. 45, November 4, 1966, p. 7.

¹⁵ See Konno's analysis of the self-criticisms in *Pekin Kono Ichinen*, pp. 67-68.

political friends. Speakers and writers underlined his opportunism and cynicism. He had even said, 'The sun itself (with which Mao Tse-tung was so often compared) has dark spots.'¹⁶

It was probably the Central Committee's Cultural Revolution Group that asked the Standing Committee to dismiss him as head of propaganda. His fall also marked the end of Teng Hsiao-p'ing's power. Mao Tse-tung had this comment to make:

T'ao Chu was introduced to the Central Committee by Teng Hsiao-p'ing. I told Teng that T'ao was not honest, but he said T'ao could be trusted. I failed to solve the problem of T'ao Chu, and you did too. The Red Guards succeeded in it as soon as they rebelled.¹⁷

The Rebel leadership

January began with the events of Shanghai. The appearance of revolutionary organizations among the workers was soon followed by an extended strike, and the huge city was in danger of being paralyzed. Electricity was cut and the trains stopped running. The revolutionaries' Headquarters appealed to the people of Shanghai to pull themselves together and return to work.¹⁸ Mao Tse-tung decided to have this appeal published in the press immediately. A great deal was now at stake in Shanghai. If disorder were established in the great industrial metropolis of the eastern coast, the regime might well be swept away. The journal *Red Flag*¹⁹ maintained that Mao Tse-tung took a 'great strategic decision' in ordering the general

¹⁶ *Mōtakutō no Chōsen*, p. 41.

¹⁷ According to a leaflet issued in Peking on January 12th from the Peking Proletarian Revolutionary Rebel Headquarters.

¹⁸ 'Message to the People of Shanghai' from the Shanghai Workers' Revolutionary Rebel General Headquarters, January 4, 1967, in *Wenhui Pao*, January 5th. See *Peking Review*, no. 3, January 13, 1967, p. 5.

¹⁹ *Red Flag*, no. 2, January 15, 1967. 'Proletarian Revolutionaries, Unite!' See *Peking Review*, no. 4, January 20, 1967, p. 15.

publication of the workers' appeal and the Urgent Notice of January 9.²⁰

By his personal support for these appeals to the masses Mao Tse-tung brought a greater influence to bear on the situation. Shanghai gradually went back to work. But it should be noted that the initiatives which the Party theoreticians saw as great revolutionary decisions were not acts of violence. Instead they were appeals or exhortations to follow some example, which were exceptional in that they were distributed without the endorsement of the Central Committee.

Chang Ch'un-ch'iao later related how he prepared to put the running of the city's affairs into the hands of the Shanghai revolutionaries:

Yao Wen-yuan and I agreed that key departments should be taken over first, so as to ensure the safety of life and property. Next we had to take over the municipal Party Committee and People's Committee, and we already had the control of these two bodies in our hands. At this period we used to hold joint discussions. We would ask the rebels to come to our meetings to discuss each problem. One day forty organizations might be represented and the next day a hundred. Nobody knew anyone else. Although we were very busy and often in a state of chaos, we felt that this sort of thing was liable to happen in a revolution, and this was the way to get problems solved. It would have been wrong to be too hasty.²¹

Power seizures by the masses were not possible everywhere, even when resort was made to violence. In order

²⁰ The Urgent Notice of the Shanghai Workers' Revolutionary Rebel General Headquarters and thirty-one other bodies announced that bank accounts were frozen, salary levels were to remain at existing levels until the end of the Cultural Revolution, all public buildings and capitalists' houses were to be nationalized, and all revolutionary organizations had to contribute to the restoration of order. See *Peking Review*, no. 4, January 20, 1967, p. 7.

²¹ From a speech by Chang Ch'un-ch'iao on October 22, 1967, to revolutionary delegates from Anhwei.

to neutralize the largest number of 'authorities' at once, the revolutionary leadership advocated military control where seizures of power were not practicable. The army, now that it had been committed to the struggle on the side of the revolutionaries, was a trump card in their hands if they wanted to play it. But military control could only be a temporary solution.

In order to give the new workers' power the chance to establish itself firmly, the takeover had to come from the inside. Chou En-lai said:

The accent must be on one's own unit. It is impossible to coordinate the seizing of power throughout a whole system at one blow. First, power should be taken in the sections, after which the revolutionary rebels will be the main force within the sections. . . . We do not agree to revolutionary organizations on a national scale.²²

This vital reservation was intended to ensure the survival of the Party.

Despite everything, the leaders of the revolution wanted to move fast. As they were in the minority everywhere they were quite likely to be wiped out. As Mao Tse-tung said,

Power must be seized straightaway without going into details. Discussions can be held later. . . . The nature of the authorities who were in power will be discussed in a later stage of the movement. . . . Take power, report to the State Council, and obtain its consent.²³

In other times the Central Committee's Secretariat would have been the ratifying authority. Now it had been completely short-circuited. But why did power seizures have to be ratified by the State Council rather than the Central

²² 'Leaders at the Centre discuss the question of power seizures,' *Yutien Fenglei*, February 10, 1967.

²³ Speech at an enlarged meeting of the Military Commission on January 27th, according to a *tatzipao* posted on February 3, 1967, by the delegation of the Cultural Revolution Preparatory Delegation of the Sian Military School to Peking.

Committee's Cultural Revolution Group? One explanation is the role played in the revolution by Chou En-lai himself. As Premier he was the head of the State Council, and with his splendid diplomatic abilities he was the best arbitrator between conflicting revolutionary organizations.

On January 10th Chou En-lai told some Red Guards that the Central Committee's Cultural Revolution Group²⁴ represented the general staff of the movement, the Military Commission its headquarters, and the State Council its executive organ.²⁵

As we have seen already,²⁶ military and political leadership in the revolution had been unified despite the objections of some army chiefs. The people grew accustomed to seeing important orders issued over the signatures of these three bodies together with the Central Committee, listed perhaps more as a symbol of the Party's continued existence than as a real body.

The new composition of the Political Bureau's Standing Committee, which probably resulted from a compromise, did not give it the strength to be a real revolutionary leading body, and it probably remained locked in struggle after Liu Shao-ch'i's self-criticism at the October meeting. The top leadership remained collective, but the few who can be supposed actually to have been involved were not enough to make it an effective body: Mao Tse-tung, Lin Piao, Chou En-lai, Ch'en Po-ta, K'ang Sheng and Chiang Ch'ing. Foreign Minister Ch'en Yi reflected the popular idea of who the leading group were when he made a speech protesting against the Red Guards' loss of political direction:

²⁴ The composition of the Group in November was as follows: Ch'en Po-ta (head); K'ang Sheng and T'ao Chu (advisers); Chiang Ch'ing (first deputy head); Wang Jen-chung, Liu Shih-chien, and Chang Ch'un-ch'iao (deputy heads); Chang P'ing-hua, Wang Li, Kuan Feng, Ch'i Pen-yü, Lin Chieh, Mu Hsin, Yao Wen-yuan, Hsieh T'ang-chung, Liu Wei-cheng, Cheng Chi-ch'iao, and Yang Chih-lin (members).

This list is taken from Kommo, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

²⁵ 'The Diary of the Cultural Revolution,' *Asahi Evening News*, Tokyo, May 1967, p. 32.

²⁶ See above, Chapter 3.

In our great Party are we only to believe in six people: Chairman Mao, Vice-chairman Lin Piao, the Premier, Ch'en Po-ta, K'ang Sheng, and Chiang Ch'ing? Or in eleven, if we add five deputy premiers?²⁷ Are there only eleven honest people? I will not take this course. Take me away and display me to the crowds.²⁸

Power was also seized in the Central Committee's bureaus, whose executive functions were now controlled by revolutionary organizations. Those in the Party machine who were resisting the revolution were now deprived of any channel by which to communicate their instructions without the knowledge of the leadership. The Party's machine being brought under control in this way made a big difference as far as orders to the provinces were concerned.

The army was apparently mollified by the compromise of deferring the Cultural Revolution in frontier regions, where priority was given to national defence. But when struggles between revolutionary groups connected with the army developed in the frontier regions, the military chiefs who had opposed the reorganization of January 11th and 12th were pitilessly attacked.

There were particularly striking cases in Sinkiang of soldiers firing on soldiers during the fighting at Shihhotzu from January 25th to 28th. Revolutionary rebels of the Agricultural Institute of the Sinkiang Production and Construction Corps, an army organization responsible for economic development in the region, carried out a local power seizure in a textile factory and arrested some officers. Some army units then came to the support of a 'reactionary' organization²⁹ that was fighting against the revolutionaries, and held prisoner some officers from the Production Corps' staff who had come to investigate. Loyalist army units had

²⁷ Li Fu-ch'un, Li Hsien-nien, Nieh Jung-chen, and Hsieh Fu-chih, with either himself or T'an Chen-lin as the most likely candidates for the fifth. Of the sixteen vice-premiers, including Lin Piao, one had died and many had been severely criticized.

²⁸ *Hungwei Chanpao*, April 18, 1967.

²⁹ The 'August 1st Campaign Army of the Production Corps,' abbreviated to 'August Campaign.' Chou En-lai ordered it dispersed in March 1967.

to be sent in to engage them.³⁰ The situation was very serious, with the deputy commander of the Production Corps among those who had been captured. According to *tatzupao* reports, the Sinkiang military commander, Wang En-mao, took the side of the reactionaries, and nine of the ten divisions under his orders followed his lead.³¹

Red Guards brought up incidents such as these in criticizing members of the Military Commission whom they knew to be in disagreement with Lin Piao. As had happened with T'ao Chu, the revolutionary leaders allowed several of them to be overthrown by their critics. Ho Lung disappeared. Old Marshal Chu Te had a very difficult time. The composition of the Military Commission's vice-chairmen changed. Lin Piao himself seems to have been mocking Chu Te when he said to him:

Kao Kang³² tried in a roundabout way to become chairman. Would you have been clever enough to do this? Isn't it true that you were never really commander-in-chief for a single day? After the Nan-ch'ang Uprising you gave up and strayed into anarchy. Before the Tsungyi Conference Chu Te was in command, but after that Mao Tse-tung took it over. During the Anti-Japanese War the front commander was X, and during the Liberation War Mao Tse-tung was in command, not you. But you still regard yourself to this day as a hero.³³

Legendary heroes were thus consigned to the shadows. Chu Te, Mao Tse-tung's comrade in his darkest hours, was the model of a stalwart old soldier even to those too old to remember the war. Ho Lung was a veteran who had

³⁰ According to a *tatzupao* of the 'Red Missile Military Corps,' a revolutionary rebel group of the Production Corps' Agricultural Institute quoted in *Asahi Shimbun* (Japanese edition of that date). This group was affiliated to the Second Red Headquarters of Sinkiang.

³¹ 'The Diary of the Cultural Revolution,' p. 48.

³² Dismissed in 1955 on charges of conspiring to seize Party and government leadership.

³³ Cited by Konno, *op. cit.*, p. 94. 'X,' not named in the text, may be P'eng Te-huai.

been brought up with weapons since childhood, a hero of the secret societies until he joined the revolution to fight for the Party.

However, the strategy of vigilant frontier defence was affected neither by the criticisms of the veteran marshals nor by the new army propaganda. 'The international forces of imperialism are hostile to the Chinese Cultural Revolution,' said Yeh Chien-ying,⁸⁴ paraphrasing a notice issued by Mao Tse-tung:

An intense level of activity by Soviet aircraft has been reached in the frontier regions of Sinkiang, and Soviet ground forces have been mobilized. All front-line units must be put on the alert. The Tsinan, Nanking, Foo-chow, Canton and Kunming military regions must also make preparations. To this end the Cultural Revolution may be somewhat toned down.⁸⁵

In order to win support for power seizures from the men who were least sympathetic to this kind of struggle, the high command sent them practical instructions. In many cases they may have been like this 1968 directive, recommending a bare minimum of action in the service of politics:

In supporting the left, you must follow the example of unit 7335. You are free not to take part, but you must take actions that help the rebels.⁸⁶

Finding a formula for revolutionary committees

The traditional Centre had lost its branches, and behind the rebels was the shadow of the army; the revolutionary

⁸⁴ Vice-chairman of the Central Committee's Military Commission.

⁸⁵ According to leaflets of February 11, 1967, issued by the Red Guards of the School of Applied Engineering.

⁸⁶ Notice from the General Bureau of Civil Aviation to the Sinkiang Civil Aviation Administration. See Canton *Tahan Tachiao*, no. 8, January 30, 1968, quoted in *South China Morning Post*.

organizations, flushed with their newly-won power, wanted to purge the Party themselves. The revolutionary leadership lost no time in telling them that only Party members had the right to impose punishments on other members of the Party.

But people who did not belong to the Party found themselves holding new powers with revolutionary cadres who had 'rebelled.' They wanted to exclude some regular members of the Party and they did so. The new Centre issued the following notice on February 12th:

According to the Party Constitution, sanctions against members can only be taken by Party organizations. The masses and their organizations do not have the right to apply the sanctions provided for by the Constitution to members.⁸⁷

This reaction indicates what changes the rebel leadership thought the Cultural Revolution should bring about in the Party. It gave grounds for believing that the Party would be maintained in its old form within the 'provisional organizations of the proletarian dictatorship.'⁸⁸ The February 12 Notice is unlikely to have been applied everywhere. A year later there still existed in Canton a body called Hung Ch'i Lienwei, a commission that consisted of specialist groups formed by eleven revolutionary mass organizations to get rid of the leading cadres of the former committees who were still holding power in the province.⁸⁹ Initiatives of this sort, which ran counter to the Centre's policies and were aimed at creating all-out class war, put considerable obstacles in the way of winning over provincial cadres. In Peking, however, the Centre was able to carry its policies through. A 'group for verify-

⁸⁷ See *Asahi Jyanaru*, vol. 10, no. 18, 'Wakagaetta Toso-shiki no Taishitsu,' p. 21.

⁸⁸ It also throws light on the concept of 'Revolution under the control of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat,' to which it conforms.

⁸⁹ Canton leaflet, February 12, 1968.

ing special cases' was entrusted with 'studying the report on the crimes of Liu Shao-ch'i.'⁴⁰ This was, of course, composed of Party members.

The question of how the Party should be represented in the 'provisional organs of power' arose as soon as the first efforts to establish the 'Shanghai Commune' were made.

Chang Ch'un-ch'iao went to great trouble to have the greatest possible number of revolutionary organizations taking part in the commune's committee in fair proportions. Workers' representatives were in the great majority. Chang, influenced perhaps by the long strike that had just occurred, was eager to have as many as possible of the workers' organizations that had helped to overcome it participating in the new leading organ. We shall see below how long these negotiations lasted. In February Tsingtao, Shanghai and Kweichow each established a revolutionary committee or a 'commune.' Mao Tse-tung, however, showed a preference for what was being done in Shansi; as in Shanghai, this took a long time; from the seizure of power on January 12th to the establishment of a revolutionary committee on March 18th. The official press concentrated mainly on the example of Heilungkiang, whose committee emerged fully armed, like Athene, on January 31st.

The Chairman's preference for what had been done in Shansi may have been founded on one or more of the following considerations: this was the province that first produced the 'triple alliance' of people, Army and Party; the leaders of the movement in Shansi spent sufficient time in consultations with representatives of the revolutionary masses, revolutionary cadres and the army to reach a satisfactory balance of forces; and the balance consisted of one half for representatives of the masses, a quarter for soldiers, and a quarter for revolutionary cadres—in other words, Party members who had come over to the revolution.

On the first point one may observe that, as of January

⁴⁰ See communiqué of the Twelfth Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee. *Peking News*, 1968, no. 44.

25th, when a message was sent to Mao Tse-tung by the 'Shansi Rebel Headquarters,' the elements responsible for the seizure of power fell naturally into three groups:⁴¹ first, workers, peasants and soldiers; second, the revolutionary cadres; third—a group whose support the other two acknowledged—the army. In Shansi members of the Party came forward to represent the Party in the revolutionary body, and the leaders of the seizure of power made a note of it.

On the third point, posters quoted some of the advice given by Mao Tse-tung to Chang Ch'un-ch'iao and Yao Wen-yuan in the middle of February. Among other things he said: The Shanghai Commune should follow the example of Shansi, where 53 per cent of revolutionary masses have allied with 27 per cent of soldiers and 20 per cent of cadres.⁴²

The Party's theoretical journal, *Red Flag*, introduced the concept of the triple alliance, though without using the term, in its editorial of January 30th. It recognized that it was necessary 'to establish temporary organs of power which will undertake the responsibility for directing the struggle.'

The model of the Shanghai Commune was not followed. Indeed, the Commune changed itself into a revolutionary committee. Perhaps Shanghai could have established a worker's democracy, but its leaders had embarked on class struggle without making any deep analysis of what forms of proletarian dictatorship were possible in the rest of China. In particular, the Commune involved the principle of grass-roots elections.

At the beginning of March a poster reported Chou En-lai as saying that it would be premature to establish a commune in Peking. A commune after the style of the 1871 Paris Commune would have implied that 95 per cent of workers, peasants and soldiers would have to vote. The time was not yet ripe for this. The poster

⁴¹ *Mōtakutō no Chōsen*, op. cit., p. 54.

⁴² *Tsinghua Chingkanqshan*, February 23, 1967.

added that Mao Tse-tung and Lin Piao agreed with this statement of Chou En-lai.⁴³

As the revolutionary committees had been approved of as bodies to direct the struggle, this implied that they would have, at the local level, a power of decision that was normally reserved for the Party.

A system of general elections was normally envisaged only for Cultural Revolution groups and committees. Had the Shanghai Commune formula been applied generally, the Party would have been permanently weakened. The political understanding of the Shanghai masses was higher than that of the rest of China. Here again we find that concern for social revolution was more or less in contradiction with Mao Tse-tung's simple plans to establish rural people's communes in the spirit of hard work and self-sacrifice.

The abandonment of the Shanghai Commune was, as we shall see later, a measure taken to confirm the grip of the Party leadership, despite its temporary loss of standing.

The February counter-current

There was considerable disorder in Peking during January. The power seizures in the public services succeeded one another so quickly that the revolutionaries themselves were unable to tell whether those in power in other branches of the administration had been approved by the Centre. In some offices, uprisings failed; in others, rival revolutionary organizations kept overthrowing each other; and in others still, the old leadership intervened to help the organizations they favoured, with the result that there were 'fake seizures of power.'

To top it all, the official news media were being so badly shaken by their own power seizures that even the advice of the press, hitherto authoritative, was put in doubt. The dismissal of T'ao Chu and his group caused

⁴³ *Asahi Shimbun*, evening edition of March 3, 1967, reporting a Bulgarian News Agency report monitored by AFP in Sofia. See *China News Analysis*, no. 653, p. 7.

an earthquake in the propaganda services, which were given new leaders.⁴⁴ The Peking local paper, the *Peking Daily*, underwent a complete seizure of power on January 19th. Meetings were called by the propaganda chiefs to let revolutionaries know about the reorganized press.

At the Centre, the State Council was trying to co-ordinate the revolution while having to maintain public order, now called 'revolutionary order.' At the same time it had to keep the country's economy going. Chou En-lai, supported by the surviving deputy prime ministers, did his best. This naturally involved some unpopular orders. As he had to validate seizures of power, he also had the job of making inquiries into the various organizations and the role they played.

Some criticisms were levelled at Chou En-lai himself, but this was felt to be going too far. Posters demanding that Chou En-lai should be 'burned alive for conspiring with Li Hsien-nien' were hastily covered up.⁴⁵ When Reuter's Peking correspondent wanted to file this story he was surprised to be told that the postal workers' committee would not accept his cable. Many of the malcontents were students who did not want to be sent home before the Cultural Revolution was over.

At this moment deputy premier T'an Chen-lin, the Minister of Agriculture, stepped forward to strengthen authority in the areas under his control. He came to embody a kind of spirit of resistance to disorder that later took the form of resisting the mass line in meetings and led to his fall.

T'an Chen-lin does not seem to have been opposed to the policy changes in the economy and education, nor

⁴⁴ According to the morning edition of *Asahi Shimbun*, January 14, 1967, quoting a statement by Ch'en Po-ta, the acting head of the New China News Agency was Hu Chih (chief editor, *PLA Daily*); and the Central Committee's Propaganda Bureau was under Wang Li (joint chief editor of *Red Flag* and member of the Central Committee's Cultural Revolution Group), assisted by Pang P'ing-chu (chief editor, *People's Daily*) and Hu Chih.

⁴⁵ *Asahi Shimbun*, morning edition, January 7, 1967, quoting Peking correspondent of the German agency ADN.

was he apparently against the new 'leap forward' that was at the heart of the Cultural Revolution. But he did believe, it would seem, that nothing more could be expected from giving the masses a free hand. He maintained that the past record of such policies was enough.

T'an Chen-lin and a few others with him 'made frantic efforts to run rectification campaigns of the sort launched twenty years ago in Yen-an by Chairman Mao, denying that the masses could achieve their own liberation and build Marxism-Leninism for themselves,' K'ang Sheng later said.⁴⁶ T'an Chen-lin was against seizures of power, but as it was impossible to avoid them altogether, he organized his own in the sector under his control—agriculture, meteorology and forestry. In his own ministry he helped the more amenable organizations.

On February 11th T'an Chen-lin deceived the Central Committee and Premier Chou. He cleverly arranged that the representatives of five units . . . in which false takeovers had taken place should be received by the Premier.⁴⁷

Such were the accusations made by Red Guards of the Institute of Agriculture and other organizations as they denounced the repression.

The conservatives (they claimed) in various agricultural and forestry departments called mass meetings to denounce revolutionary rebel organizations, in order to carry out the directive given by T'an Chen-lin to 'discredit politically' the revolutionary rebels.

According to incomplete statistics, over twenty organizations, large and small, were suppressed during this adverse trend. . . . Benefiting from this counter-revolutionary current, and thanks to the support of T'an Chen-lin and his lackeys, conservative groups recovered and attempted to come back in strength.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ See the special number of *Tungfanghung* of the Peking Institute of Geology, March 29, 1968.

⁴⁷ *Peking P'i-T'an Chanpao* (Front-line report on the criticism of Tan Chen-lin), Peking, June 16, 1967.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

During this affair all the better-known student revolutionary organizations joined forces against T'an Chen-lin. The same sequence of events took place with T'an as it had with T'ao Chu and Ho Lung: criticism grew to enormous proportions, and the Centre abandoned the men under attack.

T'an Chen-lin thus became the culprit in what was called the 'February counter-current,' which the Twelfth Plenum of the Central Committee later denounced as one of the abortive attempts made to distort the Cultural Revolution.⁴⁹

T'an Chen-lin was asked to explain himself at an enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau held in March. It may be that the discussions did not go as planned. The Minister of Agriculture defended himself by expounding his own views, and in doing so he found supporters. The Japanese press spread the news that there was only a majority of one in the voting at the meeting.⁵⁰ Although this was denied by an official spokesman, it is quite possible that several of the leaders combined against the Central Committee's Cultural Revolution Group, whose role came into question during the final discussions.

If a CTK news agency story of February 22, 1967, the month of the counter-current, is to be believed, the Central Committee considered setting up a fairly large council to replace the Cultural Revolutionary Group, on which it was expected to include figures who had been criticized. If this is true, this amounted to putting the whole organization of the Centre into question. K'ang Sheng later admitted that an opposition had formed among the ruling group. These people, he said, 'were saying that the Cultural Revolution did not enjoy the support of the Party leadership.'⁵¹ Mao Tse-tung and Lin Piao condemned the

⁴⁹ *Communiqué of the Enlarged Twelfth Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the CPC.*

⁵⁰ See especially Nogami's 'Where is the revolution bound?', Vietnam and China (16), *Asahi Evening News*.

⁵¹ Speeches by Central leaders quoted in the Peking Geological Institute's *Tungfanghung*, special edition of March 29, 1968.

line taken by T'an Chen-lin, who then found himself outvoted and was probably censured.⁵²

It can be seen from the case of T'an Chen-lin that the 'February counter-current' was more than a clash between revolutionary groups: it involved the leading group itself. It may be that the measures T'an Chen-lin took in his own sphere threatened to have serious consequences. He may have sympathized to an alarming extent with conservative tendencies among the peasantry. Conservative organizations may have found too firm a base in the Ministry of Agriculture. In the last resort, what carried the day when the Political Bureau voted was the victory of the revolutionary spirit over a technocrat who wanted to maintain a flexible line in his ministry while keeping the organizations within it under tight control. But the extremists in the Cultural Revolution Group who thought that this victory opened the way for the mob to destroy all that remained of the Party machine were mistaken.

Differing views on the intensification of the Cultural Revolution

The tide of criticism reached a new level when it brought down T'an Chen-lin in the Central Committee's Political Bureau. The revolutionaries poured their forces into the gap. Behind T'an Chen-lin, they maintained, there was someone else: the same person who had been behind P'eng Chen. At an enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau the left-wing party demanded the condemnation of Liu Shao-ch'i.

Liu had already made his self-criticism and been demoted. Most of the leading members of the Bureau probably now accepted that he could not continue to be head of state as Chairman of the People's Republic. Many of them would doubtless have been satisfied with that. But there were strong pressures to reopen the files on Liu and

⁵² T'an Chen-lin was one of Mao Tse-tung's entourage with members of the Political Bureau on May 1, 1967. His political elimination must have taken place later.

make a more thorough-going condemnation, pressures coming from the streets and the popular leaders who saw the way forward for the Cultural Revolution in the complete politicization of the masses.

The revolutionary leadership for the most part accepted these pressures, as a deeper criticism of Liu Shao-ch'i could be a rallying-point for the left. Divisions among the students were serious enough, and those among the workers were even worse, as the more conservative of them had vested interests to defend.⁵³ For the leaders of the Cultural Revolution, putting the criticism of Liu on the agenda would give them the chance to consolidate their ascendancy over organizations threatened by anarchy and revolutionaries who criticized all leaders indiscriminately.

Differences of opinion on how much further to take the criticism of Liu Shao-ch'i were expressions of different views on the intensification of the Cultural Revolution. Those of the new leaders who had close ties with the masses, especially Wang Li, Ch'i Pen-yü, Kuan Feng and Lin Chieh, clearly based their ambitions on the forces they represented. But they also knew that they would have to produce something new if they were to reunite the different tendencies into which the mass movement was splitting. Whether it was to take the form of criticizing T'an Chen-lin or further attacks on Liu Shao-ch'i, the enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau held in March was essentially dealing with the question of whether to intensify the Cultural Revolution. Opinions were divided.

The compromise that seemed to emerge was a decision to criticize Liu Shao-ch'i's writings rather than Liu himself. In the following months the book on 'self-cultivation'⁵⁴ was to be the main target of official criticism. Despite this distinction, the leftist leaders brought the criticism of Liu Shao-ch'i himself to the attention of the

⁵³ The workers had their own special demands.

⁵⁴ *On the Self-Cultivation of Communists*, better known in the west under the title of the Peking translation, *How to Be a Good Communist*.

people. As a result, the objectives of the 'great criticism' were ambiguous.

Ch'i Pen-yü opened the attack, and immediately went beyond the issue of Liu's writing by taking as his theme an old film, 'The Secret History of the Ch'ing Court'⁵⁵ which Liu Shao-ch'i had admired and recommended, and which had 'still been widely shown in Peking even in 1950.' Ch'i Pen-yü called his article 'Patriotism or Treason?'⁵⁶ and used it to show that the criticized leader's earlier career was marked with weakness and compromise. He ended in the style of the posters then covering the walls of the city with eight questions which exposed to full view the 'fifty crimes of Liu Shao-ch'i.' As his parting shot Ch'i made personal attacks on Liu, and did so in an article published in the Party's theoretical journal.⁵⁷ He called Liu, for the first time in the official press, 'the chief of the executives who, though Party members, have committed themselves to the capitalist way.'

Ch'i chose in the list of 'fifty crimes' one of the three to which Liu had not already confessed in his self-criticism: first, making the Party his 'personal party' by putting his friends in responsible positions; second, eliminating the Thought of Mao Tse-tung from his report to the Second Plenary Session of the Eighth Party Congress (after the Twentieth CPSU Congress Liu Shao-ch'i and Teng Hsiao-p'ing had taken pains to show that there was no cult of personality in China);⁵⁸ and third, having in 1936-37 instructed some Communists who were in prison to recant in order to be released. Liu was accused of having done a deal with the Kuomintang at that time. It was this last 'crime' that Ch'i Pen-yü denounced in his article:

Why did you, on the eve of the Anti-Japanese War, preach the philosophy of survival, surrender and be-

⁵⁵ A film made in 1948 in Hong Kong about the Ch'ing emperor's reaction to the Yihot'uan (Boxer) struggle.

⁵⁶ *Peking Review*, 1967, no. 15, April 10, 1967.

⁵⁷ *Red Flag*, 1967, no. 5, March 30, 1967.

⁵⁸ For a comparison of the self-criticism with the various 'lists of questions' see *Chugoku Kenyū Geppō*, no. 231, Tokyo, 1967, pp. 2-6.

trayal? Why did you press others to betray and denounce themselves? Why did you let them betray the Communist Party and defect to the Kuomintang?

The object of exposing events and personal activities of the past which had not been covered in the self-criticism made to the Central Committee, and publishing it in the pages of *Red Flag*, could only be a demand for a new self-criticism. It also amounted to presenting the Political Bureau that had just met with a *fait accompli*.

Did Mao Tse-tung approve this initiative? To find the answer to this question one must look at the next issue of *Red Flag*,⁵⁹ which contained a reply to Ch'i Pen-yü's article under the title, 'The essence of the book on "Self-Cultivation" is the betrayal of proletarian dictatorship.'⁶⁰ This appears to be a hint that the writings and not the personality were to be criticized. Then Wang Li,⁶¹ the new head of propaganda, gave this piece of advice to the leadership of the New China News Agency:

Red Flag and the *People's Daily* have published an important article. It would appear that Chairman Mao has criticized and corrected it himself. This article is the consequence of discussions at the enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau.⁶²

The only conclusion to be drawn from this is that Ch'i Pen-yü, and with him the Central Committee's Cultural Revolution Group, were being brought back into line, and that Mao Tse-tung himself had taken a direct part in doing so. Wang Li was giving the news agency the correct line.

But despite this the ultra-left did not lay down its arms. On June 19th Lin Chieh, another member of the Central Committee's Cultural Revolution Group, brought out a

⁵⁹ No. 6, May 8, 1967.

⁶⁰ Translation in *Peking Review*, no. 20, May 15, 1967.

⁶¹ Member of the Central Committee's Cultural Revolution Group.

⁶² Letter quoted in the paper of the Steel Institute's Red Guards, May 17, 1967.

spirited article in the *People's Daily* in which he demanded considerably more than that revolutionaries should unite in the service of the Party: he wanted total and absolute obedience to the revolutionary committees or the groups that were preparing to set them up. In his piece, 'Down with slavery—strictly observe proletarian revolutionary discipline,' he demanded that the provisional institutions should be drastically strengthened. His policy, if adopted, would doubtless have involved the creation of revolutionary tribunals. This is how Lin Chieh spelled out his idea of the absolute ideological authority of the Thought of Mao Tse-tung:

We must follow the instructions of Chairman Mao whether or not we have fully grasped their import.

A proletarian Party must have its own really supreme leader. His absolute revolutionary authority must be established over the whole Party. Failing this the Party will lack iron discipline and its victory will not be certain.

This line of thought was getting too far away from the principle of correcting the Party's errors through criticism by the people. The next day a warning against the tendencies of the extreme left could be read between the lines of a *Red Flag* article.⁶³ It amounted to a statement that there was no need to turn society completely upside down, in view of the fact that the bourgeoisie had only usurped the proletarian dictatorship in certain sectors:

Certain people are wrong to press for the 'complete renewal of the dictatorship of the proletariat.' Some people with ulterior motives want to deny the whole of the past and reverse all past events, that is, to overthrow the dictatorship of the proletariat and install a bourgeois one.

As far as we can tell, Mao Tse-tung at that time only wanted the revolution speeded up. 'I am not in

⁶³ No. 10, 1967. 'A Theoretical Weapon for Making Revolution Under the Proletarian Dictatorship.'

favour of the people everywhere overthrowing too rapidly the organizations and associations of the Party,' he is reported to have said on March 29th.⁶⁴ He no longer hoped to achieve the immediate regeneration of the Party, which would have involved at least a minimum of reorganization by the revolutionaries. He said on the same day that the reconstitution of the Party would have to wait for a while.⁶⁵

No doubt the line was to encourage the revolutionaries to reunite through combining against such indefensible figures as P'eng Chen and Lo Jui-ch'ing, who had in any case been condemned without any possible reservations.

The anniversary of the May 16th Circular, which was finally made available to the general public a year after its appearance,⁶⁶ offered a chance to put this policy into practice. However, the Mao Tse-tung group gave the impression from this time on of having to take leftist pressures into account. Those in the army who were most inclined to take political action were calling criticism meetings in their units even before May 16th. On May 12th Lo Jui-ch'ing was once again brought out and shown to the people by the students of a military academy. On July 1st, the Party's anniversary, the official press demanded an end to pressures on the revolutionary centre to change its decisions,⁶⁷ also reminding its readers of the necessity of struggling 'against the various non-proletarian ideas that appear among the people and in the revolutionary ranks.'

⁶⁴ Quoted in Ito's article 'Mono iwanu Liu-Teng ha,' *Asahi Jyanaru*, 1967, vol. 9, no. 37, p. 24.

⁶⁵ *Chūgoku Bunka Kakumei wo dō miru ka*, op. cit., p. 221.

⁶⁶ In a *Red Flag* article called, 'A great historic Document.' This title had a touch of humour to it. Exactly a year earlier the *People's Daily* had entitled a Sino-Albanian communiqué 'A Document of great historical Significance' at the very time the Central Committee was adopting the May 16th Circular. The similarity between the two titles may imply that Liu Shao-ch'i was satisfied with token agreements which he called 'historic' at a time when real history was being made elsewhere.

⁶⁷ *PLA Daily*, July 1, 1967. New China News Agency despatch no. 070119 (French language series).

The people, the cadres, and the army

The industrial workers and peasants were not, in general, sufficiently politically conscious to feel concerned over ideological discussions. For them, class struggle was aroused from convictions born of the most straightforward social contacts. Most of them turned up on Cultural Revolution demonstrations without really being involved. The whole business of demonstrating was formalized, as was ingenuously admitted when the time came to settle accounts. In Weishih county, Honan, for example:

In our administrative district and *hsien* everybody had to make a little flag and every village, big or small, a banner. Although many cadres realized that this was not consistent with the spirit of 'making revolution frugally,' anyone who dared say this was at once made to wear a dunce's cap. So we had to make them, even if it meant going into debt in order to do so.⁶⁸

Many other examples of such half-hearted involvement could be cited. Peasants complained of working time lost in visits to town for demonstrations, and flour wasted making paste for posters. One institute won popularity for teaching how a poster stuck up with mud would last long enough to do its job, 'given that it is generally sufficient for *tatzupao* to stay up for three to five days.'⁶⁹ Among the artisans and industrial workers of the cities of the hinterland, class consciousness was felt less sharply than the social heritage of the former guilds. Rebels were to complain that attachment to obsolete forms of society emasculated the proletarian class struggle:

It may seem that the present tendency of the revolution in Szechuan is excellent. But there are some abnormalities to which attention must be paid. Some revolution-

⁶⁸ Cited in *Mōtakutō no chōsen*, p. 191.

⁶⁹ The Nanking Institute of Engineering—see *Mōtakutō no chōsen*, p. 192.

ary organizations which have not grasped the overall orientation [to be followed] are concerning themselves with internal struggles rather than involving themselves fully in criticism. Some comrades belonging to revolutionary organizations who are well aware that internal struggles are wrong are moved by a kind of 'gratitude.' 'Those who helped us when we were in trouble,' they say, 'now ask our help. We can't forget our obligations and let them fall.' Such ideas of obligation and gratitude come from the feudal guilds. There is no place for them in the working-class Communist consciousness.⁷⁰

But the peasants' inclination to wait and see could turn to irritation, and the turbulence among the workers to anger, if the Cultural Revolution failed to give birth to a renovated political system. All the sceptics could see for the time being were dunce's caps and people being treated as 'dogs' heads' and forced to confess their sins on their knees. Moreover, the leaders decreed that 'beating, looting, pillage, requisitioning and arrests'⁷¹ were forbidden, in itself not a good sign. The revolutionaries would score some points if they managed to get the revolutionary committees on their feet. If the committees were to be viable they had to include a basic minimum of competent public administrators. These were inevitably cadres, and the cadres had been antagonized.

Cadres were afraid of being made scapegoats, of being 'shown to the masses' for the least initiative they took. Most of them avoided any deep commitment and shouted 'Long live the Revolution' for the sake of peace. The leaders saw that they had to be won over. As we have seen above, it was highly significant that the struggle against Liu Shao-ch'i was directed at his writings, not at the man himself. Revolutionary cadres were 'not in any circumstances to wait passively, stand aside from the struggle, or, following the teachings of the book on the "self-cultivation" of communists, examine their consciences

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 194–95, quoting the Szechuan Railway Bureau employees.

⁷¹ Important Notice of the Peking Municipal Revolutionary Committee, published in *People's Daily*, May 22, 1967.

behind closed doors while nursing the hope that one day they would suddenly be "liberated" and allowed to join the triple alliance.⁷²

The revolutionary leadership judged it prudent to remind cadres that few of them would really be prosecuted, that 'even if there are some bad people there can only be a few of them,'⁷³ and that the general direction of the struggle was to lay the blame only on 'the small handful of top leaders taking the capitalist road.'

Once the objective and the tactics had been settled, the Centre could lay down the law on the policy towards the cadres. They were not the stakes in the game between the revolutionaries and the conservatives. Neither were they the symbols of the power to be overthrown. They had to be analyzed as a political force. 'What we need to do is to find the truth by examining the facts and making class analyses, not by giving preference to a "left" over a "right."'⁷⁴

This was a rebuttal of the ultra-left line that all former cadres should be excluded from the movement. The question of winning over the cadres, like that of the revolution's accelerating pace, was the subject of a political quarrel. 'Some people . . . do not believe that the cadres who are now coming forward to make revolution can be sincere. They have no trust at all in these cadres, and regard them as undesirables, even going so far as to call them "speculators." ' So said the *People's Daily*⁷⁵ in a discussion on the sincerity of eleventh-hour rebels. The position taken by the intransigents was not necessarily leftist, but the Party press described it as a leftist one.

Leftists may well have had good reason to suspect some

⁷² *People's Daily* editorial of April 24, 1967.

⁷³ Speech by K'ang Sheng to revolutionary delegates from Anhwei visiting Peking to learn from the experience of Shanghai, October 22, 1967.

⁷⁴ K'ang Sheng's speech to the revolutionary delegates from Anhwei visiting Peking to learn from Shanghai's experience.

⁷⁵ *Jenmin Jihpao*, April 18, 1967, 'Let us encourage the cadres to come forward and make revolution.' The article was signed 'The Commentator.'

of these convenient changes of heart. It sometimes happened that local leaders brought back cadres whose services were needed. Even in Peking Wu Teh, Liu Chien-hsün, Kao Yang-wen and Ting Kuo-yü⁷⁶ seemed to have come over together in order to hasten the establishment of the municipal revolutionary committee. The top men of the Cultural Revolution needed leaders from among the old cadres to set alongside the Revolutionary Rebels.

There was no lack of soldiers to place alongside the Rebels. The army, which had been asked to represent authority in many sectors of life, slid into this new role without hesitation. The power it had been given in order to fight against reactionary or trouble-making organizations made it somewhat high-handed. The Military Commission had to issue a directive on April 6th to remind the soldiers that they should confine themselves to political work. The people were not to be forced to write confessions, beaten up, subjected to confiscation, or pilloried. The directive also pointed out that the fact that an association of the people had given itself a para-military organization did not indicate whether it was a rightist or leftist body.

Chou En-lai later made a comparison⁷⁷ between this and the directive of January 28th, which had been issued at the time the army started to play an active part in the revolution. The aim of the first was to urge the people to love the army; that of the later one was to urge the army

⁷⁶ Wu Teh was previously Secretary of the Central Committee's North China Bureau and First Secretary of Kirin Province. These four politicians joined the Peking Municipal Revolutionary Committee. Their collective self-criticism (March 7-11, 1967), and the speed with which it was made in public, both suggest that this was a tactical manoeuvre intended to achieve a specific end. Liu Chien-hsün was later sent on a mission to Honan, becoming Chairman of Honan's Revolutionary Committee.

⁷⁷ Speech of September 17, 1967, to delegates of the Congress of Students from Peking University and Institutes of Higher Education. Chiang Ch'ing had made the same comparison on April 20th, when the Peking Municipal Revolutionary Committee was founded. See 'Diary of the Cultural Revolution,' *op. cit.*

to love the people. The soldiers must have been guilty of some abuses.

On April 25th the *People's Daily* reprinted an article from the *PLA Daily* of the previous day telling the military what was expected of them: 'in supporting the struggles of the left, the comrades of the army must be the friends of the people and not their bosses.' It urged the soldiers to accept the criticisms of the masses. The prevailing policy seemed to be that the army should only intervene at the invitation of the revolutionary committee, if there was one. But this was not always the case.

Public proclamations gave the army increasingly greater powers of decision. For example, the Peking Revolutionary Committee issued a notice that read:

The Peking Garrison of the PLA and its military representatives have the right to deal with cases of violent conflicts. The disputants must obey them and must not refuse to carry out their orders.⁷⁸

A circular from the Centre on June 6th was in similar vein:

Local troops, as well as troops stationed in the area, are responsible for the carrying out of directives. . . . They are empowered to arrest, imprison and try according to the law trouble-makers, those who urge them on, and criminals who have wounded or killed people.⁷⁹

In these conditions some military leaders could easily believe that they were in control. In some districts direct conflict developed between them and the civilian members of the 'provisional organs of power' to such a degree that the latter attempted to impose a purge:

Ideas and actions which imply that the Party committee of a military zone has authority over the local revolu-

⁷⁸ 'Important Notice,' of the Peking Revolutionary Committee printed in the *People's Daily* of May 22nd (extract).

⁷⁹ This circular, also known as the Six-Point Circular, is included in full in Konno, *op. cit.*, pp. 231-32.

tionary committee must be criticized seriously and corrected.⁸⁰

Circumstances thus gave the soldiers an advantage over the politicians in general and the propagandists of ideology in particular. At the same time the Communist Party organization in the army had retained a cohesion that its civilian counterpart had certainly lost. It would appear that the chances for the latter to take part in the revolutionary committees alongside the cadres who had been won over soon faded into the background, among such other problems of political orientation as those concerning students and revolutionary theorists.

There were no discussions among the military as to who was suitable to join the revolutionary committees and who was not. The Party committees in the army simply appointed the delegates they thought suitable. The Party organization inside the army seems to have passed through the Cultural Revolution undamaged, and it went on to play a major part in the reconstitution of the Party as a whole.

As it had been prepared for the Cultural Revolution before the rest of the country and had the additional advantage of being allowed to sort out its own problems undisturbed, the army gave the impression of being a stable force. This stability brought it the support of conservative elements. Some reactionary organizations announced that they wished to be put under army command.⁸¹ This would have been their passport to the revolution without their having to find their own ideological course.

⁸⁰ 'The four main lessons' of members of the Tuyun Military District Party Committee. Radio Kweichow, March 10, 1968. This concerned the autonomous *Chou* of Chiennan.

⁸¹ Especially noteworthy was the demand of the *Lien Tung* (Joint Action Committee), for example, that 'all organizations should be put under the leadership of the Central Military Commission.' This demand brought protests from other revolutionary organizations, who said that this would have set the Cultural Revolution Group and the Military Commission at loggerheads. See *Shoutu Fenglei*, January 27, 1967.

However, the Military Commission and the Cultural Revolution Group seemed to be co-existing at the Centre without friction, until a minor incident revealed that there were difficulties.

On May 1st and October 1st each year a list was normally published showing the ranking of Party and government figures. On May 1st many of these were invited to take part in the celebrations with the top leaders. The papers usually published their names the next day, and the order in which they were listed was significant.

One therefore expected the *People's Daily* of May 2, 1967, to list the members of the Central Committee and the Cultural Revolution Group, the army leaders, and the top men in the Party and the government who had been able to come to Peking and had watched the fireworks with Mao Tse-tung the previous evening.

The paper did not come out on May 2nd. The May 2nd issue was not distributed until the next day, and there was a slight difference between the order of names in the New China News Agency release of the evening of May 2nd and the list in the paper published on May 3rd. The five most junior members of the Cultural Revolution Group, who had been listed after the army representatives in the news agency bulletin, were raised above them in the paper, so that the Group now took precedence over the army.⁸² This seems to have been a minor victory, not over the Military Commission (which was not listed as a body, its members being divided between the Central Committee and the group of military leaders), but in principle.

If anyone's ambitions were satisfied that day it was not those of the senior members of the Cultural Revolution Group—Ch'en Po-t'a, K'ang Sheng and Chiang Ch'ing—who were listed in Mao Tse-tung's personal entourage, but those of the men who were later to emerge as the leaders of the ultra-left wing. One may well imagine that there were mixed reactions in the army to the changed listing. The supporters of the Cultural Revolution Group in

⁸² The five young propagandists were Wang Li, Kuan Feng, Ch'i Pen-yü, Hsieh T'ang-chung, and Mu Hsin.

the army must have been triumphant, and this may be why the campaign of criticism against Lo Jui-ch'ing was intensified after May 16th. The Military Commission does not appear to have retaliated against the Cultural Revolution Group.

The leaders did their utmost to maintain the cohesion of the army, despite criticisms made by the revolutionaries of the authoritarian attitude of certain local military commanders. But although the army leaders may have yielded precedence, they took their revenge elsewhere by restraining the revolutionaries in their criticisms of officers who had indeed become 'the authorities' in their own regions.