

'dragged out') the 'small handful' wherever it was to be found. As the unit was operational at the time, the press coverage it was given was not without significance. Was it still competing with the army for power in the revolutionary committees? Whatever the facts were, the *Wenhui Pao* was purged⁹⁴ soon after opening its columns to the commander of this unit and shortly before the usual May Day truce.

The advocates of social revolution were finally incorporated within the revolutionary committees of the second period, with the help of the army, which played a dominant role. Meanwhile the demands of production were making themselves inexorably felt. The industrial workers understood that their work followed a cycle as inflexible as that which nature imposed on the peasants. They had to see themselves as being like peasants, being superior only in the technical know-how that they put at the service of the people. The norms of the new 1968 plan were applied in March and April. On the eve of May Day the reformed *Wenhui Pao* told the workers:

Production must be taken in hand; whatever is inappropriate to the superstructure of a socialist economy must be reformed; a movement for progressive management must be launched; and there must be a revolutionary transformation of the leading groups.

The leaders now being required to reform themselves and be 'progressive' were not the old cadres. They were already those who had seized power the previous year.

⁹⁴ *Wenhui Pao* was purged at mass staff meetings on April 28th, 29th, and 30th. This paper provided a very varied news service and published many readers' letters, including some which said that a second revolution and a new power takeover were needed, as the first had failed and had not led to democracy.

7. The First Revolutionary Committees

When the mission assigned to the revolutionary students had been extended to overthrowing some of the members of Party committees, it had been impossible to confine them to a critical role. Once committed to the struggle, in roles that were modified first by the bold counter-measures of the Party committees and then by the crisis brought about by the strikes, they followed a course that ended with their taking a part in the revolutionary command. The reasons for not dispersing the industrial workers were even stronger. Once they had joined in the revolution and many of them had become Revolutionary Rebels, it would have been impossible to deny their political abilities in the organs whose cadres they had replaced in order to run local affairs.

Nevertheless, the recognition of the political role of students and workers in some institutions created problems concerning the aim of the Cultural Revolution. The latter was to bring about a change of policy with the participation of the people and the transformation of the Party, both to be done without affecting the dictatorship of the proletariat. It was necessary that the Party should be rectified through general criticism, but not that everyone should take part in the institutions of government. The Centre, however, decided that revolutionary committees should be set up everywhere, and this decision was presumably taken on tactical rather than ideological grounds.

There was, however, an ideological connection between seizures of power and propaganda for a new policy for China that would be consistent with the Thought of Mao Tse-tung. The preparation for the former was done through rectifying the policies of the old committees, as Chiang Ch'ing explained in her speech at the inauguration of the Peking revolutionary committee:

The struggle, criticism and repudiation and transformation in the various departments can serve to bring about a fuller exposure and a more profound criticism and repudiation of the poisons spread on various fronts by the top Party persons: in authority taking the capitalist road.¹

Once the seizures of power had been decided on and approved, all that remained for the Centre to do was to organize them, or at least to register and co-ordinate them.

The movement in Shanghai had come from below. The revolutionary proletariat had reacted to the strike by taking over the city's essential services and only then set up some sort of leadership. Afterwards, however, as a result of the calls to seize power and the publicity given to the first examples, revolutionary power was generally established in other provincial capitals from above. First there would be a power seizure in the provincial Party headquarters, after which a local revolutionary Centre gave its sanction to other seizures. This was the pattern followed by revolutionary committees, with the exception of the Peking one, until the middle of 1968.

There was one difference between the first six committees and those that followed. In the first ones the masses were represented by people more deeply politicized than was later to be the case. The revolutionary organizations that had been ready to take part in the committees from the beginning were enthusiasts for the revolution. Their

¹ *Peking Review*, no. 18, April 28, 1967. This is one of several passages that explain why this speech has been regarded as a programmatic document for the Cultural Revolution.

confidence—at times arrogance—led them to despise any alliance with other mass organizations. When the triple alliance was first put into practice there was no difficulty in finding enthusiastic representatives of the people among the Red Guards and the Revolutionary Rebels of the various Headquarters to serve on the new provincial committees. But a year later purges seemed necessary: their insistence on their own points of view, and their intolerance of other organizations, created too many difficulties for the committees.

The principle that the people should have a third of the representation on the committees was sufficient justification for all the organizations to claim right of entry to the committees. In the speech to Anhwei revolutionaries quoted above, Chang Ch'un-ch'iao told how he had been obliged to manoeuvre between the organizations in Shanghai that had founded the Commune and others that had not been there to take part.

When the thirty-eight founding organizations held a meeting to draw up a document establishing the 'Shanghai People's Commune,' it turned out that twenty-five other organizations had held another meeting to found the 'New Commune of the people of Shanghai.' The latter maintained that 'as you did not invite us to take part in your organization, we are calling ours the New Commune, and it will be new in relation to yours.' This caused a problem, as the thirty-eight organizations represented the majority, and moreover were unquestionably Rebels. The twenty-five others formed a minority, and the two groups quarrelled, with accusations and counter-accusations of conservative tendencies.

'We worked in opposite directions,' Chang Ch'un-ch'iao said when he explained how he pleaded with the founding organizations to extend the base of their committee. He also pleaded with the Central Committee in Peking for the Propaganda services to make no distinction between the original organizations and those that came over later. When the twenty-five negotiated one by one the terms on which they might come over, demanding equal privileges with the founder members under threat of founding a

new commune, Chang had replied that being a founder brought no advantages; he and Yao Wen-yüan had been entrusted by the Centre with taking part in an organ of political power in the form of a commune, and there could only be one such organ in Shanghai, and those organizations had better realize this.

In general, all organizations regarded themselves as good, capable and devoted to the Thought of Mao Tse-tung. They did however exclude each other, making accusations concerning resistance to, and collaboration with, the Party authorities. Underlying these charges there were sometimes social prejudices. For example, many students rejected a general alliance with the workers as the latter were not willing to make unlimited sacrifices.

The students at Sian were divided between an intransigent majority and a group from Chiao Ta university that had formed a tentative alliance with the worker Rebels. The majority group started a quarrel with the workers by preaching to the miners that they should win glory by attaining new output records.²

While it was difficult for the Centre to say that one organization was worse than another in Cultural Revolution terms, and less deserving of a place in its institutions, it was also necessary to ensure that no really reactionary organizations slipped into the federations and committees. Mao Tse-tung himself confirmed that what had to be done now was more difficult than it had been during the revolutionary wars, as in those days the enemy had been visible, whereas 'now cases of ideological mistakes were being confused with ones involving antagonistic contradictions,' and 'this took some time to be sorted out.'³

The suddenness with which the Centre ordered the setting up of revolutionary committees by generalizing from the experience of two or three provincial capitals without an overall pre-arranged plan meant that the people who had to carry the policy out had their own ideas of what

² Andrew Watson, 'Armageddon Averted,' *Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 25, 1967, p. 451.

³ As quoted by Lin Piao in his report to the Ninth Party Congress, April 28, 1969.

the committees should be like. Some of these ideas harmed the committees instead of winning wider acceptance for them. Many groups felt that only truly proletarian revolutionaries, poor and lower-middle peasants, and cadres of genuinely proletarian origin deserved places on them. This was an attempt to interpret these new and unexpected institutions in fundamentalist Maoist terms; while to the Cultural Revolution's leaders the new committees were functional institutions rather than the outcome of ideological principle.

Ideally, cadres in top positions in all the provinces would have seen the light and spontaneously taken the lead in seizing power, which would have avoided having revolutionary committees made to order. But the Shanghai experience could not be repeated everywhere. There was a number of reasons, including the level of political awareness of the people of the province in question, and the demoralization of the victorious revolutionaries when faced with their own incompetence. Good guides for the people would have been 'the Party's treasures.'⁴

But too few cadres were able to bring over their provinces to allegiance under Peking. The Centre therefore designated 'preparatory groups' to lead the alliance between the cadres and the people and to make preparations for revolutionary committees. While this may not have been making revolutionary committees to order, it still left the men designated by the Centre with too much authority. That such a course was taken indicates yet again that there was a wholesale dismissal of cadres.

'A quick survey of the situation today shows that most departments need military control,' said Chou En-lai on April 30, 1967,⁵ a conclusion indicated by the fact that the administrative departments were no longer functioning, although their staffs—still overwhelmed by events—continued to work. In the spring of 1967 the cadres were under the impression that the Cultural Revolution was

⁴ New China News Agency, 1967, no. 021017 (in French).

⁵ Speech by Chou En-lai to representatives of ministries and other delegates in the hall of the State Council at 11 p.m. on April 30, 1967 (reproduced in a revolutionary pamphlet).

something outside their sphere, or even being waged against them, a student upheaval that had grown to formidable proportions which they did not really understand.

As soon as it realized that too few local cadres were taking command, the Centre must have considered using the Party's organization in the army, which had generally been sheltered from criticism and was thus in a good position to work for the reestablishment of the Party.

The story of the failure to achieve revolutionary committees was also, ironically, the story of the army. This may have been because the army only came in after the failure of the revolutionary forces, when the situation had already deteriorated so badly that nobody could have set up a revolutionary committee quickly. This was the case with Nanking. It may also have been because the army misunderstood the policies it was meant to carry out, believing that its temporary responsibilities gave it the right to silence all ideological quarrels. The fact that the army had been entrusted with establishing power from above became awkward when it used its powerful resources to crush revolutionary pressures from below. Fearing disorders, the military men gave the people no outlet for their feelings, and the positions of both sides hardened instead of becoming flexible enough to make alliances possible. Among the results were the serious incidents at Wuhan.

The principles

The northern province of Heilungkiang, whose capital is Harbin, and which makes up the northernmost part of Manchuria, provided the first example of a 'triple alliance.' P'an Fu-sheng, the first secretary of the provincial Party committee, made his self-criticism after the Eleventh Plenum of the Central Committee and supported the revolutionary cause.⁶ The 'Red Rebels of Heilungkiang' gave

⁶ A leaflet entitled *Basic Experience of the Heilungkiang Red Rebels in the Struggle to Seize Power*, written collectively by the 'leading comrades of the Rebels in Heilungkiang Province' and published by the People's Publishing House in February 1967

his account of what happened one day at the beginning of January:

Comrade P'an Fu-sheng and leading members of the Provincial Military Area took the initiative and went to the Harbin Red Rebels United Headquarters to discuss how to seize power, and the latter took the initiative in proposing that Comrade P'an Fu-sheng and Comrade Wang Chia-tao, the Provincial Area Military Commander, join the Heilungkiang Red Rebel Military Committee, when the founding of this committee was being considered.⁷

On January 12th the Rebels seized the newspapers, the radio station and the Public Security Bureau, where they met with a vigorous resistance, though 'all their contrivances were thwarted by the left within the bureau.' Right-wing organizations counterattacked in order to retake the papers, after which the army brought out its weapons and disbanded these organizations on January 26th.⁸ One of these, the *Jung Fu Chün*, which had taken defensive positions in the Harbin Palace of Friendship, was forced to surrender. The army then confirmed the rebels' seizure of the papers and 'imprisoned the ringleaders of the counter-revolutionary organizations.' On January 30th P'an Fu-sheng, the commanding officers of the military sector, and the leaders of the Red Rebels—'the three parties'—joined together and drafted the first proclamation. The revolutionary committee, which was officially established January 31st, was held up as a model by the national press. The *People's Daily* wrote:

Acting in the light of the concrete conditions of the local struggle, the revolutionary rebels carried out the Party's policy in a clear-cut way: they united with the senior leading members of the Provincial Party Com-

gives an account of the events of January 1967 in Harbin. [A translation can be found in *Peking Review*, no. 8, February 17, 1967, pp. 15-17—translator]

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁸ See *Mōtakutō no chōsen*, Tokyo, 1967, p. 57.

mittee who followed Chairman Mao's correct line and with senior leading members of the People's Liberation Army to form a 'three-in-one' force to seize power.⁹

The revolutionary leadership was thus urging the Rebels to look for support actually inside the main targets of power seizures: municipal and provincial Party committees. The Heilungkiang case was also a model in that the local leaders went to see the Rebels. An emphatic reference to the Party's line was a reminder to the Rebels that they were working for the benefit of the Party: the revolution was not for opportunists.

This constituted a theory on the relative roles of Rebels and revolutionary cadres. This theory may have been somewhat idealistic, and the example of Heilungkiang may have been a little too good. All the same, the Centre seemed to have reckoned that in many places the leading cadres would declare themselves ready to lead the people in the style of P'an Fu-sheng.

The role of the revolutionary cadres in participating in the 'three-in-one' provisional organ of power must be given full consideration. They should and can play the role of nucleus and backbone of the provisional organ,

wrote *Red Flag* on March 10, 1967,¹⁰ showing how much hope was still being placed in them. The Heilungkiang Rebels were proud of having been more accommodating towards the cadres than their Shanghai colleagues: as they wrote of themselves, 'they did not automatically and in a doctrinaire fashion imitate the experiments undertaken

⁹ *People's Daily* editorial, February 10, 1967, 'A good example in the struggle by proletarian revolutionaries to seize power,' translated in *Peking Review*, no. 8, February 17, 1967, pp. 17-19. This editorial includes a detailed study of how to deal with various categories of cadres, divided according to their political attitudes.

¹⁰ 'On the Revolutionary "Three-in-one" Combination,' *Red Flag*, no. 5, 1967; see *Peking Review*, no. 12, March 17, 1967, p. 15.

in other parts of China.¹¹ Perhaps they did not realize just how lucky they were in having the co-operation of the provincial Party first secretary. Shanghai's chaos had developed under a Party committee as unwilling to carry reaction to the extremes as to support the rebels. In most other provinces the 'hawks' in the Party machine had used the police as a means in their struggle against organizations loyal to the Central Committee's Cultural Revolution Group. After this the Rebels and Red Guards put those they were able to capture under house arrest.¹²

The Centre tried from then on to make people accept that many cadres had been wrongly dismissed or mistreated. The word came from Peking that it was bad tactics to put guilty men on public display at meetings.¹³ Criticism rallies gradually tended to be held for other reasons, and for the time being were aimed at Liu Shao-ch'i.

The cadre problem, therefore, whatever form it may have taken, was that fault was being found with the cadres; and the army's cadres were substitutes for them. Where did the soldiers come from to participate in the revolutionary committees? The military command sent them wherever they were needed:

At various levels, in those departments where power must be seized, representatives of the armed forces or of the militia should take part in forming the 'three-in-one' combination . . . Representatives of the armed forces should be sent to the county level or higher, and representatives of the militia should be sent to the commune level or lower.¹⁴

The new organs of power varied widely, containing all

¹¹ *Basic Experience*—see *Peking Review*, no. 8, p. 15.

¹² Andrew Watson tells how the senior Party cadres in Sian were kept in the provincial committee's offices, where they were forced to write their self-criticisms and do manual labour. On some days they were put on public display at mass meetings or driven through the city in open lorries. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 18, 1967, p. 405.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ 'On the Revolutionary "Three-in-one" Combination,' *Peking Review*, no. 12, 1967, p. 16.

kinds of *ad hoc* teams working to unite the left and organize committees. Many of the cadres from the army's Party organization were assigned to these tasks. At the lowest level there were regroupings of revolutionary organizations being formed into 'alliances,' which were generally called 'congresses' when at provincial or municipal level. Cadres from outside did not take part in them, preferring to work for their establishment by means of preparatory groups.

The 'preparatory groups for revolutionary committees,' whether in a Unit, a university, or a province, were teams designated by the Centre or by an existing revolutionary committee to do what P'an Fu-sheng, the Red Rebels, and the local army command had done in Harbin: amalgamate the revolutionary forces and give a popular mandate to a committee. When a preparatory group created a favourable climate of opinion, it formed an enlarged preparatory group, containing only those elements that accepted the idea of 'alliance.' This was a step towards a revolutionary committee because the preparatory group had thus acquired a definite following. Then, when a revolutionary committee was formed, recognition had to be won from the Centre.

The Centre's Cultural Revolution Group and the State Council granted the recognition without which a committee's position was still liable to be disputed. Once recognized, however, it became a provisional organ of the proletarian dictatorship, and anyone who opposed its decisions would be declared a counter-revolutionary.

This lengthy procedure often had to be undertaken. While in some provinces the elements of a revolutionary committee quickly joined forces, in others rival organizations continued to struggle with each other, while some figures, though accepted by the Centre, continued to be interminably criticized. In other cases military control prevented the development of political debate.

The necessity of keeping order gave the provisional organs even more power. Even preparatory groups were given the authority to maintain 'revolutionary order.' This was a very delicate stage in the process, for the provi-

sional groups and the military administrators had no popular bases; and it became even more complicated when there were delays in forming revolutionary committees.

The first six revolutionary committees

The first six provincial revolutionary committees were those formed in Heilungkiang, Shantung, Kweichow, Shansi and the great cities of Shanghai and Peking. Events in Shantung and Kweichow were similar to those in Heilungkiang, though less straightforward and exemplary.

In Shantung the revolutionary organizations first followed the example of Shanghai by uniting and proclaiming the revolution in one city, Tsingtao, where twenty-three organizations joined together on January 22nd. They announced that power had to be seized from the municipal authorities, because they had repressed the Cultural Revolution and set up a 'Tsingtao Revolutionary Rebel Committee.' However, immediately afterwards the chief position was filled by a local public figure in the province, the vice-mayor of Tsingtao, Wang Hsiao-yü.

The committee defied the provincial authorities, proclaimed several cadres unsatisfactory and ordered them to surrender themselves within three days, and acquitted the rest on condition that they returned to work. In other words, enough of the workers' and students' organizations recognized a leader who was able to make the administrative personnel stay on under the new authorities. This force overthrew the provincial Party committee on February 3rd and replaced it with a revolutionary committee which several army units supported with enthusiasm.

In Kweichow power was seized on January 25th. Eight days later, and probably also under Shanghai influence, the First Rebel Headquarters decided that it wanted elections held rapidly in which revolutionary rebels could democratically elect a provisional revolutionary committee with full powers.¹⁵ But, from January 25th, a senior army

¹⁵ New China News Agency, no. 020507, 1967 (in French). Unlike Tsingtao, Kweiyang is not a great industrial city. Kweichow is a backward province, and observers were surprised by

cadre had been offering the revolutionaries his services as leader: Li Tsai-han, the deputy political commissar of the Kweichow Military District. He became chairman of the revolutionary committee on February 13th, with the Kweichow military commander as one of his vice-chairmen.

There was a somewhat different story in Shansi. There was a trial of strength with the provincial Party committee, which put up resistance. Liu Ko-p'ing,¹⁶ the political cadre who put himself in charge of the masses, was on bad terms with the heads of the old bureaucracy, and thus probably also with his colleagues in the provincial Party secretariat in Taiyuan. He had a long-standing personal quarrel with Liu Shao-ch'i.¹⁷ Was he unpopular with the cadres because he had been involved in the 'revolutionary revolt?' Whatever the reason, the provincial committee put forward a rival Headquarters in opposition to the rebel one.

On January 12th over 20,000 rebels surrounded the provincial committee's offices, captured several cadres, and carried out searches.¹⁸ Then, according to revolutionary sources, the authorities laid in wait. Operating from a 'clandestine headquarters' they incited the workers' organizations to attack the rebels. Strikes followed. Taiyuan is an industrial and mining city, and it may well be that events followed the same course as at Shanghai. Chang Jih-ch'ing, the second political commissar of the Shansi Military District, played an important part in the workers' alliance¹⁹ some time before the army as a whole was

the turn taken by the revolution there. Later on, in April 1968, the Kweichow revolutionaries maintained that the working class controlled the revolution, although events in Shanghai gave no grounds for believing this. The power seizure in Kweichow was doubtless the work of a small and dynamic minority of workers in the city of Kweiyang directed by cadres newly appointed to the province after the 1965 purge.

¹⁶ Deputy governor of Shansi.

¹⁷ Liu Ko-p'ing had opposed Liu Shao-ch'i's advice to Communists imprisoned by the Kuomintang to recant, according to the story of the quarrel given in many posters.

¹⁸ See *Ajia Keizai Jumbo*, no. 694, Tokyo, September 1967.

¹⁹ *People's Daily*, January 25, 1967.

drawn into the revolution. There were lengthy consultations between the army, the cadres and the revolutionaries. The revolutionary committee was finally appointed on March 18th, with 245 members, of whom slightly less than half were representatives of the people and rather more were from the cadres and the army.²⁰

In Peking the Red Guards and the Rebels first wanted to found a commune like Shanghai's. Two federations, to which fifty-eight organizations belonged, joined together to form a 'Preparatory Committee for the Peking People's Commune.' In its pride it put up posters in red characters, as if they were orders from the Central Committee. The Central Committee's Cultural Revolution Group, however, keeping direct control over the capital, pressed for congresses in which different social groups were segregated. There were to be four of these congresses, for workers, peasants, university and college students, and middle-school students.

The Central Cultural Revolution Group, obediently followed by the various student headquarters, took charge of the setting up of a student congress, the 'red congress' that was formed in February. But other organizations were harder to combine, and around March 10th Hsieh Fu-chih, Minister of Public Security and a deputy premier, was put in charge of bringing the other congresses into being.

Hsieh Fu-chih was a soldier with experience of Party work in government.²¹ He had a soldier's toughness, but was flexible when it came to winning support and justifying ways of applying pressure. When criticized in the streets because of the harshness of the police at Shih-chingshan, he made his self-criticism immediately. In August and September, when Wang Li was falling victim to

²⁰ *People's Daily*, March 23, 1967.

²¹ He had been chosen by Teng Hsiao-p'ing as first secretary of the Yunnan Provincial Party Committee in 1953, but he no longer felt himself bound to his protector. 'Hsieh used to be under the protection of Teng Hsiao-p'ing, but he has since made honourable amends,' said Chou En-lai in a speech on January 11, 1967. (*Shoutu Hungweiping*, January 21, 1967.)

the Wuhan affair, Hsieh seemed to be in no trouble although he too was directly involved. He was a clever politician, and was said to enjoy the confidence of Chou En-lai.²²

The congress of poor and lower-middle peasants from the rural districts of Peking was set up on March 19th, and a similar body for revolutionary workers on March 22nd. It was the congress of Red Guards from middle schools that caused him the most trouble. In order to organize the turbulent and sharply divided middle-school students, whose passions threatened to wreck the alliance that had already been achieved in principle among the students, Hsieh Fu-chih used the army. He used the meetings called at the beginning of the new school year to win recognition from the school delegates for their new military instructors. Then he told them that these new teachers would be responsible for building a federation of secondary-school students under the control of the military committee.²³ The secondary-school Red Guards congress finally met on March 25th.

Next, approval had to be won from the committees of the various congresses on the composition of the revolutionary committee that was to represent all of them. Rivalries between big and small as well as moderate and militant organizations were reappearing. The birth of the committee was delayed until April 20th. Of its ninety-seven members only seventeen were soldiers and thirteen cadres. There was a careful balance between workers' and students' representatives: twenty-four workers and twenty students (fourteen university-level students and six from middle-school students). There were also thirteen peas-

²² See 'Kokusai Tenkizu. Hito no Kadai (4)' in *Asahi Shimbun*, December 22, 1967. Hsieh was put in charge of the revolutionary committee in order to set an example to China. His success, and the strength of the Public Security, gave him an exceptional political position, independent of alliances with other top leaders.

²³ See the Red Guard organ, *Chün'uan Chanpao*, March 20, 1967. The military affairs committee for the Peking region was established on February 11th, with the special mission of eliminating the associations that had been disbanded.

ants, six members of cultural and social associations, and four urban residents.²⁴ And the balance between different tendencies within each group was even more skillfully administered. The Peking committee was weak because it had been formed before the alliances were achieved. A congress was a good formula for a system of representation through elections, but not for an organ of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The participants were agreed on the composition of the committee but not on its policies.

On May 14th, some months after the first revolutionary committees had been established, Hsieh Fu-chih made this point at a meeting of the Peking committee. Enthusiasm for self-expression and participation had grown everywhere as a result of the new freedoms that had been won by the January revolution, and political passions were on the boil. Brawls and work stoppages were a plague in the big cities. The most extreme radicals wanted the revolutionary committees to fight violence with violence.

Hsieh Fu-chih commented on an 'urgent notice' to the people that was issued in the name of the revolutionary committee.²⁵ He said that all the revolutionaries were giving priority to revolutionary efforts, but it was of first importance to continue working and producing. The Central Committee and Chairman Mao were worried about the drop in output caused by absenteeism, conflicts, and even sabotage. 'Many workers from the Shihchingshan Steel Works have undertaken protest strikes and sit-ins in front of the four gates of Chungnanhai. This is not the way to get work done.'²⁶ He said that there had been 313 brawls between April 30th and May 10th, counting only those in which over fifty people were involved. He also urged organizations outside the revolutionary committees to follow the important notice of May 14th without

²⁴ Figures from Konno, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

²⁵ See the Peking Aviation Institute Red Flag's journal *Hungch'i*, no. 14, June 6, 1967.

²⁶ Speech at the third session of the Peking Revolutionary Committee on May 14, 1967, according to a *tatzipao* of the 'Propaganda Team of Revolutionary Rebel Corps of the Central Committee's United Front Department.'

delay. He begged them to make propaganda themselves against disorder and violence.

The revolutionary committee was there to give its approval to a decision on public order, but was it governing Peking? Would Hsieh Fu-chih have appealed from the committee to other organizations if it had really been in control? The notice of May 14th stipulated that the armed forces of the garrison, and soldiers everywhere, were permitted to use force, whereas the committee itself was nowhere authorized to do so. This was what the members of the Central Committee's Cultural Revolution Group who were furthest to the left were criticizing when they demanded that the organs of the proletarian dictatorship be strengthened.

The use of force continued to be left to the discretion of the army and the public security, and was a matter to be decided by the Party committees in the army. When founder organizations of the revolutionary committee ignored the appeals for order, work and unity, the army put pressure on them as well as on the committee's opponents. In June the Centre permitted the right to put up posters to certain organizations only.²⁷ The right of publication, like that of association, was now restricted.

Unsuccessful revolutionary committees

There had been many seizures of power between the end of January and February 11th. They are known to have taken place at the head of at least fourteen provinces, in addition to Shanghai. In every case the course of events was similar.

Rebels seized the local papers, radio stations and public security offices. But then conservative organizations claimed the right to seize power themselves, which was said by some to be the counter-attack of the Party committees. Battles for the control of the papers and strikes then followed. In only six of the fourteen provinces where

²⁷ It was also in June that the propaganda section of the 'Red Congress' was dissolved and its committee reorganized. (See *Shoutu Hungweiping*, June 11, 1967.)

this series of events took place did revolutionary committees emerge. In all the other cases the situation deteriorated, and the army played a dominant role.

Everything depended on how the army interpreted its mission. It had been ordered to 'support the left.' If it was understood that it was meant to let the Maoist current bring new men into politics it let organizations act and express their views, even when they criticized the army, and no disasters ensued. But if it failed to make a distinction between the Cultural Revolution and the government during the period of hiatus which it was supposed to superintend, there was a danger of the situation getting out of hand. And if the army tried to run the revolution itself by silencing the boldest voices it was preparing the way for upheavals.

The soldiers rarely understood this at once; after all, they only intervened when the situation was already chaotic. In Honan, for example, the army made some mistakes, persisted in them for some time, was subjected to an inquiry from the Centre, and only then allowed the appointed cadres to act.

This, in brief, is what happened. The 'Revolutionary Rebel Command' took over the *Honan Daily* on February 7th and held it till the 18th. One of its first actions was to demand the dismissal of Chan Shu-chih, the commander of the Honan Military District, but Peking did not agree. The Rebels joined with Red Guards of the Third Headquarters to found the 'Commune of February 7th.' Hostile organizations²⁸ tried to take the *Honan Daily* back from them. Chou En-lai turned to the army, which had apparently been held in reserve. He decided that the paper should come under military control, and that representatives of the rival groups should be sent to Peking by the army.²⁹

Next, the public security services made their own 're-

²⁸ Associated with the 'Chengchow University United Committee' (capital of Honan), which may itself have been against Red Guards from outside the province.

²⁹ On February 17, 1967. Chou En-lai's directive on the *Honan Daily* incident.

bellion,' which resulted in a very strong new group, the 'Honan Security Commune,' which seemed to be favoured by the army. The Security Commune fought against the strikes,³⁰ arrested rebels and even held them in a detention camp, claiming that it was imposing proletarian dictatorship. The Centre ordered an inquiry on the two communes, but its results were not made available until July 10th.³¹ Then it condemned some of the Party officials in the army, who had made 'mistakes in the support of the left.'

The Centre appointed a 'Preparatory Group for the Revolutionary Committee' for the province under Liu Chien-hsin, a Honan cadre who had made his self-criticism and become one of the deputy chairmen of the Peking revolutionary committee. The army accepted his authority and proved loyal, even during the very serious incidents in the neighbouring province of Hupei.

In the latter province the army's rule left no room for any other political authority. At the end of February it had established in Wuhan an office of the military sector in charge of Revolution and Production, with departments for agriculture, irrigation, industry, commerce and finance. The whole was under army control. On March 6th Ch'en Tsai-tao, the commander of the Wuhan Military Region, announced on behalf of the Bureau that the organization had taken over the army's and the Party's powers in the province.³² Schools were ordered to reopen on March 20th with very strong discipline.³³ Fifty thousand teachers, students and workers met on March 13th to be told that disputes, anarchy and abuses of democracy in schools would be dealt with.

The workers had hardly any more freedom to express their ideas than did the students. The Second Headquarters of the Wuhan workers could not demonstrate without

³⁰ Chengchow is an industrial town with large cotton mills.

³¹ See *Ching kangshan*, organ of the Peking Further Education College, no. 57 (July 26, 1967).

³² According to Hupei Radio on March 6th. See *China News Analysis*, no. 655, April 14, 1967, p. 6.

³³ Order no. 3 from the military command (*Ibid.*).

repercussions. The Cultural Revolution was kept under restraint in Hupei, unlike the other provinces where it was so tumultuous.

There were of course some provinces where defence and security had a high enough priority to leave the army no room for doubts about its role. This applied particularly to provinces with sensitive frontiers, such as those next to Vietnam, the USSR and India. Most of them were also autonomous regions with national minorities. The revolution here was later in time or slower in tempo. And then there were other provinces where the army was on active service: Fukien,³⁴ where it faced Chiang Kai-shek across the sea, or Kwangtung, the province of Canton. That great working-class city had not, despite its long revolutionary history, played a full part in the Cultural Revolution. The revolutionary organizations were unable to develop the workers' institutions they would have liked. Although the Cultural Revolution got under way, it was almost crushed by the military control that the Centre wanted and kept, even after the revolutionary committee was established much later. Chou En-lai reasoned with the Rebels there:

Military control is very important, especially in Kwangtung, which is a frontier region at the gates of Hongkong and Macao. The army must be helped in carrying out its task of control.³⁵

A seizure of power in Canton at the end of January was the work of Red Guard organizations, reinforced by outsiders from Shanghai, Peking, Wuhan and Harbin, but not allied to the majority in Canton.³⁶ These organizations formed a Kwangtung Cultural Revolution Federation and

³⁴ The army had been controlling the Cultural Revolution in Fukien since January 26th. At the end of March representatives of the Rebels went to Peking to demand that the army restore their liberties.

³⁵ Speech by Chou En-lai in Canton on April 14, 1967, according to posters of April 17th.

³⁶ On the Cultural Revolution in Canton see *Ajia Keizai Jumbo*, no. 741, December 1968, p. 13 ff.

decided to leave the existing committees in being. On January 22nd they called a meeting of the Party committee, made it hand over its seals of office, then set it to work again, claiming that they controlled it. Other organizations fought against them. On February 28th the army drove out the Cultural Revolution Federation and took control itself.

A strong movement of protest against the army concentrated its attacks on the *Canton Daily's*³⁷ 'control team.' Passions rose, and with disorder growing on the eve of the international spring trade fair, at which many foreigners were expected, Chou En-lai arrived in Canton to arbitrate. He presented himself as an advocate of revolutionary unity, and insisted that the rebels should tolerate rival organizations. These latter he rehabilitated in return for their repudiation of some of their leaders. He reiterated his support for the military control groups and introduced Huang Yung-sheng, the general sent by the Centre's Cultural Revolution Group, to take charge of the revolution in Canton.

There was much bitterness against the army. It was in Canton that such slogans as, 'Military control is the new [bourgeois] authority; power must be seized from it,' were first seen. Under army control two main factions were opposed to each other and to military control as well. There were very serious incidents throughout the summer of 1967. It took a long time to form congresses, which only emerged in October and November. A 'preparatory group for the revolutionary committee' was only appointed on November 12th.

Arbitration on the spot was the exception. In most cases, as we have seen with Honan, the rival groups had to send their spokesmen to Peking.³⁸ Peking was not just an arbitration tribunal; it was also neutral ground where asylum

³⁷ Formerly the *Yangch'eng Wanpao*.

³⁸ On February 6, 1967, for example, the State Council and the Military Commission sent two aircraft to Huhehot in Inner Mongolia to bring representatives of quarrelling organizations to take part in a conciliation meeting in Peking in which the Centre would arbitrate.

could be sought. 'It is not possible to make arrests in Peking,' said Wang Li.³⁹ All factions went there to seek justice and distribute their journals in the hope of interesting public opinion in their own particular dramas. Some asked for help against the 'fascism' of counter-revolutionary authorities, while others appealed against the 'fascism' of the Rebels.

Chou En-lai only judged these organizations on their performance. Mao Tse-tung had said more than once that there was a place for the right as well as for the left. The Centre's arbitration was heeded. Watson has described how, when the instructions came from Peking to Sian, students obeyed with surprising speed and began to criticize themselves for the error of line they had committed during the previous seventy days.⁴⁰

But as for the army, we must emphasize that, despite misinterpretations and, at times, abuses of power, it was always acquitted of its deeds,⁴¹ apart from the condemnation of a few of its leaders. This became even more noticeable after the Wuhan affair.

In Shantung, when a conflict broke out between students and soldiers, despite the revolutionary committee, the high command made a self-criticism⁴² and re-established the organizations that the army wanted to suppress. There were serious incidents in Szechuan at the beginning of May, with troops firing on a crowd in Wanhshien.⁴³ What happened was certainly a serious reverse for the military leaders. There was a meeting in Peking at which the Military Commission proposed that the political commissars of the Chengtu Military Region and some of their subordinates should be relieved of their duties. Hsiao Hua urged

³⁹ Speech to the *People's Daily* staff on March 16, 1967. See *Hung Erh-ch'i*, June 6, 1967.

⁴⁰ *Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 25, 1967, p. 451.

⁴¹ There was an exception in Chinghai in February. This was the only case in which the leaders, especially Su Yü, recognized that a counter-revolutionary insurrection had taken place. See *Hung Erh-ch'i*, no. 4, June 6, 1967.

⁴² On May 28, 1967. The self-criticism was published by the paper *Hungse Tsaofan'uan*, June 22, 1967.

⁴³ *Asahi Shimbun*, Japanese morning edition of May 7, 1967.

this solution, asking that those put in their place to run the army be shown confidence, and the Centre's Cultural Revolution Group agreed.⁴⁴ There was no purge in the army.

Once again, Hsiao Hua's policy prevailed. But the military regime that had established itself at Wuhan was preparing for the day when the army would use its weapons.

⁴⁴ Speech by the leaders, evening May 7, 1967, announcing the decision of the Central Committee for Szechuan—wall posters. Reported in *Peking Kono Ichinen*, Tokyo, 1968, pp. 155–56, op. cit.

8. The Peasants: A Moderate Cultural Revolution

The Maoist policy towards the peasants was to put into practice the principles that the Party had been putting forward since 1963,¹ not to condemn them. There was no change of policy. This meant that the social climate could be kept under control, as long as the revolutionaries did not go among the peasantry seeking support, and as long as the propagandists remained uncertain about the extent of the sacrifices which policy imposed on the peasants. Once these two conditions ceased to apply, agitation increased in the countryside. The villages on the fringes of the big cities were gradually infected by the spirit of partisan quarrels.

When it became clear that the revolutionary committees, established in the people's communes some time after those in the cities, would have a programme that envisaged the eventual abolition of individual advantages, some of the peasants turned their discontent on the poor peasants, on whom the programme relied for the implementation of the policies of the future.

The revolutionary committees themselves, however, continued to advocate moderation. The Centre made it plain that the rural collective system would be maintained. No retreat was possible now, and the concessions that had permitted certain capitalist practices to revive were condemned.

¹ See Chapter 2.