

The Politics Of Revolutionary China



Chairman Mao and Premier Chou at the 24th Session of the Central People's Government, (1953)

BRITISH AND IRISH COMMUNIST ORGANISATION

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

For a number of months prior to the death of Mao Tsetung in September 1976, and for a few months after that event, three different contributors to the publications of the B&ICO sought to evaluate Mao's role in the communist movement in general and in the Chinese Revolution in particular. The three-part series by P. McMorrow entitled "The Politics Of Revolutionary China" was published in the June, August and November 1976 issues of "The Irish Communist"; "The Last Of The Great Leninists" was published as an editorial in the October 1976 issue of "The Irish Communist"; and "Mao" was published as an editorial in the December 1976 issue of "The Communist". The present pamphlet is a reprint of all the above articles.

We think it is obvious that no definitive study and assessment of Mao can be produced without a considerable amount of further research. The present pamphlet will hopefully act as a sharp stimulus to such work. The articles reprinted below have answered many questions by posing more. They in fact have the effect of de-stabilising any pre-conceived notions or dogmas concerning the nature and process of the Chinese Revolution. Many of the descriptions are accordingly provocative and, on occasions, invite controversy. An example of such an approach is the description of Mao as "an Asian Tito" in "The Last Of The Great Leninists".

In April 1956, when the Chinese leader was himself prone to contribute to the wave of "Stalin-criticism" unleashed by Khrushchev two months earlier, Mao made a speech wherein he maintained:

"When we won the war, Stalin suspected that ours was a victory of the Tito type, and in 1949 and 1950 the pressure on us was very great indeed. Even so, we maintain the estimate of 30 per cent for his" (ie, Stalin's, B&ICO) "mistakes and 70 per cent for his achievements. This is only fair."

If Stalin and Mao seem to have had an attitude towards one another which gives the impression of a pair of mutual begrudgers, what of it? The fact is that it was the Stalinist perspective for the Chinese Revolution which Mao so creatively developed and applied in order to ensure its triumph (See the B&ICO pamphlet, "Stalin On The Chinese Revolution"). Moreover, Stalinist (that is Leninist) history can only view Mao as an "Asian Tito" in a very limited sense. Nor do bourgeois historians regard them as comparable - in fact, Mao's stature is constantly rising with them. The only point of contact between Mao and Tito is that they both, in very different circumstances, fell out with the Russian Communist Party. There is no comparison between the circumstances of their development, their policy after the break, their stature as communists, or their influence on world history.

The definition of Leninism employed in that same October editorial might also be regarded as controversial and we also reprint a reader's letter to the November issue of "The Irish Communist" which held that such a definition was debatable. But, of course, the time has long been reached when there is nothing under the communist sun that should not be regarded as debatable. Anti-Stalin Iconoclasm, for all its pretensions, has had nothing but a thoroughly conservative effect on the development of communism. As is pointed out in the article entitled, "Mao", the revolutionising of Chinese society was due to Mao Tsetung's ability to shake off the dead-weight of tradition which had led China to stagnate for so long. It is the Lenin Personality Cult which has functioned for so long as a retarding tradition in the communist movement. If, therefore, the questions posed in the following articles stimulate fresh thinking about problems of Leninism as much as they should do about the past and future course of the Chinese Revolution, then all to the good. The present pamphlet will have more than served its purposes.

British & Irish Communist Organisation,
April, 1977

THE LAST OF THE GREAT LENINISTS

Chairman Mao Tse Tung might be considered the last of the great Leninists. He died at a time when Leninism - the rapid modernisation of backward societies under the authoritarian rule of a revolutionary elite - has almost exhausted its historical mission in the world. When he joined the Communist Party of China, China was *"the most distressful country that you have ever seen"*. Now it is a vigorous, progressing modern state, and the credit for that is due to Mao, the CPC and Leninism.

Very few now can be found to question the fact that Mao's leadership had an enormously improving effect on China, whereas official ideology in most of the world insists that Stalin's leadership had anything but an improving effect on Russia. And yet the darker aspects of Stalinism had their parallels in Maoism. Because the CPC had learned the lessons of the Russian experience, and also because of the peculiar development of the revolution in the countryside which gave the communists an initial base, collectivisation in China was carried out with much less bloodshed than in the USSR. But in the general destruction of feudalism over the years after 1949, an estimated five million people were killed. The Cultural Revolution was, as Solzhenitsyn noted in the Gulag Archipelago, *"only a repetition, with slight changes (not always for the worse) of our malodorous thirties"*. And when the Hundred Flowers experiment failed, freedom of expression in all spheres was as good as abolished.

There are a number of reasons why Mao's greatness is admitted without hesitation, while Stalin's is denied. Firstly, China was never in any sense considered part of Europe, and she had no democratic bourgeois parties of substance. Secondly, some of the most astute Cold Warriors believed that China would not remain in a monolithic world Communist movement under Russia's hegemony and that in time the pressure of national interest would make Mao an Asian Tito. Thirdly, that has actually happened.

The break with the CPSU was forced by Mao in 1963. The issue was explained publicly in terms of theoretical Marxism, with the CPC taking the fundamentalist position. But considering later developments there can be no doubt that Chinese national interest was the determining factor. The CPSU planned for a kind of neo-colonial relationship between China and the Soviet Union, but Mao wasn't having it. One American writer has claimed that the

breaking point was when the CPSU refused to give China an A-bomb. Whether or not that is true, the CPC afterwards did not practise its fundamentalist preaching. Factions split from most of the world communist parties in support of the Chinese position; the CPC used these almost solely to disrupt the pro-Russia communists (most notably in India) who might have been revisionist and many other things besides, but at least retained some purpose of transforming the societies in which they operated.

But this proves very little. It was always less than half true to say that the workers of the world had an international interest, even when the world is defined (as Marx defined it for practical purposes) as the advanced societies of Europe. In a developing country like China, national interest inevitably takes absolute precedence over all else, for the revolutionary elite which heads the nation. The proper standard by which to judge Mao is not what he has done for Marxist theory, or for the world communist movement, but what he has done for China. And judged by that standard, he will be a national hero as long as there is a Chinese nation, and that will be a very long time.

But we may as well consider what he has done for Marxist theory and for the world communist movement. Some attempt was made in the late sixties to export the Chinese revolution in its specific form of encirclement of the cities by the countryside, as expounded by Lin Biao in his 1965 document, Long Live The Victory Of People's War. The small Asian communist parties which followed this line got nowhere. The wars of liberation in Vietnam and more so in Cambodia resembled the Maoist "People's War" in some ways, but there is no evidence that either guerilla movement was strongly influenced by Maoist theory. And the CPC itself has long ceased to claim that the strategy is applicable throughout the developing world. The bulk of the communist movement continues to adhere to Moscow. Mao's theoretical statements only served to confuse it further. His practise has left one valuable lesson, which communists of a very different cast like Carillo, and long ago Garaudy, were sharp enough to grasp; to be really effective a national communist party must have political independence. Otherwise, he has left no blueprint. His ghost speaks to the straying Marxist much as heaven spoke to Omar Khayyam:

*"Then to the rolling Heaven itself I cried,
Asking 'What lamp has destiny to guide
Her little children stumbling in the ark?'
And, 'A blind understanding' Heaven replied."*

(IRISH COMMUNIST, October, 1976)

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I have two points to make on your editorial obituary of Mao Tse Tung, The Last Of The Great Leninists.

1) Your definition of Leninism is debatable. You define it as: *"the rapid modernisation of backward societies under the authoritarian rule of a revolutionary elite."* Surely Lenin's greatest contribution was in the practical application of Marxist principles to national circumstances. The failure of the communist movement in industrial countries (the Italian Communist Party excluded) has been its failure to do just that. (Mao of course was a Leninist in both senses.)

2) You go on to say that Leninism as you define it has almost exhausted its historical mission in the world. This also is doubtful. South Vietnam is at present rapidly modernising in a more or less Stalinist fashion and the likelihood is that other countries in Asia will follow suit. Similarly if the exported revolution in Angola takes root the Stalinist pattern of development may well acquire^a new force throughout Africa.

Yours fraternally,

Dave Alvey

THE POLITICS OF REVOLUTIONARY CHINA - PART ONE:

THE ROAD TO SOCIALISM

It cannot reasonably be expected that the political career of Mao Tse-tung will continue for many more years, no matter how robust the ageing Chairman appears, and it can be assumed that his passing will be followed by a rapid escalation of the simmering political struggle in China. It is thus important for Communists throughout the world to assess the political situation in that country in order to be able to comment with any degree of authority on expected events. The B&ICO has in the past dealt with aspects of Chinese foreign policy and has issued a policy statement entitled The Communist Party Of China And The Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of The Soviet Union, but little investigation

has been carried out on the internal politics of the Peoples' Republic. This and subsequent articles will attempt to introduce such a discussion by outlining the main historical features of the Chinese Revolution in order that theoretical issues may later be examined.

MARXISM - AN EASTERN PERSPECTIVE

In order to realistically assess the origin, rapid growth and eventual attainment of state power by the Chinese Communist Party, it is necessary to look briefly at the historical events which preceded its formation.

At the beginning of the twentieth century Chinese society suffered from the twin evils of foreign exploitation and economic stagnation. European intervention had begun in the mid-nineteenth century with the "Opium Wars" during which the British forcibly opened China to foreign trade, and this interference had been continued by the "Open Door" doctrine proclaimed by the USA in 1899 which guaranteed "equal opportunity" to foreign powers in the economic and commercial "development" of China. The forceful occupation of river port areas and the control of navigable rivers was central to Western policy. In addition the Japanese gains in South Manchuria following the Russo-Japanese war in 1905 greatly increased the total land area being held by foreign powers.

Added to this burden of foreign exploitation was the retarding domestic social structure; equally important the semi-feudal class structure in rural China meant that the peasants were forced to part with any economic surpluses which they accumulated. These funds were wasted by the landlords by being channeled into non-growth areas. (The situation was not unlike that of the rack-rented Irish peasants of the 18th century.) The peasants had for centuries been ground to impotency by this continuing exploitation which was supported by the Government.

Chinese society reacted against this state of affairs firstly with the almost successful "Great Peace" Rebellion of 1864 which was crushed by the Manchu forces aided by British army regulars and mixed European and American mercenaries, and secondly with the so-called "Boxer" Rebellion of 1900 which aimed at expelling foreigners as well as the Manchu Emperors who had let them in. The "Boxers" were also suppressed by a Western international force. Reprisals included mass executions, crushing indemnities, new concessions and legalised foreign garrisons. The defeat of the Boxers did not however stop, but added to, the anti-Manchu, anti-Foreign Nationalist movement.

In 1911 a Republican Revolution overthrew the Manchu power but the subsequent Republican government was, due to its inherent weakness, incapable of bringing about substantial change. Foreign intervention continued and Japan was able to grasp the opportunity given by the outbreak of the First World War to occupy the German possessions in China and to present a set of twenty-one demands which in effect would reduce China to a vassal state. A second revolution in 1916 brought to an end the five year rule of the weak and unstable Republican government and the succeeding Government reversed the Republican acceptance of the "Twenty-one demands". This Government, however, was unable to gain control over the countryside and this failure resulted in the break-up of Government power and began the era of the warlords which was characterised by the existence of local belligerent enclaves.

It was against this background that the modern Nationalism of China developed. In 1911 Sun Yat-sen had founded the Kuomintang Party (KMT)—Kuo = country, min = people, tang = party—the nationalist party. The policy of the party was summarised in Sun's "three peoples principles"—namely, democracy, nationalism, and re-distribution of wealth. The intellectual youth who formed the nationalist movement looked to Western democratic ideas as a means of modernising China and combatting the timidity and passiveness of Confucianism.

This radical intellectual modernisation movement culminated in the student demonstrations of May 4th 1919 which protested against the Versailles Treaty's award of Germany's Chinese concessions to Japan. This movement is known as the "May the fourth" movement. After this date the fascination with Western ideology weakened in favour of Marxism. The reason for this may have been that Western democracy has never been embodied in a coherent set of principles which provides a blue-print for action. The Western political theorists, Burke, Locke, etc. had given theoretical expression to events which had already occurred and thus were not effective as weapons to bring about desired change. However, Marxism, especially in its Leninist guise, was demonstrated in the Russian Revolution to possess adequate potential to radically shake up a stagnant society, and enthusiastically offered itself as a dynamic instrument for revolution.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Chen Tu-hsiu, who had a considerable academic reputation and was leader of the "New-Tide" movement (radical intellectuals who felt humiliated by the Europeans monopolising their trade) began to look to Marxism as a means of obtaining national independence. In 1919 Chen approached the newly formed "Socialist Study Group" (which had as one of its members, Mao Tse-tung) and out of which a "Marxist Study Group"

grew in 1920. At this stage the Comintern became convinced that conditions were ripe for the formation of a Communist Party in China and with its assistance a number of Marxist circles were formed throughout the country and also among the many Chinese students who came to Europe in 1917/18 (the intellectuals who came together in Paris in 1920 included Chou En-lai and Teng Hsiao-p'ing). These groups came together to form the CPC, during its first party conference in Shanghai in 1921.

THE ROAD TO POWER

Following its formation in 1921 the CPC began to criticise the Nationalist KMT and build up an independent labour movement. Its leaders advocated an attitude of aggression and exclusion towards existing political parties. The CPC was to represent the proletariat alone and to have no relations with other groups. However, a close link with the Comintern was agreed and under its influence the CPC was persuaded to move away from its isolationist policy. At its second conference in 1922 the original sectarian policy was abandoned and a resolution was adopted agreeing to an alliance with the Nationalists. This alliance later became known as the "Inner Block". This policy meant that CPC members joined the KMT as individuals while retaining their CPC membership. Under this arrangement CPC members soon came to occupy influential positions in the KMT.

The death of the pro-communist leader, Sun Yat-sen, in 1925 saw the appearance in that year of an extreme right-wing faction in the KMT hostile to the CPC and favouring its expulsion from the alliance. Chen Tu-hsiu, now leader of the CPC, proposed a withdrawal from the Inner Block but the Comintern insisted on continuing the alliance. The following year (1926) General Chiang Kai-shek hit out against the growing CPC influence by arresting communist leaders and disarming workers in Canton. This coup by the right accelerated the division of the KMT into left and right wing factions. The position of Stalin and the Comintern at this stage is clearly expounded in Stalin's speeches and writings (published by the B&ICO in the pamphlet, Stalin On The Chinese Revolution).

Drawing on the Leninist thesis of anti-imperialist revolution, he considered that it was important that the CPC continue to cooperate with the national bourgeois KMT Party, and in particular its left-wing, in order to bring about a revolutionary democratic government of workers and peasants which could easily be transformed into a socialist government. He considered that the second stage would be achieved easily because of the weak position of the bourgeoisie in China. It was pointed out that the tactics of

Communists in China must of necessity differ from those adopted by their Bolshevik counterparts because they were operating in an anti-imperialist context. Lenin had not countenanced any long-term cooperation with the Russian bourgeoisie because of their imperialist and reactionary nature. The anti-imperialist Chinese bourgeoisie, however, were considered to have some progressive content because of the very nature of their struggle. Stalin considered that the struggle of the CPC within the alliance with the bourgeoisie depended on its exploitation of the anti-feudal agrarian revolution and this should be actively promoted.

This perspective was not entertained by the leader of the CPC, Chen Tu-hsui, who accepted the Trotskyist thesis which ignored the agrarian struggle and unduly emphasised the capitalist development of the country. Accordingly the CPC's basis among the peasants was not sufficiently consolidated and the subsequent massacre of communists in April 1927 by Chiang Kai-shek was largely due to this failure. In August of that year, however, the central committee of the CPC published a self-criticism which thoroughly exposed the leadership given it by the Trotskyist Chen and re-affirmed the Comintern position.

Although the surprise attack by the KMT right was largely successful in destroying the CPC organisation by the use of mass terror, Mao Tse-tung led an uprising in Hunan (known as "the Autumn Harvest Uprising") and, although this resulted in failure, he escaped with a following to form a guerrilla army. The official CPC leadership carried out subversive work in the cities but soon wore itself out in factional struggles. Thus the centre of the communist movement moved to south China where rural soviets were formed and by extensive land reform measures Mao was successful in obtaining peasant support and strengthened his army to withstand KMT offensives. Despite such successes the 1934 KMT campaign to exterminate the Red bases succeeded in encircling the Red Army. Mao was able to break out of this trap and began the heroic "Long March" of 9,000 miles northwards on which more than four-fifths of the ninety thousand soldiers perished.

During the march the politburo of the CPC met and placed Mao at the head of the party. Mao and the survivors of the march strengthened their position in an economically remote base in the North and proceeded to form another rural soviet. The KMT continued its offensive but the outbreak of war with Japan again made some sort of united front necessary. In 1936 Mao related to Edgar Snow that he was willing to unite once more with the KMT in order to effectively oppose Japan. The basis for such a compromise was laid down in 1937 when it was agreed that the KMT should be informed of all communists who joined their party and KMT members

were not to be recruited into the CPC. However, Mao had no intention of sacrificing the essential basis of his independent power and although the Red Soviet was renamed as a "Democratic Border Region" and the Red Army officially placed under Chiang's control and re-named the "Eighth Route Army", nothing had changed in reality and the independence of the Red area and Red army remained.

In the anti-Japanese war the KMT fought defensive battles and suffered heavy losses while the Communist forces used guerrilla tactics and established base areas behind Japanese lines. These areas were gradually enlarged and by promoting the correct agrarian policy the Red Army recruited many peasants into its ranks and grew rapidly in strength. After the Japanese surrender in 1945 only the big towns and small rural corridors along the railways were controlled by the KMT while the countryside was in the hands of the communists. (The communist position was further strengthened by the Soviet decision to give the Red Army the entire equipment of the 700,000 Japanese troops who had surrendered to them.) A United States attempt to bring about a coalition Government between the rival forces failed and civil war broke out once again between the communists and KMT.

At the beginning of this struggle the KMT were superior in numbers but held unfavourable strategic positions in the North and North-West. Chiang insisted on defending these positions and although he achieved initial successes the communist offensive of 1948 was successful in achieving a series of dramatic victories in the North and swept Southwards. In 1949 Peking surrendered. A second attempt at armistice failed and when a subsequent desperate attempt to hold along the Yangtze river failed, the Nationalists surrendered, many of their leaders escaped to Taiwan and across the border into Burma.

THE NEW DEMOCRACY 1949-54

The ending of the civil war in 1949 was held by the CPC to be the beginning of the bourgeois democratic revolution and accordingly, the CPC, although it was the strongest party and controlled the Red Army, did not wield State power exclusively but began an era of cooperation with non-communist parties and persons in reconstructing the national economy and the country. This strategy was in accordance with Leninist theory as adapted by Mao in his 1945 essay: On Coalition Government. The CPC also had pragmatic reasons for such a coalition: they had not enough skilled party members to staff the huge administrative apparatus of Local Government and accordingly required the assistance of members of other parties. Thus the Provisional Government of 1949

was made up of a coalition of the CPC and eight other minor parties.

The attempt to bring about at least the formal participation of non-communists in Government was genuine on the part of the CPC, although it maintained a clear control over the administration and ensured that the other parties were subordinated to its leadership. Thus the political programmes of the other parties were (until 1957) similar to that in the CPC and many of their members joined the CPC. They themselves had to accept communists in their organisations. The CPC was well aware that in an economically backward country it was of necessity a minority party and it took measures to prevent the other parties uniting into an opposition. Measures were taken to prevent the strengthening of these parties; they were not allowed to enlist workers or peasants; nor establish youth or student organisations; nor merge with any other party. Each group was further restricted by having to recruit its members from a specific category of the population and each could only organise on a local basis. (Yet despite these measures non-communist parties did form the basis of an opposition which became public during the "Hundred Flowers" period.)

The era of the new democracy saw two far-reaching social reforms carried into effect which totally destroyed the remnants of feudalism remaining in the rural areas. The first of these was the Land Reform Movement of 1950-53. During the civil war the CPC fought on the basis of its slogan, "The Land To The Tiller", and after 1949 a policy aimed at re-distributing the land of the landlords and rich peasants was put into effect. The peasants were incited to attack the landlords and seize their property. "Struggle Rallies" were held in which the peasants were united in Peasant Associations and in some cases armed by the Peoples Liberation Army. Landlords and others were apprehended and brought before the Peoples' Courts and "Struggle Rallies". The campaign was accompanied by considerable violence and it is estimated that five million were killed.

Although the peasant excesses alarmed the government it refrained from restraining them on the basis that feudalism could only be finally eradicated and the landlord class exterminated by the use of such violence. The movement was very successful in achieving a re-distribution of landed property and in a few years the peasants became the owners of the land they tilled. The recipients of the land, however, contented themselves with private cultivation and were not interested in providing the state with their surpluses for investment in industry. This lack of cooperation was one of the chief factors which contributed to their subsequent loss of the land again through the collectivisa-

tion movement.

The second important reform in this period was the Marriage Reform Movement of 1950-52 which was designed to emancipate women and liberate the younger generation. Arranged marriages were prohibited, liberal divorce legislation introduced and polygamy outlawed. This campaign, like the land reform, was carried out by meetings throughout the country at which individuals were criticised and brought before "Struggle Rallies". A good deal of injustice and hardship occurred especially where older concubines had to leave their husbands' houses and became destitute and where local party members used the law to acquire wives who had been forced into divorces with the help of "Struggle rallies". The malpractices which occurred were criticised by the Party leadership and although the movement was only partially successful it did result in the emancipation of women and struck a fatal blow at feudal social arrangements.

1954-57 THE ERA OF SOCIALIST TRANSFORMATION

The overall success of the Land and Marriage Reform Movements brought the bourgeois democratic revolution to an end (much sooner than Mao had expected in his 1940 essay, On New Democracy), and in 1954 it was announced that the Socialist transformation of the country should begin. The decision to move so soon into the second phase of revolution was due in large part to economic considerations. It was becoming clear in 1953 that the distribution of the land to the peasants would neither guarantee food supplies for the cities nor provide sufficient funds for investment. The revolutionary potential of the peasants had been exhausted when they took possession of the land and they were withholding the harvest surplus from the State and evading taxes on a large scale. Thus in order to ensure economic progress, agricultural production had to be increased and a better system of control instituted so that the additional capital was secured for investment in industry.

To achieve this a policy of collectivisation was proposed. This began by the formation of "mutual aid teams" which acquired machinery and tools jointly. These teams were later developed into "agricultural production co-operatives" in which the members jointly worked their private property with the co-op machinery and tools. Members were remunerated on the basis both of the work done and the amount of property brought into the scheme. The co-ops were then further developed by the elimination of the private property of their members (other than houses and vegetable plots) and the payment of them solely on the basis of their work-rate. This step-by-step collectivisation went ahead rapidly and

fairly smoothly and by Spring 1957 it was estimated that over ninety per cent of the rural population was collectivised into fully developed co-ops. Production also increased substantially (after an initial decrease) and soon reached and exceeded the very high 1931-37 levels.

Parallel with agricultural collectivisation, the ownership of the industrial means of production was changed firstly into joint state-private property and later into state property. The bourgeois factory owners were adequately compensated and in many cases retained as salaried directors or managers because of the need for their skills. Within a few short years both agriculture and industry had been transferred to collective and state ownership.

These new policies were extraordinarily successful and the general standard of living rose higher than at any time since 1937. However at this stage the CPC under Mao's influence embarked on two novel experiments which set the People's Republic on a different road from that which a more cautious orthodox policy would have permitted. The second and more radical of the experiments involved a complete divergence from socialist economic policies and can be shown to be directly attributable to the failure of the first - the Hundred Flowers Movement.

THE HUNDRED FLOWERS MOVEMENT

Many intellectuals were attracted to the communist movement in the 1930s by its consistent anti-Japanese attitude and they had come to regard it as the only force capable of regaining for China a respected place in the world. After 1949 many of these intellectuals hoped for the establishment of a pronounced democratic government. The CPC on the other hand realistically assessed its minority position in the country and adopting a strict Leninist line it firmly controlled not only other political parties but also literary and artistic circles which might otherwise be manipulated as a forum for political opposition by forces which could not find normal political expression. (Observers of the Soviet Union might have been puzzled when the authorities broke up a recent Moscow modern art exhibition while Soviet tourist literature lauds the Modern Art Collection in Leningrad's Hermitage Museum - the answer to the apparent contradiction appears to be that dead art, however heretical, in a museum is harmless, while a living society of artists might conceal a potential opposition group.) Thus the CPC found it necessary to subject the intellectuals to "thought reform" campaigns in 1950 and 1955, to destroy counter-revolutionary literature, and to censor all artistic expression. This had been Mao's position as early as 1942 when he expressed the view in the

Yenan Talks that all literature and art must serve the workers and peasants.

However, the zeal with which the CPC suppressed the intellectuals led to a paralysis in the University and research institutions and the needs of the economy began to suffer. A certain relaxation was needed and after 1956 a great freedom of expression was tolerated. This new policy was accelerated by Mao when he instigated a unique experiment in the following years by allowing a period of complete freedom of expression under the slogan, "Let A Hundred Flowers Bloom, Let A Hundred Schools Of Thought Contend". It is suggested that several factors influenced his decision, notably:

1. The 1956 Hungarian uprising and the prospect of a similar eruption in China unless repressed grievances could be expressed;
2. the view that the extensive changes since 1949 had found support among a wide section of the populace; and
3. consequently any criticisms would be aimed at defects in the system rather than at its fundamental basis.

At first the critics were slow to voice their opinions and only after they were guaranteed complete freedom did a comprehensive criticism set in. Demands for free elections, academic freedom, a parliamentary system, better material conditions and even the resignation of the government emerged. The Chairman himself came under attack. The sharpness of the criticisms that eventually "bloomed" and the extensive support that the critics received, not only among intellectuals but also among workers and peasants, took the party by surprise. Demonstrations against the CPC took place in many areas and party cadres were subjected to abuse. There rapidly appeared an extensive movement of opposition and resistance which threatened the continuance of communist rule. Mao was forced to recognise that he had over-estimated the political support for the CPC and to halt the movement. Not only was the movement ended but the CPC began to counter-attack and up-root the "poisonous weeds" which had grown among the "fragrant flowers". A revised draft of Mao's speech contained clear criteria for criticism which were omitted from the original text. These criteria, briefly stated, limited criticisms to those which were constructive in achieving socialism. Thus it was made possible to purge those whose criticisms were harmful to the communist movement and in fact extensive purges of intellectuals took place in 1958.

It has been suggested that the whole movement was nothing more than a trap to force the opposition to expose themselves so that they could be dealt with. The CPC itself expressed this

view. However, a more realistic assessment would be that Mao over-estimated his political support. The rapid expansion of the economy in the years 1950-57, the progress in industrialisation and re-construction, and the establishment of an educational and health service, did not of themselves guarantee political support as Mao had assumed. Mao's assumption had by Leninist terms been unwarranted. Both Lenin and Stalin were keenly aware that they lacked the mandate of the vast majority of the population, (This was epitomised by the Stalinist conception that the intensity of class struggle was sharpened as the achievements of Socialism accumulated), but they were willing to carry out gigantic economic tasks in the interests of the future proletariat even though they were supported by only a small minority.

Mao, on the other hand, believed that he could win the support of all classes, notably the peasants and intellectuals. This position propounded by him in his 1957 speech, On The Correct Handling Of Contradictions Among The People, admitted that although a great number of contradictions remained even after a socialist order had been established, these were not however "contradictions between the enemy and the people", but "contradictions among the people". They were not, therefore, of an antagonistic nature and should not be resolved by dictatorial use of authoritarian measures but by open discussion.

The vast majority of the criticisms expressed during the "Blooming" unfortunately fell into the first category of contradiction and demonstrated clearly that the support of "the people" did not in fact exist. This is hardly surprising when the class nature of the majority of the population placed it in the camp of the "enemy".

The failure of the liberalisation forced Mao to conclude that transformation of consciousness would not necessarily follow that of reality, i.e., an increase in the living standards of the population under the guidance of a socialist government would not necessarily make that same population favourable to socialism. He therefore decided to eradicate the petty bourgeois aspirations of large sections of the population by mass overnight communisation of the country, a Titanic experiment.

P.McMORROW
(Irish Communist, June 1976)

THE GREAT LEAP FORWARD

Impressive achievements in the field of economic development were accomplished by the CPC during the years 1954-57 - the era of Socialist Transformation. Industrialisation of the economy proceeded on lines similar to that of the USSR and a systematic attempt at comprehensive planning was made on a national scale. The first Five Year Plan governing the years 1953-57 was officially announced in 1955. By that year detailed plans for industry, transport, trade, agriculture and capital construction were being fairly effectively implemented. These plans emphasised investment in basic and heavy industry and the main effort was centred around the few hundred large projects which the USSR was helping to construct.

The Hundred Flowers Movement was accompanied by a limited degree of economic liberalisation. Free markets for certain agricultural products were again permitted and private plots once more became a source of income for the peasantry. The degree of liberalisation was, however, severely limited and the overall industrialisation of the country followed closely on the lines of the Soviet experience. Thus the future development of the economy might have been expected to involve a period of consolidation, expansion of production in all sectors and a gradual increase in the living standards of the population.

However, the abrupt ending of the Hundred Flowers Movement in July 1957 saw the emergence of a new Chinese concept of development, proposed by Mao Tse-tung as an alternative to the orthodox Leninist line. The appearance of this new policy was not only contemporaneous with the ending of the Hundred Flowers Movement, but can reasonably be described as a direct result of Mao's disillusionment at the lack of popular support and his growing conviction that it was impossible to create a communist consciousness among the masses by improving living standards. The new policy proposed by him to remedy the situation can justly be called "Maoist".

THE NEW LINE

The first Five Year Plan had given priority to the development of capital-intensive heavy industry. Great pride was taken in the development of electric power and up-to-date machinery and

techniques of production that had been introduced in an increasing number of factories and mines. However, in a country with limited supplies of capital the overall development of the economy could not proceed at a uniform rate, as the limited supply of capital would be required in the industrial sector, thus leaving little for agriculture.

Mao decided that this problem could be overcome if a labour-intensive concept of development was substituted for the capital-intensive one, i.e., the vast reservoir of Chinese labour would be used to develop the countryside and mass movements would be organised to carry out vast projects. The participation of the population in large scale projects designed to promote the common good would help break down their petty-bourgeois outlook and create a communist consciousness, and the temporary hardships suffered together would create new social beings. The masses would see that a great communal effort could speed up the pace of development. It would be possible to catch up and surpass the big capitalist countries in industrial and agricultural output within a few years.

The plan called for the merging of the agricultural cooperatives into bigger units of production. These large collectives would be less strongly influenced by the profit motive and capable of greater output. This development of larger units was the central theme of the new policy. The development of heavy industry was to continue but agriculture was to be regarded as equal with industry in the overall development plan. Small industries were to be set up to supply the agricultural collectives with simple tools and other purely local needs. These industries were to be outside the national plan and controlled locally. It was hoped that they would ease the demand on the national economy, thus allowing agriculture and industry to develop simultaneously.

This new policy of accelerated economic development was not immediately accepted by the party. Although the Chairman himself was calling for such a policy substantial opposition remained. Many leading party officials continued to emphasise the more orthodox capital intensive development policy. But the radicals gradually increased their influence in the politburo and by Spring 1958 Mao had won over a majority of the party leadership to his new line. Some critics yet remained, the most notable of whom was the respected revolutionary veteran and Minister for Defence, Marshall P'eng Te-huai, who openly opposed the Chairman's line. However, Mao had gained the support of most of the influential leaders including Liu Shao-chi and Teng Hsiao-P'ing. (It was later alleged that Liu had consistently opposed Mao's line but the documentary evidence shows that Liu had placed himself on the

radical side at an early stage and had enthusiastically embraced the new line even before it was generally accepted.) By August 1958 the establishment of agricultural super-collectives or "People's Communes" was adopted as party policy.

THE NEW POLICY IN PRACTICE

Up to the end of 1957 rural China was organised in agricultural production co-operatives which generally comprised one village or thereabouts. The members and their families lived in their own private houses while machines, tools, animals and cultivated lands were owned collectively. Members were paid for work done and often received production bonuses. In 1958 the co-ops began to be merged into larger units in accordance with Mao's new line. By mid-July most areas had been successfully reorganised.

The commune differed from the co-operative in that not only were tools, machines, land etc. owned in common but houses, household tools, small animals, and other sundry items also were transferred to communal ownership. Meals were eaten together in canteens, children and babies deposited in nurseries, and the elderly sent to old-peoples' homes. Even in some rare cases the population of the commune was divided according to sex and housed in different barracks. Work was strictly controlled and labour was organised on military lines with the leaders having the same power over members as military officers. Payment was based on the slogan, "*to each according to his needs*", and a high proportion of wages paid in kind rather than cash.

The introduction of the commune movement brought about a substantial degree of de-centralisation. Each commune had a local governing body or "representative conference" elected by the members (other than counter-revolutionaries, bad elements and right deviationists) which in turn elected a leadership committee. This committee dealt with administration, planning, transport, public works, small industries, book-keeping, banking, marketing and supply, education, medical services and much more, and was virtually independent of the central government. The remaining link between the central authority and the communes concerned a system of "production guarantees", ie, before the harvest the commune guaranteed the State a certain amount of produce and was bound by this guarantee. If the guarantee was not fulfilled the members had to make good the shortfall out of their own rations.

Extremely favourable weather conditions were largely responsible for a very high yield from the first harvest after the communes were established. The publication of the high production data in the press convinced the CPC of the success of the collect-

ivisation programme and the people were exhorted to even greater collectivisation. By September 1958 it was reported that 90.4% of the population had been communised. The Party began to talk about the beginning of the transition to communist society.

The year 1958 also saw a sudden drive for the large-scale utilisation of labour-intensive techniques to produce industrial goods with crude equipment. The importance of modern factories was never played down; the massive employment of crude equipment and methods was merely to be superimposed on the development of modern capital-intensive plants. The Great Leap programme had been designed to enable China to ~~over-take~~ the per capita heavy production of Britain within fifteen years. Thus steel production was vitally important and the most famous attempt at boosting production in accordance with the new theory was the establishment of backyard blast furnaces made of crude clay and bricks. These furnaces used as raw material all kinds of ore, coal, and scraps, and "production battles" were waged to increase the national output of steel from five million tons to over eleven million tons.

A description of the working of the new policy is given by Edgar Snow who describes the high point of the Leap in the autumn of 1958 as follows: *"The wave of socialist construction swept into 1958 as millions leaped forward along the 'general line' of 'aiming high and going all out to achieve greater, better and more economical results'. Foreign visitors saw a countryside in convulsion, as armies of blue-clad peasants, drums beating and flags waving, attacked their joint tasks of cultivating, digging and building as if committed to battle. Newspapers carried reports of people 'eating and sleeping in the fields day and night' and of women cadres who 'worked forty-eight and seventy-two hours without a rest'. At this time twelve and fourteen hour days in the fields were common and press reports told of people collapsing from fatigue."* (*Red China Today*, p413).

"Mass feeding at canteens became common. Strong young women were brought into work and someone had to come to care for their children and household chores; community services were organised. Swarms of office workers, students, and intellectuals were sent from the towns to help out; some of them set up spare-time schools for illiterates." (*ibid*, p414)

THE FAILURE OF THE LEAP

Although official Chinese propaganda still describes the Leap as a great victory for the party's general line the facts tell a different story. The Commune Movement and its accompanying feverish work rate was short-lived. The movement had begun too

suddenly for all the physical and social implications to be fully understood, even among the eight or nine million cadres of peasant origin not to say the peasant masses. The basic requirements were almost everywhere inadequate: - the rapidly constructed canteens lacked equipment, nurseries were staffed by inexperienced and hastily recruited personnel and the vast majority of the administrative staff were unqualified for the tremendous tasks which they faced. The very greatly (and unrealistically) increased agricultural production quotas worked out between the State and the commune planners had not taken into account the voice of the actual producers - the agricultural production teams. The cadres who were answerable for both quota fulfilment and statistics were often self-deceived and consequently gross exaggerations appeared in the national harvest figures. Accountancy, too, was frequently deficient. (In addition many communes made things more difficult by taking the proclamation of the 'transition to communism' literally. Believing that communist society had indeed arrived and that the state was withering away, they severed connections with the central authority.) This rapid de-centralisation of planning and administration of the economy resulted in the mis-allocation of materials and caused a severe strain on communications. The "production battles", too, often impaired the health of the population and caused such a lack of equilibrium in the national economy that chaos was unavoidable.

The arrival of Winter saw the beginning of the peasants' resistance to the commune programme. By October the peasants were refusing to work in military formations, meals were being secretly eaten at home instead of the canteen, children were taken away from nurseries, and old people began returning to their own homes. It was becoming increasingly apparent to the party that the Leap was in trouble and a retreat from its radical policies had already begun before the end of 1958. Although there is no public record of a general reversal of the Leap policies, the Wuhan conference in November/December ended the construction of barracks and guaranteed the peasants' private ownership of dwellings, gardens, and pets. This conference showed a marked retreat from the aims of the Leap and although a Communist social order was still the ultimate aim it was now postponed to the distant future.

As his policy came under a rising tide of criticism it was announced in December that Mao had decided not to be a candidate for a second time as Chairman of the Republic, but in future would concentrate his energies on dealing with the question of the direction, policy and line of the party and the state. Many saw this as an open acknowledgement of the defeat of his policies. Open critics of the policy, however, were not tolerated. Earlier in the year Peng Te-huai had been purged as a result of his open

letter to Mao complaining of his lack of understanding of socialist laws of planned and proportionate development and accusing him by implication of petty-bourgeois fanaticism. Mao, in turn, had sharply counter attacked by declaring that: "*Peng Te-huai's letter of opinion constitutes an anti-party outline of Rightist opportunism... It is by no means an accidental or individual error but it is planned, organised, prepared and purposeful*".

Mao had threatened to organise guerrilla bands if the PLA chose to follow Peng. This threat had been sufficient to have Peng and his followers purged by the party and further critics were subjected to "*rectification campaigns*". Indeed, Mao had deliberately wrought confusion in the Marxist-Leninist theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat. He had substituted for the irreconcilable confrontation of antagonistic classes a bastard formula of a dictatorship of all classes, of the masses, or of the people. In place of concrete objective criticism and a scientific definition of social classes he had proposed a vague conception which allowed him maximum freedom to identify his allies and attack his opponents, strictly on the terms of their willingness to adhere to his personal theories. Thus although the policies of the Leap were progressively abandoned by the party, critics of those policies were not tolerated.

Officially, at any rate, the Great Leap continued throughout 1959 and although the surge on the industrial front lasted into 1960, the withdrawal of Soviet technicians and a second bad harvest brought the Leap to a close in that year. In the next few years a severe economic depression hit China and at the low point of 1960-62 gross national output dropped by 20% to 30% from the high point during the Leap, per capital income fell by roughly 32%, industrial production dropped by 40 to 45%. As well as the fall in production, natural disasters and bad weather destroyed harvests. Famines and epidemics were reported. Further adjustments had to be made in the structure of the people's communes at the party conferences in November 1960 and January 1961 so that they bore little resemblance to the idea formulated in 1958. In October 1961 free markets were extended to villages and 5 - 10% of the land was made available for private plots. In January 1962 the production team became the basic accountancy unit; in effect, this meant a retreat to the level of the lower agricultural co-operatives since both units had the same number of households. The wheel had turned full circle.

THE ROAD TO THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

The debacle of the Great Leap and the wholesale rescission of its programmes created a situation which led directly to the Cultural Revolution. Behind a facade which presented outward unity

two distinct factions emerged in the CPC. The moderates led by Liu and Teng began to criticise the policies of the Leap and to blame the subsequent set-backs more on the unscientific policies adopted than on the natural disasters. In 1962 Liu wrote:- *"In the past several years many shortcomings and mistakes have occurred in our work. The cadres and members of the whole party and even the great majority of the people have all had personal experience of this. They have starved for two years"* (Dittmer; *"Liu Shao-chi"*, p43).

Mao on the other hand continued to identify himself with the Leap's objectives; he seems to have felt that the Leap's failure did not reflect its intrinsic demerits but only the strength of the reactionary elements. In 1963 he wrote in his essay, Where Do Correct Ideas Come From?, that: *"In social struggle the forces representing the advanced class sometimes suffer defeat not because their ideas are incorrect but because in the balance of the forces engaged in struggle they are not as powerful for the time being as the forces of reaction; they are therefore temporarily defeated but they are bound to triumph sooner or later."*

Thus the two factions consolidated their positions. The Maoists held to their vision of the mass mobilisation of human labour to change reality through consciousness (*"politics in command"*). The moderates held the view that human labour could only replace capital investment to a limited degree and emphasised objective economic conditions as the chief determinant of consciousness. The moderates, moreover, held control and therefore pursued a policy of re-adjusting the economy to consolidate the industrial sector and gradually mechanise agriculture. They extended the number of private plots and privately owned animals, and created further free markets. Production guarantees were transferred to individual peasant households. As a result of these measures, the economy began to recover.

The difference of policy between the factions would not remain hidden for long, however, and within a short few years China was once again thrown into turmoil; this time in the Cultural Revolution.

POSTSCRIPT: SOME ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

Despite the ideological overtones of the Great Leap Forward, the economic problems faced by the CPC leadership in the late 1950s were not dissimilar to those confronting other developing Third World countries. The aspirations of any young nation emerging from colonial domination tend towards independence in all spheres, especially in the key area of economic development. Economic independence however dooms the isolationist to reliance on its own meagre resources of investment capital. It was therefore ^{not}

unnatural for some elements in the CPC leadership to look to China's abundant supply of unskilled labour as a substitute for investment capital. Though China has attained a high level of technological development in selected economic sectors, labour-intensive or semi-labour-intensive methods continue to be utilised. Given the large reserve of untrained man-power, the developing nature of China's skilled man-power pool, and other constraints, the use of labour-intensive or semi-labour-intensive technology would appear to make sense. However, it is in the elevation of labour-intensive technology to a leading principle of economic development, overshadowing capital-intensive technology, that the danger lies. The Great Leap Forward clearly illustrated the inherent weakness of such a policy.

It is the labour-intensive aspect of China's economic policies - without the Maoist excesses - which many Third World countries have found attractive. This policy is found to accord better to their present level of national development and results in better use of existing resources. The point is well illustrated by the case of two textile mills in Tanzania. One was built with Chinese aid and equipped with Chinese machinery; it relied on semi-labour intensive technology and employed nearly 3,000 workers. The other mill was built with French assistance and was equipped with modern machinery from the west; it was fully automated and employed only 1,500 workers. It may be argued that the Chinese-equipped textile mill provided a better utilisation of Tanzanian resources given the available pool of manpower and its skill level. The mill provided employment for a larger number and because it relied on semi-labour-intensive technology the local labour was able to master the machinery better. On the other hand, the French-built mill employed fewer workers and relied greatly on the expatriate labour force because of the more complex machinery. In the case of the French mill there had been an over-import of technology. In the context of self-reliance and national development, it can be argued that in this instance China's level of technology was "correct" for Tanzania, not only allowing better utilization of existing resources but also providing a greater sense of independence by allowing Tanzanians themselves to operate the machinery. (Example quoted from The Maoist Model: Appeal, Relevance And Applicability, by George T. Yu.)

It is the attainability of such limited economic goals which makes the Chinese development attractive to Third World countries.

Patrick McMorro
(August 1976, Irish Communist)

THE GREAT PROLETARIAN CULTURAL REVOLUTION

Chairman Mao Tse-tung was one of the world's foremost revolutionary leaders. Mao was the last great politician of an era which was characterised by the fact that political life relied heavily on the individual personalities of authoritarian dictators. And although the rapid emergence of the Peoples' Republic of China as a modern state owed a great deal to the force and vitality of his unique personality, the important political conflicts which divided the CPC during his reign, and which have not been resolved upon his demise, need to be examined in detail. We have focussed on a number of these dissensions in which the salient features of Mao's unique brand of Marxism were illustrated. These theories were again crystallised in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

Although a majority of the leadership favoured the adoption of such a programme, the experience of the failure of the Great Leap Forward resulted in the development of two conflicting factions within the CPC leadership. The aftermath of the "Leap" saw the moderate faction led by Liu Shao-chi holding effective political power. Mao had resigned from office and the Maoist faction was temporarily without political control. The "Liuists" pursued policies involving the gradual mechanisation of agriculture and the consolidation of the modern industrial sector. The idea of changing the consciousness of the masses through labour was replaced by the gradual introduction of material incentives to increase production. Individual incentive, too, was encouraged and individual peasant households were to be the basic unit of production. All this was to be accompanied with a gradual extension of freedom of expression, provided direct political statements were not involved. Indeed it is conceivable that had Mao not rudely interrupted this process by initiating the Cultural Revolution, China would have developed along a less stringent and less revolutionary path.

CONFLICTING VIEWS

The confusing events of the Cultural Revolution have been subjected to thousands of words of analysis. Briefly speaking, these studies may be divided into two main categories: the official Chinese version of the grand plan formulated by Mao to unseat the Party Secretary - an arch political manipulator, well versed in the art of weathering campaigns and the subsequent repression. This plan is declared to have been formulated and executed by Mao in carefully planned steps during which he guided the participation

of the masses, as if conducting an orchestra, to determine the outcome in his favour.

The opposing view tends to dismiss the grand plan and considers Mao as a "great experimenter" who conceived of the Cultural Revolution as a mass mobilization experiment which did not in fact follow any definite plan and which at times went beyond his control. This view considers that the end result was not what Mao originally intended.

The 50th anniversary of the foundation of the CPC in 1971 saw the publication in Peking Review (No. 27, July) of a lengthy article on the history of the CPC. The Cultural Revolution is explained as follows: *"Only by arousing the broad masses to expose our dark aspect (ie, revisionism - ed.) openly in an all round way and from below would it be possible to clean out the Liu Shao-chi renegade clique, temper hundreds of millions of people in the class struggle, educate them in the struggle against revisionism and enable them to gain experience in seizing back that portion of power which had been usurped by a handful of capitalist roaders.*

"Armed with quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung the masses took part in debates and gradually learnt how to distinguish good and bad people, and between the proletarian revolutionary line and the bourgeois reactionary line, and how to carry out Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line and politics correctly. In this way the whole country became a great school for the living study and application of Mao Tsetung Thought, and the broad masses learnt in the stormy struggle what they could not learn in normal times."

This view was absorbed in one gulp and regurgitated by some Western intellectuals of the time. A good example is afforded by, The Cultural Revolution In China, by Joan Robinson, a "Marxist" economist and Professor of Economics at Cambridge. She re-states the Chinese position without comment (save to add a few pathetically misguided attacks on Stalin) and raised the whole process of the Cultural Revolution into a further development of Marxism applicable to all revolutions:

"...Why was it necessary to carry through another revolution after power had been seized and why should the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese Proletariat initiate such a revolution? The reason lies in the objective law of class struggle. Every revolution should be consolidated some time after its initial successes. The class enemy will not be reconciled to his fate. After being dispossessed, the bourgeoisie struggles for restoration...many times in history a revolution has been succeeded by a restoration. In the Soviet Union, counter-revolution was defeated, private

property had been transferred to the State, but they failed to make a cultural revolution. Bourgeois ideology was not remoulded and proletarian power was corrupted by it. A kind of restoration of capitalism was made by Khrushchev in 1956... The sad lesson of revisionism in the Soviet Union gives us warning that removing property is not enough, the revolution must be carried into the superstructure of the economic system."

If the view of the CPC and Joan Robinson accurately reflected the purpose and result of the Cultural Revolution and if the method of mass mobilisation was the correct way of dealing with revisionism then one would expect today to see a strong united party in China which would be capable of guiding the country calmly through the period following the death of its founding father. Instead, the opposite appears to be the case - the CPC is regarded to be weak and its Central Committee is divided into factions. The re-appointment and later re-purging of Teng Hsiao-Ping can be taken as a barometer of inner party tensions. Accordingly the official version of the Cultural Revolution must be treated as not entirely truthful.

THE OPPOSING VIEW

An alternative view of the Cultural Revolution treats Mao as a great experimenter who only vaguely knew what he wanted to achieve when he launched China on its adventurous course. It fails to discover any master plan in the confused events. A good example of such a view is afforded by Jurgen Domes in The Internal Politics of China 1949-72 (published by Hurst & Co, London, 1973). Domes critically examines the historical events of the Cultural Revolution in detail in order to arrive at his conclusion. A summary of these events is as follows:

The appointment of Lin Piao as Minister of Defence in 1959 was the beginning of the glorification of Mao within the armed forces. This was begun at a time when the Chairman's prestige among the general population was at a low level due to the effects of the Great Leap. The army also had been uneasy about the effects of the Leap and a vast ideological education of the troops had to be undertaken during the years 1960-64. The long duration and intensify of the campaign is thought to reflect the considerable difficulties encountered. But Mao and Lin apparently succeeded and one effect of their success was the abolition of all ranks and insignia in 1965. This campaign moulded the armed forces into an instrument of the Left, which in the event of an open split in the party would be employed as an alternative organisation.

After the failure of the Great Leap the CPC leadership had

attempted to shift responsibility for the failure onto the cadres by stating that they had disobeyed Party instructions and had ill-treated the people. The cadres also faced the hostility of the people and under such circumstances their morale was low. Some even joined the peasants in their criticism of the Party leadership. The low morale of the cadres was one of the factors responsible for the collapse of the Party machine during the Cultural Revolution.

The Cultural Revolution began with the call by many intellectuals in 1964 and 1965 for a more liberal climate of opinion in which to express their views. Many directed their attacks at Mao and his followers. In this climate the CPC made some concessions: schoolchildren were allowed to spend their holidays as they wished and specialist studies were given priority over political education. Trade unionists and even the Communist Youth League joined in the chorus of those who favoured moderation. The CPC propaganda department began to up-grade the personality of Liu and he began to be referred to as "Chairman Liu" corresponding with the term, "Chairman Mao".

Mao, on the other hand, had not altered his position. He demanded a new rectification campaign against his critics but this motion was turned down by the majority of the top-level of the CPC. A few weeks later Mao departed for Shanghai and continued his criticisms from afar. The Maoist domination of the armed forces enabled pressure to be brought on the party to purge his most severe critics. The moderates however, while consenting to a rectification campaign tried to control it and to carry it out as "*a contradiction among the people*". Mao and his circle in Shanghai were still unsatisfied.

Despite continued Maoist criticisms the Party leadership attempted to resolve the conflict by open discussion and a "Cultural Revolution Group" was set up in February 1966 to lay down guidelines for discussion. Only one Maoist was elected to this body. The group produced a report which referred to the dispute as an "*academic discussion*" and warned of academic tyrants - thought to be a reference to Maoists who attempted to regulate the behaviour of intellectuals.

Faced with the unacceptable position adopted by the Group, Mao and Lin Piao instantly took counter measures by opening the discussion on culture within the army. Chiang Ch'ing, Mao's wife, convened a forum on Art and Literature in the armed forces in which many of the participants - including many leading political commissars - described the cultural confrontation as "*sharp class struggle*", which amounted to an antagonistic contradiction. Mao himself criticised the report of Liu's Cultural Revolutionary Group and called for a "*revolutionary storm*".

In April 1966, while Liu was abroad on state visits, the Maoists succeeded in having the Mayor of Peking (a protector of the intellectual critics) dismissed, the report of the Cultural Revolution Group revised, and the struggle re-defined as an *"extremely sharp class struggle"*. Many intellectuals were also purged.

In their campaign against the intellectuals, the Maoists concentrated on the schools and colleges. The students had been suffering from a number of frustrations mainly due to the great expansion in secondary education in the 1950s and the inability of the industrial sector to provide the requisite number of jobs. The Maoists used these difficulties for their own purposes and encouraged students to criticise teachers and others in big character posters. In order to release fully the energies of the young the colleges and schools were completely closed down in Summer 1966. Students were encouraged to back up their criticisms by the use of violence and terror and organise themselves into Red Guard groups. This growing violence caused Liu to attempt to control the students by sending "work teams" to the schools, and although Mao declared this decision to be revoked, the "work teams" responded to the Maoist terror with counter terror.

At this time also (Summer 1966) the Liuist faction made another attempt to control a situation which was rapidly getting out of hand. Liu and Teng Hsiao-P'ing planned to hold a meeting of the Party's Central Committee and elect Mao to the post of "Honorary Chairman" of the CPC, and thus effectively exclude him from making political decisions. However, the Maoist influence in the army prevented any such move. While Mao indulged in his well publicised Yangtze swim the army occupied the party headquarters and army units were stationed in the streets where party leaders had their homes. In view of this overt display of force the meeting of the Central Committee was cancelled even though a majority of the members had already arrived.

The Maoists, in fact, proceeded to hold their own plenum later in the Summer but the communique issued omitted the usual list of candidates attending and it is thought that the meeting was in breach of the party constitution by not having the required quorum. This plenum adopted the policy of Mao and Lin, a *"new phase in Socialist Revolution"* had been reached, and it was declared imperative to carry through a basic change in the super-structure which could not be carried out *"without violence"*. New mass organisations were to be formed.

From July 1966 the Chinese press was filled with the programmatic principles of the Left. The country was to become a *"great revolutionary school of Mao Tsetung thought"*, schools and

factories were to be organised on military lines, students were to carry out productive labour, a new proletarian culture was to be advanced and once again agriculture was to be undertaken by mass labour organised on military lines. All this was to be achieved by a new organisation - the Red Guards. The first appearance of this extra-Party organisation was at a mass rally of over one million people in August 1966. Further rallies took place and the Red Guard organisation spread over large areas of the country, dominating not only the schools, but the streets of many cities. They destroyed churches and museums and physically assaulted anyone accused of being an opponent of Mao. By Autumn of 1966 it is estimated that more than four hundred thousand people had been "physically liquidated" by Red Guard violence.

The Maoists soon encountered resistance - in some cases spontaneous, in others instigated by CPC branches. Street battles were reported and the military were needed to restore order. The Maoist call for the extension of new mass organisations into the factories and the establishment of new leadership organs based on the Paris commune was opposed by the Federation of Trade Unions as well as by the Party leadership. This opposition resulted in the arrest by Red Guards of Party members and the proclamation that the leadership of the Federation of Trade Unions was dismissed from office. By the end of 1966 the Red Guards had invaded the factories using apprentices and unskilled workers who were in conflict with skilled labour, to voice their egalitarian slogans. Militant groups of Red Guards were sent to the provinces and many administrative areas were brought under their control and local party leaders attacked.

By the beginning of 1967 it appeared that the Red Guards had been successful in seizing control of nearly all administrative offices in the State. However, the wave of resistance to their offensive was only gathering force. Party officials who had been attacked responded by mobilising workers in many areas. Urban workers resisted by strikes, closure of factories and disruption of production. Clashes between workers and Red Guards usually resulted in the latter getting the worst of it. The acts of resistance were not confined to workers. The peasants seized the opportunity to withhold produce from the State, storm grain stores and banks and establish free markets, and they turned violently against the Red Guards.

The confusion and disruption of production throughout the country forced the Maoists to call on the army to restore order. The army leadership under Lin Biao continued to support Mao and the armed forces took control of administration, broadcasting, the police and army units occupied factories and shops. Yet despite

the loyalty of its leaders to the Maoist position, the army's Regional Commanders appeared to be somewhat less than enthusiastic in their support of the left. This lack of support by the Regional Commanders evoked dissatisfaction by the Red Guards and demands for purges were made. Clashes between the army and Red Guards were reported. These clashes often involved firearms and light machine-guns.

The loyalty of the army to the Maoist cause was shown to be doubtful by the Wuhan Incident in July 1967. Here an attack by the Red Guards on the Regional Army headquarters evoked severe counter-attack by the army and workers. High ranking Maoist leaders who were sent to mediate were arrested and it was only with the aid of paratroopers and gun-boats that control of the city was established. The loyalty of the Regional Commanders could no longer be relied upon.

Faced with the dangerous situation posed by the Wuhan Incident Mao had to change course. He could no longer carry through the Cultural Revolutionary Programme if it meant going against the Regional Commanders. A compromise between the aims of the Maoist army leaders and the Regional Commanders had to be reached. It is thought that the basis of their compromise was laid down at an enlarged session of the military commission of the Central Committee convened in Peking which was attended by most of the military commanders and other military leaders. Following on the conference a number of Maoist leaders were arrested on the grounds of being counter-revolutionaries.

This balance reached between the army leadership and the Regional Commanders reflected a defeat for the left wing Maoist policies. This defeat was further aggravated by the difference of opinion (in February 1968) over the political life of the army between Madame Mao and the acting Chief of General Staff, General Yang. This provided the Regional Commanders with an opportunity to promote Yang's downfall and his replacement with one of their representatives. Thus having secured control of the army, the Regional Commanders became the engineers of the liquidation of the Red Guard movement. Clashes between the army and Red Guard Groups were reported and both sides used heavy arms. In these clashes the Red Guard movement was almost extinguished. The army everywhere consolidated its control and effectively restored order. Further purges of army leaders, including Lin Piao, after 1971 are seen by Dittmer as reflecting the growing strength of the Regional Commanders in the army.

In summarising the results of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, Dittmer holds that the Maoist grand plan version fails to adequately account for historical fact and that consequently a

different picture must be drawn. This explanation would view the net result of the Cultural Revolution as a take-over of effective administrative control by the armed forces. Dittmer views the Chinese army as not being essentially any different from the armies of other developing countries, ie, it is committed to pragmatic modernisation at the expense of ideological commitment. Thus the recent re-habilitation of many deposed moderates would appear to have the tacit support of the army.

Weighing up the successes and failures of the Cultural Revolution, Dittmer takes the view that, while the Maoists failed to interrupt the growing tendency towards a revision of the Maoist conception of 1958, they did achieve a suppression of the intellectual opposition in the realms of art and literature. Thus Maoist propaganda today covers up the toleration of the private plots of the peasants and of a system of material incentives.

Dittmer regards the training of the younger generation in revolutionary activity as a failure for the Maoists. Mao called forth the Red Guard fury but was unable to protect the Red Guards when they were suppressed by the army. Their activity ended in the liquidation of their organisations and massive disciplining by the army. This unsavoury ending is unlikely to enhance the revolutionary fervour of the younger Chinese generation.

THE FIGHT AGAINST REVISIONISM

The propaganda of the Maoists during the Cultural Revolution made the question of revisionism the central issue of the campaign. Mao charged Liu and his faction with using their administrative authority to effect revisionism which would inevitably lead to the restoration of capitalism. All other features of the movement appear to centre on this main issue. However, in his campaign against this revisionism Mao produced a number of creative developments of Leninism which were later described as Maoism.

The first of these methods was the adoption of extra-party methods of political organisation to dislodge the "*handful of revisionists*" occupying the top party positions. How did these revisionists come to occupy these positions? Why did the party have to suffer such an onslaught during the Cultural Revolution? Why could this "*handful of capitalist roaders*" not be purged by debate within the party? The answers to these leading questions can be more easily understood in the light of the history of the CPC since the Great Leap in 1958. The CPC has always been the organisation of leaders at both national and local level. These leaders organised units of people in the many campaigns to transform society. The 1958 campaign was not just one Great Leap Forward but was a period of millions of small leaps carried out

throughout the country by enthusiastic party cadres. When the Leap failed, the party leaders faced with the anger of the peasants began a rectification campaign to purge the party of the adventurers who were responsible for its excesses. The ending of the Leap also left the party without ideology. The Maoist development plan had failed, Mao himself had resigned from office, no one in Peking knew what to do except use any and all of the means available to pull China out of the morass. Thus the new leaders were essentially pragmatic (eg, Teng's often quoted statement that it does not matter what colour a cat is as long as it catches mice). In party debates on the correct way of doing things all the solutions offered were practical. Pragmatism took over. Indeed this pragmatism paid off handsomely and the economy recovered rapidly.

In the light of this background it can be readily understood why Mao had to engage in extra-party measures to implement his policies. The CPC, having sampled Mao's unorthodox plans during the Great Leap, and the bitterness of the peasants after their failure, would hardly have been in a mood to abandon this successful course charted by Liu. Mao therefore was forced to organise the extra-party masses to carry out the extensive purge of party personnel. In doing so, if Dittmer's account is to be believed, he critically weakened the party's prestige and this led to the army playing a dominant role in government. Mao's use of the masses may justly earn him the title "Populist".

Similarly the propaganda success of the Maoist faction both during the Cultural Revolution and afterwards can more easily be understood when measured against the pragmatism of their opponents. Liu and Teng had in reality no definite political policy. Both were repelled by the failure of the Maoist development policy and both were committed to modernisation of the economy. Mao was probably keenly aware that in inter-party debate the outcome would not be resolved in his favour but that the fanatical devotion of millions of young militant supporters would ensure the adoption of his policies, especially when his opposition had not formulated a clearly expressed political line. In this he underestimated the wave of resistance which the activities of the Red Guards provoked and the subsequent seizure of power by the army. The interest of the army in restabilising the system of rule led it to espouse the moderate line.

Another aspect of Mao's populism can be seen in his constant distrust of bureaucracy. One of the dominant themes of the Cultural Revolution was the assault on bureaucratic tendencies and the attempt to find new ways to get the people involved in presenting ideas and criticisms to their leaders, be they teachers, organisers or Party cadres. Mao had on many occasions expressed

his personal antagonism towards the bureaucracy and bureaucratic styles of work which had developed in post-1949 China. But the development of the bureaucracy owed a great deal to the consolidation of power by the CPC. Large scale organisational forms such as youth and women's associations, trade unions, economic planning agencies, etc., had been set up. All these organisations required salaried personnel organised in a complex hierarchical division of labour.

Max Weber, the German sociologist, had expressed the view that a bureaucracy was essential to the efficient running of a developed nation and that the bureaucracy as an organisational form led to a more rational administration of complex economies. Weber saw the bureaucracy as becoming bigger with the growth in complexity of society and he did not view this increase as objectionable in any way. He did not claim that actual bureaucracies were perfectly efficient, but he did make the claim that a bureaucracy could perform all kinds of complex tasks efficiently, if properly organised. He saw the technical superiority of the bureaucratic form as allowing efficient economic development, but he was also aware of, and critical of, the negative aspects of bureaucracy, eg, the tendency of officials to follow formal rules while ignoring substantive justice, the anti-democratic implications of bureaucratic hierarchy, etc.

The views of Weber have been largely accepted by capitalist countries who see a properly organised bureaucracy as a method of supervising the diverse needs of a developed nation. And although Weber died before Stalin reversed the NEP and began implementing socialism in the USSR, and although his main writings on bureaucracy date from 1911-13, he was of the opinion that, like capitalism, socialism would result not in a reversal of bureaucratisation but in its advancement. In this he certainly appears to have been proved correct in the USSR. China, too, saw the birth of a complex bureaucracy after 1949.

In the USSR Stalin appears to have accepted the growth of the bureaucracy as a fact of life to be faced by any developing country. The main aim was not to get rid of the bureaucracy but make it more efficient. Trotsky, on the other hand, never accepted the bureaucracy. In his attack on the Soviet State, The Revolution Betrayed, he views the bureaucracy as a caste which has triumphed over the masses and expropriated the proletariat politically. Mao's attack also, bears a strong similarity to Trotsky's romanticism. Mao never accepted the premise that bureaucracy is an inevitable product of a developed society. Thus the Maoists aimed to destroy the bureaucracy during the Cultural Revolution by decentralisation campaigns. These attempts, like Trotsky's

criticisms must be described as petty-bourgeois romanticism.

Not altogether different from the attack on the bureaucracy was the Maoist commitment to extreme egalitarianism. The Maoist faction expressed strong resentment at the privileges and soft life of China's elites during the Cultural Revolution and attempts were made to force reductions in the incomes upon which this soft life was based. It appears that the Maoists were not successful in their attempt and that whatever differentials in the wage structure existed prior to the Cultural Revolution did not collapse in the face of the Maoist attacks. A recent article in the China Quarterly (Whyte: "Inequality And Stratification In China", C.Q., No. 64, Dec 1975, page 684), suggests that while China appears to be an extremely egalitarian society after the Cultural Revolution, this egalitarianism is to be found not so much in the reduction or elimination of differences of income as in the attempt to mute the consequences, in matters like life-styles, consumption patterns and inter-personal relations, of the inequalities that exist. A number of examples are given to illustrate this:-

The Military: - "The elimination of ranks in the armed forces did not produce a situation in which former privates were issuing commands to former generals, nor one in which their pay was equalized... The ordinary soldier still knows who is where in his immediate hierarchy, but to the outsider more subtle clues (eg, age, girth, bearing, the cut of the uniform) have to be used to distinguish the officers from the men".

Industry: - "Factory managers and engineers (as well as commune officials) are required to spend regular periods of time doing manual work alongside the workers and peasants they supervise. The ordinary workers and peasants do not correspondingly take turns serving as managers or engineers (although mobility into such positions is possible) and later on the supervisors will return to their previous offices and routines".

The Party: - "Party officials and supervisors of other types are also supposed to stage regular occasions for criticisms of their defects from below... again the party official does not stop being a party official, but his acceptance of criticism symbolises that he will not use his authority in a dictatorial manner or arbitrarily retaliate against his critics."

The Maoists therefore succeeded in achieving an apparently egalitarian society, or at least one in which differences are not readily seen by an outsider. Whatever inequalities exist are disguised by a code which makes conspicuous consumption in any

form dangerous. The 'people' must be seen to be united and ad idem in the populist philosophy. A prosperous working class with a better standard of living than the peasant masses finds no place in Mao's policies.

The nature of the inner tensions in Chinese communist politics which have been outlined will, it is hoped, form the basis on which a comprehensive analysis of the current controversies and problems, which beset the CPC after the death of its leaders, can be undertaken. These problems are not unique to China but raise issues which marxists elsewhere should not ignore. It cannot be doubted that Mao was supreme as a man of political ideas and it is to his credit that these issues were raised in the first instance. It can be shown, however, that his conceptions were motivated by many populist and petty bourgeois notions.

The position of his opponents is equally confusing and perhaps even more so as they exerted their energies in evading the issues. Their political stance was a pragmatic reflex to many of Mao's failures and was not a worked-out ideology. Within the ranks of the moderates there must have been many genuine marxists (perhaps even Liu) but without doubt there were also many who desired to surreptitiously restore capitalism. It has been stated before that Mao had only a hazy understanding of the role of classes in society and his labelling of all his opponents as simply revisionists was a negative contribution to what could otherwise have been a positive debate. ~~Since~~ the theoretical concepts have such a muddled formulation it is hardly surprising that the result of Mao's life-long dedication to socialism should have such uncertain results.

P. McMorrow

(Irish Communist, November 76)

M A O

The final act of Mao's leadership of the Chinese revolution has had a rather bewildering effect on Western commentators of both left and right. Everything that went before it was comprehensible, and was rapidly becoming universally admirable. If Mao had died in 1957 he would simply have been regarded as the most universal genius of the age: as a revolutionary politician equal to Lenin; as a statesman who, like Lenin, founded a stable and powerful state, but who was more admirable than Lenin because his

state allowed for the functioning of opposition politics; as a man who wielded massive political power as capably as Stalin, but who also remained a nice man; as an original military theorist comparable to Clausewitz and a general comparable to Wellington; as a robust ~~asopate~~ comparable to John Ruskin; as an incomparable poet; and as a bon viveur to boot - not merely Plato's Philosopher-King, but a Poet-Philosopher-King, which Plato regarded as inconceivable. Poetry, according to Plato, was irreconcilable with a well-ordered state. And maybe that was the fly in the ointment. It would seem that the wonder of Mao's poetry was not merely the wonder of the ass that talked. It would seem that he really had a poetic temperament of considerable force, which might account for why he failed to congeal into a universally respected Philosopher-King uttering pompous truisms like a Times editorial. Be that as it may, there was an unexpected fourth act to his life that disorientated his admirers and changed them either into enemies or into mindless idolators.

VOLTAIRE AND ROUSSEAU AND ROBESPIERRE

How should this final act be characterised?

How should the Reign of Terror in the French Revolution be characterised? Marx and Engels clearly had ambivalent feelings about it, sometimes admiring it and sometimes deploring. The particularity of the event did not allow for any simple feeling about it. Looking at it as a whole, one would be inhuman if one did not deplore it and a reactionary moralist if one did not acknowledge the profoundly progressive effect it had on French society. The roots of mediaeval France withered under the shock of it, and the French were atomised and reorganised as a nation. All traditional loyalties, which is to say all loyalties which were even a year old, were melted down. There was no guarantee of survival. The individual had to live by his own wits, and if his wits weren't sharp enough the guillotine disposed of them. The world was declared to have started afresh. The days and the months were given new names and the calendar was started all over again at the year one. Nothing that was older than the year one was defensible, and by the year two the ideas of the year one had become outmoded traditions. A week was a long time in politics. To have been a week behind the Robespierre faction of the Jacobin Club could have made one an enemy of the people.

The enemies of the people at the outset were aristocratic and monarchist remnants, but the revolution persistently worked its way downwards and obliterated the old world in the depths of the society as well as on the peaks. The Reign of Terror opened up a chasm between the past and present that no reactionary move-

ment could bridge. The monarchy could be restored by it would not "take". And the rabble entered history on its own account

The French Enlightenment, hitherto a phenomenon of the upper social strata, gripped the depths of French society through the Reign of Terror. France assimilated Voltaire and Rousseau in a manner that would have astonished them both.

If France, one of the most advanced of European societies, was modernised root and branch - and root most of all - through the Reign of Terror, how might one expect China to be modernised? French backwardness and conservatism in 1789 was as nothing by comparison with the backwardness and conservatism of China in 1949. And Chinese backwardness was not of the African kind. It was the backwardness of a positively developed civilisation, cultured and literate, that had for long been in the vanguard of human development, and that had endured as a state for three thousand years, but which in the end turned out to be a blind alley.

A EUROPEAN VIEW OF CHINA

The problem has been put like this:

"Who could instil socialist Marxist consciousness in the mass of Chinese workers and peasants? Chinese intellectuals? But what was their knowledge of European cultural traditions from which Marxism had emerged..."

"Was there any special reason behind Marx's choice of the term 'dictatorship' when characterising revolutionary power (instead of, say 'despotism')? For a person acquainted with European culture this is a very simple question. Dictatorship originally meant the extraordinary powers granted to a statesman of Republican Rome for a short term under extraordinary circumstances. In such conditions dictatorship was despotism within democracy... The republican spirit and way of life made the dictator an ordinary citizen with ordinary rights once his term of power had expired. On the contrary, despotism is autocracy in conditions of civilisation that recognises autocracy as an institution having no power above itself. Marx usually employed the term 'despotism' with the attribute 'Asian'... Unlike the situation in ancient Peloponnesus, Asian despotism meant the ruler's open tyranny supported by a ramified bureaucracy and the army. 'Unlimited power' is invariably understood as despotism in the historical context of China. Without progressive intellectuals who have adopted the democratic ideas of political freedom (as Russian intellectuals did), the idea of revolutionary dictatorship becomes the idea of revolutionary despotism. There were not such people in China either in the 19th or in the 20th centuries... (p12/13)

"Marx's communism is the acme of a thousand-year European liberation movement and the struggle for the idea of freedom... But it is extremely difficult to explain this point to the Chinese who has little knowledge of European culture. The remains of primitive democracy disappeared in China as far back as the 5th century BC and since then there has never developed a struggle for freedom, such as has become part of the progressive European.

"The Chinese were inspired by many fine ideas but not freedom. There were ideals of humaneness, duty and harmony, but there was no ideal of freedom. The people who formed Mao Tse-tung's guerilla armies were, at best, bearers of the traditional Confucian erudition, in other words bearers of the ideology of oriental despotism. The 'communism' they learned, acquired quite logically the nature of the 'communism' of Mo Ti (5th-4th century BC) and Wang Mong (1st century AD). That was a military barracks 'communism'... established by 'wise leaders' over humble and obedient people. No wonder therefore that Mao Tse-tung's reforms developed in about the same manner as those of Wang Mong... The Chinese leader's activities were progressive between 1949 and 1956. But even then there was no socialist democracy to be observed (even in the Party) ... (p14/15)

"The traditional features of the Chinese social structure are playing a prominent part in the present-day convulsions shaking the country. It goes without saying that they can be regarded as a particular case of the more general model of an undeveloped country with survivals of pre-bourgeois social relationships. But such an approach may well prove wrong since many significant facts will then escape attention. Therefore it would be well to concentrate attention on the specific Chinese traits... We shall only deal with four aspects: ...

"Chinese humanism. Chinese culture is the least religious of all. Confucianism... was a moral and ethical philosophy rather than a religious one... Man stands in the centre of the Confucian outlook. No God, spirit or any other holy being distracts from the service of man. But the Confucian is never independent. Invariably he is only a cell in the family and state body, a 'bound particle' of a huge molecule...

"One of Confucius's dialogues with his pupils illustrates this point. 'What are the conditions of good administration?' the pupil asked. 'The people should be well-fed,' said Confucius, 'there should be a strong army; the people should trust the government.' 'Which of the three is easiest to spare?' the pupil continued. 'The army', Confucius replied. 'And of the remaining two?' 'I would prefer to do without food. From time immemorial people have died but without trust in the ruler the state will collapse.'

"A European humanist would probably reply that he would prefer that there should be no trust in the government. For him (theoretically at least) society is a multitude of individuals each of whom has an inviolable right to life and happiness. But the Chinese humanist even in theory believes the state is an organism that enjoys the full right to sacrifice any number of its cells - people.

"Chinese humanism in private life is just as peculiar. Jin (humanism) is often defined as love. But it is not an independent individual's love based on free choice. It is the love of children for their parents, of a younger brother for his elder brother, of a wife for her husband etc...

"Apart from family love there is also friendship. But never have relationships based on free choice been made the centre of life in China... No Chinese bard has lauded a Chinese Francesca da Rimini who broke her matrimonial duty of a Chinese Juliet who betrayed her parents for the sake of her beloved. Chinese humanism has never acknowledged the right of the individual to do as he pleases with his life... The European consciousness emphasises the connection between love and freedom, the Chinese, the connection between love and duty.

"Chinese rationalism ...has nothing in common with European. The European consciousness perceives rationalism and individualism as very close in meaning, almost identical, whereas the Chinese sees them almost as antonyms. In Chinese history it was not individual but 'swarm' consciousness (to use Leo Tolstoy's expression) that acquired a rationalist form... Chinese rationalism has always been of a formal character and was actually an expression of collective, 'apparatus' consciousness.

"Two forms of rationalism have existed since ancient times: Confucian and legitimistic... Confucianism drew on conservative family humanism described above, and legitimism, an anti-humanist administrative 'zeal'... According to legitimists man is very seldom born kind... So he must be trained as an animal... Just as the craftsman can make a wheel or an arrow by bending or straightening a piece of wood, the sovereign can make diligent farmers or fierce soldiers out of his subjects. At tranquil periods... Confucianism triumphed... But when social changes were imminent, legitimism...became the only alternative.

"The Chinese tradition is such that any group that isolates itself from the state and takes its own path, is considered a conspiracy and suppressed. For that reason the progressive minority cannot risk experiment in hope that others will follow it if successful. The minority that wishes a renewed system must seize power and impose its will on the majority by force.

"If Tolstoy's metaphor is to be used once more, China can be described as a highly organised swarm that remains quiet as long as it stays in its old hive. Once the time to change comes the swarm becomes highly agitated and is ready to fall on any passer-by and sting him half to death without any special reason.

"No ideology based on display of personal initiative has taken root in China. Marxism, proclaiming the individual's striving for freedom, could not be fully understood there either... Marxist criticism of bourgeois individualism taken up by the Chinese consciousness which had not fully grasped even the idea of bourgeois individualism revived certain forms of pre-bourgeois thinking (in one of its least attractive shapes). Semi-Confucian China was modified into a legitimistic China... It is a deplorable fact that in the past too Chinese civilisation proved capable of advances only as a result of outbreaks of administrative fervour after which a long time was needed to make good the damage inflicted on culture...

"Chinese democratism... The Chinese are absolutely void of any aristocratic prejudices. But the absence of aristocratism still does not mean the presence of democracy. Chinese tradition lacks one significant feature - legal opposition. The Chinese cannot even conceive of opposition until he himself joins a conspiracy... Two forms of political behaviour were known in old China: absolute loyalty and conspiracy.

"Chinese internationalism. In a sense, the Chinese have always been internationalists, never a nation in the European meaning, one that regards itself as something special existing alongside other nations... The Chinese believed they were a civilisation surrounded by barbarians... The idea of equality of Tibetans or Uigurs is as ridiculous for the Chinese as, say, of the identity of Barbarism and Civilisation". (p21-9)

WHERE IS MOSCOW?

That thoroughly Europocentric view of the matter comes from Moscow. It is quoted from The Chinese Crisis: Causes and Character, by Liparit Kyuzajhyan. There are a number of obvious comments that spring to mind. It is not only in China that there was and is a simple choice between absolute loyalty and conspiracy. The feature of legal opposition is missing from states nearer home. And there are other Communist Parties besides the Chinese whose notion of Communism does not include the feature of individualism freed from bourgeois shackles and made absolute.

Moscow gives substantially the same reasons for the distortion suffered by the socialist Revolution in China that West

Europeans give for the distortion of the socialist revolution in Russia. For the West European Asia is beyond Warsaw. For the cultured Muscovite of Asiatic extraction it is beyond Tashkent. Once the Soviet Asian gets kulturni he becomes more European than the Europeans. The Europeans now take their Europeanism for granted, and, having scattered the seeds of Europe worldwide, encourage their development by making as little fuss as possible about the non-European aspects of Asia or Africa. But the Muscovite European is sharply aware of the difference, and he alone can now speak uninhibitedly about the Asiatic peculiarity of the Chinaman. By doing so he consolidates his European character.

Now that there are no longer any self-confident capitalist imperialists to state the classical Europocentric position, it is useful to be reminded of it by the Marxists of Muscovy. It would be still better if the Muscovite Marxists asserted European freedom and individualism at the political level in Moscow, and established the right to political opposition against the Kremlin instead of merely demonstrating the Asiatic peculiarities of China at the behest of the Kremlin.

THE TROTSKYIST DILEMMA

Was the 'degeneration' of the Chinese revolution made inevitable by the traditional culture of China? Trotsky viewed the 'degeneration' of the Russian Revolution in a very ambiguous way, saying at one moment that social conditions made it inevitable and that it survived in the only form in which it could survive, and saying at another moment that it failed because it was 'betrayed'.

The Moscow view of China is very similar.

Kantianism has been refuted at great length and in the most decisive manner. But Kantianism lives, and not least amongst its refuters. When Kant analysed the world it fell into antinomies, into contradictions that could not be resolved: or, that could not be resolved on their own ground, in the finite world. But he acknowledged that 'practical reason' was not content to put up with the antinomies of pure reason. Pure reason might analyse the world into antinomies, but practical reason could not refrain from scheming to circumvent ^{these} antinomies. And practical reason would have the final say. Kant therefore postulated infinity as a medium within which the antinomies might be resolved, and within which duty and desire might fruitfully interact. This didn't make all that much sense in theoretical terms. It was a pragmatic compromise that enabled pure reason to maintain an honoured and influential position in the world.

For Trotsky, the Russian revolution fell into an antinomy. He postulated 'world revolution' as an equivalent of Kant's infinity. World revolution wasn't actually there to resolve the antinomy of the actual revolution and transform it into a dynamic contradiction. It was a fuzzy concept, whose function was to enable 'Marxist analysis' to retain an honourable position in a world that didn't correspond to it.

Moscow, confronted with Maoism, has analysed the Chinese revolution into an antinomy. And since Moscow cannot say, any more than Trotsky or Kant, that the situation is hopeless, it too must postulate something which is external to the situation as a condition of resolving it. But, whereas Kant postulated a metaphysical abstraction, and Trotsky a political abstraction, Moscow postulates something tangible - itself. And for that very reason the Moscow postulate is the most definitely external, the most vulgar, and the most hopeless of the three. Infinity must be fused into a synthesis with the finite, like the zero is with numbers, if it is to be functional. And Moscow can only engage in diplomatic or military relations with Peking.

"A socialist movement supported by peasants (for lack of proletarians) is quite possible, and a number of such movements have won in Asian and African countries during the last few decades. A most vivid example has been furnished by the Mongolian Peoples' Republic. But the final victory of such movements largely depends on the strength of their union with the international working class and the world socialist system. Once this union breaks up the success of the movement becomes doubtful." (p16)

If Soviet hegemony is the condition of success for socialism in China, it is surprising that the Soviet leadership did not act more prudently to retain that hegemony. In the circumstances it was only feasible to aspire to a voluntary cultural hegemony. It was impractical to think of the kind of hegemony that was exercised over Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Khrushchev's hamfisted approach demonstrated conclusively that the Soviet Union was not fit to exercise the only kind of influence that was useful or possible with regard to China.

When a rift began to open up between the two parties after 1956, the Soviet attitude was such that it inevitably developed into a comprehensive severance of relations. And when relations had been severed the Soviet apologists came up with the analysis which has been quoted above. If the aim was to frighten the Communist Party of China into placing itself under Soviet guidance, it was badly miscalculated. Such 'analysis' could only deepen the division. On the pragmatic level, it is of no use telling a

people how utterly backward and how hopelessly non-European it is if you are aspiring to influence it. Soviet propaganda expressed pique more than policy, and its practical function was to generate anti-Chinese feeling in Russia rather than help the Communist movement in China. And on the theoretical level, while including a considerable amount of general historical truth, it misconceived the contemporary situation.

There was certainly an elaborately developed and deeply rooted conservative culture to be overcome in China. The Chinese heritage could only be overcome through internal conflict. Soviet hegemony, like any colonial hegemony, could set up modern structures in a few cities, broadcast the European world-outlook (to use Soviet terminology) in dogmatic form, and develop a progressive elite. But that would leave the modern world as a thin crust on the ocean of the traditional world (to use Lenin's description of Russia in 1921). And when the colonial hegemony has done that much it has reached the end of its tether.

Only the operation of an internal dynamic could shake up and modernise the mass of the society.

SOWING THE WIND

"It was not simply that he (Mao) lacked a proper academic knowledge of all the works of the classics of Marxism-Leninism; more important was the fact that his petty-bourgeois background made him perceive the proletarian doctrine through the prism of Confucianism, nationalism and Sinocentrism... Mao's weak grasp of Marxism, his primitive, vulgarised, and distorted, understanding of Marxist theory is particularly in evidence in his political writings of 1926 to 1930". (M. Altaisky & V. Georgiyev, The Philosophical Views Of Mao Tse-tung, 1971)

"This system (Maoism) is largely eclectic and pragmatic, comprising elements of the most diverse doctrines (like Confucianism, Marxism, utopian socialism, idealism, populism, anarchism and Trotskyism)". (The Economic Theories Of Maoism, E. Korbash, 1974)

The Moscow view is something like this: the Marxist nucleus was the Comintern element in the cities organised by Liu Shao-chi. Unfortunately Mao had a remarkable aptitude for practical politics while the people with the right ideas couldn't lead a fly out of a bottle. Mao brought the Communist movement to power in a highly original manner. Thereafter he should have left the conduct of affairs to the Comintern group. But he insisted on interfering, and on extemporising solution to social problems as if they were military or political problems. And that was when things went wrong.

Korbash observes: "Hence the attempt to turn the subjective factor, politics and ideas into an absolute, to whip up socio-economic development and execute leaps and bounds."

The Europocentric view which Moscow now expounds was first comprehensively developed by Hegel, who remarked: "Chinese religion cannot be what we call religion. For us religion means retirement of the spirit within itself, in contemplating its essential nature, its inmost Being. In these spheres man is withdrawn from his relation to the State, and betaking himself to this retirement, is able to release himself from the power of secular government. But in China religion has not risen to this grade, for true faith is possible only where individuals can seclude themselves - can exist for themselves independently of any external compulsory power. In China the individual has no such life." (Philosophy Of History)

Now, if 'the Chinese' was to become a free spirit like us in Moscow and Paris and London, if he was to become a fit subject for socialism, if he was to acquire an outlook on life that would enable him to appreciate Dante's story about how Francesca de Rimini went to Hell, he had to be thoroughly disrupted, disorientated and driven in on himself. If he was to acquire an independent inner life like the Murphys and Smiths and Korbashes, it was necessary to "turn the subjective factor into an absolute" for him, and to launch a scorched earth campaign against his Confucian inheritance.

If we adopt the Moscow classification, the Liu faction in the CPC was thoroughly Confucian. Liu's major work, How To Be A Good Communist, was a deadening Confucian tract. The Cominternists were a new Confucian elite who were only capable of administering the state. If subjective freedom was to develop it could only be through a 'Legitimist' movement. The beginnings of subjective freedom in so traditional a society would have to identify with the only aspect of traditional society which allowed for movement.

A criticism of the formal Maoist programme in 1958 or 1965 would not lead to an adequate understanding of what was at issue, and would almost be beside the point. As was pointed out by Patrick McMorrow in the November Irish Communist:

"It can be shown that his conceptions were motivated by many populist and petty bourgeois notions. The position of his opponents is equally confusing and perhaps even more so as they exerted their energies in evading the issues. Their political stance was a pragmatic reflex to many of Mao's failures and was not a worked-out ideology."

The Moscow ideologists, having emphasised the massive problem

of China's cultural inheritance, argue that it should have been dealt with by routine administrative means. Mao tackled it by means that were much more appropriate to the immensity of the problem. He was certainly the most European spirit in the leadership of the CPC. Far from reflecting Chinese tradition, he succeeded in mounting a frontal assault on it that threw the entire society into the greatest subjective confusion it had experienced in two and a half thousand years. This offensive could scarcely have been programmed, and could not have led to any simple victory. It was conducted with great tactical skill, and the necessary compromises were worked in such a way as to keep questions as open as possible. And Mao carried the greatest of the Confucians with him right to the end - Chou En-lai.

"Maoism" embraced conflicting elements, which gave it its dynamic. Mao sustained his offensive by tacking between the two wings of his movement, between his "ex-actress fourth wife" (to quote Palme Dutt) and Chou. Now that he is gone that mode of development is no longer possible, and equilibrium has been established by the conservative wing of the movement. The radical wing, without Mao, was not politically capable.

Through the Great Leap and the Cultural Revolution traditional China has been demoralised and the seeds of the European spirit have been scattered into every corner of Chinese society. And if these seeds include not only "correct Marxist ideas" but a fair sampling of other ideas as well, that is all to the good. They have been scattered in highly dogmatic form, which is the only form in which they could have been scattered. And if the manner of their scattering does not stir up the spirit of freedom in China, then nothing will.

The new Europeans in Moscow, who gloss over the particulars of how they themselves came to be Europeans en masse in the early thirties, and who revile Solzhenitsyn when he tries to spell it out, do not yet dare comprehend what has happened in China. And Palme^{DUTT} could no more comprehend it than Edmund Burke could comprehend the French Reign of Terror.

(The Communist, December 1976)