

Basic Elements of Internal Party Politics in Communist China 1949-1969*

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The deep-rooted and violent conflict that erupted in the "Cultural Revolution" has shaken the very foundations of party rule in Communist China. Containing the elements of a basic policy dispute and of a factional struggle for power, this conflict developed into the most severe political crisis that befell China since 1949. There have, however, been precursors of conflict in the 16 years between the Communist take-over and the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution. Yet their characteristics differ largely from that of the recent (and possibly current) crisis.

So far, factional disputes in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) have shown three apparent signals of different quality:

One of these signals is the **expulsion** of individual dissenters from the party, an action that did not blemish too much the monolithic picture which the CCP generally presented to the outside world.

Another signal is the **removal** of dissenters from influential positions in the state and party machines, without their expulsion from the party, so that again at least the outward appearance of unity was preserved.

Characterizing the developments since 1965, the third signal of functional conflict is an **open split** which has destroyed even this outward appearance of unity.

While the signals of factional disputes changed, the character of factions has changed too, so that at least two types of group formation can be distinguished:

Firstly, a momentuous **factionalization** of the leadership with changing, mostly issue-based affiliations; and

secondly, a continuous **factionalism** which developed in the very core of leadership with the emergence of program-based, relatively coherent circles competing for overall control.

These are, of course, prototypes, and we do not find them in pure form. Moreover, there are intermediate stages indicating a process of transformation from factionalization to factionalism. By taking a closer look at the most important conflicts within the CCP during the last 20 years, we may, nevertheless, recognize the difference between the three signals of conflicts and the two prototypes of factional character suggested here:

Firstly, the dispute in 1953-54 which led to the purge of the chairman of the State Planning Commission, Kao Kang, and of the director of the Central Committee's Organization Department, Jao Shu-shih;

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secondly, the dispute over the handling of the "Hundred Flowers' Campaign" in 1957;

thirdly, the dispute over the establishment of people's communes and over Mao Tse-tung's "Great Leap Forward" policy in 1958/59; and

fourthly, the conflict that developed since 1961/62 between the promoters of the Maoist line and their opponents in the major areas of culture, education, economy and the style of party-work.

I.

On March 31, 1955, a "CCP National Delegates Conference" convened in Peking, and passed a resolution to expel Kao Kang and Jao Shu-shih from the party¹. Together with Kao and Jao, seven minor party leaders, most of whom had worked together with Kao in Manchuria before, were censured². When the 5th plenary meeting of the CCP Seventh Central Committee confirmed these purges on April 4, 1955, it announced, that Kao "not only did not admit his guilt to the Party, but even committed suicide as an expression of his ultimate betrayal of the party"³.

The purge of these two high-ranking leaders developed in a period during which important changes in the field of domestic politics took place. On October 1, 1953, Mao Tse-tung had proclaimed the new "general line of socialist reconstruction" which sparked a country-wide drive towards agricultural collectivization⁴. Moreover, on June 19, 1954, the Center decided to abolish the six Great Administrative Areas, which had been established in 1949/50 in order to organize the administration of the country with strong regional military participation⁵. With the Authority of the center thus considerably strengthened, the formal constitution of the country was promulgated on September 20, 1954⁶. 1953 was also supposed to be the first year of the First Five-Year-Plan for the economic development of China⁷.

¹ "Je-min jih-pao" (JMJP), Peking, April 5, 1955; cf, "China News Analysis" (CNA), Hongkong No. 80, April 22, 1955. "Hsin-hua yüeh-k'an", December 1952, p. 4.

² Hsiang Ming, Vice-Chairman of Shantung province in the former East China Area, a former associate of Kao Kang; Chiang Hsiu-shan, North-Eastern Government Council member; Chairman of that government's Control Committee; Chang Ming-yuan, third secretary of the Party's North Eastern Bureau of the Central Committee; Vice-Chairman of the North-Eastern Government Council; Chao Te-ts'un, Head of the Village Department of the Party's North-Eastern Bureau; Chairman of Heilungkiang province; Ma Hung, Director of the Secretariat of the Party's North-Eastern Bureau; member of the State Planning Committee; Kuo Teng, Deputy-Director of Organization Department of the Party's North-Eastern Bureau; Director of Personnel in North-Eastern Government; Chen Po-ts'un, Head of Organization Department of the Party's North-Eastern Bureau; Deputy Director of personnel of the North-Eastern Government (CNA, *ibid.*).

³ JMJP, *ibid.*

⁴ JMJP, October 2, 1953.

⁵ CNA, No. 43 July, 1954. The Great Administrative Areas comprised at that time the following provinces: 1. North-East (Manchuria): Liaoning, Kirin, Heilungkiang, and Jehol; 2. North: Hopei, Shansi, Inner Mongolia, Peking, and Tientsin; 3. East: Shantung, Kiangsu, Anhui, Chekiang, Fukein, and Shanghai; 4. Central-South: Honan, Hupei, Hunan, Kiangsi, Kuangtung, and Kuangsi; 5. South-West: Ssuch'uan, Kueichou, Yünnan, and Tibet; 6. North-West: Shensi, Kansu, Ningshia, Ch'inghai, and Sinkiang.

⁶ English text in: Peter S. H. Tang, "Communist China Today", vol. II, New York 1957, p. 90-135.

⁷ It generally followed the basic development principles of the Stalinist Soviet Union by stressing the importance of the construction of heavy industry.

Until today, the reasons for the purge of Kao and Jao are not entirely clear. It has been argued, that the activities of the two leaders constituted an attempt to establish a new ruling group in Peking, which would have been more docile in its relations with the Soviet Union, and that, therefore, Kao and Jao were backed by Moscow. There can be no doubt, that Kao had established rather close relations with Soviet authorities when he headed the administration in Manchuria. But the same cannot be said about Jao. On the other hand, some of Kao's colleagues in Manchuria, who had at least as many connections with Russians, as he himself — so a.e. Li Fu-ch'un — were promoted at the same time when he was purged. Although the possibility of a Soviet attempt at greater influence on Communist China's leadership through the ascendancy of Kao cannot be excluded, there are at least three areas of domestic policy in which a dissent between Kao and Jao on the one hand, and leading figures of the center on the other hand arose:

Firstly, there were arguments over the speed of agricultural collectivization during which Jao Shu-shih obviously argued for a slower pace; secondly, the regional allocation of investment funds during the first Five-Year-Plan was under dispute, and it seems that Kao Kang, against the wishes of leaders from other areas, had worked for a priority on further industrial development in Manchuria. Finally it has been suggested, that Kao, who did not belong to the leadership core that emerged during the Long March, tried to substitute Liu Shao-ch'i in the second position of the central leadership⁸, while Jao was aiming at Chou En-lai's post as Prime Minister. Thus, a combination of disagreement on economic policies and a drive for power on behalf of the two purged leaders, possibly together with the impact of Soviet influence, had created the conflict. This crisis, however, remained confined to limited proportions. The purge hit only two out of 43 full members of the Central Committee, and although these two held rather influential positions, they were still marginal figures as compared with the members of the inner leadership-core, who had risen to the top echelon during the Long March. The main results of the purge thus were a stronger trend towards centralized control in the field of organization and a strengthening of the positions of Liu Shao-ch'i and Chou En-lai in the field of power distribution. During the course of the next major crisis, these two leaders obviously got into a disagreement.

II.

At the time when the purge of Kao and Jao was announced, a new campaign was already in full swing among the Chinese intellectuals, forcing them into often humiliating "self-criticism" and aiming at the suppression of independent thought. Under the impact of this purge campaign, many members of the intelligentsia found themselves no longer able to do the work which the leadership wanted them to do. Around New Year 1956, therefore, Chou En-lai was the first to call for a shift in party policy. He asked the party to treat the intellectuals, in general, and the specialists which were needed for China's economic development, in particular, in a more understanding manner⁹. During the following year, the new campaign, in which the

⁸ Peter S. H. Tang and Joan N. Maloney: *Communist China: The Domestic Scene 1949–1967*. South Orange, N. Y., 1967 p. 92 ff; c.f. also CNA, No. 80, April 22, 1955.

⁹ Chou En-lai, Report on the question of intellectuals, Peking 1956.

intellectuals and members of the minority parties in the united front were exhorted to criticize the mistakes and shortcomings of the party, developed rather slowly. The critics were obviously very cautious. Nevertheless, two trends became gradually visible. On the one hand, some leading figures, most of them prominent in state administration, encouraged criticism. Leaders within the Civilian Party machine, as Liu Shao-ch'i, P'eng Chen and others, on the other hand, kept relatively quiet on the unfolding campaign, while they stressed party discipline and the importance of collective leadership. This became particularly obvious at the Eight's Party Congress in September 1956¹⁰. Here, the Secretary General of the Central Committee, Teng Hsiao-P'ing, while introducing the new Party Constitution, proclaimed a "movement to improve the working-style of party and administration", a term that could be analyzed as supporting the "Hundred Flower Campaign", but his special attention also was turned towards discipline and collective leadership¹¹. Thus, the major figures of the party machine around Liu Shao-ch'i apparently were highly sceptical about the new campaign, because in their view it threatened dangerously the "bolshevik party discipline" which they were geared to preserve. It seems that Mao at this time sided with Chou En-lai's more "moderate" group in the state administration. In early 1957, he publicly took sides with the strong promoters of open discussion within and outside the party¹². Mao might have hoped, that this could serve as an outlet for grievances which had accumulated during the years of strict regimentation of all intellectual activities. Other party leaders were more cautious, particularly P'eng Chen, who, in early May, reiterated the importance of clear leadership by the Central Committee¹³. Developments soon indicated that, from the Party's point of view, the "orthodox", machine-based critics of Mao's drive for more freedom of speech and thought had been right. The campaign developed into a formidable threat for the regime, when, in May and early June the intellectual criticism was no longer only directed against administrative shortcomings, but turned its spearhead against communist ideology, the system, and the top leadership themselves. In order to avert the imminent danger of a general uprising, the leadership turned the tide. On June 8, the Chinese Communist press stated for the first time, that a "counter-criticism" was necessary¹⁴, and soon the critics were hit by an intense campaign against "rightist deviationists". This campaign, however, concentrated on non-partisans and members of the minority parties, while only very few and rather marginal purges occurred within the CCP itself. Some provincial party leaders, including a small number of alternate members of the Central Committee, were removed from their positions, while actual expulsions from the party remained limited to a number of intellectuals with lower party rank.

Although, during the crisis of 1956/57, there was obvious dissent on the issue of the "Hundred Flower Campaign" within the leadership, a consent on procedures

¹⁰ Liu Shao-ch'i, The political Report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China to the Eighth National Congress of the Party, Peking 1956.

¹¹ Teng Hsiao-p'ing, Report on the revision of the constitution of the Communist Party of China, Peking 1956. c.f. CNA, No. 151, October 5, 1956.

¹² Mao Tse-tung, On the correct handling of the Contradictions among the People, Peking 1960 (5. Print).

¹³ "Kuang-ming jih-pao" (KMJP), May 5, 1957.

¹⁴ JMJP, June 8, 1957.

remained intact. All groups still seemed to recognize the decision-making power of the Central Committee and the Polit-Bureau. While, as already indicated, in the central party leadership, a relatively "moderate" group around Chou En-lai faced the opposition of an "orthodox" group around Liu Shao-ch'i, Mao himself, after the dangerous intensification of oppositional activities among the intellectuals became obvious in spring 1957, decided to change sides, i.e. henceforward to support the "orthodox" group¹⁵. During the debates that preceded the formulation of the second Five-Year-Plan in winter 1958/59, administrators and economic managers obviously suggested a continuation of gradual, "step by step" development which was based on the "objective" economic and social conditions in the country. Mao Tse-tung, his closest supporters and the leading members of the party machine around Liu Shao-ch'i, however, pressed for a stronger emphasis on mass-mobilization and on a considerable acceleration of the pace of development, which, in their view, would lead to an early transformation of the socialist into a communist society. For them, the traumatic experience of widespread discontent in early 1957, which had developed in spite of economic success and a remarkable rise in the standard of living, rendered evidence enough for the idea, that thought-reform and mass-mobilization were more important than development in accordance with established principles of economic growth.

Already in late 1957, there were indications for a victory of the "orthodox", more radical forces behind Mao and Liu. The party leadership started to call for a quicker pace of development in "gigantic steps"¹⁶. This became definitely manifest at the 2nd plenary meeting of the Eight Party Congress in May 1958. Here, Liu Shao-ch'i proclaimed the theory of "premanent revolution" as the guiding principle of the new party line¹⁷. Already in winter 1957/58, the Chinese Communist had started in some areas to combine a number of agricultural cooperatives into larger production units. This tendency became nation-wide in May and June 1958 and on July 1, Ch'en Po-ta used for the first time the term "people's communes" as the name of this new type of collectives¹⁸.

Yet, during summer, 1958, the new policies were obviously still under dispute. While Mao, Liu, Ch'en Po-ta, and some other leaders in July and August continuously praised the establishment of people's communes as the most important step on the road to communist society. Chou, Vice Premier Ch'en Yün and the Minister of National Defense, P'eng Te-huai, conspicuously avoided this subject in their public statements. The decision fell finally, when the 5th plenary meeting of the Eight Central Committee, in August, decided to force the commune system on the whole nation, and proclaimed the policy of the "Three Red Banners" as the guideline for China's development¹⁹.

After some striking initial successes, however, the new policies proved to be a

¹⁵ c.f. Roderick MacFarquhar, "Communist China's Intra-Party. Dispute" in: "Pacific Affairs", December, 1958, p. 323 ff. c.f. Donald S. Zagoria, *The Sino-Soviet Conflict 1956-1961*, Princeton N. J., 1962, p. 66 ff.

¹⁶ JMJP, December 12, 1967.

¹⁷ "Peking Review", No. 14, June 3, 1958.

¹⁸ "Hung-ch'i", No. 3, 1958.

¹⁹ The resolution of the 5th plenary meeting of the Eighth CCP Central Committee, dated August 23, 1958, was first published in: JMJP, September, 1958.

failure, leading to organizational chaos, economic dislocations, a serious food shortage, and finally to widespread passive resistance among the populace. Although Mao himself continued to press for the implementation of his line of accelerated development, the more pragmatically minded leaders started a quest for a gradual revision of the radical policies. It seems that, in winter 1958/59, three new issue-based groups emerged within the party leadership:

1. Mao himself and a group of leaders who persisted in the promotion of the "Three Red Banner" policy;
2. a group around P'eng Te-huai, which pressed for the liquidation of these policies and which got at least tacit support from Chou En-lai and other leading figures in state administration and economic management; and
3. Liu Shao-ch'i, Teng Hsiao-p'ing, P'eng Cheng and other leaders of the party machine, who, under the impression of the apparent failure of the Maoist line, now ceased to support the policies of the party leader, thus forming what might be called a "New Right".

At the 6th and 7th plenary meetings of the Eight Central Committee — in Wuhan in December 1958 and in Shanghai in April 1959 — the majority formed by the latter two groups introduced a drive for "readjustment", during which the first moderating changes of the commune system took place. But the real showdown between the groups was to come in summer 1959, when the Politbureau had met at Lushan in order to prepare for the 8th plenary meeting of the Eight Central Committee which was scheduled to be held in the first half of August at the same place²⁰. During the enlarged Politbureau conference a letter which P'eng Te-huai had written to Mao on July 14 became known to the leaders. In this letter, P'eng, though in a very polite form, criticized the Maoist policies as being disengaged from reality and even branded some of them as "petty-bourgeois fanaticism"²¹. The attack of P'eng and his group being supported by a growing deterioration of general conditions in the country, the Lushan plenum which started on August 2 became the scene of a bitter encounter between Mao and his critics. At a decisive moment of this conference, Liu Shao-ch'i and Chou En-lai, however, obviously decided to reach a compromise with the party leader. P'eng and his closest supporters were removed from their posts in the administration and the military, while the at least officially kept their membership in the Central Committee. The resolution of the Lushan plenum blamed them for "rightist deviationism", but at the same time, most of the policy changes proposed by the opposition were now implemented²². Thus, the leaders of the party and state

²⁰ "Hung-ch'i", No. 13, 1967.

²¹ Ke-ming ch'uan-lin, August 24, 1967 in: "Survey of China Mainland Press" (SCMP) No. 4032, October 2, 1967, p. 1 ff., c.f. Dieter Heinzig, "Von Lushan zur Kulturrevolution", *Berichte des Bundesinstituts für Ostwissenschaftliche und Internationale Studien*, Köln 1968, No. 5, p. 7 f., c.f. J. D. Seimonds "P'eng Te-huai: A chronological re-examination", in: "The China Quarterly", London, No. 37, January–March, 1959, p. 120 ff.

"Hung-ch'i", *ibid.* c.f. David A. Charles, "The dismissal of Marshall P'eng Teh-huai" in "The China Quarterly", No. 8, October–December, 1961, p. 63 ff.

²² Wu Han, "Hai Jui pa-kuan", Peking 1961, pp. 7–8, Union Research Service, vol. 25, No. 2, p. 23, Reprint of an article by T'ien Han, "The Problem of Choosing Themes", from "Wen-i pao", No. 7, 1961; T'ien Han, "Hsieh Tao-huan", "Chü-pen", July/August, 1961, p. 9; Teng T'o, "A Love for all Things", "Yen-shan yeh-hua", vol. 2, Peking 1962, p. 60, "Current Background" (CB), Hongkong, No. 792, p. 4, "A Special Treatment of America", "Ch'ien-

machines, while agreeing to censor P'eng, forced Mao to agree, in turn, to a thoroughgoing revision of the "Red Banners" policy. The organization of agricultural work along military lines had already been discarded. Now, the main responsibility for agricultural production was shifted from the communes to the much smaller "production brigades" and in 1961 to the "production teams"; which comprised in the average 10 to 25 families. Soon, the farmers were allowed to retain some of their land as private plots, the products of which they could sell on free markets. The campaign to establish backyard furnaces was stopped, and the new policy stressed again a gradual development in accordance with economic realities.

But in the years following the Lushan compromise, neither the Maoists, who had only reluctantly agreed to the policies of "readjustment", nor the more pragmatically oriented groups that rallied around Liu Shao-ch'i were willing to comply with the situation. Thus, out of the conflict of 1958/59 there developed a new crisis, unfolding since 1961/62, and this crisis led directly into the open split. In spite of the revisions which terminated the policy of the "Three Red Banners", opposition from intellectuals, economists and leading party cadres became more and more intense and grew into a general offensive against the policies of Mao and his supporters in at least five areas:

First, in the field of cultural policy, the opponents, mostly party intellectuals, protested against the reglimentation of arts and literature. This opposition soon developed a quest for freedom of thought and expression, which was accompanied by acid satirical attacks against the views and even the person of the party leader^{22a}.

Second, in the field of educational policy, opposition from cadres in the state machine and from teachers pressed for a shift of emphasis from irregular institutions such as the "part-work, part-study schools" and "workers' universities" back to the regular educational institutions.

Third, in the field of ideology, opposing party theoreticians disagreed with the Maoist interpretation of the theory of contradictions by emphasizing the importance of synthesis rather than that of antitheses. This had important political implications. The theory of "combining two into one", which was argued in 1963/64 by Yang Hsien-chen (Deputy Director of the Marxist-Leninist Institute and member of Central Committee) could provide a rationalization for a Sino-Soviet rapprochement internationally and for a policy of "co-existence" of state-owned enterprises and individual ownership of the means of production domestically²³.

Fourth, the oppositional forces in the party and state machines which had succeeded in practically liquidating the "Three Red Banners" policy, continued their drive for major policy revisions. In 1962, they called for more private for the commune farmers, more free markets and for the shift of responsibility for agricultural production from the "production teams" to the individual farmer's household²⁴.

hsien", No. 19, 1962 under the column Notes from a Three Family Village; c.f. Marle Goldman "The Blooming and Contending" of 1961-1962, in: "The China Quarterly", "The Unique", No. 37, January-March, 1969, p. 59 ff.

²³ "Hung-ch'i", No. 16, 7/18, 21/22, and 23/24, 1969; NCA, No. 535, September 25, 1964, and Joachim Glaubitz, "China's proletarische Kulturrevolution", in: Europa Archiv, No. 19, 1966, p. 658 f.

²⁴ Chung-hua jen-min kung-ho-kuo ti san-chieh ch'üan-kuo jen-min tai-piao to-hui ti-i-tz'u bui-i chu-yao wen-chien, Peking 1965, p. 20; "Hung ch'i", No. 2, 1965; c.f. Max Biehl, Die

Fifth, during 1965, a planning debate obviously developed, in which the opponents of Mao called for a stronger accentuation of quality over quantity, and for stronger support for those enterprises, that rendered profit²⁵.

The basic policy dispute that developed between 1962 and 1965 therefore can be described with three observations as a dispute between

- intellectual diversity and intellectual uniformity;
- attempts at domestic and international reconciliation and the acceleration of domestic and international "class struggle"; and
- predominantly technocratic concepts of development policy as opposed to the Maoist idea of mass-mobilization as the main developmental force.

With these debates, issue-based disagreements thus started to develop into a basic policy dispute.

At this point, it seems appropriate to discuss another aspect of the apparent signals and forms of conflicts presented so far.

In the case of Kao and Jao, in spite of the dissenters' devotional alliance, there is evidence that their relationship was not free from strains: Kao had distinguished himself in Manchuria as one of the main promoters of agricultural collectivization, while Jao, in East China, was on record for having been very cautious in this field. The Central Committee's allegation notwithstanding, it should therefore be stated that the two dissenters did not really succeed in forming a coherent faction. They had only formed a temporary alliance based on their agreement on some, but not all issues.

Here, the conflict appears in the form of **factionalization**. Since among the inner core of party leadership, in 1953/54 there was a basic consent on the main political issues under dispute, it seems, that the solution of the conflict by expulsion of the two dissenters was possible without a party split, because this consent — which was at the same time a consent on procedures — still remained untouched.

The basic consent on issues among the members of the inner leadership circle, was shaken in the course of the debates over the "Hundred Flowers' Campaign". It definitely broke down in the disputes that followed the failure of Mao's radical approach to the development of China in 1958. The consent on procedures, however, was still valid. Even when P'eng Te-huai and his closest supporters were censored, all party leaders still agreed on the use of the Central Committee and the Politbureau as policy-deciding platforms. Group-formation, too, had not yet led into consistent factions. The attitude of Liu Shao-ch'i at the Lushan plenum — supporting most of the policies suggested by P'eng while agreeing to his removal from office — renders proof that the intra-party disputes were still issue-based and the personal affiliations changing. That means, that group-formation remained in the stage of factionalization.

It may thus be concluded, that expulsion and removal are the major signals of

chinesische Volkskommune im Großen Sprung und danach, Hamburg 1965, p. 56 ff.; CMA, No. 663, June 9, 1967.

²⁵ For this debate, c.f. among others: "Meng K'uei & Hsiao Lin, "Comment on Sun Yeh-fang's Reactionary political Stand and Economic Program", in: "Hung-ch'i", No. 10, 1966, English in "Selections of China Mainland Magazines" (SCMM), No. 539.

intra-party conflicts, as long as factionalisation is the main type of group formation²⁶.

I want to suggest that, between 1962 and 1965, the dissent on issues was aggravated by a growing dissent on procedures. Thus, opposing groups more and more developed into relatively coherent circles competing for overall control and reached the stage of factionalism. In this stage, the signal of intra-party conflict became **the open split**, which tore the party apart during the Cultural Revolution. The grave domestic crisis of the last four years has been so much described and discussed that it seems unnecessary to give yet another factual account in this presentation.

Although this crisis by no means seems to be solved, however, some analytical conclusions may be drawn already. This applies in particular to the problems of change in the ways and means of intra-party conflict which were brought to the fore during the Cultural Revolution.

III.

The conflict, which practically resulted in a split of the CCP, has brought about remarkable changes in the method with which intra-party disputes are solved. This applies, first of all, to the **symbols** used by the opposing forces. While until 1959, opinion groups within the CCP basically were using the same language, the process of transition to factionalism which started in 1959 and accelerated since the early 1960's is especially visible in terminology. Where the Maoists stressed "uninterrupted revolution", the anti-Maoists emphasized "step by step development". Other pairs of contradictory positive symbols were: "the thought of Mao Tse-tung" and "Marxism-Leninism" only, "masses" and "party", or — at the utmost — "the party and Chairman Mao", "contradiction" and "consolidation". While the Maoists tend to use "right" and "wrong" as decisive criteria to evaluate policies, the anti-Maoists preferred to speak about "objective" and "subjective", and — with reference to a rather common pair of terms — the Maoists stress "redness", while the anti-Maoists put a stronger emphasis on "expertness"²⁷. These examples already reveal that the recent crisis developed as a conflict on three levels:

1. As far as **political style** is concerned, the Maoists concentrated on open and abusive accusations, which were raised in the context of a general atmosphere of "struggle". Their opponents, on the other hand, would rather stress consolidation,

²⁶ One might even ask whether it could be possible that the acceptance of Mao Tse-tung's decision not run again for the post of Chairman of the People's Republic by the Wuhan Plenum in December 1958 represents a sort of removal.

²⁷ The quoted terms are mostly, but not entirely taken from: "On Khrushchov's Phoney Commission and its Historical Lessons for the World." Ninth article by the Editorial Departments of Runmin Ribao and Honqiu commenting on the open letter of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. in: "Peking Review", No. 29, July 17, 1964, p. 7 ff. "Carry The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution Through to the End", Peking 1966, "Hold Still Higher the Great Red Banner of Mao Tse-tung's Thought, Bring the Mass Movement for the Creative Study and Application of Chairman Mao's Works to a New and Higher Stage, and Turn Our Army Into a Genuine, Great School of Mao Tse-tung's Thought", CFCP and JMJP, January 2, 1967, in: SCMP, No. 3859, January 6, 1967, p. 1 ff. Lo Keng-mo "The Character of Rural People's Communes at the Present Stage", KJJP, July 19, 1961, english Translation in BC, No. 669, November 16, 1961, "Consolidate the Great Achievements and Strive for New Victory", JMJP, January 1, 1963.

peace and order, and the concentration on the development of the country. At this point one should note that many pronouncements of the military and by the remaining representatives of the administrative machine made after February, 1967, seem to be more in conformity with anti-Maoist concepts of political style than with the Maoist ones.

2. But the conflict was also a dispute over the **character of the party**. Here, a basic question was whether the party should be regarded as an auxiliary organ to promote the ideas and the power-position of one or two individuals or whether the individual should be regarded as a servant of a cause which is set by the collective of the party, represented by its **legitimate** leadership organs.

3. Although the Maoists, already under military influence, in February 1967, claimed the slogan of "grasping revolution and promoting production (Chua kê-ming, ts'u shêng-ch'an)", these two terms basically can also be used to describe the third level of conflict. Here, the Maoists' emphasis lies clearly on "revolution", while the anti-Maoists with the same clarity stressed "production".

Basic differences can also be detected regarding the **organizational weapons** used in the conflict. Mao and his supporters were the first group in the CCP history relying — besides the PLF-on newly created ad-hoc organizations outside the regular party chains of command as a major instrument of factional struggle.

The Red Guards created in spring and summer 1966, and also the "Revolutionary Rebels" (Kê-ming tsao-fan p'ai) which appeared around New Year, 1967, were mainly associations of people discontented with the attitude of the party machine. Most prominent among them ranked young people between 14 and 25 years of age, and here again, PLA cadets, children of Maoist cadres considered to be reliable, and rural youngsters living in boarding-schools in the cities formed the hard core. During the early stages of the Maoist movement, this attempt at the mobilization of a group influenced, in general, by not too well sublimated puberty problems which could easily be converted into aggressions, and, in particular, by the frustrations developed in a rather rigid system of learning and examinations, seemed to be very successful. Soon, however, the movement, while spreading fast over many areas of China, developed into a considerable number of competing factions. By summer 1967, it had deteriorated into an irregular, organizationally non-centered amalgamation of the most controversial forces. The basic failure of the Maoist drive thus came to the fore: as a double attempt at the rationalization of the irrational and at the organization of the unorganizable, it was bound to end in chaotic infights.

In the early period of the crisis, the anti-Maoists first tried to apply the same organizational weapons which had proven successful when they practically sabotaged the "Rural Socialist Education Movement" in 1963/64. Using the regular channels of the party machine, they tried to deflect the Maoist efforts by verbally accepting parts of the Maoist program while practically pursuing their own political platform. Only under the impact of the Red Guard rampage in autumn 1966, the anti-Maoists also turned to organizational weapons outside the regular party channels. Following the Maoist blueprint, they themselves created ad-hoc organizations; relying mostly on industrial workers. In order to stop the violent Maoist thrust for power, the opposition furthermore incited workers and peasants to go on strike and to disrupt the agricultural collectives.

These efforts succeeded in forcing the Maoist offensive to grind to a halt in late

January, 1967. It did **not** succeed, however, to overthrow the Mao-Lin group, nor did it even help Liu and his supporters to maintain their positions. Astonishingly enough for superficial observers, the **resistance ability** of the regular party and mass-organizations proved to be rather low. The seemingly well-oiled party apparatus was soon in shambles. Those, who had not expected such a development obviously overlooked three important factions:

1. With its restrictive if not oppressive attitude towards many strata of the Chinese society, the CCP, since the mid-1950's had more and more lost the support of the majority of the population. It seems that the general populace referred to the attitude to "sit down and watch the tiger eating the lion", rather than to defend not-too-popular party functionaries against attacks by the youth and the military.
2. Moreover, it should be noted that the party-machine against which the Maoist thrust of 1966/67 was directed, had undergone a deep and nearly devastating crisis when, in the aftermath of the "Great Leap Forward", its chains of control were badly damaged at the basic level. Recuperation from this crisis was under way since 1963/64, but it had not yet fully succeeded when the current crisis began.
3. Finally, at the regional and provincial levels, there had developed a growing rivalry between the leading civilian party and military cadres. The PLA therefore was only too willing to assist the Maoist offensive against the civilian party machine, even if it did not necessarily support the aims of this drive. The party machine had not been constructed against military demonstrations of power. Its collapse, therefore, became inevitable.

With the regular party machine thus shattered, the chains of command of the state administration damaged, and the Maoist movement splitting up into a great number of competing factions, the PLA emerged as the only instrument of power which remained relatively intact. After late January 1967, it therefore set out to take over control. Under the impact of this military drive for power in the provinces, new types of **leadership-organizations** came to the fore: The first one of these was the **Commune** (Kung-she), which was established by leftist organizations in Shanghai on February 5, 1967²⁸, and which provided for committee-government following the Paris model of 1871. The Commune, however, was never fully endorsed by the central authorities, it did not spread from Shanghai to other places and even in Shanghai, it was disbanded after less than three weeks.

Then, military intervention in most provinces led to the establishment of "**Temporary Power Organs**" (Ling-shih ch'üan-li chi-kuan), which consisted nearly entirely of PLF personnel. But their task remained transitional, meant to pave the way for a more durable organ, which has been established in all Chinese provinces: The **Revolutionary Committee** (Ke-ming wei-yüan-hui). These committees united, on the provincial level, the leadership of the administrative, and economic machines as well as the party and mass organizations which now appear to be under reconstruction. Although originally the Revolutionary Committees were conceived as the leading organs of a coalition of Maoist organizations, the PLA, and pro-Maoist party and administrative cadres, in which these three elements were supposed to have equal shares²⁹, but developments in 1967/68 proved that the military has come out as the

²⁸ "Wen-hui pao", Shanghai, February 5, 1967.

²⁹ NCNA, March 23, 1967.

decisive factor. Most prominent among the emerging regional leadership are the Military Area commanders. While the army field forces, which comprise about 80% of the whole ground forces are under their direct command, eight of them have taken over the chairmanship of the Revolutionary Committees in the most important provinces of their areas³⁰. Three others are vice-chairmen of Revolutionary Committees³¹, and only one remains without an assignment in these power organs³². It is, therefore, hardly doubtful, that one of the major results of the Cultural Revolution so far has been the rise of the regional commanders to power in the provinces.

As far as the recent crisis was spurred by a basic policy conflict, the result has not been a decisive victory for the Maoist line. Although the political ideas of Mao's opponents were branded as "revisionist" and verbally defeated, developments in 1968 and 1969 suggest that a return to pragmatic rather than revolution-oriented policies might well be in the making. As far as the Cultural Revolution presents itself as a powerstruggle with the main feature of fight for succession while the aging leader is still alive, it has, however, resulted in a thorough-going purge of the Liu Shao-ch'i group, at least at the central level. Whether the new group of leaders ratified by the 9th Party Congress will constitute the future leadership core of Communist China is not yet definitely sure. For the time being, however, it seems to represent the nature of the coalition which now rules the country. This coalition presents itself as a combination of four main forces:

- the central military leadership;
- regional military commanders;
- the remnants of the old administrative machine centering around Chou En-lai; and,
- the "Cultural Revolution group" which obviously considers itself as the central organ of the Maoist organizations.

In this setup, the administrative machine, decimated in leadership and with damaged chains of command, appears to be much weaker than it was before 1966, while the power of the "Cultural Revolution group" is growingly undercut by regional and local disciplinary actions against the Red Guards and other Maoist organizations. With its two partners thus in a precarious power situation, the influence of the PLA on the central decision-making process has sharply been increased. The position of Mao Tse-tung himself remains unclear. In spite of the outward appearance of his triumph over the opponents in the party, the ageing leader of the CCP seems to have lost much of his influence. Although the leading group continues to refer to his "instructions" — mostly rather vague fragments with which different policies can be supported —, and although the cult of personality dedicated to him reached apothetical proportions, one may well doubt whether he really still partakes in political decision-making.

³⁰ Ch'en Hsi-lien (Shenyang) in Liaoning, Hsü Shih-yu (Nanking) in Kiangsu, Han Hsien-ch'u (Fuchou) in Fukein, Tseng Ssu-yü (Wuhan) in Hupei, Huang Yung-sheng (Canton) in Kuangtung, Tseng Yung-ya (Tibet) in Tibet, Lung Shu-chin in Sinkiang, and T'an Fu-jen (K'unming) in Yünnan.

³¹ Cheng Wei-shan (Peking) in Peking, Yang Te-chih (Chinan) in Shantung and Liang Hsing-ch'u (Ch'engtu) in Ssuch'uan.

³² Chang Ta-chih (Lanchou).

The Cultural Revolution therefore cannot be regarded as having resulted in a Maoist victory. While the strongly centralized leadership structure which prevailed in the country between 1953/54 and 1966 has been damaged, trends towards military regionalism — albeit of a different type from that in the early years of the Republic — are clearly detectable.