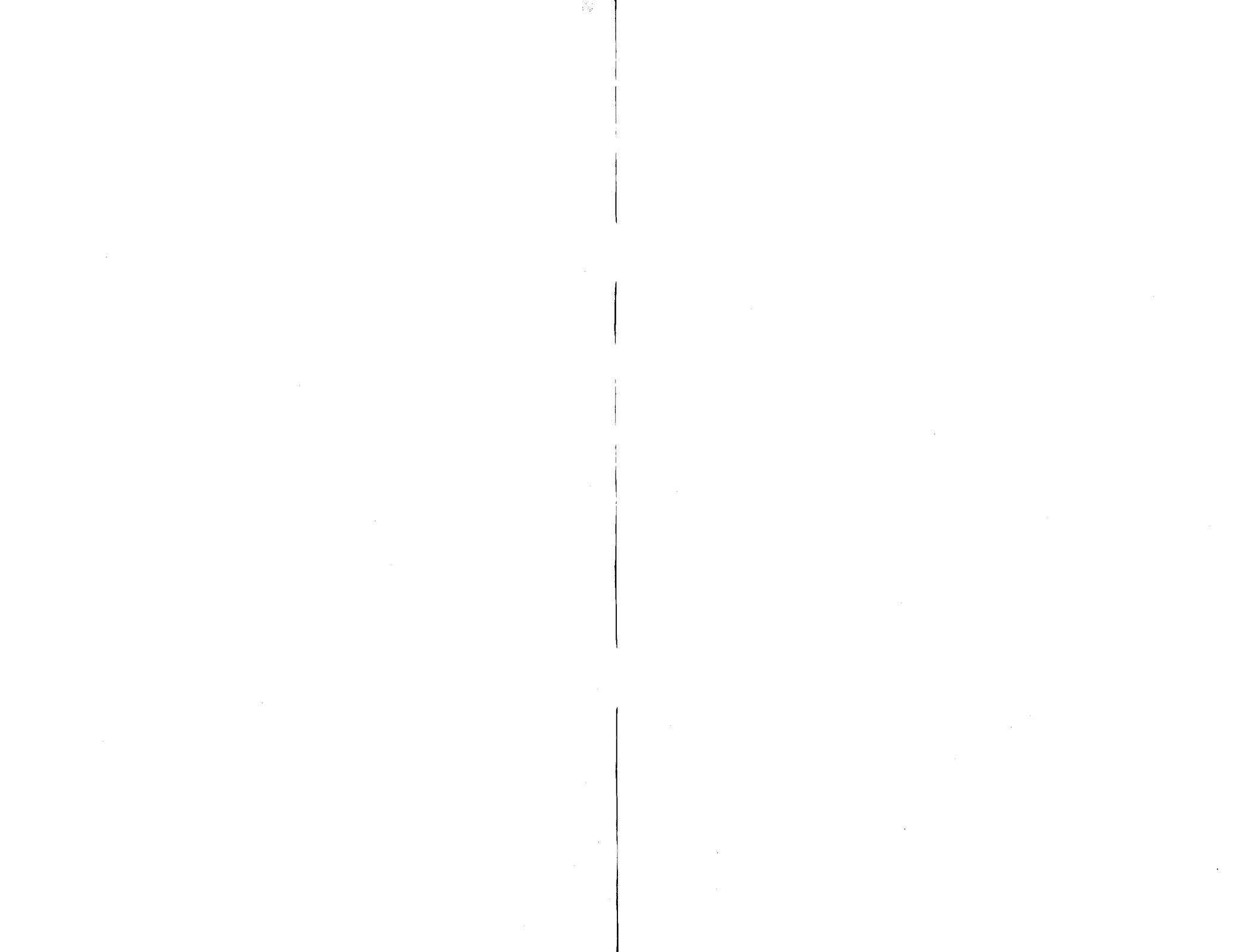


THEY MADE REVOLUTION WITHIN THE REVOLUTION

BY IRIS HUNTER

THE STORY OF CHINA'S
GREAT PROLETARIAN
CULTURAL REVOLUTION







Red Guards in Tien An Men Square, 1967.

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The train we took on August 27 was full of Red Guards, students from Peking's major universities. They spent the whole 30-hour journey to Shanghai reading, studying, and discussing sheaves of documents. . . . [They] were utterly absorbed in their work, as if cramming for a tough exam. Their assignment turned out to be nothing so academic; they intended, in fact, to subvert a whole city. Their papers were prototypes of material soon to appear on Shanghai's walls, material that would threaten the very existence of the Party and government of China's greatest metropolis. (Neale Hunter, Shanghai Journal, p. 89)

Plant after plant, office after office was taken over by its workers. Detachments of the PLA [People's Liberation Army], at the request of the WGHQ [Shanghai Workers Revolutionary Rebel General Headquarters], took up posts along with the workers' militia to guard key points — power stations, waterworks, transport centers, telephone and radio stations — in order to prevent sabotage. The workers had studied Marx's work on the Paris Commune. Noting his criticism that the Communards had not seized the banks, they posted pickets at all banks to prevent a run on their funds. It was a classical revolutionary take-over of power. . . . (Jack Chen, writing on the 1967 January Storm in Shanghai, Inside the Cultural Revolution, pp. 254-55)

We wanted to know some of the changes that had been effected at the Number 15 Middle School by the Cultural Revolution. We were told that the old teaching methods of spoonfeeding, cramming, and "encyclopedia training" are no longer considered good educational practice. Education now combines theoretical work, productive labor, and proletarian politics. As far as we could tell, Number 15 had no tracking. All children learned physics and all children learned factory and agricultural work, because both

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theoretical information and practical experience were considered important for all the children.

The twice yearly exams have also been changed. The emphasis is now on the ability to analyze and solve problems, not just to memorize facts. Our hosts told us that students are given the questions before the exam and have a chance to discuss them with their classmates. (Science for the People, China: Science Walks on Two Legs, p. 180)

Even before Mao Tse-tung unleashed the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, Red China had managed to isolate itself from most of the world. The weird rampages of the Red Guards made the alienation virtually complete. As no other major nation in modern times, Red China stands alone, with other Communist countries possibly even more appalled by its actions than anyone else. . . . Peking has reacted to the criticism from abroad with hysterical cries of delight. "We love precisely what the enemy hates," exulted Peking's Red Flag. "It is an honor for the Red Guards to be attacked wildly by enemies abroad." (Time, Sept. 30, 1966)

What was going on? While the full implications weren't clear to many outside China at the time, what came across unmistakably was that Chinese society was being sprung into the air in a revolution within a revolution. The Chinese revolution had been victorious in 1949 — yet here it was the mid-1960s, and things were being turned upside down (or rightside up, depending on what side you were on) once again.

Responses came accordingly from all classes and from around the globe.

With great disdain, bourgeois commentators lashed out at the revolutionary fervor of tens of millions of youth who crisscrossed the country with copies of *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tsetung* (the "Little Red Book"); such authorities sneered, too, at the workers and peasants who planted red flags everywhere and were transforming the country. The Cultural Revolution stuck in the craws of exploiters everywhere. Whether they were the lumbering state-bureaucratic capitalists of the Soviet bloc or the paternalistic and cost-efficient managers of Japan, whether they were cultured West European bankers or philistine chief executives of American corporations — for all of them, the Cultural Revolution was an unfathomable and unforgivable social experiment. And to this day there is a continuing deluge of hate and contempt poured out onto the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, increased even more with the help of the revisionists

who seized power in a coup in China in 1976 after Mao's death. With such enemies, the Cultural Revolution should — and did — attract friends from the oppressed everywhere. To the oppressed on every continent, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was an invigorating red wind, whipping away the deadly dust of the past and bringing in a new definition of revolutionary possibilities. Youth in Africa trained with rifles and copies of the Red Book; demonstrators in Japan raised banners with the words, "Long Live Mao Tsetung Thought"; and in the U.S., the Red Book was taken up and popularized by the then-revolutionary Black Panther Party and widely studied by many others and circulated broadly, including at rallies against the Vietnam war, where hundreds of copies were distributed.

After a decade of revisionist consolidation and nauseating capitulation to U.S. imperialism by the leaders of the Soviet Union, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution under the leadership of Mao Tsetung made the words "socialism" and "Marxism" once again ring with revolution. The Cultural Revolution demonstrated unequivocally that revolutions did not have to end in defeat; that capitalist restoration was not the inevitable outcome of socialist revolution; that by mobilizing and arming the masses with a Marxist-Leninist line and relying on their conscious activism, the old exploitative relations and ideas could continue to be uprooted and society advanced toward communism.

The Cultural Revolution — Absolutely Necessary and Most Timely

Mao Tsetung repeatedly stressed that the Cultural Revolution was "absolutely necessary and most timely." But after seventeen years of proletarian rule in China, following more than two decades of arduous, bloody struggle including the famous 6,000-mile, year-long Long March, why was this so? How could it happen that after such years of sacrifice, dedication, and struggle things were in the state where the Ministry of Culture, Mao said, "should be renamed the Ministry of Emperors, Kings, Generals, and Ministers, the Ministry of Talents and Beauties or the Ministry of Foreign Mummies" if it refused to change? And that the Ministry of Health should be renamed the "Ministry of Health for Urban Overlords"? And wasn't it shocking when he stated in 1969, after the first years of the Cultural Revolution, that "in a fairly large majority of factories — I don't mean all or the overwhelming majority — leadership was not in the hands of real Marxists

and the masses of workers''? (cited in Lotta, p. 213)

Shocking? Indeed! Or, rather, alarming to those with a vested interest in the status quo. But an invigorating challenge to genuine revolutionaries the world over. How did this situation come about where Mao was so sharply critical of the new society which he himself had played the leading role in bringing into being? The fact is that, while a great initial liberation, still, in substantial ways the "new" society was not so different from the old.

First, people whom Mao called "capitalist roaders" had seized important leading positions in many spheres of society. Many of these people had played a progressive role in earlier stages of the revolution, fighting the invading Japanese imperialists and the reactionary Kuomintang, Chiang Kai-shek's forces which were backed by the U.S. Some of these "veterans" had made the Long March with Mao. And most held leading positions of responsibility in the Chinese Communist Party. Under socialism, because of the overall leading position of the party, party members hold many of the responsible posts throughout society. Once in power, however, fighters who weren't daunted by the enemies' guns in battle may fall from what Mao described as "sugar coated bullets." These bullets — appeals and temptations to preserve many old ways and to protect and expand, not restrict, remaining inequalities and privileges within the new society — are not shot from guns but can be just as deadly, in the long run if not the short run, to a revolution.

ONE-QUARTER OF HUMANITY STOOD UP

Over one-quarter of humanity took a step into the future on October 1, 1949 when China's masses celebrated their liberation from feudalism and imperialism and advanced onto the socialist road, led by Mao Tsetung and the Communist Party of China.

China had been carved up by various imperialist powers, its economy and political system dominated for over a century by the needs of foreign capital and its domestic agents, the big capitalists (the bureaucrat-capitalists), who worked hand in glove with local despots — big landlords and warlords — to enforce the most crushing exploitation. The Chinese people, some 450 million at the time of liberation and of fifty-five different nationalities, over 80 percent of whom were peasants in the countryside, had been imprisoned in wretched poverty and misery.

When Mao proclaimed "The Chinese people have stood up!" in

But the basic question involved was that of political line and outlook. Many of these capitalist roaders were fundamentally bourgeois democrats. They helped push things forward when it was a question of ridding China of imperialist domination and the big landlords and comprador capitalists who supported it, during the first, new-democratic stage of the revolution. But, as Mao analyzed, with the seizure of power and the development of the socialist stage of the revolution, these people wanted to call a halt to things. They became protective of the status quo and of their own positions, becoming in fact new bourgeois elements. The bourgeois headquarters under socialism is centered in the top levels of the Communist Party itself, precisely because it is party members who hold responsible leading posts and are, therefore, the ones in positions to set lines and policies that will determine which way society goes.

When Mao made this analysis, it was heresy to much of what was then considered the communist movement. Communist parties were supposed to be sacrosanct, maybe a few bad eggs from time to time, but nothing like a living center of struggle between a bourgeois and a proletarian revolutionary headquarters! The squawks came loudest from the party leaders in the Soviet Union. And no wonder. For it was exactly the experience of the Soviet Union, the reversal of the revolution in the first socialist country in the world and the restoration of capitalism, that enabled Mao to develop this analysis and draw the appropriate lessons — that, unless the present

1949, the struggle had taken over twenty years of war and many twists and turns, including the famous "Long March." The Red Army, fighting the reactionary Chiang Kai-shek's forces all the way, covered some six thousand miles on foot in one year until they reached Yenan in northern China to establish Mao's revolutionary headquarters there in 1935. The revolution went through many phases, including a period of temporary and partial unity with Chiang Kai-shek when the Japanese imperialists invaded and occupied parts of China from 1937 to 1945 — a "unity" which saw Chiang Kai-shek continue to attack the Red Army forces, and the Communist Party under Mao's leadership unleash and rely on the masses to fight and defeat the imperialist invaders.

After the Japanese had been defeated, the U.S. became the main imperialist power in China, backing Chiang Kai-shek politically, economically, and militarily against Mao's revolutionary forces, support that continued for decades even after Chiang Kai-shek was routed and forced to flee to the island of Taiwan in 1949.

direction were reversed, China would go down the same road.

But there is also something more fundamental than the existence of individual capitalist roaders. Beneath the capitalist roaders, there is the existence of the road itself, the material basis for them not only to exist and develop some strength, but for new capitalist roaders to be born. This basis is provided in the very features of socialist society itself — that is, the contradictions which characterize socialism as a transition period between the old bourgeois society, with its characteristic exploitative relations and ideas, and the classless society of the future, communism. And more importantly, and interacting with all this, are the international pressures of a world still dominated by imperialism militarily, economically, politically, ideologically — and the all-around stranglehold imperialism constantly tries to put on genuine socialist countries. That's why the possibility of capitalist restoration exists during the entire period of socialism and until communism is able to be achieved on a worldwide scale.

After the proletariat seizes power, the new socialist society doesn't emerge clean and pure. It has the remnants, what Marx called the "birthmarks," of the old society. Such things as the commodity system, differences in income, the division of labor, can be described as "bourgeois right," that is, part of the economic relations which characterize bourgeois society. These "birthmarks" are closely tied to the continuing existence of the divisions between town and country, between workers and peasants, and between mental and manual labor. Unless these divisions are consciously narrowed and bourgeois right consciously restricted under socialism, the divisions and inequalities will not only persist but will increase. This is, in short, the task of the dictatorship of the proletariat, to train and lead the masses in consciously restricting bourgeois right and narrowing the divisions and inequalities that still exist — transforming all of society in the direction of communism. And if the capitalist roaders are able to seize control of the country overall, that is, of the key positions of power, then they would, as Mao said during the last year of his life, be able quite easily "to rig up the capitalist system" on the remnants of capitalism that still exist under socialism.

The Cultural Revolution, then, was a life-and-death battle as to which road China would follow. That the Cultural Revolution failed to prevent the coup d'etat after Mao's death in 1976 and the subsequent (and continuing) restoration of capitalism does not detract from its achievements, but points up the profound truth of Mao's analysis and makes those achievements all the more important to understand and grasp deeply.

Critical Importance of Superstructure

In order to continue on and strengthen the socialist road, Mao recognized the critical importance of the superstructure, that is, the political institutions, education, culture, habits, and ideology. In order to restrict bourgeois right and narrow the divisions and inequalities that exist in the economic base of the society, public opinion must be created. People must be won to the necessity for it and mobilized to do it. And, in particular, as part of revolutionizing all of society, they have to grasp the necessity to continually supervise and revolutionize leadership. This means repeatedly and continually overthrowing the capitalist roaders in the party, while bringing into the party fresh, new forces and strengthening its proletarian revolutionary character. It's not enough, as millions and millions were jolted into realizing during the Cultural Revolution, to be loyal and hard-working. No! The masses themselves, and especially the proletariat, have to take up and master affairs of state and transform all of society. And it's not enough for the proletariat just to *enter* all arenas; if the old bourgeois institutions, culture, and so forth aren't *transformed*, then the proletarian dictatorship itself will be transformed and revert back to bourgeois dictatorship.

Take education for example, one of the most important elements of the superstructure for instilling values and, for that reason, one of the fiercest arenas of struggle during the Cultural Revolution. For the seventeen years after Liberation, education had been dominated by the old bourgeois methods: highly competitive exams (which Mao called "sneak attacks" on the students); theory separated from practice, learning from production, students from workers and peasants; and entrance exams which favored the sons and daughters of educated professionals or party and government officials. In other words, much like the U.S. education system today. But even more telling, the nature of the educational process was such that even those children of workers and peasants who managed to pass the entrance exams were transformed into intellectual snobs. For example, in the course of their schooling, youths from poor peasant backgrounds began to forget their own class origins and ended up looking down on the very class they came from. This situation was intolerable for Mao and the other revolutionary communists. Something drastic had to be done or China would take the path of the Soviet Union!

During this period of the early 1960s, the revisionists in China had been gaining strength. The Socialist Education Movement, a precursor to the Cultural Revolution, had been launched in the countryside but derailed

by officials following the direction of China's president Liu Shao-chi, who in a few years would be targeted as "China's Khrushchev" (named after the man who had led the capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union). Internationally, the Soviet Union was still seeking to accommodate and collude with U.S. imperialism in preparation for greater rivalry later, and the latter was getting bogged down in its war of aggression against Indochina. China was not the direct target of attack, as it had been by the U.S. at one point during the Korean War. Mao seized the opening to unleash the Chinese masses on a grand scale to prevent restoration, and in doing so, gave a huge boost to the cause of revolution around the world.

As Mao said in 1967:

In the past we waged struggles in rural areas, in factories, in the cultural field, and we carried out the socialist education movement. But all this failed to solve the problem because we did not find a form, a method, to arouse the broad masses to expose our dark aspect openly, in an all-round way and from below.

The "problem" was how to overthrow the capitalist roaders who had taken over positions of power in the party and to further dig away at the soil that bred bourgeois relations and elements in socialist society; the basic form, the method that Mao developed in the Cultural Revolution, was mobilizing and relying on the conscious activism of the masses.

This was unprecedented in the history of the international communist movement. As Bob Avakian has written in his book *Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions*:

It went against all the "norms" of what socialism was supposed to be, what a communist party is supposed to do, and so on. This, of course, is true only in a superficial sense, because in reality the sole purpose of a communist party is to lead the proletariat in making revolution to achieve communism, and this is what Mao was leading the Communist Party of China to do. But it was something that went against all the traditions and the force of habit that had been built up and had in fact become obstacles under socialism. The force of habit cannot be followed in making revolution, including under socialism. Social habit and tradition has been built up by thousands and thousands of years of class society, and following such tradition will not lead toward classless society.

And, of course, it was unprecedented for the chairman of a communist party to call upon the masses to rise up and strike down powerful persons within the party. But revolution does not work on precedent, and in fact within the Party there were two headquarters. The capitalist-roaders had their own machine and their own headquarters, and this was what was necessary to dislodge them in order to prevent China from being taken down the road to capitalism. (Avakian, 1979, p. 281)

At the same time and as an essential part of knocking down the capitalist roaders, the real object of the Cultural Revolution, to quote from Bob Avakian, was

to remould the world outlook of the masses of people, so that they take up the stand, viewpoint and method of the proletariat, Marxism-Leninism, and thus are increasingly armed to recognize, isolate and strike down revisionists whenever they raise their heads, while at the same time strengthening their mastery of society (and nature) and their ability to win over and remould the majority of intellectuals, cadres, etc. (Avakian, 1979, p. 292)

Mao put it this way in his speech to the Albanian Military Delegation visiting China on May 1, 1967:

To struggle against power holders who take the capitalist road is the main task, but it is by no means the goal. The goal is to solve the problem of world outlook; it is the question of eradicating the roots of revisionism.

Class Struggle — or Production in Command

Politically, much of this struggle focused on the relation between revolution and production, whether the key to building socialism was increasing production by any means possible (the theory of productive forces) or waging the class struggle to consciously restrict bourgeois right and narrow the still-existing inequalities and divisions in society, for the proletariat to enter, master, lead, and transform every aspect of society in accordance with this. In the economic sphere, Mao put forward the slogan, "Grasp Revolution, Promote Production." Liu Shao-chi had advocated policies of putting technique, experts, and material incentives in command of production.

In the late 1950s Liu's forces had gone on the offensive. They seized on disruptions and dislocations in the economy which developed as a secondary by-product of the experience of the Great Leap Forward in 1958, the mass movement in which people, especially the peasants, rose up and carried out many achievements in socialist construction. The Great Leap's achievements included the formation of the people's communes (political, social, and economic units of organization in the countryside, each of which might encompass dozens of villages and tens of thousands of people) and other undertakings, such as peasants taking up small-scale industrial prod-

uction, that were previously undreamed of and, consequently, scoffed at and attacked by reactionaries and conservative elements both inside and outside the party. These innovations were of great importance in narrowing the differences between workers and peasants and between town and country — as well as critical to developing the greatest amount of self-sufficiency in case it again became necessary to wage people's war against invading enemy forces. At about this same time, the Soviet Union suddenly pulled out its technicians who had been assisting the Chinese people with building a number of vital construction projects; their departure, including taking crucial blueprints, resulted in temporarily sabotaging the Chinese economy. A series of natural disasters in the next several years also played into the revisionists' contention that the economy was being wrecked.

Liu and company pushed for the market and profitability to govern production rather than the needs of society overall; they resurrected restrictive rules and regulations which had been reformed earlier, advocated piecework and instituted bonuses (which had been cut back in some places earlier on the demand of the workers because they divided the workers and narrowed their outlook toward self gain); they cut back the time workers were to spend in political study and demanded an end to political struggle in the factories. This was also the time when Deng Xiaoping, one of Liu's men then and the behind-the-scenes leader of the coup which overthrew the revolutionary headquarters after Mao's death, made his famous statement: "It doesn't matter whether it is a white cat or a black cat, any cat that catches mice is a good cat." That is to say, it doesn't matter if methods promote socialism or capitalism, so long as they get results (boost production).

The struggle over this question, the relation between class struggle and production, was to recur throughout the Cultural Revolution, from the early battles against Liu and Deng, to Lin Piao and then Chou En-lai and, again, Deng immediately preceding Mao's death. It is interesting to note here that, despite the repeated cries then and thundering bourgeois chorus now from both inside and outside China claiming that the Cultural Revolution was disastrous for the economy (along with everything else), such a bourgeois mouthpiece as *Time* magazine reported otherwise in its September 20, 1976 issue after Mao's death. While *Time* repeated the accustomed slanders of the Cultural Revolution, that "the cataclysmic Cultural Revolution of 1966-69" and other "events . . . in the last decade of his life became ever more marred by violence and irrationality," the article stated that China had made some "staggering" accomplishments. "Industrial production increased from \$11.2 billion in 1950 to \$185 billion last year [1975]; the problem of adequately feeding the country's enormous

population was solved." So much for the Cultural Revolution being an economic disaster, even by bourgeois calculations!

The Opening Shot

The opening shot in the Cultural Revolution targeted a play written in 1961 by Wu Han, a deputy mayor of Peking. Entitled *Hai Jui Dismissed from Office*, it purported to be a historical drama about an "upright official," Hai Jui, who was unjustly dismissed from office. In reality, it was a thinly disguised attack on Mao for knocking down (dismissing from office) Peng Teh-huai, former Defense Minister who had led the attack on Mao's revolutionary line and policies, including the Great Leap Forward, at the 1959 Central Committee meeting held at Lushan. At that meeting Mao made his famous statement about the Great Leap — "the chaos caused was on a grand scale and I take responsibility" — declaring that the mass upsurge of the Great Leap Forward was fine, not terrible, even with its economic dislocations and disruptions, principally because the masses had taken the initiative and pioneered new undertakings. Peng Teh-huai and the line he championed were defeated at Lushan, but now were upheld in Wu Han's play which proclaimed Hai Jui (i.e., Peng Teh-huai) to have been wrongly "dismissed."

Mao publicly counterattacked in November 1965. Under his leadership, Yao Wen-yuan, then a Shanghai revolutionary and propagandist, wrote an article, "On the New Historical Drama *Hai Jui Dismissed from Office*," exposing the reactionary social essence and aim of the play. The revisionists held such power in Peking that Mao could not get the article published there. So Yao's article was first published in a Shanghai newspaper on November 10.

It was a rallying call for vigorous ideological struggle against the bourgeoisie within the party. The revisionists tried to confine and stifle the struggle, attempting to channel it into a purely academic discussion about an "historical" incident and only permitting debate to proceed "with the approval of the leading bodies concerned." In other words, the masses were not to draw *political* conclusions and were only to engage in struggle as directed from above, that is, as the revisionists directed. So Mao again went on the offensive. Soon he struck with the May 16th Circular, issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and drawn up under

his guidance. At this time it was circulated only within the party and was aimed at mobilizing the revolutionary elements in the party, and, through them, the conscious activism of the masses. The May 16th Circular emphasized themes which Mao would continue to focus and deepen during the course of the Cultural Revolution: the danger of capitalist restoration led by the bourgeoisie in the party, the protracted nature of the struggle against the bourgeoisie under socialism, and mobilization of and reliance on the masses.

Throughout the course of the Cultural Revolution the method of developing the struggle and the role of the masses were to be distinguishing hallmarks of the two sides: Mao and his revolutionary comrades within the party relying on and mobilizing the masses, daring to boldly arouse them, and the capitalist roaders, the revisionists, doing everything in their power to stop, derail, or divert the process. On their side, the revisionists had the force of habit and conservatism of centuries of oppressive feudal and bourgeois relations — where the laboring people were treated as unthinking beasts of burden. And on the other, Mao and his forces relied on the masses, both inside and outside the party, being unleashed around the revolutionary line. If the Great Leap Forward had been “chaos on a grand scale,” this was to be grander by far, reaching into every corner of the country, every school, institution, workplace, and neighborhood.

The method of the Cultural Revolution did not give comfort to those who think revolution must be neat and tidy and predictable — in other words, not revolutionary! The masses in their literal millions were taking up and battling out the cardinal questions. Things were not always, or even often, clear right away. Those who opposed Mao would claim to uphold him and maintain that *they* were the true revolutionaries. The masses had to learn to distinguish what was revolutionary and what wasn't by analyzing deeply what was being said and then, most decisively, what was done in practice. The key was getting beneath surface phenomena to the content, the substance, whether things were being led in the direction of communism or in another direction, back toward capitalism.

Just issuing directives for people to follow wouldn't have achieved this, although at certain critical times issuing directives or publicizing statements from Mao (or those known to be speaking for him) was absolutely critical to set a correct orientation which would unleash the masses. These directives, too, were issued at key junctures after the process had unfolded to a certain extent and the reactionaries had exposed themselves more clearly. The role of genuine revolutionary leadership in this situation was to set a correct orientation and let things rip, then to provide continued leadership in the process of great mass upheaval.

Cultural Revolution Bursts Out on the Campuses

While the Cultural Revolution broke out initially in the cultural arena, it burst out broadly among the masses in the education arena, specifically among the students and young teachers. What was heralded by Mao later as the “first Marxist-Leninist Big-Character Poster” was written and pasted up at Peking University on May 25, 1966. The poster audaciously attacked two members of the Peking Municipal Government responsible for university affairs and the university president. They claimed to uphold the Cultural Revolution but had done everything possible to minimize its political content, turn it into a purely academic affair and stifle mass initiative, discouraging big mass meetings (small groups are better for discussion, they said) and the posting of big-character posters (called ta-tzu-pao). The poster boldly stated that in opposition to the call from the Party's Central Committee and Mao, the masses at the university “are being kept immobilized, the atmosphere is one of indifference and deadness, whereas the strong revolutionary desire of the vast number of the faculty members and students has been suppressed. . . . By ‘guiding’ the masses not to hold big meetings, not to put up big-character posters and by creating all kinds of taboos, aren't you suppressing the masses' revolution, not allowing them to make revolution and opposing their revolution? We will never permit you to do this!” (cited in *Revolutionary Worker* No. 356, pp. 4, 13) Word of this daring challenge to the authorities spread immediately, and within hours young people were filling walls with huge sheets of paper on other campuses and institutions.

When Mao heard of it, he had the text broadcast over the radio and printed in the papers on June 1. The *People's Daily* noted several months later: “This [first big-character poster] kindled the raging flames of the great proletarian cultural revolution and set in motion the mass movement which has as its main target for attack the handful of persons within the Party who are in authority and are taking the capitalist road.” (cited in *RW* No. 356, p. 4)

The “raging flames” that were kindled included a vast outpouring of revolutionary sentiment and sharp struggle on many campuses that spread to other institutions. The Central Committee and the government announced that examinations in the schools were postponed and matriculation set back for a semester (this was later extended to over a year). Classes were suspended, and in their place the high school and university students and their teachers gathered daily — and often into the night — to discuss and debate teaching methods, the purpose of education and its relation to

politics and society overall. One observer described the situation like this:

Brochures and fliers multiplied thick and fast inside the schools and universities. The outside walls as well as the classroom walls were literally covered with posters sporting big-character slogans painted in a variety of colors. This characteristic backdrop of wall newspapers, of manuscript-posters juxtaposed, superimposed, like some vertical patchwork quilt, would spread throughout the coming months from the schools to the streets of every city and town, transforming the walls and sidewalks into a welter of many-sided, ebullient literature. (Daubier, p. 48)

Another first-hand observer reported that in one week alone, one hundred thousand posters were put up at Peking University which had a student body of ten thousand. Paper and ink were provided free to schools, workplaces and other institutions. A writer at the Foreign Languages Press Bureau in Peking described what the scene looked like:

[Big-character posters] were everywhere; every wall was plastered with them. The dining room was unusable; it had now been given over entirely to posters. When you walked down the main corridor of our Bureau you walked through an unbroken curtain of posters. Wires had been strung from wall to wall at intervals of two to three feet, and from these hung posters ten or twelve feet long. Ever more ingenious ways were being found to make them eye-catching: colored paper, colored inks, fancy calligraphy, cartoons, etc. . . . Temporary walls were then built of matting, and soon these too were plastered over. Daredevils got themselves let down from the roof to write large slogans on the upper walls. Posters then exuded onto the street outside. Finally they were written on the floors and pavements. At that point it was agreed that the oldest posters should be taken down or moved from choice locations to make room for new ones. . . .

Later the militants took over billboards and even the vermilion walls of the [old emperor's] Forbidden City; then they began to mimeograph and print their own broadsheets, newspapers, and books. Never before in history had there been such an outpouring of opinions. (Chen, pp. 230, 232, 233)

The Sixteen Points

This was not to be easily contained as the capitalist roaders wished. Still, in the summer of 1966, innumerable efforts at sabotage and repression of the mass upsurge were attempted, encouraged, and led by Liu Shao-chi, Deng Xiaoping, and other high-ranking revisionists. In August, the

Eleventh Plenum of the Central Committee met in Peking and, with Mao leading the struggle, repudiated the line led by Liu and Deng and adopted the "Decision of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," called the "Sixteen-Point Decision." It was immediately publicized broadly among the masses and came to be known as the charter for the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The fact that it was passed by just a narrow margin indicates the strength of the revisionist line; but the fact that it *was* passed gave a great impetus to the revolutionaries and pushed the Cultural Revolution to a new, high tide throughout the country.

The Sixteen-Point Decision, written under Mao's close supervision, clearly reestablished the main targets of the Cultural Revolution — persons in authority taking the capitalist road — and *not* the workers, students, lower-level party authorities, and so on, many of whom had been attacked by revisionist forces trying to save their own skins and divert the struggle. This was put in the lofty context of transforming all of society. The Sixteen Points called on the proletariat to

meet head-on every challenge of the bourgeoisie in the ideological field and use the new ideas, culture, customs and habits of the proletariat to change the mental outlook of the whole of society. At present, our objective is to struggle against and overthrow those persons in power taking the capitalist road, to criticize and repudiate the bourgeois reactionary academic "authorities" and the ideology of the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes and to transform education, literature and art and all other parts of the superstructure not in correspondence with the socialist economic base, so as to facilitate the consolidation and development of the socialist system.

The Sixteen-Point Decision stood firmly with the "courageous and daring" students and others who were writing the big-character posters and launching great debates. To those who were bemoaning the zeal of the youthful rebels, it stated unequivocally that "In such a great revolutionary movement, it is hardly avoidable that they should show shortcomings of one kind or another; however, their general revolutionary orientation has been correct from the beginning. This is the main current in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution."

The Sixteen Points set as policy for the Cultural Revolution Mao's great trust in and reliance on the masses, going so far as to admonish people not to be afraid of the inevitable upheaval this great movement would not only bring about but *require* if it were to be successful.

Trust the masses, rely on them and respect their initiative. Cast out fear. Don't be afraid of disturbances. Chairman Mao has often told us that revolution cannot be so very refined, so gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous. Let the masses educate themselves in this great revolutionary movement and learn to distinguish between right and wrong and between correct and incorrect ways of doing things.

And further, that

The outcome of this Great Cultural Revolution will be determined by whether or not the Party leadership dares boldly to arouse the masses. . . . What the Central Committee of the Party demands of the Party committees at all levels is that they persevere in giving correct leadership, put daring above everything else, boldly arouse the masses, change the state of weakness and incompetence where it exists, encourage those comrades who have made mistakes but are willing to correct them to cast off their mental burdens and join in the struggle, and dismiss from their leading posts all those in power who are taking the capitalist road and so make possible the recapture of the leadership for the proletarian revolutionaries.

This became the standard by which the revolutionary masses judged the party leadership on all levels.

Bombard the Headquarters!

With the orientation and guidelines set, the task was to carry out in practice what the Sixteen-Point Decision called for. While the Sixteen Points settled the methods and overall goals of the Cultural Revolution, the leading capitalist roaders had yet to be identified by name. On October 3, 1966 an editorial in *Red Flag* magazine made explicit what had only been implied earlier: that there was "struggle between two lines within the Party," and, therefore by implication, reactionary opposition to Mao's leading line. Mao himself had written a big-character poster on August 5, which was widely posted and publicized. Its title alone, "Bombard the Headquarters," was a bold summons to the revolutionary masses. In it he praised "China's first Marxist-Leninist big-character poster" and urged people to read it again. He then called out "some leading comrades from the central down to the local levels [who] have acted in a diametrically opposite way." He continued:

Adopting the reactionary stand of the bourgeoisie, they have enforced a bourgeois dictatorship and struck down the surging movement of the Great Cultural Revolution of the proletariat. They have stood facts on their head and juggled black and white, encircled and suppressed revolutionaries, stifled opinions differing from their own, imposed a white terror and felt very pleased with themselves. They have puffed up the arrogance of the bourgeoisie and deflated the morale of the proletariat. How poisonous! (Robinson, p. 80)

There would be no stopping the youth and other rebels now! With Mao Tsetung himself directly entering the fray by calling on the masses in such a popular form, the Cultural Revolution was given a big impetus. But there were still many parts of the country where local officials, often in league with Liu, Deng and others at the top, were impeding the struggle as Mao's big-character poster stated. Another way had to be found to spread the movement.

Red Youth Shake Up the Country

Just as the youth had initiated the big-character posters, so did they play another key role at this point in the Cultural Revolution. They were the ones called on to spread it throughout society. Immediately after the conclusion of the Eleventh Central Committee Plenum, Red Guard groups, organizations of high school and university youth, were organized throughout China. The first had been formed in the Middle School (high school) connected to Tsinghua University in Peking on May 29 during the first upsurge in the schools.

The Red Guards wore red armbands emblazoned with three large characters, Hong Wei Bing (Red Guard). They first took up the task of uprooting the "Four Olds" — old and out-dated culture, ideas, customs and habits. They searched the homes of former capitalists and big landlords for contraband, including gold, jewelry, opium pipes, and opium stores (drug use, which had a devastating effect on sections of Chinese society before Liberation in 1949, had been banned since that time) as well as hidden weapons, deeds to property, etc. What they found (and they found quite a stash) they put on display as proof that there were old-time capitalist roaders waiting in the wings for capitalism to be restored.

The exuberance of the youth in taking up Mao's call to remake society earned the most vicious venom of the bourgeoisie — in China and

elsewhere — resulting in highly exaggerated tales of widescale violence and destruction of historical artifacts. Frankly, it didn't really matter if there were incidents of unwarranted roughness and some unnecessary destruction. That's to be expected in any great upheaval in which the masses are genuinely unleashed, as Mao and the Sixteen Points had made clear. What *did* matter — and still does today — is that youth, exactly because of their initiative, their spirit of boldly daring to assault the sacred citadels of conventional wisdom, conventional values, and convention generally, with no stake in preserving any outmoded thinking or practice, carried the spirit and essential content of the Cultural Revolution to every part of the country. With their red flags flying and red armbands proclaiming to all that they represented the future, the Red Guards took to the roads in their own Long Marches, or travelled by train — the railways had been instructed to give them free passage — converging by the tens of thousands at times on provincial towns and other areas. They all carried copies of the "Little Red Book" of *Quotations by Chairman Mao Tsetung* which they studied and discussed continually. Mao Tsetung's statement that "It is right to rebel against reactionaries" was their battle cry.

One observer reported that the city of Changsha (population about 800,000) in Hunan Province had over 200,000 Red Guards visiting during the first part of December 1966. Most came to visit nearby Shaoshan, Mao Tsetung's birthplace. An older visitor to this rural area at that time wrote: "The posters will be blown down, the youngsters will move on out into work or back to their schooling, but the message they have brought will remain in people's minds. Everywhere there has been a definite rise in political understanding. The fight against revisionism is definitely on." (Alley, p. 15)

Of the tens of millions of youth travelling throughout the country, most came to Peking at one time or another. They came to learn what had happened in China's capital, exchange experiences with others and, hopefully, to see Mao Tsetung. On August 18, 1966, Mao appeared at a gigantic rally of Red Guards in Tien An Men Square in the center of Peking where he put on a Red Guard armband, thereby publicly declaring his support of the youth. Subsequently, mass youth rallies were held every two weeks or so with over a million people each, addressed by high-ranking party people.

One observer wrote:

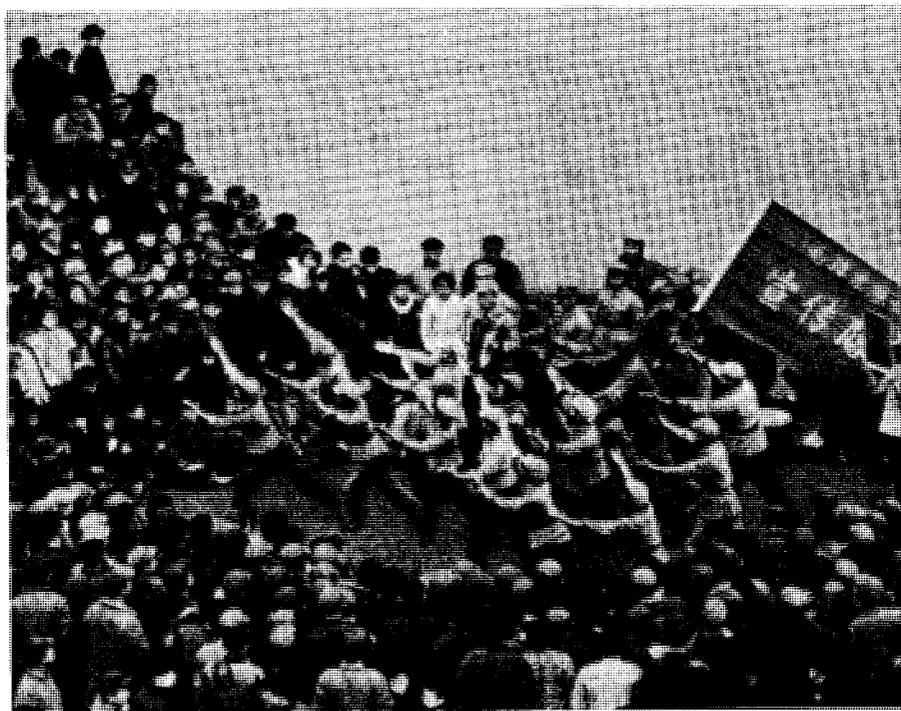
In Peking the visiting Red Guards were taken care of with remarkable organization by the military: they were housed, fed, and transported in such a way that over a four-month period Peking had a supplementary, transient population of a million extra people without any apparent



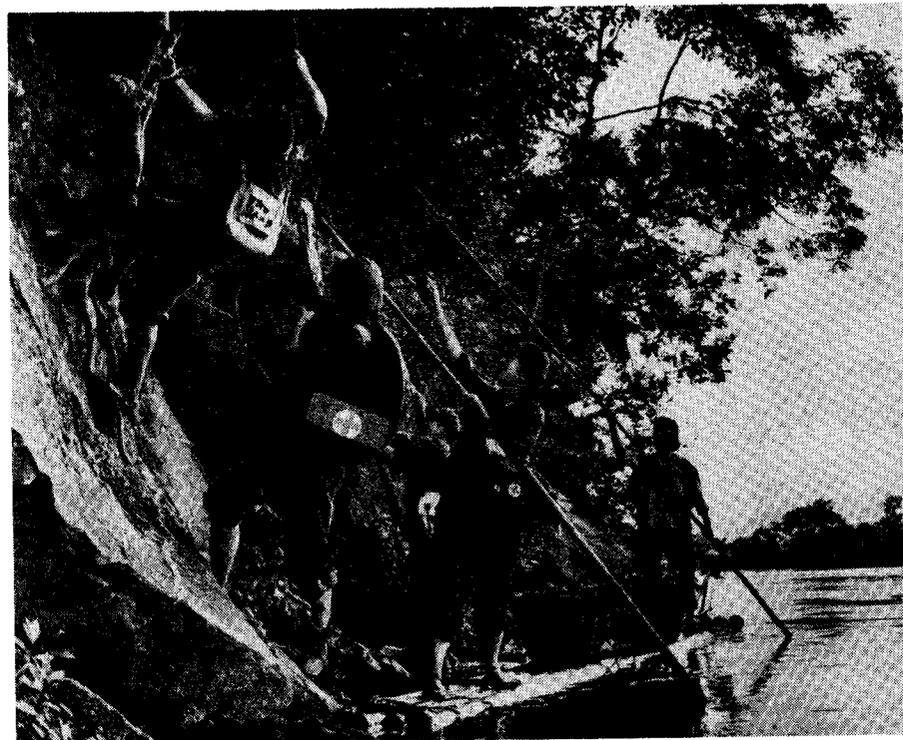
The 1967 January Revolution in Shanghai. Thousands rally to welcome the release of a statement by the Central leadership of the Chinese Communist Party in support of the revolutionary seizure of power in Shanghai.



Big-character posters in a village near Canton.



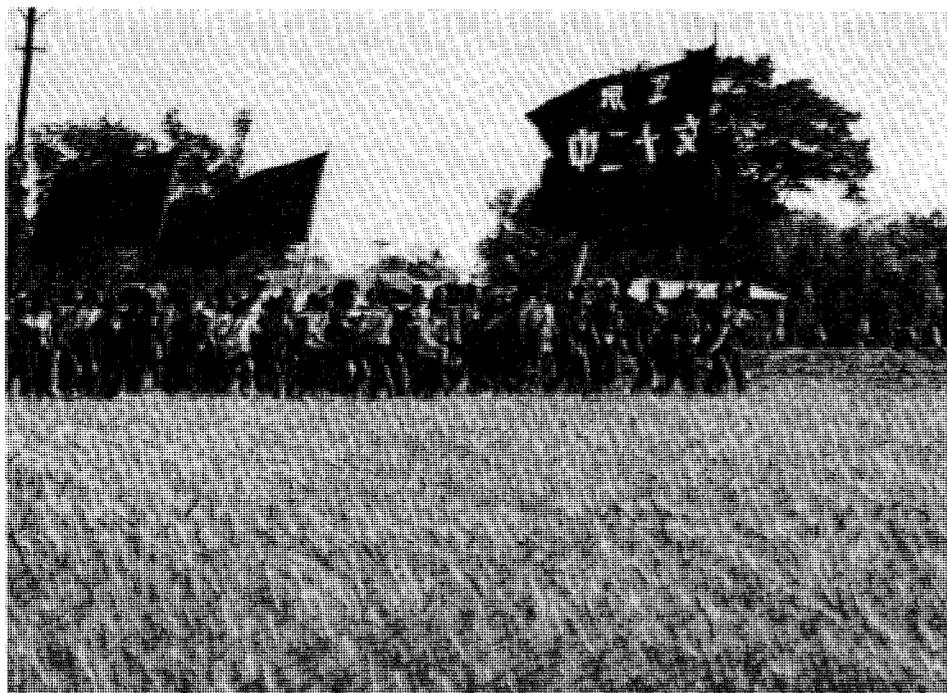
Red Guard propaganda team in the streets.



Medical workers collect medicinal herbs.



Young Red Guards in Peking change the name of the street where the Soviet embassy is located from "Yangwei (Display of Military Power) Road" to "Anti-Revisionist Road."



Marching into the countryside to help with the harvest.



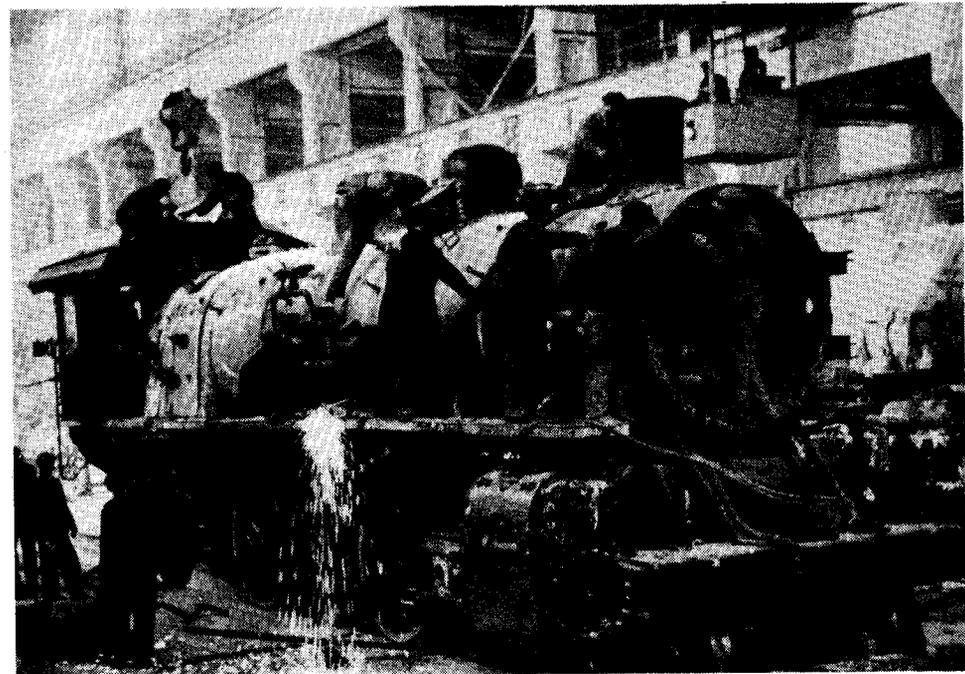
Mao reviewing Red Guards in Tien An Men Square on August 18, 1966.



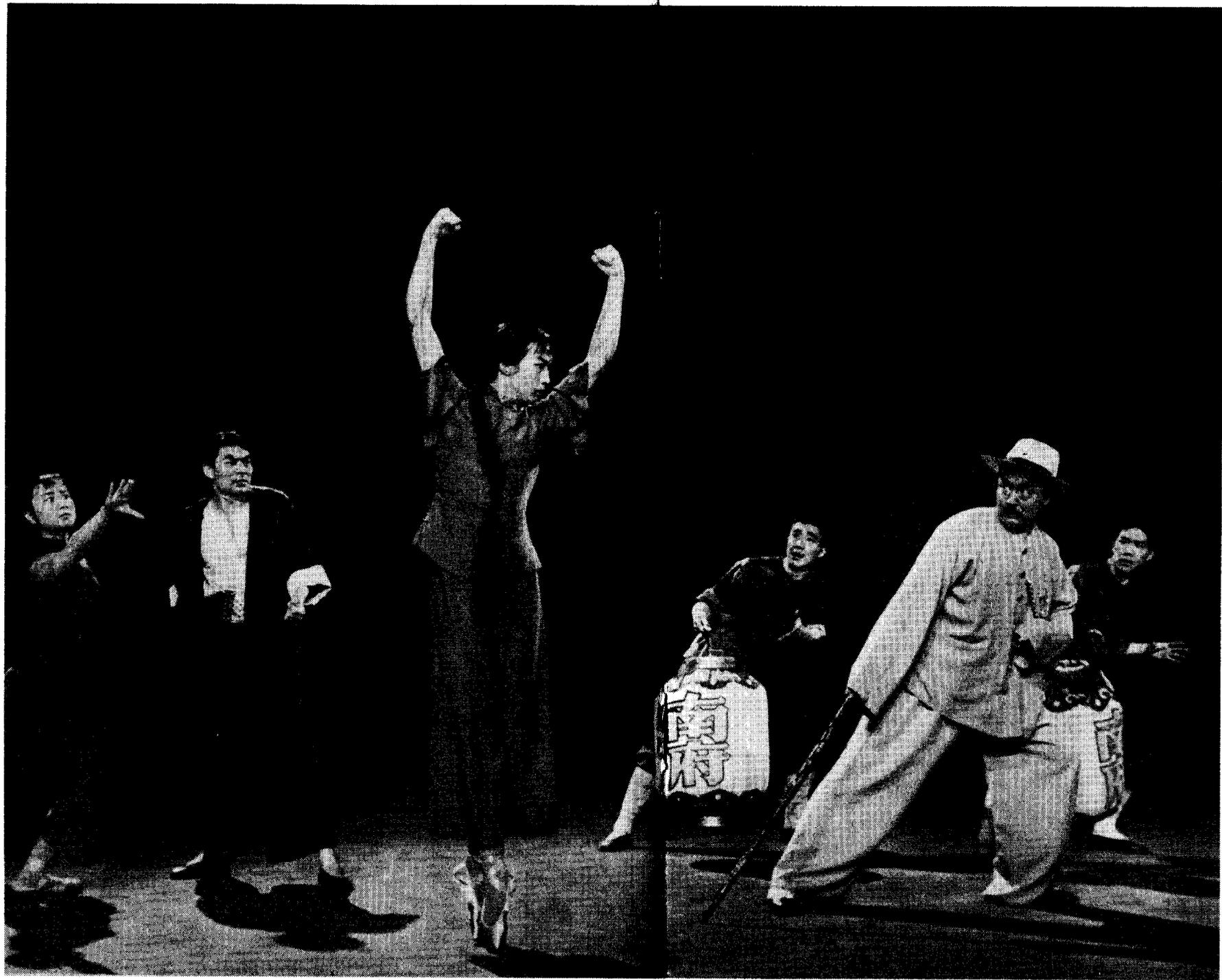
1968. Over a million demonstrators fill the streets in support of the Black uprisings in the U.S.



Sign above reads: "Grasp Revolution, Promote Production. Down With Economism. Worker/Student Liaison. Shanghai Steel No. 3."



Overhauling a train in a Shanghai factory.



Scene from
*The Red
Detachment
of Women.*



Chiang Ching, speaking
at the founding of the Peking
Municipal Revolutionary
Committee in 1967.



Chang Chun-chiao at the
founding of the Peking
Municipal Revolutionary Committee.



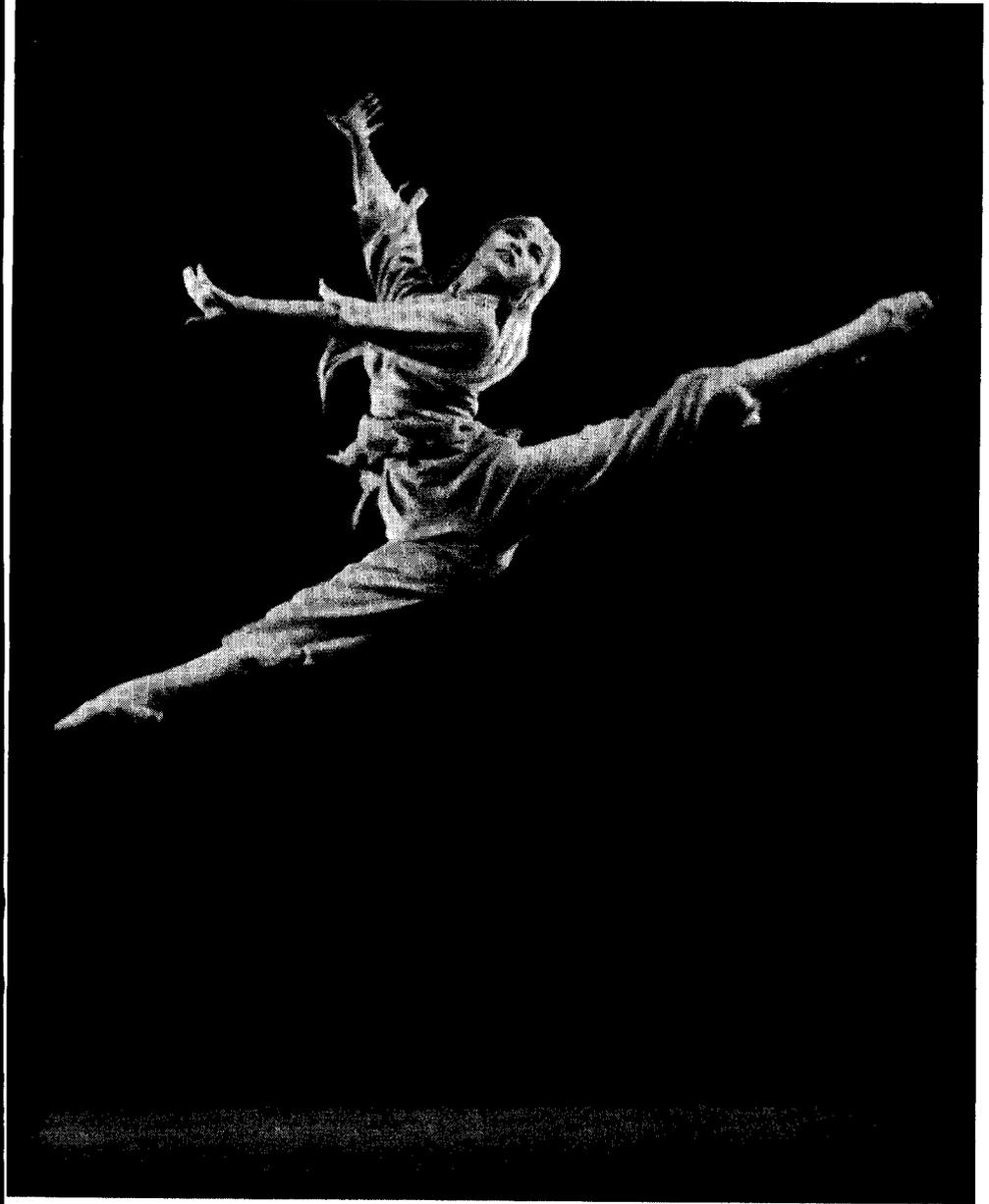
Distributing handbills during the January Storm.

Rally to celebrate the establishment of the Revolutionary Committee of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region.

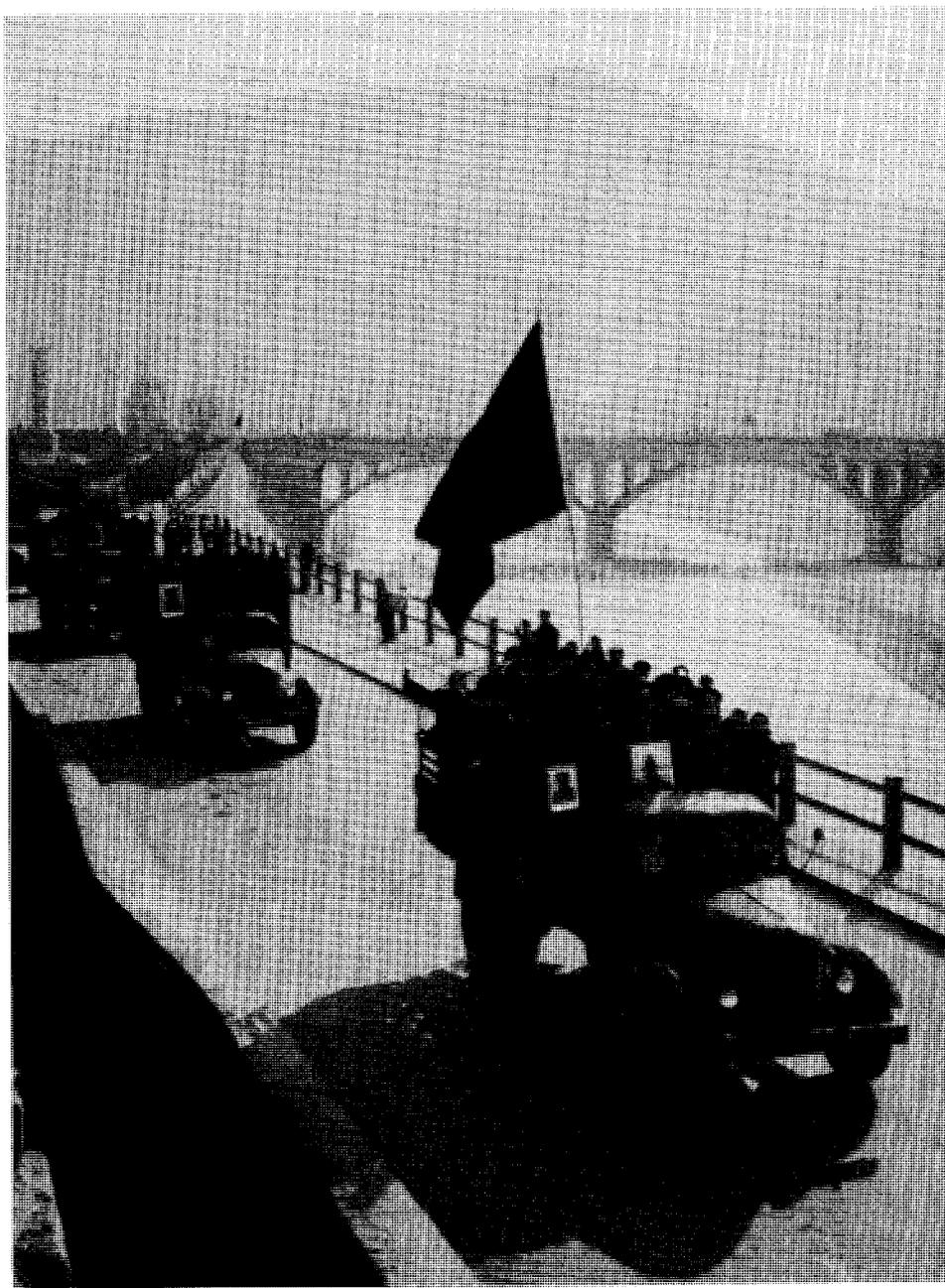




Members of the White-haired Girl Dance Troupe travel to the mountains to live, work and perform.



A scene from the revolutionary ballet *The White-haired Girl*.



Revolutionary students from Peking arrive in Yen-an to settle in the countryside.

strain on the food supply or the transportation system. There was a new look in the city streets: young, booted Mongolians dressed in long belted tunics strode side by side with Uigurs from faraway Sinkiang, with their bright, shimmering provincial costumes. . . . Stores and buses, gardens and restaurants resounded with various accents and dialects. All of China was in Peking, in all its prodigious, manifold variety. (Daubier, p. 75)

On National Day, October 1, over 2 million Red Guards and other rebels marched through Tien An Men in a seven-hour parade. The Western bourgeois media scoffed at such displays as proof that Mao had turned China into a nation of fanatic robots. But this scoffing concealed their great terror at the sight of such mass revolutionary activity at a high level of political consciousness and on such a scale never seen before. The mass rallies and marches signified the revolutionary enthusiasm which the Cultural Revolution, led by Mao, had unleashed, and the profound political and ideological changes that were transforming the country. And it was this which sent the bourgeoisie into such frenzy around the world.

The Proletariat Enters the Scene

In the midst of this unprecedented revolutionary fervor and outpouring of youth, another force was coming onto the scene, preparing to play the decisive role that only it can play. This force was — and is — the proletariat. In July 1967, Mao spoke to its decisive role:

The revolutionary intellectuals and the young students were the first to achieve consciousness, which is in accord with the laws of revolutionary development. . . . The development of the movement showed that the workers and peasants are always the main force. . . . Only when the broad masses of workers and peasants arose was all that bourgeois stuff thoroughly smashed; while the revolutionary intellectuals and young students had to fall back into a subsidiary place. (cited in Daubier pp. 81-82)

Mao was not making a subjective judgment here or commenting on any fundamental lack of revolutionary fervor by the youth; he was assessing things scientifically, according to Marxist principles that have been borne out in every great revolutionary movement. Because they are fresh forces less tied to institutions and conventions and their position in society gives them relatively greater freedom to both think about and act on broad political questions, young people and intellectuals are generally the first to

come into motion. And that's fine. But, as Bob Avakian has pointed out in a recent interview in *Revolution* magazine:

They are not the people who can be the backbone and leading force of the revolution. They are not those who are in a position to carry it all the way through, either in the sense that their interests demand the most thoroughgoing revolution in society or in the sense that their life conditions prepare them to carry through a fight like that on their own initiative and under their own banner. If left to themselves, they'll stop short and seek some way to just reform the system, which, on the one hand, is impossible to reform, but on the other hand, the system does continually throw up illusions of reformability and these people are more susceptible to those illusions. (Avakian, 1986, p. 14)

One of the critical roles the youth can play in any revolutionary movement is spreading revolutionary ideas and the need for revolutionary action to other sections of society. We have seen how the Red Guards were mobilized to do just that in the Cultural Revolution. With the youth on the march all over the country backed up by Mao himself, the revisionists could not halt the mobilization of the masses. They were forced, therefore, to adopt other stratagems intended to divert or derail it. One of these efforts was to keep the revolutionary upsurge contained by preventing the Red Guards from linking up with the proletariat. The revisionists would try to whip up antagonisms between the workers and, in the countryside, the peasants, on the one hand, and the revolutionary youth, on the other. When that ultimately failed, the revisionists tried to bribe the workers and foster splits in their ranks.

The Battle for Shanghai

Nowhere were the efforts of the revisionists more desperate, nor the fight of the revolutionaries for the proletariat more critical, than in Shanghai. Shanghai — the city which before Liberation in 1949 had been carved up by the imperialists of different countries and turned into both a big-time profit zone and an infamous "adventurers' paradise," filled with every feudal and bourgeois decadence imaginable, from child prostitution to opium dens. After liberation, revolutionaries following Mao's line, led by Chang Chun-chiao (who first came to prominence during the Great Leap Forward and who became a principal leader of the Cultural Revolution, both with respect to the epochal struggles in Shanghai and as a key member

of the central group in charge of the Cultural Revolution) and others, fought to transform the city. The continuing class struggle had been particularly sharp there. As one revolutionary leader had commented, Shanghai "is a place where the bourgeoisie is most concentrated, it is a place where you will find class struggle most complicated." Shanghai forever earned its place in revolutionary history during the Cultural Revolution when it became the pacesetter and standard-bearer for the rest of the country during the "January Storm."

The Shanghai municipal party committee had become a nest of capitalist roaders. The revolutionaries also had a strong base there, but did not hold power overall. And many of the workers had been lulled or bribed into passivity. A woman worker and party member at the Shanghai No. 17 Textile Mill told visiting revolutionaries in 1971 that she had been on the wrong side when the Cultural Revolution first broke out — she had thought, "Why rebel? We're enjoying a happy life now. The Party led us in making the revolution; it's wrong to criticize party leaders." Mao's big-character poster and call to "Bombard the Headquarters" was a big jolt to her and others.

Along with encouraging complacency among the workers, the capitalist roaders also attempted bribery. During the high tide of mass upsurge in December 1966, municipal party committee officials reversed gears, and, conceding that, yes, the workers had been getting a raw deal, they promised to set things right by giving the workers bonuses and retroactive pay increases. This was called the "economist wind." Pay increases were granted selectively in order to foster jealousies among the workers; and the reintroduction of bonuses created further divisions among the workers. There was intense and sharp struggle in the workers' ranks around this; it was resolved in the most advanced places by the workers returning the money, saying, "When we got the money we forgot about state power, when we got the bonuses we forgot about revolution. We don't want this stinking bribe, we want state power and we want to make revolution!"

As part of this "economist wind," the capitalist roaders also incited the workers to stop production and disrupt public services. Contrary to revisionist claims then and now, the view of Mao and his revolutionary comrades was never "to hell with production." It was, rather, that the masses, especially the proletariat, had to pay the utmost attention to affairs of state, to what line leads overall, and to transforming *all* of society in the direction of abolishing all inequalities and divisions. Their sphere of concern had to be the world revolution, and not limited to production or to "their" factory. If production was temporarily disrupted for political debate and strug-

gle for *this* goal, it was quite another matter. Applying this to the sphere of production meant that politics had to be in command of economics, that the productive forces could be truly unleashed only by training the masses in the revolutionary line and science of Marxism and arousing their conscious activism. On this basis many old and outmoded methods and rules could be changed by the workers and true wonders of production accomplished. This was expressed in the slogan, "grasp revolution, promote production."

The correct application of this resulted in a high level of political consciousness, along with astounding achievements in economic development — such as Shanghai workers developing the means to build a 10,000-ton ocean liner on a dry dock intended for only a 3,000-ton ship. And 1969-71 saw record rates of increase in industrial output. But the revisionists continually sought to narrow the workers' consciousness by attempting to focus their attention on material gain.

The January Storm

Finally, in January 1967, after fierce struggle, millions of rebel workers, joined by students and nearby peasants, overthrew the municipal party committee. This involved physically storming and occupying key institutions (such as the offices of the two daily newspapers) and taking over other vital municipal services. It also required uniting the various rebel workers' organizations and factions which had formed in the course of the struggle. In a talk given in 1968, Chang Chun-chiao described the seizure of power:

In the early stage of the seizure of power in Shanghai, we never thought of the "capture of power" nor did we use the words "January Revolution." We proceeded in the main from the Party spirit and with no thought of factionalism. This is because we saw with our own eyes stoppages of work in industrial plants, and the piers were in such a state of paralysis that foreign vessels entering Shanghai harbor were unable to unload or load cargoes. Taking advantage of the situation, imperialists lost no time in broadcasting to the world, saying that wharf workers in Shanghai went on strike. They did so with the malicious intention to attack and slander us. . . .

What was uppermost in our minds was what we were going to do [about the widespread dislocations]. After discussing the situation as a whole, we set about putting the vital departments such as the piers,

railway stations, waterworks, power plants, broadcasting stations, postal offices and banks under our control. We did so to prevent counter-revolutionary acts of sabotage. Therefore, we mobilized troops and students and the rebels of industrial plants and railway stations to assist the revolutionary workers.

In the case of the Shanghai Railway Bureau, for instance, the rebels of railway stations with the assistance of thousands of college students manned the ticket booths and entry points to platforms, or served as locomotive conductors and train attendants. The students of practically all secondary schools in Shanghai were busy at the piers helping to load or unload cargoes. To get these workers organized, a joint command was set up not for seizing power on behalf of this or that faction, but for the sake of class interests, for the honor of the fatherland, for the socialist economy and for repelling the counterattack of bourgeois "economism."

We submitted a report to the Center on the situation in Shanghai and what steps we had taken. Chairman Mao endorsed our actions, telling us that the seizure of power was wholly necessary and correct. This is how we came to use the term "seizure of power" as suggested by Chairman Mao. (*RW* No. 90, p. 9)

The next step was to develop an organizational form by which power could be consolidated and wielded by the revolutionaries in order to carry out further transformations. This form was the revolutionary committee, which developed into a three-in-one combination: in equal numbers, representatives of the masses, selected by the masses; party cadres (full-time functionaries or officials) who were judged to be revolutionaries following Mao's line, also selected by the masses; and, at the municipal and provincial levels, representatives of the army (in factories, offices, and schools, it was members of the people's militia). Other three-in-one combinations were also utilized, such as workers, technicians, and cadres; and young, middle-aged, and old.

The seizure of power in Shanghai was followed by similar struggles across the country, as part of the overall great upheaval and turmoil that characterized these first years of the Cultural Revolution. Entrenched capitalist roaders were subjected to merciless criticism from the masses and knocked down from their positions. Many of their followers were given the same treatment. Officials whose methods may have been merely bureaucratic and not the product of a deeply rooted wrong line were also sharply criticized — and, as to be expected, often things got a little wild and some mistakes were made. Conservative party leaders seized on these to try to stifle the masses' initiative and to stop the whole thing. But Mao continued to stand firmly with the masses. He had foreseen just such developments when he admonished party officials and others in the

Sixteen-Point Decision not to be afraid of disturbances and that "in such a great revolutionary movement, it is hardly avoidable that they should show shortcomings of one kind or another."

The Sixteen Points had also instructed that debates "should be conducted by reasoning, not by coercion or force." In those instances where the masses had formed factions which became antagonistic toward each other and were incited to use violence by revisionist agents or provocateurs, detachments of workers or soldiers of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) were sent in to reason with all sides and persuade them to stop any violent confrontations.

The Communist Party was reconstituted from the ground up based on experience in the mass upsurge, including the masses' judgments as to who was following and fighting to apply Mao's revolutionary line.

Stirring Internationalism

In the midst of all this turmoil, when the class struggle was so intense, and when the fate of the Chinese revolution was at stake, Mao Tsetung and his revolutionary comrades never lost sight of the bigger picture, the world situation of which China and the Cultural Revolution were just a part, and of their internationalist responsibilities. Political support and material aid and assistance were given to people struggling against imperialism on every continent. For instance, China's firm support of the Vietnamese people's struggle against U.S. aggression was manifested in major shipments of food, mainly rice (in the late '60s China was the biggest supplier of food to North Vietnam); Chinese construction teams were sent to repair roads and bridges destroyed by the U.S.; and fighter planes and small arms were shipped, as well as other equipment for construction and military purposes.

Mass rallies were held in Peking and other cities to support anti-imperialist struggles around the world, and revolutionary literature by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao, including the famous Red Book, was printed in dozens of languages and distributed in many countries. Political support was also given to those struggling in the imperialist countries, such as the students and workers during the 1968 May Days of rebellion in France. And a rally of a million people in China upheld the struggle of Black people in the U.S. On April 16, 1968 Mao issued his famous statement "In Support of the Afro-American Struggle Against Violent Repression" in which he called it "a new clarion call to all the exploited and op-

pressed people of the United States to fight against the barbarous rule of the monopoly capitalist class." These stirring manifestations of internationalism ignited and fueled revolutionary fires among the oppressed on every continent.

Socialist New Things

The mass upsurge had succeeded in breaking the hold of the revisionists throughout the country, and in October 1968, Liu Shao-chi, who had been identified and targeted as China's number one capitalist roader, was ousted from all positions of leadership and from the Party (he had been President of the Peoples Republic of China). Even more than routing the bourgeois headquarters, the mass upsurge had resulted in profound revolutionary transformations in every sphere of society, in both the underlying economic relations and the superstructure. Ivory towers and sacred citadels of all kinds came crashing down under the impact of the proletariat armed with the revolutionary science of Marxism. In their place new institutions, representing new social relations, were created. These "socialist new things," as they were called, were concrete expressions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of the proletariat mastering and occupying all arenas of society and transforming it in the direction of communism.

Take education, for instance. This former bourgeois bastion was transformed from top to bottom. Mao Tsetung Thought Propaganda Teams composed of revolutionary workers were sent into the universities to permanently guide the work. Curricula and teaching methods were changed to link theory with practice, and classroom study was combined with productive labor in nearby factories or agricultural communes, with the students (and teachers!) learning from as well as imparting book knowledge to the workers and peasants. This was called "open door" schooling.

Highly competitive exams for grades were abolished and, instead, exams were used as means of finding gaps in a student's understanding as well as shortcomings in teaching. Primary and secondary schools also combined book study with productive labor, often in small workshops set up in the schools. There was a lively classroom atmosphere, with students encouraged to state their opinions and criticize their teachers. (Anyone who's tried to do that in schools here knows what an achievement — and how liberating — that was!) After completing secondary school, youths would work in factories, in the countryside, or in the military (which at that time was

vastly different from the imperialist military) for several years. A campaign was waged for educated youth to go the countryside and settle there permanently, and many, many youth volunteered. This was part of the efforts to narrow the differences between city and countryside; at the same time the youth were bringing book knowledge to the peasants and using it to "serve the people," they were transforming their own outlook and overcoming vestiges of elitism.

Upon recommendation of their workmates using politics as the criteria — that is, devotion to the revolution and desire to use their higher education for the good of society rather than personal fame and gain — youth could apply for admission to college. (Tuition and living expenses were provided.) Colleges also were established in the countryside, and special courses of study were set up right in the factories to train technicians from among the workers themselves.

Reactionaries then and now claim that Mao and the Cultural Revolution were anti-intellectual. Well, it depends on what you mean by "intellectual." Mao certainly fought against the attitude that "educated" people are a cut above others and deserve special treatment and against the prevalent bourgeois notion that knowledge is private property to be used to enrich and heighten the prestige of its owner. But "anti-intellectual"? During the Cultural Revolution, peasants, some of whom were barely literate, engaged in scientific experimentation in the fields and in simple laboratories, and learned through their own experience (and with the aid of educated youth from the cities) how to increase crop yields and reclaim barren land. They broke barriers of what was considered "possible." The biggest barriers of all that were broken were the centuries of feudal and bourgeois ideology, which held that people who worked with their hands, and especially backward rural peasants, were good only for back-breaking labor — strong backs but weak minds. Privileged and pampered intellectuals may not have liked the idea of knowledge being out of *their* control, but the workers and peasants grabbed it and ran with it.

They particularly grabbed onto philosophy, Mao Tsetung Thought above all. The Red Guards had popularized the "Little Red Book" of *Quotations from Mao Tsetung*, which was taken up and used in a living way — that is, as an approach and a method for analyzing and solving contradictions. The study of Marxist theory was promoted broadly among the people — for instance, at one large, politically advanced Shanghai factory, 3,000 study classes were organized among the workers which focused on six works: *Civil War in France* and *Critique of the Gotha Programme* by Marx, *Anti-Dühring* by Engels, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* and *State and*

Revolution by Lenin, and *The Communist Manifesto*. Not exactly frivolous reading matter. One could say that all this is proof that the Cultural Revolution fostered a very keen intellectualism — but of the proletarian and not the bourgeois variety, which really makes all the difference. Intellectualism in the cause of and from the standpoint of the revolutionary proletariat will always be "anti-intellectualism" from the standpoint of the bourgeoisie.

A Radical Rupture in Culture

There was a similar revolution in the cultural arena — theater, dance, art, and literature. Along with education, culture is crucial in promoting ideology and values of one kind or another and in creating public opinion as to what must be done to revolutionize society. It was called the *Cultural Revolution*, after all, for a reason. The battle had begun to be waged in earnest in the early 1960s when Chiang Ching was given the responsibility of revolutionizing Peking Opera and other stage works. (Chiang Ching had been an actress in Shanghai in the mid-1930s before she joined Mao's revolutionary headquarters in Yenan where they were later married.) At the Forum of Theatrical Workers Participating in the Festival of Peking Opera on Contemporary Themes in July 1964, Chiang Ching stated:

It is inconceivable that, in our socialist country led by the Communist Party, the dominant position on the stage is not occupied by the workers, peasants and soldiers, who are the real creators of history and the true masters of our country. We should create literature and art which protect our socialist economic base. . . . Theaters are places in which to educate the people, but at present the stage is dominated by emperors, princes, generals, ministers, scholars and beauties — by feudal and bourgeois stuff. (Chiang Ching, pp. 1, 2)

Even works that played a revolutionary role during the earlier new-democratic stage of the Chinese revolution had to be analyzed and revised in order to propel the further advances needed in the socialist period. For example, *The White-Haired Girl*, written and staged originally in Yenan, was revised to downplay the love theme between the heroine and hero so that class struggle became the motive force in the story, not love between two individuals. In addition, in the new version the heroine's father, a poor peasant, fights the landlord's troops when they come for his daughter instead of committing suicide. Instead of being raped, becoming pregnant,

and then fleeing only after the landlord refused to marry her and made plans to sell her, the heroine fights off the landlord's attempted rape and flees into the hills where her hair turns white from hardship. In the revised version, the hero goes to find the Red Army instead of running off and being found by it. In all these ways, revisions were made to show the characters actively resisting and consciously taking their destiny into their own hands. It's not surprising that the earlier version was restaged with much fanfare by the current rulers when they seized power after Mao's death, and Chiang Ching was vilified for her leadership in the cultural arena.

Under her guidance, outstanding model works were created and popularized throughout the country, including being adapted into various regional theatrical forms and languages of China's minority nationalities. By the mid-'70s these model works included nine model operas, two dance dramas (*The White Haired Girl* and *Red Detachment of Women*), two symphonies, a piano composition, and a piano concerto. At the time of the coup in 1976, several other major works were being experimentally performed — that is, performed for limited audiences for criticism and then revised — and several outstanding revolutionary feature films had been made.

At the heart of the struggle here was whether or not proletarian culture must involve a radical rupture, a qualitative change from and leap beyond all past culture. Advancing beyond the practice of past revolutions, the model works did just that. The revolutionaries transformed traditional artistic forms, such as Peking opera with its centuries of Chinese tradition, and Western-style classical ballet, to convey the ideas, values, and goals of the new society. To do this, certain traditional artistic conventions had to be broken with — for example, that ballerinas had to be dainty and ethereal. The strong women of the new society could not be depicted by classic ballet positions and postures, dressed in fluttery tutus. Instead, Chiang Ching, in the model ballet *Red Detachment of Women*, put them in military uniforms carrying rifles. When women's dance motions included strong arms with clenched fists instead of the constant images of delicacy, the bourgeois purists screamed! Past traditions and art forms, however, were not indiscriminately scrapped, but, rather, criticized and, where appropriate, adapted or transformed to conform to the revolutionary character of proletarian art.

And what gives art its revolutionary character? Mao had first discussed this in *Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art* in 1942: "Revolutionary literature and art should create a variety of characters out of real life and help the masses to propel history forward." (p. 82) This was in opposi-

tion to the bourgeois smokescreen of "art for art's sake," which denies that all artistic expression, irrespective of the subjective intent or desires of the artist, has class content — while peddling reactionary culture at miles a minute.

A secondary aspect of the revolution on the cultural front was the tremendous outpouring of creativity on the part of the masses who put on amateur productions of the model works and took up painting, writing poetry and short stories, and other cultural activities in their spare time. And this in a country where formerly the laboring people had been considered too rough, too dirty, too uncultured to even pick up an artist's brush!

Barefoot Doctors and May 7 Schools

Another "product" of the Cultural Revolution was the transformation of medical care. In this arena, as in education and culture, there had been a clash of two lines. The proletarian line emphasized relying on the conscious activism of the masses to attack general health problems — uniting the people in mass campaigns for improved hygiene or to wipe out the conditions which gave rise to certain diseases — and the bourgeois line put first priority on experts and technique. The latter meant building up urban medical centers and services, whereas Mao's proletarian line fought to orient health services to the countryside, where the vast majority of China's peoples live. The bourgeois line emphasized long years of medical school and training in Western medical techniques; the revolutionaries, however, developed graduated courses of training including the training of "barefoot doctors," peasants (and workers in the cities) who continued to work in the fields (or the factories) but who also took care of the basic health needs of the people in their work units. (The name "barefoot doctor" came from south China where the peasants work barefoot in the rice paddies.) More complicated health problems were referred to doctors in nearby towns or cities.

The revolutionary line also advocated the development and use of traditional Chinese medicine — acupuncture, herbal remedies, etc. — along with Western methods. The bourgeois experts scoffed at traditional medicine — but during the Cultural Revolution, significant breakthroughs were made in understanding scientifically and further developing traditional methods, such as the use of acupuncture for anesthesia in some operations, a technique that stunned Western doctors when they first

observed it. And the combination of traditional with modern medicine meant better health care for rural areas which still had limited access to high-tech methods of health care.

Another socialist new thing was the May 7 Cadre Schools, schools in the countryside where party cadre would go for a period of time, do all the physical work necessary to maintain themselves (including building housing, growing food, and other tasks) along with intensive study of Marxist works. For those who found it disgusting to get their hands dirty, and who viewed "menial work" as beneath them, the May 7 schools were horrible. Others welcomed the opportunity to gain a first-hand appreciation of the work of peasants and proletarians as part of transforming their world outlook. This was part of the reeducation program that many cadres went through — some willingly and some resentfully. This, too, helped revitalize the communist party and strengthen the leadership.

New Victories, New Opposition

In 1968, Mao had pointed out that even though a great victory had been won,

the defeated class will still struggle. These people are still around and this class still exists. Therefore, we cannot speak of final victory. Not even for decades. We must not lose our vigilance. According to the Leninist viewpoint, the final victory of a socialist country not only requires the efforts of the proletarians and the broad masses of the people at home, but also involves the victory of the world revolution and the abolition of the system of exploitation of man by man over the whole globe, upon which all mankind will be emancipated. Therefore, it is wrong to speak lightly of the final victory of the revolution in our country; it runs counter to Leninism and does not conform to facts.

Here, Mao clearly linked the development of the Chinese revolution to the revolutionary struggle worldwide, cautioning against any relaxing of the class struggle. Certainly it was far from over in China, let alone the rest of the world.

A major part of the two-line struggle during the last years of Mao's life was what attitude to take toward the achievements of the earlier years of the Cultural Revolution — whether to uphold them as part of upholding the verdicts generally or to reverse them.

The Ninth Party Congress in 1969 represented a consolidation of the

struggle up to that point, united with the achievements, and on that basis called on the proletariat to further transform all of society. At the same time, Mao predicted that "probably another revolution will have to be carried out after several years." The accuracy of Mao's analysis was borne out just a few years later when Lin Piao — the man who had stood side-by-side with him during the early high tide of the Cultural Revolution, and who in fact had been named as Mao's successor — jumped out in a full-scale attack against Mao, even going so far as trying to pull off an assassination attempt in 1971. (For an in-depth analysis of the Lin Piao affair, see Bob Avakian's *The Loss in China and the Revolutionary Legacy of Mao Tsetung*.)

Lin's line essentially came down to another version of the Liu Shao-chi line, against which he ostensibly had been fighting all these years. Lin had replaced Peng Teh-huai as Defense Minister in 1959, but by 1967 or so was advocating basically the same line. Peng had advocated transforming China's army into a "modern" army like the Soviet Union's (and the Western capitalist countries'), which went right along with Peng's (and Liu's) demand to focus the economy on heavy industry and high-tech military hardware at the expense of light industry, agriculture, and all-around economic construction. Peng's (and by the late '60s, Lin's) line of relying on advanced weaponry went right up against Mao who, while not ignoring the importance of modern technology, argued that it was people, not weapons, that are decisive in warfare. Instead of the strict ranks and mindless yes-sir-ing demanded of the ordinary soldiers in "modern" armies, the Chinese People's Liberation Army under Mao's line did away with special privileges for officers and relied on a high level of political consciousness among the troops for discipline. Mao also placed considerable emphasis on developing the people's militia, with units in factories, schools, communes, and other basic-level institutions.

While no doubt nurturing certain careerist aims, Lin had played a leading role in carrying out the Socialist Education Movement in the Army and combating Peng's line. The "Little Red Book" had been used widely in the armed forces, before it was popularized throughout society by the Red Guards. But by 1969 Lin was arguing that there was no more need to wage class struggle since revisionism had been defeated and it was time to reestablish order and focus on production. When his line was resoundingly defeated Lin turned to intrigue. He was killed in an airplane crash as he tried to flee to the Soviet Union after his plot to assassinate Mao was discovered.

Lin's treachery had serious repercussions, however, as it put Mao in the position of having to bring back and utilize some of the rightists in the party

leadership. It strengthened the position of Chou En-lai, who had gone along with the Cultural Revolution reluctantly and who had advocated bringing back and relying on die-hard rightists like Deng who had made token self-criticism. The Tenth Party Congress in August 1973 was a victory for the revolutionaries in that it upheld Mao's line, the Cultural Revolution, and the socialist new things. But the rightists were gaining ground once again. Their strength, as in earlier stages of the Cultural Revolution, lay in organizationally controlling various key positions in the Party and government. Deng was soon back in a powerful position. And, once again, the strength of Mao and the revolutionaries lay in unleashing the masses of people around the correct political line, training them in the tempests of today for the struggles of the future, and digging away still deeper at the roots of revisionism.

As Raymond Lotta has pointed out in *And Mao Makes Five*, the struggle from 1973 to 1976 was "a continuation of the struggle that came to a head in the early years of the Cultural Revolution when the working class successfully resisted attempts at restoration and carried out major transformations of society." (p. iv) It was also a continuation of Mao's method of relying on the masses, in this case, preparing them ideologically for when things were bound to come to a head and politically educating them to further distinguish between the road of revolution and that of counter-revolution. It principally took the form of educational campaigns and the defense of the socialist new things.

Internationally, the Soviet Union was flexing its imperialist muscle: contention with the U.S. imperialists was beginning to predominate over its earlier collusion. With the Soviet Union presenting a growing threat on China's northern border, Mao summed up that it was the principal external danger to China, thus necessitating a certain "opening to the West." Under Mao, this was nothing like the craven capitulation and subservience toward the U.S. that China's current rulers display today. It did, however, further strengthen the position of pro-U.S. rightists like Deng and, behind him, Chou.

One of the big battlegrounds was, once again, the economy. The rightists held that the only way to push the economy forward was through "modernization" — which meant advanced technology from abroad, lopsided internal development geared to foreign trade, reintroducing highly centralized management, and a return to strict rules and regulations along with material incentives to push workers harder. Their attitude toward the masses, expressed openly after Mao's death and the coup, was a sickening condescension and haughty paternalism: "If merits are not rewarded and

wrongs not penalized, how can the people be encouraged to advance and how can the four modernizations be brought about?" (*Peking Review* No. 33, 1978) These condescending saviors viewed the masses as petty-minded beasts of burden, concerned only with their immediate well-being. What a contrast to the lofty vision of the Shanghai dockworkers in 1974 who raised the slogan: "Be Masters of the Wharf, Not Slaves to Tonnage!"

Hand-in-glove with this view of the masses, the rightists advocated a return to preeminence of bourgeois intellectuals. They scorned the practice of educated youth going to the countryside as a waste of talent and of professionals and officials going to May 7th Schools as a waste of time. The reforms in education were blasted as lowering academic standards (Deng would later refer to the students and teachers of that period as "intellectual cripples"). And the achievements of workers and peasants in doing scientific experiments and developing technical innovations were scoffed at — besides, it was time taken away from work!

On the cultural front, with the visit to China of symphonic orchestras from abroad and other cultural exchanges, a battle erupted over how to view bourgeois culture — whether to critically analyze it, learning from the positive aspects and criticizing what was outmoded and backward, or to slavishly fawn over it. At the same time, the model works which had set a pathbreaking standard for proletarian culture were attacked, and the development of new model works was obstructed. The right was even bold enough to stage a rehash of an old opera which extolled the Cultural Revolution's chief target, Liu Shao-chi. Mao Tsetung fought the rightists in both theory and practice right up until his death. He continued to give leadership to his revolutionary comrades in waging mass political campaigns, at the same time analyzing the continuing class struggle under socialism. In the last year of his life, Mao warned again of the continuing danger of restoration:

With the socialist revolution they themselves come under fire. At the time of the co-operative transformation of agriculture there were people in the Party who opposed it, and when it comes to criticizing bourgeois right, they resent it. You are making the socialist revolution, and yet don't know where the bourgeoisie is. It is right in the Communist Party — those in power taking the capitalist road. The capitalist roaders are still on the capitalist road.

Bright Future, Tortuous Road

At the same time, Mao expressed a profound optimism that throughout all the twists and turns of the class struggle, the proletariat and revolutionary masses would ultimately prevail. Just a few days before Mao's death, and, as it turned out, a few weeks before the counterrevolutionary coup, the revolutionary headquarters, in an article entitled "Proletarians are Revolutionary Optimists" in *Red Flag*, quoted from a statement Mao had made some four decades earlier: "the future is bright; the road is tor-

DEFIANT REVOLUTIONARY LEADERS

On November 10, 1980 the revisionist leaders of China put Mao's closest comrades on trial before a kangaroo court, thereby hoping to reverse the verdicts and condemn the achievements of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the greatest contributions of Mao himself. But the tables were turned on them when Chiang Ching and Chang Chun-Chiao steadfastly refused to go along with the farce. Chiang Ching answered and refuted their indictments with sweeping vision and bold contempt for her jailers and would-be judges. "You have power now so you can easily accuse people of crimes and fabricate false evidence to support your charges," she reportedly said before the trial began. "But if you think you can fool the people of China and worldwide, you are completely mistaken. It is not I but your small gang who is on trial in the court of history." She repeatedly interrupted the judge and the puny, pathetic witnesses, those who had opposed Mao politically and who had been removed from office during the Cultural Revolution; she upheld the Cultural Revolution and exposed the court as really attacking Mao. Chiang Ching's only "confession" was: "If I have to admit to anything, I can only say I lost in this struggle for power." (RF No. 90, p. 7)

On January 26, 1981 at the trial's end when the judge sentenced her to death — later commuted to life imprisonment because they did not dare execute her — she started shouting at the top of her voice, "Making revolution is no crime, it's right to rebel!" "Down with revisionism!" "Down with Deng Xiaoping!" She was hauled out of the courtroom shouting "Long Live Revolution!" (RF No. 90, p. 6)

Chang Chun-chiao, apparently in ill health, remained silent

tuous." They commented:

The revolutionary optimism of the proletariat differs from blind optimism in that we understand the dialectics of historical development. Blind optimists fail to see or cannot see clearly the law governing class struggle in socialist society. They are susceptible to a slackening of vigilance and are easily beguiled by the theory of the dying out of class struggle, or they become pessimistic and despondent when the revolution comes up against difficulties. We should not only see the bright future of

throughout the entire proceedings, refusing to accept the indictment (unheard of in China's courts at that time when those brought to trial were expected to admit guilt), and maintaining a defiant and disrespectful air, glaring at the judges and witnesses. Radio Peking commented that Chang's silence "shows he is stubbornly insisting on his reactionary stand" — that is, the firm stand of a revolutionary.

As the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA stated at the time: this time, in this round of struggle, the proletariat was NOT defeated politically. "In a temporary sense in the balance of forces they lost, but POLITICALLY — and this trial makes it even clearer — they were in no way defeated." As opposed to what happened when the revisionists seized power in the Soviet Union, the terms of the struggle, the political lines and forces, were clear, analyzed by Mao himself before his death and brilliantly upheld by Chiang Ching and Chang Chun-chiao during their trial. And internationally, there were — and are today — forces who uphold and are tremendously inspired by the great achievements of China's revolution — especially of the Cultural Revolution — and who went on to form the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement.

As Bob Avakian stated in 1981:

What shines through then, and in the heroic stand of Chiang Ching and Chang Chun-chiao, and in the basic reasons for it, is that the proletariat throughout the world can and will continue to learn more deeply and wage the struggle to seize power to keep it and advance, and most fundamentally to make and continue the revolution worldwide until the historic mission of the proletariat — a communist world free of exploitation, oppression and class distinctions altogether — has been achieved. (Avakian, 1981, p. 3)

the revolution and have full confidence in victory, but also see the twists and turns on the road of revolution so that we will enhance our revolutionary fighting will and be prepared to strive for the bright future consciously and with indomitable fortitude. The declining classes are like a giant tree which has lost its life and is rotten to its foundation. However, they will not retreat from the stage of history of their own accord but will carry on a death-bed struggle to protect their lives with every possible means. An old system will be buried only after many reverses for a fairly long historical period. In the past, the replacement of an old system by a new and the triumph of a rising class over a decadent and declining class invariably took place after a long and tortuous struggle. . . . This is the case with the revolutions in the past in which one exploiting system replaced another. The proletarian revolution which aims at completely eliminating the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes and all exploiting systems will of course take much longer time and will go through many more twists and turns and reverses. (reprinted in Lotta, p. 395)

Just a few weeks later, the tortuous road of revolution became all too clear when the right staged a coup d'etat and immediately arrested Mao's revolutionary comrades, the so-called "Gang of Four," led by Chiang Ching and Chang Chun-chiao. (The other two, Yao Wen-yuan and Wang Hung-wen, later vacillated or capitulated in the face of extreme pressure. Chiang Ching and Chang Chun-chiao remain defiant and unrepentant to the present, although silenced by prison.) Subsequent nationwide arrests and, in some cases, executions of other staunch defenders of Mao's line and the use of the army to put down organized resistance, including armed resistance by some militia and army units, secured the revisionists' power.

They quickly moved to put their people, most of whom had been knocked down during the Cultural Revolution, in positions of power and to implement their revisionist line. They moved especially fast to create public opinion for restoration, slandering the "Gang of Four" (really a Gang of Five, if you include Mao), and playing on petty prejudices and the vacillations of many professionals and middle-level officials. Those who had been criticized during the high tide of the Cultural Revolution — and there were more than a few who had to come down off high-and-mighty airs even if they hadn't been die-hard rightists — were encouraged to come back with a vengeance and get even. At first, these moves were taken in Mao's name; later, the rightists said that while Mao had done an all right job in leading the Chinese people to defeat the Japanese and the Kuomintang, he'd been wrong from the mid-'50s on. And, according to Deng and company, the Cultural Revolution had been particularly disastrous — the "ten dark years."

A Decade on the Heights

For the proletariat, however, the period from 1966 to 1976 was the highest pinnacle yet achieved on the road toward communism. The achievements of the Cultural Revolution are, of course, inconceivable without the experience of earlier proletarian revolutions, the Paris Commune in 1871 and the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia. Although it lasted for little more than two months before it was brutally crushed by the French bourgeoisie, the Commune was the first time the working class not only rose in rebellion but smashed the bourgeois state apparatus and established its own political power (proletarian class rule, the dictatorship of the proletariat). Karl Marx wrote of it:

It was essentially a working-class government, the produce of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labour. . . . The Commune was therefore to serve as a lever for uprooting the economical foundations upon which rests the existence of classes, and therefore of class-rule. With labour emancipated, every man becomes a working man, and productive labour ceases to be a class attribute. (Marx, 1871, p. 223)

Much greater experience was gained by the international proletariat of this process of "uprooting" in the October Revolution when the Russian working class under the leadership of V.I. Lenin and the Bolshevik Party seized power and went on to transform society as never before. Through this experience, Lenin in particular made further developments in Marxist theory on the practice of building socialism and the carrying out of the dictatorship of the proletariat — a transition period that must continually be moving forward toward worldwide communism. Mao Tsetung later was to develop this understanding much more fully by deeply analyzing the extended experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union under Lenin and then Stalin, and, in particular, the reversal of the revolution and restoration of capitalism there after Stalin's death.

Based on this experience, Mao developed the theory of the necessity of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, that during the entire transition period of socialism

there are still classes, class contradictions and class struggle, there is the struggle between the socialist road and the capitalist road, and there is the danger of capitalist restoration. . . . From now on we must remind

ourselves of this every year, every month and every day so that we can retain a rather sober understanding of this problem and have a Marxist-Leninist line.

Mao went on to analyze that the main danger to the continued advance of the revolution, the bourgeois headquarters, was within the Communist Party itself, and that the party had to be continually revolutionized as part of revolutionizing all of society. This could only be done by relying on the conscious activism of the masses to continually overthrow "those Party persons in power taking the capitalist road," and transform all of society further in the direction of communism. This is what Mao and the revolutionary headquarters led the Chinese masses in doing during the Cultural Revolution and it fanned the flames of revolution throughout the world. As Bob Avakian has summed up:

it was the concrete practice of hundreds of millions of Chinese people under the guidance of this theory [continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat], particularly in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, which once again (to use a phrase of Mao's) spread the salvos of Marxism-Leninism and the basic truth that it is right to rebel against reaction and that the future of communism will be brought about by the proletariat and masses of people, spread this to every corner of the world. (Avakian, 1979, p. 315)

With the revisionist coup in China itself in October 1976, the achievements of that period came under slanderous attack from the bourgeoisie, both within and outside China, attacks which continue today, unabated in their viciousness and intensity. And the coup demoralized many who had thrilled to the Cultural Revolution and its accomplishments. Especially in light of what has come to pass in China since the coup and the disgusting reinstatement of bourgeois relations and values in all spheres, the real question is not "how did the revolutionaries lose?" but rather, how did they accomplish so much?

In light of the barrage of attacks today, it is instructive to recall that there were many at the time from various classes and strata, who, while they may not have understood it fully, recognized that a pathbreaking experiment in remaking humanity and the world was going on. And, most significantly, to the oppressed around the world the Cultural Revolution became the beacon light, spreading Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, sowing the seeds of revolution in many countries (including in the U.S.), and rekindling the hopes and dreams of hundreds of millions. The Cultural Revolution was the greatest step yet achieved toward ac-

complishing the radical rupture Marx and Engels talk about in *The Communist Manifesto*:

The Communist revolution is the most radical rupture with traditional property relations; no wonder that its development involves the most radical rupture with traditional ideas. (Marx and Engels, 1848, p. 126)

In one brief decade, centuries of traditional "wisdom" were shattered as the proletariat broke one chain after another, chains which have bound the muscles and constricted the minds of oppressed people for centuries. The fact that the chains have been reforged in China today cannot erase or detract from the overwhelmingly more significant fact that the Cultural Revolution basically settled in practice the question of how to advance the revolution under socialism and scaled heights which previously were only glimpsed from a distance.

The Cultural Revolution was a concrete manifestation of what humanity is capable of, proof that it is possible to bridge the gap between the horror of the present and an entirely different world — proof of what Bob Avakian has described as

the *possibility* of an entirely different world, the possibility of a world which could genuinely be called beautiful: a world of radically different conditions, radically different relations between people, and radically different ways of looking at everything. (Avakian, 1986, p. 53)

Mao Tsetung and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution have left behind the weapons with which today's proletarians and all who crave such a world can fight to bring it into being.

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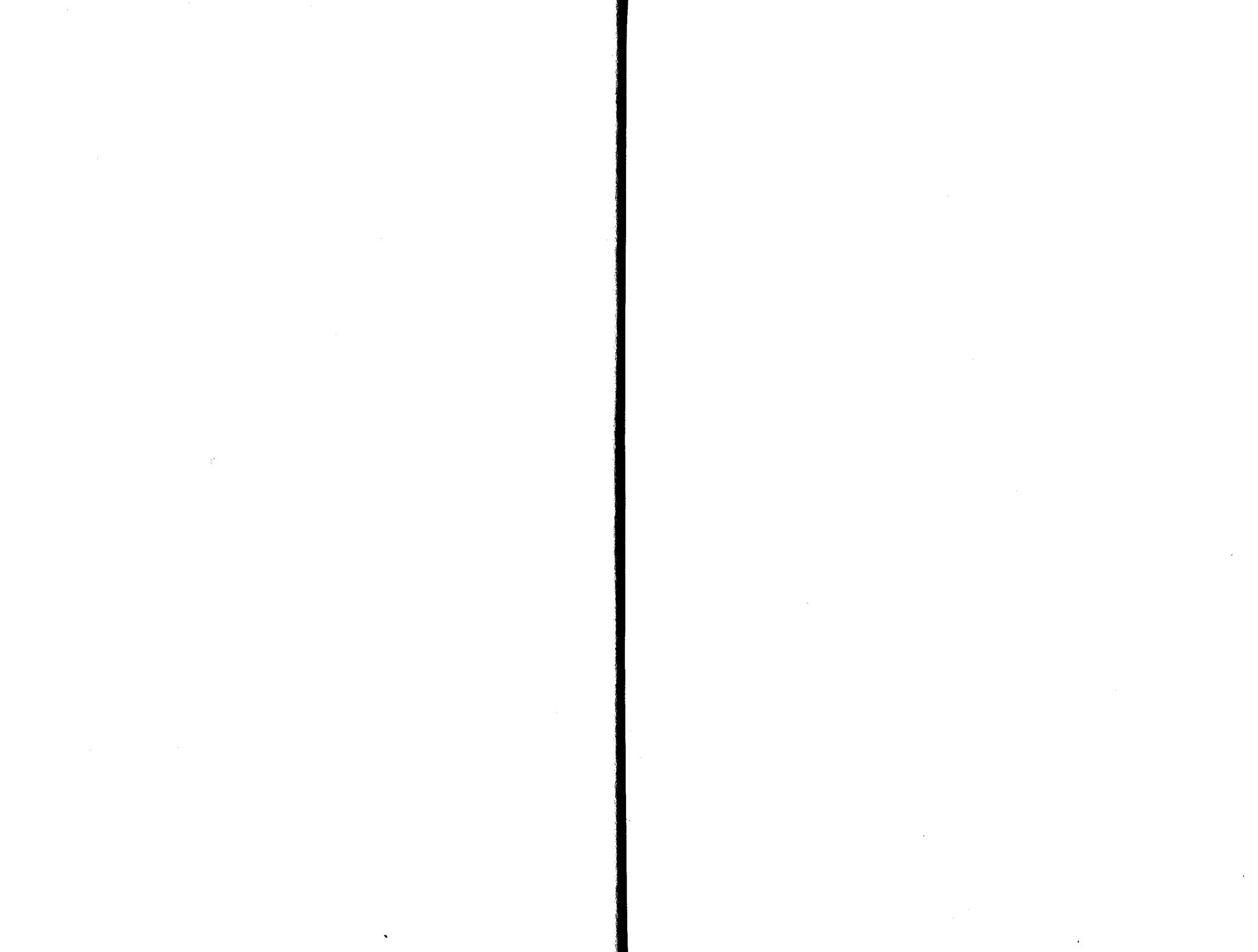
* All quotations from Mao Tsetung, unless otherwise noted, appear in *Revolutionary Worker*, Special Edition No. 90 and are taken from the following: "Report to the Ninth National Congress of the Communist Party of China" in *Important Documents on the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1970); "Reversing Correct Verdicts Goes Against the Will of the People" in *Peking Review* No. 11, March 12, 1976 and Lotta, *And Mao Makes 5*; "Talk to the Albanian Military Delegation" in *A World to Win*, 1985, No. 1; "Speech at the Lushan Conference" in Stuart Schram, ed., *Chairman Mao Talks to the People* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974).

Note on Chinese Names

For many Chinese proper names, there are two sets of English spellings which can be found in the literature. In official Chinese publications, the English spelling changed from the Wade-Giles to the Pin yin system after 1978. For this reason, we have below compiled a list of many of the Chinese names used in this pamphlet, using both spelling systems.

In the text of this pamphlet, the spelling system used in most cases is the one used in the earlier period. The reason for this is that, if readers study the revolutionary literature of the time, these are the spellings they will find. With some other names, we used the newer spelling system (mainly in the case of names that are commonly in the media today). Hopefully, this will be least confusing to the reader. — Ed.

Wade-Giles	Pin yin
Chang Chun-chiao	Zhang Chunquiao
Changsha	Zhangzha
Chiang Ching	Jiang Quing
Chou En-lai	Zhou Enlai
Hai Jui	Hai Rui
Kuomintang	Guomindang
Lin Piao	Lin Biao
Liu Shao-chi	Liu Shaoqi
Mao Tsetung	Mao Zedong
Peking	Beijing
Ta-tzu-pao	Dazubao
Teng Hsiao-ping	Deng Xiaoping
Wang Hung-wen	Wang Hongwen



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