"GRASP REVOLUTION, PROMOTE PRODUCTION": STRUGGLES OVER SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION IN CHINA, 1973 - 1976

by

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Date July 24, 1981
"To understand a revolution and its actors, it is necessary to observe from very close and judge from very far: extremes which are hard to bring together.

Simon Bolivar
The study is an examination of struggles over socialist construction in China between the Tenth National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 1973 and the arrests of the so-called "gang of four" in 1976. It analyzes the content of debates, the context in which they occurred and policies implemented during the period. The study is based upon materials collected while living in China, observations during participation in various political movements of the period, and on materials from the Chinese print and broadcast media.

The dissertation analyzes struggles over industrial development and organization, science and technology policy, rural development, and the role of the education system in socialist society. Issues debated included worker participation in management, cadre participation in labor, labor remuneration policies, the role of scientists and technicians in the production process, the importation of advanced technology, the relationship between scientific theory and Marxism-Leninism, structural and ideological changes in the modernization of agriculture, access to higher education and the role of intellectuals in socialist society.

These debates are analyzed from the perspective of Marxian theory. From this analysis the study concludes that in spite of the formal appearance of a debate, genuine and open discussion of policy alternatives and concrete results did not in fact occur. There were a number of conceptions, widely held in China during the mid-seventies, which it is argued were a central factor in thwarting the emergence of real debate. These include
the concept of the role of the Communist Party as the "core of leadership" in all spheres of social life, the notion of the "continuation of class struggle" in socialist society, misinterpretation of the relationship between the forces and relations of production in the process of development, misunderstanding of the means by which the division of labor can be transcended and misunderstanding of the nature of Chinese society. The study challenges these conceptions from the point of view of Marxian theory and traces the role they played in the distortion of the debates and the suppression of alternative viewpoints.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THESIS ABSTRACT</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTES</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES.</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTE ON THE TRANSLITERATION OF CHINESE TERMS.</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLOSSARY OF CHINESE TERMS</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDEX OF ABBREVIATED NAMES OF TRANSLATION SERVICES.</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.</td>
<td>xiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER ONE: Introduction.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why This Period?</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the Media as a Source of Documentation</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Significance of This Period as a Case Study.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Party as the &quot;Core of Leadership&quot;</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Continuation of Class Struggle in Socialist Society</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misunderstanding of the Relationship Between the Forces and Relations of Production</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misconception of the Process of Transcending the Division of Labor</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misconception of the Nature of Chinese Society</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Two: The Main Protagonists</td>
<td>Pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mao Zedong</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhou Enlai</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deng Xiaoping</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hua Guofeng</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jiang Qing</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhang Chunqiao</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yao Wenyuan</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang Hongwen</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A &quot;Gang of Five?&quot;</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter Three: Meetings and Mass Movements</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Tenth Party Congress</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Criticize Lin Biao and Confucius&quot;</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fourth National People's Congress</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Study the Theory of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat&quot;</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Criticize Deng Xiaoping&quot;</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter Four: Industry</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factory Organization in the Mid-Seventies: Beijing No. 2 Machine Tool Plant</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker Participation in Management</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cadre Participation in Labor</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules and Regulations</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Five:</td>
<td>Science and Technology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transcending the Division of Labor: Mass Participation in Technical Innovation and Scientific Experiment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transcending the Capitalist Division of Labor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shipbuilding and Self-Reliance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Outline Report on Science and Technology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Six:</td>
<td>Agriculture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Changes in the Relations of Production in Chinese Agriculture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Dazhai Model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The National Conference on Learning from Dazhai in Agriculture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opposition to the Movement to Learn from Dazhai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Xiaojinzhuang and He'er-tao.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class Struggle in the Countryside.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Equalitarian, Crude Communism&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER SEVEN:</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development of the Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Two Assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Areas of Struggle: 1973-1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zhang Tiesheng's Blank Exam Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>From the Commune, To the Commune:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Movement to Learn from Chaoyang Agricultural College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Role of Intellectuals: The</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Case of Huang Shuai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Issues Come to a Head: The Farrago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>on the Education Front and the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Campaign to Criticize Deng Xiaoping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER EIGHT:</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Party as the &quot;Core of Leadership&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Continuation of Class Struggle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in Socialist Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Misunderstanding of the Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Between the Forces and Relations of Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Misconception of the Process of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transcending the Division of Labor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Misconception of the Nature of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An Alternative Analytical Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>Materials from the Chinese Media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary Sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One:</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two:</td>
<td>The Main Protagonists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three:</td>
<td>Meetings and Mass Movements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four:</td>
<td>Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five:</td>
<td>Science and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six:</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven:</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight:</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Total Number of Postsecondary Institutions in China, 1940-1963</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Enrollment in the Chinese Education System, 1949-1987</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Percentage of Students from Worker or Peasant Background in Chinese Postsecondary Institutions, 1952-1965</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NOTE ON THE TRANSLITERATION
OF CHINESE TERMS

In the text all Chinese names and terms are transcribed in the standard (pin yin) romanization used in the People's Republic of China and increasingly in western works. If, however, an English language source is quoted or the name of a familiar historical figure appears, the original or familiar transliteration is retained. In the Notes and Bibliography the original transliterations of names and terms are retained.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Term</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ba dayuan</td>
<td>eight officials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chejian</td>
<td>workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dou, pi, gai</td>
<td>struggle, criticism, transformation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gongchang</td>
<td>factory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gongduan</td>
<td>work section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gong-nong-bing</td>
<td>worker-peasant-soldier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jiefang qian - qian,</td>
<td>before Liberation - money,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jiefang hou - cheng,</td>
<td>after Liberation - money, after the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wenge hou - quan</td>
<td>Cultural Revolution - influence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lilun duiwu</td>
<td>theoretical contingents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sange ziliu</td>
<td>three spontaneities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she lai, she qu</td>
<td>from the commune, to the commune.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wei shenchanli lun</td>
<td>theory of the primacy of the productive forces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yi da, er gong</td>
<td>big and public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>youtiao</td>
<td>fried bread twist.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
zhengzhi guashuai  政治挂帅  politics in command.

zhiye diyi  职业第一  putting vocation first.
### INDEX TO ABBREVIATED NAMES OF TRANSLATION SERVICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
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The Canadian Association of Universities and Colleges kindly provided the funds that allowed me to study in China from 1973 till 1975 and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada granted me a Doctoral Fellowship during the time I was preparing and writing this thesis. Without this financial help this thesis would not have been possible.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my many teachers, students and friends in China who took it upon themselves to help me gain a deeper understanding of the Chinese revolution. Finally, my deepest thanks go to my friend and companion, Pat Howard, without whose support and understanding this project of many years could not have born fruit.
Chapter One: Introduction

During the night of October 6, 1976 members of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) guard unit 8341 who were responsible for the security of high ranking Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and state officials arrested four leading Party members: Jiang Qing, widow of the recently deceased Party Chairman, Mao Zedong; and three Political Bureau members, Zhang Chunqiao, Wang Hongwen and Yao Wenyuan. As news of their arrests began to leak out in the following days and especially after the official announcement on October 21, the streets of China were witness to the greatest outpouring of spontaneous, open expressions of relief and exultation since the 1949 Liberation.

In the months that followed the Party initiated a media campaign against the arrested leaders, dubbed the "gang of four". The now infamous four were held responsible for many serious and persistent problems of the previous decade. In November 1980 they were put on trial, charged with a series of criminal activities dating from the start of the Cultural Revolution in 1966.

The leadership that emerged after the arrests of the "gang of four" instituted a set of policy initiatives within a general program of "four modernizations" in industry, agriculture, national defense, and science and technology. This has led to the abandonment or alteration of many policies that were developed during the Cultural Revolution decade of 1966–76.

In industry, important experiments have been initiated in giving individual enterprises more initiative in working out production plans, making them responsible for their own profits and losses, and secret
ballot elections of workers' congresses and management personnel.\textsuperscript{3} Trade unions have more autonomous powers and are supposed to exercise a supervisory role in relation to management.\textsuperscript{4} Material incentives are being reemphasized with various forms of bonus systems operating in the factories.\textsuperscript{5} The acquisition of advanced foreign technology has been greatly accelerated. Imports include both hardware and software including complete sets of equipment and some turnkey operations. Certain forms of joint operations and direct and indirect foreign investments are being encouraged in order to more rapidly absorb world standard technology.\textsuperscript{6}

In agriculture the emphasis has switched from centralizing decision-making and accounting at higher levels of the People's Communes to protecting and expanding the ownership and management rights of teams and brigades. In some poorer areas small groups and even individual households are contracting to perform certain types of agricultural production for the collective.\textsuperscript{7}

In education, the length of schooling has been increased and examinations, including entrance exams, have been reintroduced. Middle school graduates are no longer required to work in industry or agriculture for a number of years before being eligible to apply to go on for post-secondary education.\textsuperscript{8}

Class struggle is no longer an all-encompassing theme in the media. Many former landlords, national capitalists and "bad class elements" have had their civil rights restored. Thousands arrested during the Cultural Revolution decade have been released from jails and labor camps and many have risen to positions of prominence.\textsuperscript{9}
These are but some of the policy initiatives which represent a decisive reorientation of policies carried out in the years immediately preceding the arrests of Jiang Qing and her supporters in the Political Bureau. This reorientation has received considerable attention from the Western press, the international business community and academics. Among China scholars there is considerable disagreement over the significance of the post '76 policies. On one hand there are those like Mark Selden who see a basic continuity with preceding policies:

As the People's Republic enters its fourth decade, we can observe a certain continuity between its current priorities — the search for unity in the service of modernization, effective modes of cooperation, and expanded democratic rights — and those of earlier periods of revolutionary change. Perhaps the most persistent element of all has been the drive to defeat the legacy of poverty, to achieve a common prosperity that will lay the material foundations for an advanced socialist society.\(^{10}\)

At the opposite extreme are those like the French scholar, Charles Bettelheim, who consider the current policies a "great leap backward". Bettelheim wrote in 1978 that "an examination of texts published in China during the last few months, as well as what it is possible to establish as to actual practice, has led me to believe that a revisionist line is presently triumphing".\(^{11}\)

This study is an attempt to throw light on the controversy over current policies by providing a detailed account and analysis of certain struggles over aspects of development policy that immediately preceded the triumph of the "four modernizations" program. It is my argument that the issues struggled over, the form in which the debate was carried out and the consequences of the implementation of policies advocated during
the mid-seventies provides an indispensable background for understanding present policies.

Why this period?

The period I have chosen for analysis extends from the Tenth National Party Congress in August 1973 until the arrests of the "gang of four" in October 1976. The Tenth Congress marks the end of the political crisis that occurred when Lin Biao, the then defense minister who had been designated Mao Zedong's successor during the Cultural Revolution, attempted to gain complete control of the Party and state for his faction. It was also during congress that members of the faction around Jiang Qing were later reported to have solidified control over the Chinese media. This control was to be an important factor in the policy struggles that were to follow. The congress also marked the beginning of a period during which large numbers of leading cadres set aside during the Cultural Revolution were to return to positions of responsibility. For these reasons the period from late 1973 to late 1976 can be seen as a discrete period in the series of policy struggles that have marked the history of the CCP.

I have also chosen this period because it corresponds with the time during which I had some direct experience of events in China. My wife and I were among the first group of Canadian students to go to China as part of the Canada-China student exchange program. We arrived in Beijing in November 1973 and spent the first academic year studying Chinese at the Beijing Language Institute. During the 1974-75 academic year I was
enrolled in the Philosophy department at Beijing University. The one-year program consisted mainly in study of works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Mao as interpreted at that time in China. An essential part of the program involved what was then called "open door education" (kaimen banxue). Along with our Chinese roommates who were also studying philosophy, the Canadian, French and German students in my class lived, worked and carried out "social investigation" at the Red Star Peoples' Commune just outside Beijing and at the Beijing No. 2 Machine Tools Plant within the city itself. The Chinese and foreign students formed investigation teams and developed research plans in different areas according to our interests. To fulfill course requirements, we wrote reports in Chinese on these investigations when we returned to the university. Materials gathered during the process of open door education in Beijing are included in the thesis chapters on industry, science and technology and agriculture.

After completing our year at Beijing University, my wife and I applied to remain in China as teachers of English. From the fall of 1975 until the summer of 1977 we taught at the Guangdong Foreign Languages Institute. While there we participated in all activities in the school except for those exclusively for Party members. We were able to attend school-wide and departmental meetings and regular weekly political study sessions for teachers. We joined a group of our students in their weekly political theory discussions. Observation and reflection on such meetings and study sessions as well as conversations with friends in both Guangzhou and Beijing form an important background to the analysis presented here. We were able to participate in social investigations in
communes and factories in Guangdong when, as teachers, we helped to organize and participated in open door education for our students. In the four years of our stay in China we made six one-week to three-week trips to other parts of China including the northwest, northeast, central, south and east China. On these trips we had opportunities to compare the situation in factories, communes, schools and other units with those in Guangzhou and Beijing.

Importance of the Media as a Source of Documentation

Along with materials gathered while living in China, I have attempted to base my descriptions of policies and practices on sources from the Chinese press and radio that are available to scholars in the West. A central function of the Chinese media is the transmission of policy decisions made by the Party leadership to the population. Struggles over development policy were usually made public as part of a mass political campaign. At the beginning of such campaigns, the issues at stake were articulated in speeches, editorials and documents emanating from the central leadership. These statements of policy were usually published and broadcast in the media and were the subject of political study at all levels. As part of the campaigns, articles appeared clarifying specific aspects of the policies under discussion and analyzing the relevance of the issues to local conditions. Units that were models of the proper implementation of policy would be given wide publicity in the media. Thus the media are a source of both theoretical discussions and descriptions of attempts at policy implementation at different levels and different places in Chinese society.
General Significance of this Period as a Case Study

As Stephen Andors points out, the policies under debate have also been of interest to people in Western society who have become critical of their own social system.

In the late nineteenth century, the turmoil in Western society indicated a certain kind of growth and development; in China, turmoil was a sign that the old order was dying. Now, many Western intellectuals have begun to talk about the decline of Western civilization, and to write about the possible or probable alternatives to "modern" society. There is not much optimism to be found here, and no wonder. To mention only some of the obvious problems which variously afflict the industrialized world is to describe a crisis of no small proportions. Waste, pollution, and mindless growth gobble up limited natural resources. Alienation and anxiety result from gigantic organizations, complexity, and a dehumanizing division of labor. Technological developments and economic growth centralize power, create new elites, break down communities, and lead to rural squalor, suburban sprawl, and urban crisis. Manipulation, lying and brutality are hidden behind the facade of raison d'état, and are justified by those with power and accepted cynically by those without. Persistent inequalities of wealth and all the other blessings of "modern civilization" lead to seemingly random, sometimes organized outbreaks of domestic and international violence. The threat of uncontrollable disaster haunts the popular imagination, as it preoccupies the concerns and plans of ruling groups. 14

For many critics of Western society, China was seen, during the early and mid-seventies, as developing policies aimed at overcoming alienation and increasing the possibility for ordinary people to have some input into the process of making decisions that affect their lives. In the process of development the Chinese were seen to apply their version of Marxist theory to the creation of new work relationships and methods of political participation. The Chinese leadership was seen to
be consciously striving to build an industrial society radically different from those in either the Western capitalist countries or in the U.S.S.R. An appreciation of these efforts in China could aid in the development of a critical understanding of problems in western industrial society.\(^1\)

Among China scholars the innovations in Marxist theory that formed the basis of the reforms begun in the Cultural Revolution have led to a revival of interest in the role of Marxist theory in understanding policy formation in China.\(^2\) A particular version of Marxism, defined as Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought by the media, was central to the policy debates. This version of Marxism will be critically analyzed within the framework of Marxist theory through the application of concepts that were ignored or suppressed in the debates.

As the debates over socialist construction were conducted in the form of mass movements publicized in the media, an impression was created of a wide-ranging, deep and popular debate. Many Western accounts of China described an example of a society in which there was a great deal of democratic participation in debate and decision-making.\(^3\) At the lowest levels in terms of local decisions, my experience was that such views were generally correct. China would therefore seem to provide an ideal context for a debate over party and government policies affecting the course of development. In spite of appearances, it is my contention that no real debate in fact occurred. The struggles over socialist construction that occurred between 1973 and 1976 are not an example of mass democracy but of its opposite.
In the campaign to criticize the "gang of four" that followed their arrests, many problems were attributed to results of their factional activities. In my descriptions of the struggles, these factional activities also play an important role. While it might be tempting simply to lay the blame for the failure of the debate at their feet, it would be a great mistake.

While there is plenty of evidence that factional manipulations created a context of confusion and fear that obstructed the development of a lively discussion, nevertheless there is far more to be learned from this experience than simply the necessity of eliminating the immediate conditions that allowed for the arbitrary use of power by the "gang of four". From my reading of the press and experience of discussions that went on at the base level, I will argue that there are a number of factors that are much more central to understanding why a real debate failed to emerge. I will begin with a brief account of these factors. I will then proceed to a discussion of the context of the policy debates of the 1973-76 period by introducing the leading participants and presenting a brief chronological overview of events. This will be followed by a description of the debates that occurred in the main areas of contention: Industry, science and technology, agriculture and education. In the concluding chapter I will return to an analysis of the factors presented here in light of examples drawn from the description of the debates.

The factors that prevented the emergence of real debate primarily involve conceptualizations that were dominant in China during the period
that the debate was supposed to take place. Although these conceptualizations appear to be caricatures of aspects of Marxist-Leninist theory, they were unfortunately widely-held beliefs.

The Party as the "Core of Leadership"

The generally held conception of the role of the Communist Party was that it should play the leading role in all aspects of social life. Marx conceived of a communist party as an organization of people who, because they had a clearer conception of the road ahead, could provide theoretical leadership to a working class that was in the process of liberating itself. Lenin added to this notion of theoretical leadership the concept of the party as an organization of professional revolutionaries. Since he considered the working class as incapable of recognizing the necessity for socialist revolution simply on the basis of its experience of struggle within capitalist society, socialism had to be brought to the working class from without by a minority of intellectuals identified as advanced elements or the "vanguard of the proletariat". In fact, the leadership provided by this highly centralized and disciplined organization was a central factor in the successful overthrow of the czarist autocracy and the establishment of Soviet power. But the division of labor between Party and class continued after the October Revolution. The form of "dictatorship of the proletariat" that emerged out of the crisis of the civil war was a one-party state. Working class rule was equated with the leading role of the Party in the state and society. Marx and Engels looked forward to the period of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" as a relatively brief one. After the working
class had exercised its dictatorship over the bourgeoisie by expropriating its property and turning it over to the associated producers, political authority as a sphere of separate and alienated decision-making would begin to disappear.\textsuperscript{20} Stalin, however, argued that this was impossible under the conditions that prevailed in the Soviet Union. What he felt was necessary was rather the strengthening of the dictatorship of the proletariat.\textsuperscript{21} As the Party represented the proletariat, the strengthening of the dictatorship of the proletariat meant strengthening Party authority over all spheres of life. In China in the mid-seventies this was characterized as "carrying out all-round dictatorship over the bourgeoisie".

One sphere in which the Party exercised this authority to the ultimate was in the realm of social theory. The Party is the only authoritative interpreter of the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao. The fundamental justification for its leadership is the notion that it is the only organization capable of correctly interpreting Marxism-Leninism. And in fact, this authority is limited to top Party theoreticians and even then in the final analysis was subject to the powerful veto of the aging Party Chairman. Other than works written under his authority, all other theoretical writings tended to be limited to commentaries or extrapolations.

Closely associated with this conception of the Party's leading role in theoretical work was a prevalent notion of Marxism as a body of established truth. In an introductory lecture in our philosophy class at Beijing University it was explained that Mao Zedong Thought consisted in "the application of the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism to China". In spite of
Mao's own admonition that the source of all knowledge was practice and the validity of theory had to be determined in the course of application, Marxism was often treated as a set of apriori truths. Thus the correctness of any appreciation of reality depended on its correspondence with the "truths of Marxism-Leninism" as interpreted by the Party center. The acceptance of the apriori validity of the "universal truths of Marxism-Leninism" and the absolute authority of the Party leadership's interpretation of those "truths" led to the uncritical acceptance of what were in fact misinterpretations or misapplications of analyses, observations, comments and speculations by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Mao.

The Continuation of Class Struggle in Socialist Society

One of the often-cited contributions Mao Zedong was credited with making to Marxist-Leninist theory was the "theory of the continuation of class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat". He maintained that in spite of the fact that the landlord and capitalist classes had been expropriated, classes and class struggle continued to exist in China and the question of who would win out had not yet been settled. Both Lenin and Stalin held that class struggle continued under socialism but Mao developed it as the central theme in his understanding of socialism as a transitional stage between capitalism and communism. This transition could move in either of two directions. The old ruling class still physically remained in society and its ideological influence was still widespread. Petty-bourgeois ideas of small ownership were still prevalent among the peasants, and intellectuals trained in the old society continued
to hold and propagate old ideas. Therefore, Mao argued, failure on the part of the Party to "take class struggle as the key link" in all its work could lead to regression back into capitalism.

Interpretations of this theory that were prevalent during the mid-seventies had a serious effect on the debate over socialist construction. All positions could be (and were) categorized in terms of whether or not they were reflections of bourgeois or proletarian ideology. This was often done at the expense of an analysis of the validity or usefulness of a suggestion in the concrete situation in which it was raised. In the "debates" of 1973-76 concrete discussion of the problems that a particular policy position addressed was repeatedly aborted by labelling the position or its advocate as "bourgeois".

This tactic involved more than unfair debating tactics. Since the continuation of class struggle was being stressed in the media and ideological struggle was an important component of class struggle, labelling was a very serious matter. The Party leadership was not only the authoritative interpreter of theory, it was a party in power and controlled the organs of "proletarian" dictatorship. Advocating a position labelled bourgeois could mean being seen as siding with the enemy in the class struggle. Advocating a position at odds with official opinion took considerable courage in the face of growing awareness of cases of repression without effective means of redress.

The interpretation of the theory of the continuation of class struggle under socialism that prevailed during the mid-seventies also affected the ability of different social groups to enter policy debates. Since the prevailing view was that intellectuals as a group had not
managed to reform their thinking, they were seen as still being influenced by bourgeois ideology. Thus, intellectuals were particularly susceptible to the charge of supporting the enemy in the class struggle.

The concept that classes continued to exist under socialism was also given a particular interpretation during this period. According to Marxist theory, class position is determined by relationship to the means of production. In societies where private property in the means of production exists this is expressed in terms of ownership or non-ownership. In China the property of the former ruling classes had been expropriated and officially belonged to the producers, as collective or state property. An elaboration of the concept that classes continued to exist under socialism involved the explanation of how a new bourgeoisie could emerge in socialist society. One aspect of the explanation involved the idea that the ownership of a factory or other unit was determined by the line being carried out by the leadership in that unit. Line in this case means policies advocated and implemented. It should be noted that this conception of class is not based on relationship to the means of production. It is based on thought and action. Thus, a person in a position of leadership who advocated a position labelled bourgeois could be accused not simply of supporting an enemy class but of being a member of that class.

Misunderstanding of the Relationship between the Forces and Relations of Production

During the debates of the mid-seventies one of the charges laid against "capitalist roaders within the Party" was that they were advocates
of the "theory of the primacy of the productive forces". They were accused of neglecting the role of changes in the relations of production in the process of socialist construction.

In Marx the term forces of production refers not only to the raw materials, machines and tools, factories and mines, etc., used in the process of production, but to also the people engaged in production including the skills that they bring to that process. The term relations of production refers to the social relationships between people in the process of production. These relationships include their relationships to the means of production and (derived from this relationship) relations of domination and subordination in the work process and differential access to the distribution of the product. For Marx these fundamental production relationships affect all other political, legal and social relationships.

According to Marx's materialist conception of history, a revolutionary period begins when the development of the forces of production is blocked by the prevailing relations of production. Economic, social and political crises lead to a revolutionary change in the relations of production which allows for the rapid development of the forces of production. This analysis was derived from Marx and Engels' study of the rise of capitalist society and formed the basis for their interpretation of how socialism could replace capitalism.23

But Marx and Engels expected revolutionary change to occur first in advanced capitalist societies where the forces of production had already developed to a very high degree. China's revolution occurred, however, when her productive forces were at a very low level of development. The process of socialist construction in China involves both changes in the
relations of production and tremendous development of the forces of production including that development which Marx expected would be achieved by the bourgeoisie. To carry this through successfully it is necessary to have a clear understanding of the concrete relationship between these two factors at any given point. Changes in the relations of production can liberate new potentials in the forces of production. But if changes in the relations of production are pushed beyond the potential inherent in the forces of production at their current stage of development, regression can occur. This will be illustrated in the discussion of the process of collectivization described in the chapter on agriculture.

Determination of the concrete relationship between these two factors is crucial for the development of successful policies of socialist construction. This determination necessitates extensive empirical investigation and wide-ranging discussion of opinions as to the present situation and its potential at each stage of development.

In China in the mid-seventies, these factors were seen as mutually exclusive. An individual either supported the "continuation of the revolution under socialism" by advocating further changes in the relations of production or was a "capitalist-roader" advocating the "theory of the primacy of the productive forces". The position that under the present circumstances development of the forces of production had to be emphasized in order to prepare for further changes in the relations of production was labelled rather than debated on the basis of investigation of concrete reality.
Misconception of the Process of Transcending the Division of Labor

According to Engels, the primitive communal societies in which human beings lived for most of their existence as a species began to break up into more complex forms of social organization through the division of labor. The earliest form of this division was that between men and women. When the social surplus of the community was great enough to allow for the support of individuals who were not engaged in production, a division between mental and manual labor emerged. It was this division which led to the emergence of classes and of political power separate from and above the community. Thus emerged the state. In the production process, especially in the complex production processes that exist in modern society, the technical division of labor can be conceived in terms of the increasing separation of conceptualization and execution. This framework is used in a case study of technical innovation at a Beijing machine tools plant in chapter five on science and technology.

In China in the mid-seventies relations of domination and subjugation that flowed from the division of labor were stressed. Mencius' famous statement, "Some labor with their minds and some with their physical strength. Those who labor with their minds rule others and those who labor with their physical strength are ruled by others", was often quoted as an example of a reactionary attitude toward labor and laboring people. The process of transcending the division of labor in Chinese society was seen primarily not in changing the character of work, but in remoulding the ideology of mental workers. Failure to remould could lead to the
development of antagonistic relations between mental and manual workers. Physical labor in and of itself was seen as the key to the process of remoulding.

The suspicion of all mental workers as potential oppressors and the narrow understanding of the questions involved in transcending the division of labor seriously distorted both the debates and policies that emerged in relation to this problem in both industry and education. The underlying issue implicit in the problem of transcending the division of labor was largely ignored. In China the most important tasks of conceptualization are carried out by the Party and the planning bureaus. Technical detail work and managerial work are at a much lower level of abstraction and are much more closely related to execution. The key issue in a planned economy is how the laboring people can gain an increasing capacity for and possibility of exercising control over planning and other decisions that determine what is produced, how and why. The conceptual framework in which questions related to the transcendence of the division of labor were debated prevented real analysis of the concrete situation by obscuring the central issues. Factory and commune democracy cannot substitute for the socialization of state authority through direct democracy in local government and responsible representation at higher levels.

Misconception of the Nature of Chinese Society

China accepted from Soviet sources the orthodox Marxist description of "the development of productive forces from ancient times to our day".
According to this framework, the development of the forces of production has led to the emergence of five types of relations of production in history: primitive communal, slave, feudal, capitalist, and socialist. Since preliberation China was clearly not a capitalist country, the old society was designated by Mao and other Chinese writers as "semi-feudal, semi-colonial." China in the century before Liberation was seen as a society in which decaying feudalism was combined with enclaves of capitalism created as a result of imperialist penetration.

According to this account, with the disintegration of the primitive commune, a series of class societies emerged based upon private ownership of the means of production. Through ownership of the means of production the dominant classes, slaveholders, landowners and, finally, capitalists were able to appropriate the social surplus through exploitation of the laboring people. In socialist society exploitation is ended as the means of production become property of the laborers themselves. In this analysis state ownership is equated with the socialization of the means of production. Thus China, with state-owned industry and collectively-owned agriculture, is basically socialist. To complete the process of socialization, collective ownership would have to be "raised" to the level of state ownership.

But other readings of Marx throw considerable doubt on the validity of the rigid, deterministic formula the Chinese inherited from the Soviet Union. Marx described another society, or in his terms "mode of production", that emerged with the disintegration of primitive society. Marx and Engels described this social formation as "oriental despotism" or the
"Asiatic mode of production". One form of this mode of production emerged in areas where natural conditions require the development of irrigation networks to sustain and expand agricultural production. In this mode of production classes and exploitation exist without the existence of private property. Production is carried on in scattered communal villages. The land officially belongs to one person, the monarch, usually in his capacity as the representative or "son" of the deity. The ruling class is made up of the state bureaucracy who are servants or priests of the god-king themselves holding no property in the means of production. The bureaucracy extracts the social surplus from the villages, usually in the form of labor service, not on the basis of ownership of the means of production, but on the basis of their role in the division of labor. The educated bureaucracy organizes the construction and maintenance of the irrigation system and/or other functions necessary to carrying out agricultural production. Forms of this mode of production existed in Egypt, the Middle East, China, central and southeast Asia, and the Inca empire in South America.

Descriptions of this mode of production can be found in Marx and Engels' writings although they never attempted a systematic analysis. Their central concern was in describing the emergence and demise of the capitalist mode of production, not in developing a general schema for human history. The concept can also be found in Lenin's pre-October works when he describes Russia as "semi-asiatic", but in the early thirties under Stalin the concept was rejected as an illegitimate part of the Marxist-Leninist heritage.
Legitimate or not, the concept of an Asiatic mode of production allows for the possibility of developing an analysis of other societies in which private property in the means of production does not exist. Recent analyses of countries that call themselves "socialist" have maintained that this self-description is an illusion. Socialism, described by Marx as the direct appropriation of social wealth by associated producers, has yet to be achieved. These societies still remain within the bounds of class society. This new mode of production has been variously described as "bureaucratic collectivism", "proto-socialism", and "statism". This is, however, not a description of a new form of "oriental despotism". The Asiatic mode was static while these societies are dynamic. They emerged from social revolutions and the state bureaucracy is fulfilling the task of the bourgeoisie in creating the material conditions for socialism. The crucial question raised by these analyses is whether and how these societies could create changes in the relations of production necessary for the transition to socialism.

The Chinese analyze their own society as one in which classes and class struggle continue to exist. But there is a crucial difference between the Chinese analysis and the one alluded to above. The Chinese believe they have already achieved socialism. The danger of emergence of new forms of exploitation is seen in terms of slipping back into the theoretically prior mode of production according to the Soviet scheme, i.e., capitalism. I will argue that it is this misconception that has seriously distorted the debate over socialist construction in China in the mid-seventies.
Notes: Chapter One, Introduction


2 See "Indictment of the Special Procurate Under the Supreme People's Procurate of the People's Republic of China", published as an English supplement to Ta Kung Pao, Hong Kong, November 1980.


14 Mark Selden, "China's Uninterrupted Revolution", p. 32.


18 See for example the description by Marx and Engels of the relationship between Communists and the working class in the second section of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1972), pp. 47-48.
See for example Lenin's description of the need for a centralized party under the conditions prevailing in Russia in the section on "Organization of Workers and Organization of Revolutionaries" in his "What is to be done", V.I. Lenin, Selected Works (Moscow: Foreign Languages Press, 1950), pp. 322-38.


See Mao Zedong, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People", Selected Readings (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1971), pp. 463-64, for the first appearance of this concept in Mao's published works.

This process is outlined in section one of the Manifesto, pp. 3-46.


A brief description of this concept of historical development can be found in the section on dialectical and historical materialism in History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (B) (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing, 1948), pp. 126-61. This text and this description of the fundamentals of Marxism were basic to the Chinese understanding of Marxist theory. A Chinese translation of the History (Bolshevik) was used as a text in Party schools and in the Philosophy department at Beijing University. The only source of alternative versions of Marxism or criticisms of Marxism generally available in China were those included as negative examples in the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. Chinese teachers and students at Beijing University were completely unaware of post-war developments in Marxism in Eastern and Western Europe and the rest of the world. Some post-1956 Soviet material was available, however, for purposes of criticizing revisionism.

28 Marx's use of the term "mode of production" depends upon the level of abstraction he is working with. In *The German Ideology* (N.Y.: International Publishers, 1947), pp. 7-8, he refers to the mode of production as a "mode of life". In *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Chicago: Kerr, 1904), p. 11, he states that "the mode of production of material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life" but in *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* (N.Y.: International Publishers, 1964), p. 136, he states that "religion, family, state, law, morality, science, art, etc., are only particular modes of production ..." In general, mode of production seems to be Marx's widest social category, including the economic base (forces and relations of production) and all aspects of the superstructure that are derived from the relations of production: "religion, family, state ..." It is a means of describing a society as a set of relationships with the productive process at its base. The different societies described in the *Soviet History* are modes of production. For a description of the relationship between the concept of mode of production and other aspects of Marx's work see Umberto Melotti, *Marx and the Third World* (London: Macmillan, 1977), introduction.


30 This however was not the only form the asiatic mode could take. See Melotti, Chs. 11-12 for the range of forms possible with or without substantial hydraulic features. John Taylor in his *From Modernization to Modes of Production* (London: Macmillan, 1979), Ch. 9, maintains that control of irrigation is not a sufficient explanation of the role of the state in the asiatic mode. Other functions he notes are: regularly redistributing communal lands to meet changing demographic requirements, maintaining storage facilities, organizing crop rotation and the production and distribution of tools for agricultural production.

31 For a description of the Inca variant see Bahro, pp. 73-75. For the Chinese variant see Melotti, Ch. 17.

In *The Civil War in France* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Press, 1948), Marx describes how in the Paris Commune the producers began the process of social appropriation leading to a situation in which "united co-operative societies are to regulate national production upon a common plan". These measures included the destruction of the existing state machine and its replacement by the Commune, the election of representatives to the Commune through universal suffrage with provisions for instant recall and the stipulation that "public service had to be done at workmen's wages", the provision of universal education without interference from church or state and the beginning of social legislation including the turning of workshops and factories over to "associations of workmen". See pp. 73-91.

See Melotti, Chs. 21-22, for a description of the emergence of "bureaucratic collectivism" in the U.S.S.R.

See Bahro, Ch. 3, "From Agricultural to Industrial Despotism".


This is the basis of the analysis of the U.S.S.R. presented by Bettelheim in his *Class Struggles in the U.S.S.R*. Bettelheim's thesis is that socialism is a transitional society which can move in either direction: forward toward communism or backward toward capitalism. In his debate with Paul Sweezy in *On the Transition to Socialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), he argued that transition towards capitalism could not be defined as movement away from state planning toward the increasing role of the market. This was simply a surface manifestation of the change in power relations in society. The crucial question is who holds power, the proletariat or the representatives of the new bourgeoisie. This can be determined by analyzing the line followed by the ruling Party. Thus his position is essentially the same as the one prevalent in China in the mid-seventies.
Chapter Two: The Main Protagonists

Chapters two and three describe the context which shaped the form and manner in which policy alternatives were presented and which ultimately determined the choices that were made. The succeeding chapters deal with specific issues in the areas of industry, science and technology, agriculture, and education. These issues were the focus of debates over socialist construction in the mid-seventies. I will attempt to clarify what was at stake, theoretically and practically in each of these areas.

In reality, for most of the period only one side of the debate was publicly aired. The views that eventually prevailed appeared in the media in fragmentary form as objects of criticism quoted out of context. It was only after the downfall of the "gang of four" that materials became available which allow the alternative policy options to be sketched out. In the one-sided "debate" that did occur publicly these issues were presented in the context of movements to prevent "the restoration of capitalism in China" through the coming to power of persons who would lead China down "the capitalist road". It is this context that will be outlined in these chapters in terms of the individual protagonists who stood at the center of political power, the political movements that were the public manifestations of the struggle and the problem of factionalism that lay beneath the tensions of the period.

In any social system, questions of policy are at the same time questions of power. The form that the dictatorship of the proletariat has taken in China is that of a single party state.\(^1\) The state structure
has as its center the State Council with its subordinate ministries in Beijing. The State Council is elected at periodic National Peoples' Congresses. Below the central government the state structure consists of provincial governments and centrally administered municipalities and then the county governments and larger municipalities. The lowest level of state structure includes the rural peoples' communes, small cities and municipal districts in larger cities. During the mid-seventies, governments below the national level were headed by revolutionary committees. The Party structure parallels the state structure but extends down to base level organizations such as the brigades or teams within the communes and factories in the urban areas. The Communist Party plays the leading role in the political system. Major policy decisions are made by the Party while the state's role is simply to implement those decisions. Party and state structures are closely linked. To ensure the Party's role as the "core of leadership" it has traditionally been the practice to have the principal leader at any level concurrently hold the leading Party and administrative positions. The Chinese consider their system democratic in the sense that citizens are encouraged to participate in politics under the leadership of the Party. Popular participation in the decision-making process occurs within the framework of what is called in China the "mass line". This was described by Mao Zedong in the following terms:
In all the practical work of our Party, all correct leadership is necessarily 'from the masses, to the masses'. This means: take the ideas of the masses (scattered and unsystematic ideas) and concentrate them (through study turn them into concentrated and systematic ideas), then go back to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas, until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast to them and translate them into action, and test the correctness of these ideas in such action. Then once again concentrate ideas from the masses and once again go to the masses, so that the ideas are persevered in and carried through. And so on over and over again in an endless spiral, with the ideas becoming more correct, more vital and richer each time. Such is the Marxist theory of knowledge. 

When, on the basis of information flowing up to the appropriate level, decisions are made, the role of Party members is to explain these decisions to people and to persuade them to carry them out. These processes often occur as part of "mass movements" which have ranged in scope from the land reform of the early fifties which destroyed the economic basis of the old society in the countryside to the weekly patriotic health campaign in which we and our neighbors at the languages institute were organized to spend an hour or so every Wednesday morning sweeping the streets or setting off DDT smoke bombs to kill mosquitoes. When the aims of these movements correspond with the needs and interests of a large section of the people, they can be powerful vehicles for social change. But when they do not, as we increasingly found the case to be in our experience in the mid-seventies, participation becomes the empty repetition of slogans in response to pressure from above.

Although participation is widespread, decision-making on issues of general national significance is highly centralized. Within the Communist Party itself, members have the right to freely discuss issues and hold
views different from those of the leadership, but final decisions rest with the Central Committee and "... the lower level is subordinate to the higher level, and the entire Party is subordinate to the Central Committee". When the Central Committee is not in session a smaller body, the Politburo, makes decisions in its name. A yet smaller group, the Standing Committee, carries out day to day decision-making. Since the deliberations of these bodies are secret, China scholars and the Chinese population can only speculate on the internal dynamics of these groups and the relationships between individuals in these groups to broader political and social groupings.

Fortunately, in the movement to criticize the "gang of four" that followed their arrests, materials were made public which indicated the identity of the major protagonists in the struggles at the center of political power in China during the mid-seventies. As their names will recur in the exposition of the policy debates that follows, background information on each of these individuals can help to clarify the significance of their involvement.

Mao Zedong

Mao Zedong was born on December 26, 1893 in the village of Shaoshan in Hunan province. His political activities began in the May Fourth movement of 1919. He was one of the founding members of the CCP in July 1921. He continued to play leading roles in the Party and became its principal leader in 1935 at a meeting of the Political Bureau of the Party in the village of Zunyi (Tsunyi) at the beginning of the Long March after the Party and its armies had been forced to abandon its bases in
central China. It was under his leadership that the Party consolidated its power in the northwest, participated in the united front to resist the Japanese invasion, and fought its way to national power in 1949. Because the social programs carried out under his leadership as part of these struggles met the pressing needs of the vast majority of the Chinese people, he achieved tremendous personal prestige.\textsuperscript{8}

As head of state and chairman of the Party, Mao used his personal prestige to push forward the nationalization of industry and the collectivization of agriculture. This culminated in the formation of the people's communes during the Great Leap Forward movement of the late fifties. Excesses in the implementation of these programs led to opposition within the Party centering around Peng Dehuai, the then minister of national defense. This opposition was defeated at the Eighth Plenum of the Central Committee in August 1959 but it was clear that many in the Party considered many of the criticisms justified.\textsuperscript{9} It was during this period that Mao decided to give up his position as head of state and withdraw from day to day decision-making. The Sixth Plenum of the Central Committee deemed this a positive decision stating, "Comrade Mao Zedong will be enabled all the better to concentrate his energies on dealing with questions of the direction, policy and line of the Party and the state; he may also be enabled to set aside more time for Marxist-Leninist theoretical works ..."\textsuperscript{10}

During this period Mao's attention was centered on what he saw as the growing danger of revisionism in the international communist movement. He supervised the publication of a series of letters and articles that opened
up the Sino-Soviet debate. One of the letters explained that:

Classes and class struggle continue to exist in this society, and the struggle still goes on between the road of socialism and the road of capitalism. The socialist road on the economic front (in the ownership of the means of production) is insufficient by itself and cannot be consolidated. There must be a thorough socialist revolution on the political and ideological fronts. Here a very long period of time is needed to decide "who will win" in the struggle between socialism and capitalism ... Anyone who fails to see this or to appreciate it fully will make tremendous mistakes.\(^{11}\)

This danger of restoration of capitalism was central to Mao's thinking for the rest of his life. Concluding that the policies of the early sixties which were attributed to Liu Shaoqi, the new head of state, were leading in the direction of capitalism, Mao launched the Socialist Education Movement in 1963 and then the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in 1966.\(^{12}\) It was during the Cultural Revolution that efforts to enhance Mao's prestige took on the proportions of a personality cult. The person most responsible for the development of the cult, Lin Biao (Lin Piao), was declared to be "Comrade Mao Zedong's close comrade-in-arms and successor" at the Ninth Party Congress in 1969.\(^{13}\) When an attempt at the Second Plenary Session of the Ninth Central Committee in August-September 1970 on the part of Mao's "close comrade-in-arms" to accrue even more power to himself failed, a crisis occurred which led to an abortive attempt on Mao's life and Lin Biao's death in September 1971 when his plane crashed en route to the Soviet Union.\(^{14}\)

Following this crisis the attempt to rebuild the Communist Party, which had been shattered in the Cultural Revolution, began in earnest. By the Tenth Party Congress in 1973, Mao was almost 80 years old. In the
beginning of 1974 Mao's health began deteriorating. Although no official announcement as to the nature of his illness was ever released, we were informed by friends in China that he was suffering from a form of Parkinson's disease in which periods of lucidity alternate with periods in which the patient is not aware of his surroundings. Although he continued to be politically active, his public appearances became less frequent. He did not attend the Fourth National People's Congress in January 1975. It has been reported that by July 1976 Mao was gravely ill. His death on September 9, 1976 triggered the crisis that led to the arrests of the "gang of four".

Zhou Enlai

Zhou Enlai was another senior statesman of the Chinese revolution. Born in 1898, his political activities began when he was a high school student in Tianjin (Tientsin) in 1914. During the May Fourth movement he and his future wife, Deng Yingzhao, were among the organizers of the Awakening Society, an important student group of the period. While a student in Paris in the early twenties, Zhou helped organize a Party group among the Chinese students and workers living in Europe.

In the struggles that led up to the liberation of China in 1949, Zhou played a number of key roles. He helped organize the workers' uprising in Shanghai at the end of the Northern Expedition of 1927. When Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek) betrayed the united front of the Nationalists and the Communists and suppressed the workers' movement, Zhou moved on to Nanchang where he helped organize the military uprising that
is celebrated today as the birth of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA).\textsuperscript{19} His support of Mao at the Zunyi meeting was crucial to establishing of Mao's leadership in the Party.

In the pre-liberation period Zhou emerged as the chief negotiator for the Party. During the Xian (Sian) incident of 1936 Zhou negotiated the release of Chiang Kai-shek on the promise that the Nationalists would enter into a united front with the Communists to resist the Japanese.\textsuperscript{20} During this second united front period Zhou was the Party's representative in negotiations with the Nationalists and its main contact with the outside world.\textsuperscript{21} After liberation Zhou would continue in this role in foreign affairs (as Minister of Foreign Affairs until 1958) and in party to party relations within the international communist movement.\textsuperscript{22} Internationally, he became the most well known of the leaders of the Chinese revolution.

As Premier of the State Council after liberation, Zhou Enlai's primary role was to organize the concrete implementation of Party policies. As reality often imposes compromises on policy in the process of implementation, Zhou is often viewed as a "moderate" in relation to Mao's role as a "radical" initiator of policies. This can be misleading. There was a story that circulated among the people we knew in China that Mao often referred to Zhou as "my housekeeper" implying that at times it was necessary for Zhou to clean up the messes he had made. Although perhaps apocryphal, I suspect the story is a truer indication of the dynamics of the relationship between the two men.
During the Cultural Revolution Zhou played a key role in attempting to resolve factional disputes and halt the suffering and destruction that were their outcome. He also attempted to protect individuals who were being wrongfully accused and persecuted.\textsuperscript{23} It was these activities that were stressed again and again by people giving their personal evaluations of his life during memorial meetings, political study sessions and personal discussions we experienced in Guangzhou following his death. Zhou was found to have cancer in 1972. He was politically active until the last days of his life, although a particularly short report on the work of the government had to be prepared for the Fourth National People's Congress to allow him to deliver it without a break.\textsuperscript{24} He died on January 8, 1976 at the age of 78.

Deng Xiaoping

At the center of the storms of struggle in the mid-seventies stood the diminutive figure of Deng Xiaoping. He, among the first generation of Chinese communist leaders, has the distinction of having been removed from his posts and returned to power three times in his political career.\textsuperscript{25} Deng was born into a landlord's family in Szechuan in 1904. In 1921 he travelled to France on a work-study program. He became involved in the student movement and joined the French branch of the Chinese Communist Youth League organized by Zhou Enlai. In 1925 he joined the Communist Party and after studying in Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow for a year, he returned to China and did party work in Shanxi and Shanghai.\textsuperscript{26} In 1929 Deng was sent to Guangxi province to organize an uprising among the local troops. In December the uprising succeeded and led to the
establishment of a Soviet area in Guangxi. Deng became the political commissar of the Red Flag Army (later the Seventh Red Army) formed during the uprising. The Soviet area was crushed in 1930 but guerrilla activities continued in the area until liberation in 1949.27

After a brief stay in Shanghai, Deng joined Mao in the Jiangxi (Kiangsi) Soviet where he held various government posts until being purged for support of Mao's policies in 1933. From the Long March in 1934 till liberation in 1949, Deng's main work was providing political leadership in the Eighth Route Army during the anti-Japanese war and in the field armies which fought the civil war against the Nationalists.

At the end of the civil war Deng was assigned the leading Party, government and military posts in the southwest region. In the early 1950's he was awarded a number of posts in the central government as well and in 1954 became the Secretary-General of the Central Committee (in charge of the administrative offices of the Committee), the Vice-Chairman of the National Defense Council and Vice-Premier of the State Council. In 1956 he also became a member of the Standing Committee of the Politburo of the Party. When Zhou Enlai was out of the country it was Deng who served as acting Premier. In 1962 he supported Liu Shaoqi's policies of retrenchment in the economy following the Great Leap Forward and the withdrawal of the Soviet experts. It was then, in relation to agricultural policy, that he uttered the words that were to haunt him later in his political career: "As long as it catches mice, it doesn't matter whether the cat is black or white". It was also during this period that Mao became critical of Deng. During the Cultural Revolution
Mao is reported to have stated in a meeting of the Politburo: "Deng Xiaoping has never come to me since 1959. In 1962 all the four vice-premiers came to see me in Nanjing, but Deng Xiaoping refused to come with them ... During the past six years he has never reported his work to me ... Deng Xiaoping is alienating me".28

In the Cultural Revolution Deng became second only to Liu Shaoqi as a target of the campaign to overthrow the "capitalist roaders" in the Party. September 1966 was his last public appearance until 1973. On Mao's recommendation that Deng's case be viewed differently from Liu Shaoqi's, Deng was not expelled from the Party. He spent the next years in a "May Seventh" cadre school and as a cadre in a factory. In April 1973 he emerged as a Vice-Premier of the State Council. Zhou Enlai's health seriously deteriorated toward the end of 1974 and Deng began taking over more and more of his workload. In January of 1975 Deng became a Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee and First Vice-Premier of the State Council and Chief of Staff of the Army. This was the year of Deng Xiaoping.29

Toward the end of 1975 barely veiled criticisms of Deng began to surface. In January 1976 he gave the memorial speech at Zhou Enlai's funeral. It was his last public appearance until his re-emergence again in 1977. In April 1976 Deng was held responsible (though not directly) for the "counter-revolutionary political incident at Tian An Men square" and was dismissed from all his posts "both inside and outside the Party".30
Hua Guofeng

On the same day, another resolution was published appointing Hua Guofeng First Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee and Premier of the State Council. Hua is from the generation of Chinese leaders who joined the revolution during the anti-Japanese war. Although little information about his early life is available, it has been reported that he was born in Chiaocheng county, Shanxi province in 1921. He began revolutionary work in his home county probably in 1937. He became chairman of the county's Anti-Japanese Agression and National Salvation Federation, director of the propaganda department of the county Party committee and later secretary of the county Party committee. As political commissar of the county militia he was involved in guerrilla warfare in the area. In 1949 he was sent south as part of the process of having Party and government work teams accompany the PLA during the civil war. He and his group arrived in Xiangyin county, Hunan province in August 1949. He was to serve for twenty years in the province of Hunan before moving on to posts in the central government. He organized the land reform in Xiangyin county while working as first secretary of the county Party committee. During the movement to organize mutual aid groups and agricultural cooperatives, he was secretary of the Xiangtan prefectural Party committee. In 1955, of the 12,000 agricultural co-ops organized in Hunan, forty percent were in Xiangtan prefecture. Materials collected by Hua while leading finance and supply work during the Great Leap Forward may have been used by Mao in countering the criticisms of the Great Leap and the speed of collectivization raised by Peng Dehuai.
at the Lushan meeting in 1959. On Mao's recommendation, Hua was appointed secretary to the Hunan provincial Party committee. During the "three hard years" of dislocations due to natural disasters, the pull-out of Soviet experts and the mismanagement of the Great Leap Forward, Hua was involved in work teams of cadres sent down to lower levels to solve serious local problems. During an inspection tour Mao made at the time in Hunan, Hua twice reported to Mao on his work in Maotian district.

During the Cultural Revolution, although he was marched through the streets of Changsha in a dunce cap, Hua Guofeng was not "overthrown" in the factional fighting in Hunan. On Zhou Enlai's recommendation, he participated in the work of setting up a revolutionary committee to head the provincial government in 1967. He became a vice-chairman of that body in 1968. When a new provincial Party committee was set up in 1970, Hua became first secretary.³⁴

Hua was transferred to Beijing in 1971 to work under Zhou Enlai in the State Council. He returned to Hunan in 1972 to work on problems related to the Lin Biao affair. At the Tenth Party Congress in 1973 he became a member of the Political Bureau. At the Fourth National People's Congress in January 1975 he was made a vice-premier and put in charge of public security work. In 1976 he was named acting premier when Zhou Enlai died, became premier following the Tian An Men incident and chairman of the Party in October.³⁵

Hua's rise to central leadership positions after 1970 was quite rapid and was probably related to his prominence in the rural collectivization movement and the Great Leap Forward in the areas where Mao grew
up. Mao was aware of his work by at least 1959. Hua's work in Hunan gave him experience in agriculture, finance and trade, united front work, military affairs and water conservancy. By the time he arrived in Beijing, Hua was a quite well-rounded administrator and a leader of proven ability.

Mao, Zhou and Deng were among the elders of the Chinese revolution who, by the mid-seventies, had held key positions of power for a generation. Although Hua Guofeng's rise to power was more rapid than most, it was a step by step process through which he acquired considerable experience and political contacts. By contrast, the group of leaders that came to be known as the "Shanghai faction" and later as the "gang of four" owed their positions to the sudden realignments that occurred during the Cultural Revolution. From political obscurity or lower level posts they emerged onto the center stage during the late 1960's. This phenomenon was described by Deng and others in China as a "helicopter ride". In any event, their political positions depended on a continuing affirmation of the policies and practices of the Cultural Revolution as they interpreted them.

Jiang Qing

Jiang Qing, as Mao's wife, was perhaps the most influential of the leaders who emerged during the Cultural Revolution. She was born in 1914 in Shandong province. In 1931 she entered university in Qingdao (Tsingtao) while working part-time as an actress. During this period she joined the League of Left-Wing Writers. According to her own account she joined the Party in Qingdao in 1933. In the summer of 1933 she moved to Shanghai
where she worked with the Shanghai Work Study Troupe and taught in a workers' night school. During this time she was unable to make contact with the under-ground Party organization in Shanghai. After being imprisoned by the Nationalists for a short period, she continued her acting career including roles in left-wing films. It was the relationships she developed in these years that were the basis for later charges that her forays into cultural spheres during the Cultural Revolution were motivated by personal revenge and an attempt to cover up her activities in Shanghai during the 1930's.37

In 1937 Jiang Qing left Shanghai for the communist base area at Yan'an (Yenan). She continued working as an actress and taught in the Lu Xun Academy. She began living with Mao Zedong in 1938. Mao had divorced a previous wife and he and Jiang decided to marry. According to one version of events, the Political Bureau was opposed to the marriage and only consented with the proviso that Jiang Qing could not assume any positions of political power.38 Another plausible explanation may simply be that chronic illness kept her inactive until the early 1960's. At any rate Jiang spent the period of time from her marriage to Mao till 1949 working mainly as his private secretary. During the 1950's she alternated periods of recuperation from medical treatment in the Soviet Union with work in the cinema department of the Party's propaganda department and in the General Office of the Party's Central Committee. In her autobiographical account to Roxanne Witke, she claims that during this period she collaborated with Mao in a series of attempts to rid the cultural sphere of bourgeois influence.39
Her first public appearance was a speech at a Beijing opera festival in 1964. In 1965 she was involved in the preparation work for Yao Wenyuan's critique of the play "Hai Rui Dismissed from Office", which became the opening shot of the Cultural Revolution. In 1966 Lin Biao (Lin Piao) appointed her to the position of cultural advisor to the People's Liberation Army (PLA). She also became one of the leaders of the Cultural Revolution, serving as deputy head of the Cultural Revolution Group of the Central Committee and secretary to the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau. Through these positions she was able to exercise extensive control over the cultural life of China. She was to remain one of the most politically influential people in China for the next ten years. At the time of her arrest in 1976 she held the post of member of the Politburo.

Zhang Chunqiao

Less is known about the man considered to be the chief theoretician of the "gang of four". Zhang Chunqiao was born in Shandong province in 1917. It is known that he was involved in literary work in the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei base area in the 1940's. He entered Shanghai with the PLA in 1949 and became deputy director of the Information and Publication Bureau of the East China Military and Administrative Council and the deputy director of the East China office of the New China News Agency (Xinhua). In 1954 he became publisher of Liberation Daily (Jiefang Ribao), the main newspaper in Shanghai. He later became deputy secretary of the municipal Party committee and deputy minister of propaganda for
that committee.\textsuperscript{45} In the period just before the Cultural Revolution he worked closely with Jiang Qing and provided the access to the media that Mao lacked in Beijing. When the Cultural Revolution Group was reorganized in May 1966, Zhang became one of the leading members. He played a central role in factional struggles in Shanghai and became head of the Shanghai Commune (later the Shanghai municipal revolutionary committee) when "the Left seized power" in February 1967. That year he also became the first political commissar of the Nanjing Military Region and the Shanghai Garrison Command. At the Ninth Party Congress he was elected to the Politburo in Beijing. At the time of his arrest he was a member of the Standing Committee of the Politburo, Vice-Premier of the State Council, director of the General Political Department of the PLA and first secretary of the Shanghai municipal Party committee as well as retaining his post in the city government.\textsuperscript{46}

\textit{Yao Wenyuan}

Yao Wenyuan, a young literary critic in Shanghai, earned his "helicopter ride" to the centers of power in Beijing by preparing and writing the article which sparked the Cultural Revolution. Born in Zhejiang province in 1931, he was the son of Yao Pengzi, a left-wing writer of the 1930's, who broke with the CCP in 1934. In the 1950's he was active in youth organizations becoming a member of the national committee of the All-China Youth Federation in 1958. He was also a writer, working as a reporter for \textit{Wenyi Bao}, a cultural magazine in Shanghai. In 1956 he
became editor of *Literature Monthly*. In the early sixties he became a council member of the Shanghai Writers' Association and editor-in-chief of *Liberation Daily*.47

In 1965 Mao decided to open the struggle against those he saw as restoring capitalism in China, first on the cultural front. In 1959 Peng Dehuai had been dismissed from his posts in the Party and the PLA for "right opportunism" in his opposition to the Great Leap Forward. In 1961 Wu Han, deputy mayor of Beijing, wrote and produced a play, "Hai Rui Dismissed from Office", about an historical individual who loses his post for protecting the ordinary people from the policies of the emperor. Yao Wenyuan's role in 1965 was to write an article exposing the allegorical intent of the play in attacking Mao's role in the dismissal of Peng Dehuai. Because of opposition from the Beijing Party committee, Yao's "On the New Historical Drama Hai Rui Dismissed from Office", was first published not in Beijing, but in Shanghai on November 10, 1965.48 The ensuing struggle led to the fall from power of members of the Beijing Party committee and then wider and wider circles of people in both Party and government. Yao was rewarded with a position in the Cultural Revolution Group. Yao was also involved in the struggles around the formation of the Shanghai Commune. By the time of his arrest in 1976, he was a member of the Politburo of the Party, second secretary of the Shanghai municipal Party committee and vice-chairman of the Shanghai municipal revolutionary committee.
Wang Hongwen

It was through the power and influence of Jiang, Zhang and Yao that the "gang of four" were able to control the media as part of the cultural apparatus in China. The fourth member of the "gang", Wang Hongwen, had made his mark not in the areas of culture and the press, but in the factional struggles that made up such an important part of the Cultural Revolution. Born in 1935 in the city of Changchun in Jilin province, Wang joined the PLA sometime during the Korean War. He was demobilized in 1962 and sent to work as a security officer at the Shanghai Number 17 Spinning and Weaving Mill. It has also been reported that he served as secretary of a party branch within the factory. During the Cultural Revolution this factory was one of the first places where the workers became organized. In October 1966, when the main activity was still that of the student Red Guards, Wang's organization, the "Forever Loyal to Chairman Mao Thought Fighting Group", sent him as part of a secret delegation to the Cultural Revolution Group in Beijing. There they met with "leading comrades" and returned to the factory having been given a "sixteen character presentation": "Stick to principles, dare to struggle, pay attention to strategy, unite the majority". Armed with these instructions, Wang and his followers organized a Rebel Workers Group in his factory which sent people out to organize groups in other factories. Wang became the head of the city-wide Shanghai Workers Revolutionary Rebel Headquarters. Zhang Chunqiao, in his capacity of representative of the Cultural Revolution Group, gave his blessings to the new organization. During the "January Storm" of
1967, this group led the forces that overthrew the municipal Party and government in Shanghai. The events in Shanghai served as a model for power takeovers in other cities.

When the Shanghai municipal revolutionary committee was organized in March 1967, Wang became a deputy director. In 1969 he became a member of the central committee and in 1971 secretary of the Shanghai municipal Party committee. By the time of his arrest he was a member of the standing committee of the Politburo and vice-chairman of the CC as well as retaining his posts in Shanghai.

A "Gang of Five"?

During the mid-seventies Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping clearly represented different policy options than those of the group now called the "gang of four". As Hua Guofeng was promoted to positions of greater power, he became subject to the same kinds of attack through the media controlled by Zhang and Yao as had Zhou and Deng. Hua was also one of those who authorized their arrests. These relationships clearly were or became antagonistic.

But what of the relationship between the "gang of four" and Mao Zedong? As can be seen from their backgrounds, Mao's wife and the three leaders from Shanghai cooperated very closely with Mao in the initial stages of the Cultural Revolution. They were central figures in this movement which was declared to be "under the personal direction of
Chairman Mao". It would therefore be logical to conclude that the "gang of four" was actually a "gang of five" with Mao Zedong as a fifth member.\(^5\) This also appears to be the basis of Jiang Qing's defence at her trial.\(^5\)

However, in central Party documents and press reports that were published after the arrests of the four, the Chinese maintain that Mao Zedong had, in fact, opposed them while he still lived.\(^5\) This contention is based upon a series of statements made by Mao between early 1974 and May 1975. These include references to Jiang Qing, criticisms of factionalism and statements about Marxist philosophy. It has been reported that Mao and Jiang Qing personally separated sometime in 1973.\(^5\) In March 1974 he is reported to have told her: "It's better if we don't see each other. You haven't done many of the things I talked to you about over the years. What's the use of seeing each other more often? The works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin are there, my works are there, but you simply refuse to study".\(^5\) During the maneuverings that occurred as part of the process of nominating a new set of state leaders before the Fourth National People's Congress, Mao is reported to have exclaimed: "Jiang Qing has wild ambitions. She wants Wang Hongwen to be Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and herself to be Chairman of the Party Central Committee".\(^5\) In 1975 he is reported to have remarked: "After I die, she will make trouble".\(^5\)

Mao also seems to have been distressed by their factional activities, at least at the center. In July of 1974 he is reported to have said: "You'd better be careful; don't let yourselves become a small faction of four". Almost a year later he was still criticizing them for factionalism.
It is this quote that is the source of the label "gang of four": "Don't function as a gang of four. Don't do it any more. Why do you keep doing it? Why don't you unite with the more than two hundred members of the Party Central Committee? It is no good to keep a small circle of a few. It has always been no good doing so".\(^6^1\)

The closest thing to a criticism of the general position held by the "gang of four" occurred when Mao reacted to a campaign being conducted against "empiricism". The campaign was being used to attack veteran cadres with long experience. Mao pointed out: "It seems the formulation should be: Oppose revisionism which includes empiricism and dogmatism. Both revise Marxism-Leninism. Don't mention just one while omitting the other". "In my opinion, those who are criticizing empiricism are themselves empiricists."\(^6^2\)

On May 3, 1975 Mao is reported to have suggested that some action be taken against his wife and her supporters: "If this is not settled in the first half of this year, it should be settled in the second half; if not this year, then next year; if not next year, then the year after".\(^6^3\)

We must assume that all available evidence of Mao's opposition to the "gang of four" would have been marshalled as part of the campaign against them after their arrests. But what do the quotes indicate? He was personally estranged from his wife and considered her ambitious. He was aware of and condemned their factional activities within the CC and he had a basic philosophical difference with them over the nature of the danger of revisionism. His remarks concerning "settling" the affair of the "gang of four" can as easily be taken as a plea for procrastination
as one for prompt action. He appears to have opposed the factional activities he was aware of without indicating any thoroughgoing opposition to the policy positions they were taking in the debates of the mid-seventies.

However, his participation in the decisions placing Hua Guofeng in the key positions of power after the death of Zhou Enlai and the purge of Deng Xiaoping indicated he did not trust the four sufficiently to acquiesce to their obtaining overwhelming power.64

In his analysis of the "gang of four", Lowell Dittmer uses the concept of the "favorite" developed by historians of European court politics. He notes:

The favorite may become influential in any organization with a strong monocratic executive who chooses to isolate himself from his official advisors and to rely on personal advisors whose loyalty to him is unquestioning. The executive may so choose for any number of reasons: a falling out with official staff, a susceptibility to flattery, are two of the more obvious. It is in the interest of the favorite to facilitate his patron's isolation in order to make his own role as go-between indispensable.65

Although there are parallels between this concept and the relationships that seem to have developed between Mao and the "gang of four", I believe it would be misleading to carry the analogy too far. By raising the question of the danger of restoration of capitalism in China in the mid-sixties, Mao did place himself in opposition to many of his senior colleagues who did not see this as the central question at that time. By broadening the scope of the debate through the mobilization of people outside the Party and its leadership, Mao attempted not only to democratize the discussion but also to overcome his own isolation. Because the Party
propaganda apparatus was controlled by people with whom he disagreed, Mao relied on his wife and her allies in Shanghai to make the debate public. The Cultural Revolution Group was to serve as the organizational center for making contact with the mass organizations that joined the debate. What Mao had in mind was an "open door" rectification of the Party similar to that which occurred in Yan'an in the early forties. Mass organizations would be invited to criticize Party policy and participate in a process whereby a very small minority of leading cadres who persisted in "following the capitalist road" would be removed from power. This was the spirit of the famous "Sixteen Points" which were issued by the CC on August 8, 1966.

But what in fact occurred was a breakdown of the situation into factionalism during which the Party organization virtually everywhere except in the PLA disintegrated. Within the center of power individuals and groups used the situation to their own advantage.

When the first attempt to develop a new institutional structure based upon the Shanghai example ran into trouble, the PLA had to be called in to restore order. Because they played a key role in bringing the contending factions together, representatives of the PLA played a much more significant role in the new revolutionary committees than they had in civilian government in the past. The prestige of the PLA was also greatly enhanced. Lin Biao used this situation to attempt to "put Mao on the shelf" and take personal power. After the exit of Lin Biao it became possible to return to the policy toward cadres enunciated in the "Sixteen Points". Mao had long maintained that the overwhelming majority of cadres
were basically good. In the early seventies many of the senior cadres who had fallen during the Cultural Revolution were "liberated" and went back to work. The return of Deng Xiaoping was the outstanding example of this policy.

This new direction was, however, very threatening to Mao's wife and her allies who had worked their way to the top precisely through the elimination of the people who were being restored to positions of authority. This set the stage for the struggles of the mid-seventies. Unfortunately, it was during this period that biological limitations began to catch up with Mao Zedong. Increasing age and illness severely limited his awareness of what was occurring and increased his isolation. It was in the interests of the "gang of four" to foster his and the public's suspicion of senior cadres. Mao saw through some of these attempts. This probably was one of the factors that led to his personal break with Jiang Qing in 1973. Nevertheless, they attempted to maintain privileged access to him through Wang Hongwen and through Mao's nephew, Mao Yuanxin. They were attempting to facilitate Mao's isolation. It is now charged that they used these channels to provide Mao with distorted information and to interpret his opinions on current political problems.

All this, however, does not add up to a conclusion that Mao supported the "gang of four". What seems to me to emerge is a tragic situation in which an increasingly ill and isolated aging Mao was being manipulated by a group that depended on the appearance of his support to maintain and expand their power. Jiang Qing and her group claimed the support of Mao for their policies and actions. It would be idle to speculate what would
have happened had Mao's situation been different. But it seems to me that he was not in a position to make a meaningful contribution to the debates of this period. In this sense the "gang of four's" claim to Mao's support had very little substance. The real question that needs investigation is not whether Mao supported or opposed the "gang of four". The real question is how was it that in a society which calls itself "socialist", the support or non-support of a single individual for a set of policies could carry such overwhelming weight. How had a tradition of concentrating power into the hands of a single individual developed? It was this concentration of power that developed into such a dangerous situation at a time when basic questions concerning the direction of socialist construction were being debated.68
Notes: Chapter Two, The Main Protagonists

1 There still exist in China eight party organizations known as the "patriotic democratic parties" which were part of the united front with the Communist Party. They still play an advisory role in the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference but have no direct policy making power. See: China, A General Survey (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1979), pp. 68-80, for a description of these parties and an official view of their role.


3 This has recently come under criticism. One of the proposed reforms of the post "gang of four" era has been the separation of Party and state power. See: Hongqi Special Commentator, "Power Should Not be Concentrated in the Hands of Individuals", Beijing Review, No. 44, No. 3, 1980, pp. 15-17.


5 "Constitution of the Communist Party of China", The Tenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China (Documents) (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1973), pp. 67-8. This constitution was in effect during the period under discussion. A new constitution was adopted at the Eleventh National Party Congress in August 1977.

6 The Tenth Central Committee, 1973-77 had 319 members and alternates, the Politburo 26 members and alternates and the Standing Committee was a group of nine. Ibid., p. 89-93 and 97-98.

7 John Bryan Starr outlines the various approaches to this problem that China scholars have taken and their limitations in his article "From the 10th Party Congress to the Premiership of Hua Kuo-feng: the Significance of the Colour of the Cat", China Quarterly, No. 67, Sept. 1976, pp. 479-87.


10 Quoted by Guillermaz, ibid., p. 248. During the Cultural Revolution Mao was to comment that this decision had been a mistake.


12 For a detailed account of one aspect of this period see Richard Baum, Prelude to Revolution: Mao, the Party and the Peasant Question, 1962-66 (N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1966). Baum presents a much more complex picture of the differences between Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping during the Socialist education campaign than was presented in the descriptions of the "two line struggle" in the media in the mid-seventies.


20 Memorial Hall of the Eighth Route Army Office in Sian, "Premier Chou's Achievements in Settling the Sian Incident Will Go Down in History Forever", ibid., pp. 72-81.


Report of remarks by Deng at the Third Plenum of the Tenth Central Committee appeared in Ming Bao, Hong Kong, Aug. 16, 1977. Translated in FBIS (Foreign Broadcast Information Service), Aug. 17, 1977, p. El. Deng pointed out he had been dismissed once in Jiangxi Soviet period in the early thirties, once in the Cultural Revolution and finally during the "gang of four" period.

Chi Hsin, Teng Hsiao-ping – A Political Biography (Hong Kong: Cosmos Books, 1978), pp. 3-17.

Interview with Meng Jialing of the United Front Ministry, Guangxi province, July 26, 1977.


"Resolution of C.P.C. Central Committee on Dismissing Teng Hsiao-ping from all Posts Both Inside and Outside the Party", Peking Review, No. 15, April 19, 1976, p. 3.

Text of resolution, ibid., p. 3.


Party Committee of Chiaocheng County, "Comrade Hua Kuo-feng in the Years of War", Peking Review, No. 15, April 8, 1977, pp. 9-12.


37 "Indictment of the Special Procurate Under the Supreme People's Procurate of the People's Republic of China", published as an English supplement to Ta Kung Pao, Hong Kong, November 1980, p. 23.

38 Raymond Lotta, ed., And Mao Makes Five (Chicago: Banner Press, 1978), p. 399. While we were in China there was a widespread belief that Zhou Enlai has opposed the marriage and that this was one of the reasons Jiang Qing bore a vengeful hatred for the Premier. We were also told that Kang Sheng, who would become advisor to the Cultural Revolution Group in 1966, sponsored Jiang Qing's Party application and arranged the compromise that allowed her to marry Mao Zedong.


40 See Ch. 2 of Clive Ansley's The Heresy of Wu Han (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971).

41 Ibid., pp. 315-355.

42 "Indictment ...", op. cit., p. 35.

43 Ibid., p. 35. Lotta gives his birthplace as Anhui province.


45 Ibid., p. 75. See also Lotta, op. cit., pp. 401-2.

46 "Indictment ...", op. cit., p. 35.


Interview with Xu Yueqi, op. cit. The report in Issues and Studies indicates that Zhang Chunqiao arranged for Wang Hongwen to meet Mao and Lin Biao.

"Wang Hung-wen - A New Department Director ...", op. cit., p. 89.

Indictment ..., op. cit., p. 36.

This is Raymond Lotta's conclusion. The subtitle of the book he edits is: "Mao Tsetung's last great battle". See Lotta, op. cit., pp. 1-52.


"Crushing the Gang of Four ...", p. 28.

Ibid., p. 29.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid., p. 28.

Ibid., p. 29.


Tadashi Ito (KYODO) Tokyo, Aug. 15, 1977, "Politics and People", FBIS, Aug. 19, 1977, p. E1, describes some of the background to Mao Yuanxin's relationship with the "gang of four" and with Mao and his role in Beijing toward the end of Mao's life.

The lessons of this situation and the events that led up to it were outlined in an article that appeared in Red Flag (Hongqi), No. 17, in 1980. It was pointed out that inner-Party democracy is destroyed, factionalism appears and opportunists are rewarded. Collective leadership is advocated as a countermeasure. See: Hongqi Special Commentator, "Power Should not be Concentrated in the Hands of Individuals", Beijing Review, Nov. 3, 1980.
Chapter Three: Meetings and Mass Movements

Between July 1921 and August 1973 the Communist Party of China held ten national Party congresses. Although according to the various Party constitutions, national meetings are to be held every five years, the pattern which has emerged in practice has been different. Meetings appear to have occurred when a consensus had been reached among the upper levels of leadership over the general policy directions to be taken and the apportionment of responsibilities within the central organs of the Party.

The Ninth Party Congress held in April 1969 sought to end the more active stage of the Cultural Revolution and sum up the lessons of that struggle. But a new struggle within the Central Committee against Lin Biao and Chen Boda began immediately afterward. At the Second Plenum of the Ninth Central Committee held at Lushan in 1970 Lin Biao's faction attempted to gain control over positions of authority in the Party. When this attempt failed, Lin Biao's group engineered a military coup d'etat. When the coup attempt was aborted, Lin commandeered a military plane in which to flee to the Soviet Union. The plane crashed in the People's Republic of Mongolia, killing all on board.\(^1\)

After Lin's death in 1971, there was a low-keyed campaign which was first called the movement to "criticize revisionism and rectify our style of work" and later the movement to "criticize Lin Biao and rectify our style of work".\(^2\) We were told by friends in China that this movement had a very positive impact at the base. In many units problems of local
factionalism were openly discussed and solved and some of the ultra-left excesses of the Cultural Revolution such as the cult of Mao were criticized. It was generally felt that the tension that characterized the Cultural Revolution and the Lin Biao affair was coming to an end.

The Tenth Party Congress

By August 1971 provincial Party committees had been formed throughout China. During the following two years leading to the convening of the Tenth Congress in August 1973 the much more difficult task of overcoming local factionalism and re-establishing base level Party units was slowly proceeding. By the time the congress was announced, the Party was able to report that the 1,249 delegates had been chosen through a democratic process working from the base level units on up and including consultation with the masses outside the Party.

In an attempt to insure a unified public stance, delegates debated policy questions before the formal convening of the congress. Although there was speculation that a congress was to be held, the congress was not officially announced until after it had ended. The delegates met over an unusually short period (five days) with only two plenary sessions: an opening session on August 24 and the main session at which two reports were read and a new Central Committee elected on the 28th. There is no record of any other meetings being held during the congress. The purpose of the congress was to publicize decisions already taken.

Zhou Enlai gave the political report on behalf of the CC. In it he reaffirmed the basic policies that had been proclaimed as part of the criticism of Liu Shaoqi's "revisionist line" during the Cultural Revolution.
Significantly, the report accused Lin Biao (in collaboration with Chen Boda) of preparing a political report for the Ninth Congress which in essence repeated the position attributed to Liu Shaoqi that in the Chinese social system the major contradiction was now that "between the advanced socialist system and the backward productive forces of society". Zhou said that Lin's report had been rejected and he had been forced to read the one that was made public at that time.

The Premier also outlined the tasks that faced the Party in the years ahead. The work of criticizing Lin Biao and rectifying the Party's style of work was to go ahead in order to develop among the population a deeper understanding of the nature of class and line struggle. Party members in particular were called upon to study basic Marxist theory. Class struggle in the superstructure was to continue. The revolution in the arts and literature, the revolution in education, the policies of sending educated young people to the rural areas and cadres to May 7th cadre schools for re-education were all to be maintained. The fall of Lin Biao did not involve any public expression of changes in Cultural Revolution policies.

The report on changes made in the Party constitution was read by Wang Hongwen. This indicated that he was now playing an important role in the center. During the congress he was elected to the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau and became a vice-chairman of the CC. There has been speculation that he was appointed a department director of the CC but there has been no official confirmation. Although Zhou had quoted Mao to the effect that it was necessary to "unite to win still greater victories", Wang's report added a proviso to this call for order. His report included another quote from the Chairman:
Great disorder across the land leads to great order. And so once again every seven or eight years. Monsters and demons will jump out themselves. Determined by their own class nature, they are bound to jump out.\textsuperscript{8}

This was a warning that the laws of class struggle insured that the fall of Lin Biao did not mean that major struggles among the leadership had ended.

Both reports contained contradictory messages as to how struggle was to be carried out. On the one hand, Mao's "three do's and three don'ts" warned against factionalism: "Practice Marxism, and not revisionism; unite, and don't split; be open and aboveboard, and don't intrigue and conspire". At the same time it was pointed out that Mao had stated that: "Going against the tide is a Marxist-Leninist principle". This would be later used as a factional justification for actions against "capitalist roaders".

The Tenth Party Congress elected a new Central Committee. Since all of the most important leaders are included among the members and alternates of the CC, it is a good indicator of the types of people who hold political power in China. A biographical study in 1974 of the membership of the tenth CC indicated that there had been important changes since the Ninth Congress.\textsuperscript{9} The purge of the followers of Lin Biao caused the percentage of military cadres to drop by 12.8 percent to 31.3 percent of the total membership. This also reflected the general withdrawal of the PLA from the civilian sphere in conjunction with the rebuilding of the Party. The percentage of veteran cadres showed a slight increase to 28.5 percent. This was due to the beginning of a policy of bringing back leaders who had been overthrown during the Cultural Revolution but who nevertheless
were considered to be basically good. If the cadres whose backgrounds were unknown are included in the group that came to power during the Cultural Revolution, then their proportion increased by a dramatic 12.9 percent to 41.2 percent of the total. Although a person's background may not indicate the political positions he or she will take, the figures do give some rough idea of the distribution of political forces. With the fall of Lin Biao, the principle that "the Party controls the gun" had been reasserted. The PLA was to play a less central role in decision-making. The main tension was to be between those whose political careers were based on their actions during the Cultural Revolution and the returning veteran cadres who had been overthrown during that period.

It has been reported since the fall of the "gang of four" that it was during the Tenth Congress that they gained control of the mass media. Although exactly how this control was achieved has not been made public, press reports issued in 1977 outlined the methods that were used to generate public opinion favorable to the faction around Jiang Qing. In Shanghai and Beijing they had their own writing collectives, which produced articles under pen names like "Liang Xiao" and "Luo Siding". Their articles were published in major national newspapers like People's Daily and Guangming Daily and the Party's theoretical journal, Red Flag. They not only controlled Party organs but also academic journals such as Study and Criticism published by Fudan University in Shanghai and Beijing University Journal. Since the articles in the latter were often more explicit,
they were very popular among those who were trying to figure out what was happening at the Party center. When copies of *Study and Criticism* were shipped up from Shanghai, the Beijing bookstores sold out immediately.

In China the press is used to mobilize people. Major articles from national papers and magazines are often reprinted in the local press and serve as models for further articles and radio and television commentaries. Political movements are given guidance by this mechanism. When, in the mid-seventies, hundreds of articles were published by the Beijing and Shanghai writing groups, they caused a great deal of confusion and tension. These were clearly the key articles in the political movements. Someone at the center was clearly approving them. But in the past, general direction was given to movements by materials designated as coming from the Central Committee. This precedent was taken as an indication that there was no consensus at the center. Who then was leading these movements and to what end?

"Criticize Lin Biao and Confucius"

The first movement to develop after the Tenth Congress was the movement to "criticize Lin Biao and Confucius". Confucian philosophy had been criticized in the May 4th Movement and the topic had been raised again during the Cultural Revolution. The connection with Lin Biao was made when the investigation into his case revealed that he had been an avid reader of the Confucian classics. Although the question of Confucius had been raised in previous months, an official movement was not launched until February 1974.
Because the movement attacked a feudal ideology that had prevailed in China for thousands of years, it had positive aspects. People were encouraged to question hierarchical concepts that had been taken more or less for granted. While we as students were carrying out social investigations at the Red Star commune outside Beijing in the winter of 1974, the women in the village where we were living with peasant families were using the movement to expose the feudal roots of male chauvinism and to improve their economic and social position. It was reported in the Chinese press at the time that analysis of Confucianism and its concrete manifestations was going on at this time in villages, factories and PLA units throughout China.

But the movement also had another aspect. During the earlier movement to "criticize Lin Biao and rectify our style of work", Lin's ultra-left tactics had come under fire. This threatened not only the memory of Lin Biao, but also others who had been active during the Cultural Revolution. At the Tenth Congress it had been argued that Lin was a revisionist in the mould of Liu Shaoqi. In 1974 it was maintained that those who emphasized Lin's ultra-left aspects were mistaken. It was claimed that Lin was fundamentally a rightist whose actions had been aimed at the restoration of capitalism in China. His behavior was "left in form but right in essence".

The theme of restoration also became central to the analysis of Confucius in the press. The period in which Confucius lived was described as one of transition between slave and feudal society. Confucius was castigated as the ideological representative of the slaveholders who were attempting to return to the old order. This theme was to be repeated
and elaborated on in numerous subsequent articles. People were admonished to study the line struggle in Chinese philosophy between the Confucianists and their opponents, the Legalists, in order to draw lessons for the line struggle of the 1970's.

The movement seemed to be degenerating into a rather abstruse academic debate, but in fact there was an immediate political purpose behind this shift in emphasis. Since their fall the "gang of four" have been accused of using historical analogy to attack veteran cadres and especially their patron, Zhou Enlai, whom the "gang" held responsible for the policy of bringing back into leading positions veteran cadres denounced in the Cultural Revolution. Deng Xiaoping had re-emerged in 1973 and was by this time doing important work in the government. In April 1974 he was chosen to represent China at the United Nations General Assembly. Deng had been identified as the number two capitalist roader after Liu Shaoqi in the Cultural Revolution. His restoration to a position of responsibility stood (as it was no doubt intended to stand) as a symbol of the possibility for any and all criticized cadres to transform their outlook and return to work. This possibility, like the criticisms of ultra-leftism in 1972, can be seen as a threat to the power of the four.

The charge that historical analogy was used to meet this threat is corroborated by an article that appeared while the "gang of four" still controlled the media. In March 1976 Red Flag published an article that summed up the movement to "criticize Lin Biao and Confucius". Since this was a later stage of the struggle, the author was much more explicit
than earlier articles. First he lauded the movement because it "... gave a forceful rebuttal to the reactionary trend of thought of trying to restore capitalism that appeared in 1972". He claimed that the "capitalist roaders within the Party" opposed the movement because they agreed with Confucius's slogan "call to office those who have fallen into obscurity". Deng, here still referred to as "that unrepentant capitalist roader", is shown as following Confucius' admonition to "restrain oneself and restore the rites". It was claimed that Deng had "restrained himself" by promising not to attempt to reverse the verdicts of the Cultural Revolution in order to regain power. Now he was being charged with using his power to attempt to restore capitalism. In the article the focus of the attack was broadened to veteran cadres in general. Labelled "capitalist roaders", they were accused of defending the policies of the 1950's when they asserted that "some of the previous practices are not necessarily all wrong".

The shift in direction in the movement to "criticize Lin Biao and Confucius" marked the beginning of a growing discrepancy between practical policy initiatives on the part of Party and state leaders responsible for the economy and an increasingly strident denunciation of "capitalist roaders" in the press.

The Fourth National People's Congress

Political maneuvers apparently began some months before the Fourth National People's Congress was convened in January 1975. It is now charged that the "gang" plotted to influence Mao's opinions on
personnel selections by slandering Zhou Enlai. According to Wang Hongwen's testimony at their trial, Mao told him that he intended to recommend Deng Xiaoping for the post of first vice-premier.\textsuperscript{26} This was an unprecedented move as there had not previously been a post of \textit{first} vice-premier. This was an important move because Zhou Enlai was already hospitalized with cancer and Mao's recommendation would mean the choice of Zhou's successor would be made before and not after his death. It also insured that Mao would have a hand in the decision. Wang has admitted that, after conferring with the others, he was sent to see Mao in October 1975. In his discussion with Mao he insinuated that Zhou Enlai was using his stay in hospital to plot a power seizure with Deng and other veteran cadres. He was rebuffed by Mao but returned again in December to try to persuade Mao to change his mind. In the same month Jiang Qing forwarded her opinions on personnel arrangements through two of Mao's interpreters.\textsuperscript{27} Mao was not impressed. His comments on his wife's ambition were reported in the last chapter.

The NPC was prepared in a manner which insured that unity would be achieved before the formal sessions began. Questions of personnel selection were settled by the end of December.\textsuperscript{28} The 2,864 deputies met for preliminary discussions from January 5-11.\textsuperscript{29} The Party's Central Committee met from January 8-10 to put the final touches on the congress documents and name lists.\textsuperscript{30} The Fourth NPC met for only five days, from January 13-17, with plenary sessions on the first and last days. The items on the agenda were the revision of the constitution, the report on the work of the government and the election of leading state personnel.\textsuperscript{31}
Zhang Chunqiao gave the report on the revision of the constitution. Although this indicated his importance in the leadership, in the list of vice-premiers his name was second to Deng Xiaoping's, who was taking over the bulk of Premier Zhou's work. In the section of his report that dealt with socialist construction there was a passage that presaged the struggles to come:

It should be pointed out that in our country we still have harmony as well as contradiction between the relations of production and the productive forces and between the superstructure and the economic base. Like the morning sun, our socialist system is still very young. It was born in struggle and can only grow in struggle. Take the state sector of the economy for example. In some enterprises, the form is that of socialist ownership, but the reality is that their leadership is not in the hands of Marxists and the masses of workers. The bourgeoisie will seize hold of many fronts if the proletariat does not occupy them. Confucius died more than two thousand years ago, yet such rubbish as his never vanishes of itself where the broom of the proletariat does not reach. The draft lays down that "state organizations and state personnel must earnestly study Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought", that "the proletariat must exercise all-round dictatorship over the bourgeoisie in the superstructure, including all spheres of culture" and the state organizations and state personnel must maintain close ties with the masses and overcome unhealthy tendencies. It is precisely the purpose of these provisions to call on us to pay keen attention to grasping socialist revolution in the realm of the superstructure and to pay attention to solving problems concerning the relations of production. We must broaden, deepen and persevere in the current movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius and occupy all fronts with Marxism.32

Although Premier Zhou's report on the work of the government also noted that: "While tackling economic tasks, our leading comrades at all levels must pay close attention to the socialist revolution in the realm of the superstructure and keep a firm grasp on class struggle and the
struggle between the two lines", the centerpiece of his discussion of socialist construction was the proposal that would come to be known as the "four modernizations", which would involve the building of "an independent and relatively comprehensive industrial and economic system" before 1980, and the modernization of agriculture, industry, defense, and science and technology by the end of the century. Zhou called upon grass-roots level units across China to participate in the drawing up and implementation of long and short-range plans under the direction of the State Council. China was to begin a twenty-five year period of rapid modernization. By the end of the century she was to have a fully developed industrial base technologically up to world standards and a mechanized agriculture.

The reports given at the congress did not simply express the views of the persons who delivered them. They had been approved by the CC as a whole. But they contained two very different views of the principle task facing the Chinese people in the years ahead. On the one hand, emphasis was laid on the primacy of further revolutionizing the relations of production. On the other hand, the forces of production were to be developed to world standards at a very rapid pace. Theoretically there need be no fundamental contradiction between the two goals. But in the concrete conditions of China the differences in emphasis would grow into antagonistic contradictions.
"Study the Theory of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat"

A new campaign was launched shortly after the close of the congress. In December 1974 at the same time that he approved Zhou Enlai's suggestions for arrangements for the Fourth NPC, Mao made a set of statements that were made public in an editorial in People's Daily on February 9, 1975.34 Apparently concerned that in the drive for rapid modernization basic principles of Marxism-Leninism might be slighted, Mao emphasized that it was important to understand why in a socialist society the dictatorship of the proletariat was necessary. He pointed out that although the system of ownership had changed, aspects of the relations of production and superstructure were similar to those of the old society. The commodity, money and wage systems remained and distribution was according to work (rather than need as it would be after the transition to communist society). Therefore "it would be quite easy for people like Lin Biao to push the capitalist system if they come to power". Mao was also quoted as saying: "Lenin said, 'Small production engenders capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale'". Lenin was referring to the continued existence of small-holding peasants in the early Soviet period. Mao, however, goes on to say, "This also occurs among a section of the workers and a section of the Party members. Both within the ranks of the proletariat and among the personnel of state organs there are people who follow the bourgeois style of life". In so doing he confused economic phenomena occurring in the base with what was essentially an ideological problem among some people. Mao does not elaborate, at least in the part of his talk that was
made public, what the economic basis for a bourgeois lifestyle is; this allowed for the confusion of levels of analysis in the materials commenting on these quotes.

The source and context of these quotes from Mao Zedong were not explained in the media, but they were used as a starting point for a new movement to "study the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat". At the beginning of this movement political study groups were issued pamphlets containing a series of thirty-three excerpts from the Marxist classics similar in format to the "little red book" of the Cultural Revolution. They were soon supplemented by two pamphlets that summed up the theoretical basis of the "gang of four's" policy positions.

In his "On the Social Basis of the Lin Biao Anti-Party Clique" Yao Wenyuan explained the connection between the criticism of Lin Biao and the new movement. Besides representing the interests of the old ruling classes, Lin's faction was cited as an example of how new bourgeois elements could emerge in the Party and attempt to gain control of the state. Yao explained that because differences remained between the state-owned and the collectively-owned economy, the commodity system had to be maintained in order to facilitate exchange between the two sectors. The existence of the commodity system meant that goods had to be exchanged for equal value, money continued to be used as the medium of exchange and bourgeois right, exemplified by the slogan, "to each according to his work", prevailed in the relations of production. Yao considered bourgeois right to be the economic basis for the emergence of what he called bourgeois elements. Yao pointed out that if bourgeois right were expanded
rather than restricted, polarization would occur in the distribution of individual incomes. He also saw polarization occurring through the illegal accumulation of money through graft and corruption. He further maintained that it was possible for state and collective ownership to be transformed into private ownership by an emerging bourgeois class. Yao argued that in those enterprises where the line of the leadership was incorrect, ownership was in the hands of a new bourgeoisie. If not struggled against, this new bourgeoisie would seize power in the Party and state as they had in the Soviet Union. If this were to occur, collective and state property would become the collective private property of a new ruling class and the socialist system would be destroyed.

From the perspective of Marxist theory, there are a number of things that Yao Wenyuan failed to point out in his analysis. The material basis for the continued existence of commodity exchange lay primarily in the low productivity of agriculture. Given the limited development of the productive forces in the rural areas, the state could not afford to nationalize agricultural production and pay the peasants state wages. This is the economic basis for the continuation of commodity exchange between the state and the communes. Bourgeois right could not, as Yao claimed, be an economic foundation for the emergence of capitalist relations of production. Bourgeois right is a notion of formal equality which ignores underlying inequalities. Thus equal pay for equivalent work and equal access to education, for example, ignore differences in individual needs and capacities. Bourgeois right is a concept, a superstructural phenomenon, not a part of the economic base. The economic basis of the
commodity system is in fact the low level of development of the productive forces. Yao ignores this fundamental point in his analysis.

Can polarization of income lead to the development of capitalist relations of production as Yao implies? Yao muddies this issue by raising the question of accumulation of money through graft and corruption, a phenomenon which does not depend on bourgeois right for its existence. Not all money is capital. In order for capitalist relations of production to emerge, the new bourgeois elements Yao describes would have to be able to invest their money in the exploitation of labor. This is impossible under the present system in China. Yao neatly sidesteps this problem by equating the correctness or incorrectness of line with ownership. Thus in Yao's analysis ownership is no longer an attribute of relations to the means of production but can be determined by the policies advocated and pursued by the leadership of an enterprise. For Yao, in the levels of leadership above the enterprises, class position is also determined by line. Yao, by describing bourgeois right as the economic basis for the emergence of capitalist relations of production and by defining class status as a subjective category, is seriously distorting Marxist theory.

What this allows him to do is to ignore the importance of developing the forces of production. Polarization in individual incomes is most likely to occur in the gap between urban and rural incomes because of the low level of peasant productivity. The ultimate solution to this problem lies in simultaneous mechanization of agriculture and industrialization of the countryside. This will increase the productivity of the decreasing
number of people working in agriculture while increasing the overall value of total rural production. But so long as the forces of production have not developed to the stage where "to each according to his needs" can be practiced, bourgeois right must not only be restricted but preserved. By ignoring the problem of developing the forces of production, Yao is able to argue for pushing reforms in the relations of production without taking into consideration the material basis for those changes.

Zhang Chunqiao, in his contribution to the study materials for the new movement, draws out the political implications for the analysis introduced by Yao. He utilizes a quote from Mao referring to the situation in some factories prior to 1969 to imply that numerous enterprises in China at that time were in the hands of the bourgeoisie. He repeats the notion of the danger of power being seized in the Party and state and later pin-points the main suspects.

There are undeniably some comrades among us who have joined the Communist Party organizationally but not ideologically. In their world outlook they have not yet stepped out of the confines of small production and of the bourgeoisie. They do approve of the dictatorship of the proletariat at certain stages and in certain spheres and are pleased with certain victories of the proletariat, because these will bring them some gains; once they have secured their gains, they feel it's time to settle down and feather their cozy nests. As for exercising all-round dictatorship over the bourgeoisie, as for following up the first step on the 10,000-li long march, sorry, let others do the job; here is my stop and I must get off the bus. We would like to offer a piece of advice to these comrades: It's dangerous to stop half-way! The bourgeoisie is beckoning to you. Catch up with the ranks and continue the advance.
What began as a movement to encourage theoretical study as a part of the drive for modernization was being turned into something else. In the process of developing the forces of production in a socialist society, a discussion of the means used must be framed in terms of the overall goals of social development. This means that the relations of production which are part of the effort must be the subject of discussion and debate. But if changes in the relations of production are debated in the absence of an understanding of the material necessities of the present stage of development then there are no objective criteria to judge various proposals. Everything is judged by the idealized criteria of a communist society.

By setting the discussion in the framework of class struggle, Yao and Zhang were, in fact, closing off meaningful debate. It was no longer a question of differences among the people but struggle against class enemies. If one did not accept the necessity to restrict bourgeois right and "exercise an all-round dictatorship over the bourgeoisie", one had "gotten off the bus" and allied oneself with the bourgeoisie. What had started as a study movement was being pushed in the direction of an attack against cadres in leadership in the economic sphere from the factory floor and the rural production team on up. These two articles set the theme for the movement conducted in the mass media. Articles elaborating the framework set down by Yao and Zhang continued to appear through the spring and summer of 1975.40
"Criticize Deng Xiaoping"

During the summer of 1975 Deng Xiaoping took over the leadership of the State Council from Premier Zhou. During this period he supervised the drawing up of a series of documents to be used as directives to guide the modernization drive. The policy proposals in the three documents will be analyzed in later chapters. It was Deng and his supporters' analysis of the political problems of the period that led them into direct conflict with the "gang of four".

One of these documents, "The General Program for all Work of the Party and the Country", returned to the theme of the ultra-left nature of Lin Biao's tactics. It then maintained that there were still people around using the same tactics.

... They always take over our revolutionary slogans, distort and mutilate them, and insert their prejudices in them, so that they can turn black into white and reverse right and wrong ... They wave the banner of opposing revisionism in order to promote revisionism and engage in restoration activities under the signboard of preventing a bourgeois comeback. They throw good Party cadres and outstanding advanced figures out of office and usurp the leadership of certain localities and units so that they can impose a bourgeois dictatorship there ... Without striking down these class enemies and wresting back the leadership they have usurped, in no way will we fulfill the task of achieving proletarian dictatorship at the grass-roots level. And there the all-round dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie will just remain an empty phrase.

It is not likely that anyone in the upper levels of leadership would not know who "they" were. The report also deals with the problem of factionalism:
... They feel no pain when socialist production and construction suffer damage and are indifferent to breaches of socialist systems. Indulging themselves in building mountain strongholds and fighting factional wars, they have been embroiled for a long time in the struggle between this and that faction, asserting that it is a struggle between rebels and conservatives, between new cadres and the old, between "Confucians" and "legalists".\(^\text{43}\)

The "General Report" and the other documents were never made fully public before the fall of the "gang of four". Copies of the reports were first leaked to supporters of the "gang" and used as a basis for a campaign to discredit Deng.\(^\text{44}\) It began with agitation in December 1975 on the campuses of Beijing and Qinghua universities over alleged attacks on the revolution in education. But in the New Years Day editorial in *People's Daily, Red Flag* and *Liberation Army Daily* the issue was given wider significance: "The recent farrago on the educational front, representing a Right deviationist wind to reverse previous verdicts, is a conspicuous manifestation of the revisionist line that stands against the proletariat on behalf of the bourgeoisie".\(^\text{45}\)

We experienced the change in atmosphere at the time through our participation in the "movement to learn from Dazhai". In the middle of September a national conference on learning from Dazhai (Tachai) was convened near the location of the famous model production brigade.\(^\text{46}\) The meeting sparked a movement to increase productivity in agriculture. In Guangzhou ten thousand urban dwellers went to Dongguan county to help level the land in preparation for the introduction of tractor cultivation. Along with fellow teachers, students and cadres of our language institute we went with the first group and worked in the country for much of the
month of December. The second group, scheduled to go in January, never left school. Cadres in the countryside were being accused of being "capitalist roaders" because they were supposedly too concerned with production to the exclusion of revolution. When the leadership began to falter, the movement in our area collapsed.

Deng Xiaoping made his last public appearance of 1976 when he delivered the memorial speech at Zhou Enlai's funeral in January. In the beginning of the campaign Deng was not attacked by name. But a series of quotes from "that unrepentant capitalist roader in power in the Party" in the press soon clarified who the specific and general targets of the movement were. He was quoted as saying, "In restricting bourgeois right, it is also necessary to have a material basis. Without it, how can we restrict?" In rebuttal it was argued that in the years of revolutionary war a system of military communism was applied in spite of harsh conditions. Now it was argued "... our material conditions are far better than in the years of revolutionary war".47

The question of the cadres was raised again: "Hasn't the unrepentant capitalist roader said that all cadres, regardless of what mistakes they have committed, should be employed?"48 Deng was also quoted as saying:

> The situation in the Party is abnormal. Many comrades are afraid of this and that, but they are not afraid that the building up of the country will not go ahead ... It cannot be said that, in general, the old cadres are revisionist. I do not believe they are."49
The "gang of four's" writing groups at Qinghua, Beida, and Fudan universities, however, evoked suspicion of the veteran cadres:

If their thinking remains in the old stage and if they view and assess the socialist revolution from the stand and world outlook of the bourgeois democrats, then they will represent the bourgeoisie and become capitalist roaders and hence targets of the socialist revolution.\(^50\)

From April 3-5 during the Qing Ming Festival when Chinese traditionally honor their dead, hundreds of thousands of people gathered in Beijing's Tian An Men square to pay respects to Zhou. When attempts were made to remove memorial wreaths placed around the monument to the people's heroes in the center of the square, people put up resistance. At the time the incident was denounced as counterrevolutionary.\(^51\) Although it was admitted that there was no evidence to link Deng Xiaoping with the affair, nevertheless, the Politburo decided that "the nature of the Deng Xiaoping problem has turned into one of antagonistic contradiction. On the proposal of our great leader, Chairman Mao, the Political Bureau unanimously agrees to dismiss Deng Ziaoping from all posts both inside and outside the Party while allowing him to keep his Party membership so as to see how he will behave in the future".\(^52\) This rather ambiguous announcement meant that Deng could be attacked by name in the press. But it caused a great deal of confusion. Much to the consternation of non-members who had to take up the slack, Party members at our school were given ten days off work to discuss the resolution in closed study sessions. They were unable to achieve a consensus as to whether or not the contradiction with Deng was one among the people or one with the enemy. It was clear to all that serious differences remained among the national leadership.
It was clear that the movement to "criticize Deng" was becoming increasingly unpopular. A mass rally and parade was held in Guangzhou a few days after the announcement of Deng's dismissal. Each unit in the city was required to send a contingent of marchers. It was the most unenthusiastic victory celebration we had ever witnessed. In our school the students criticized the leadership, demanding to know why the movement had "gone cold". The leadership responded by organizing mass meetings at which attendance was compulsory. At the meetings the audience read, knitted or slept while the speakers repeated statements and slogans from the press. In political study we were issued mimeographed lists of quotations out of context from the so-called "three poisonous weeds" written under Deng's supervision in the summer and fall of 1975. When the teachers in our group complained that it was impossible to criticize documents which could not be read in full, the Party secretary admitted that though he had read the texts in full, he had not been able to detect anything wrong with them. Tension continued to mount. Even after the disastrous earthquake that destroyed the city of Tangshan on July 28 there was no let up and there were rumours circulating that Hua Guofeng had been criticized for neglecting the movement "to beat back the right deviationist wind" while concentrating on organization of relief for the earthquake victims.

Mao Zedong died September 9, 1976. The outpouring of grief was matched by a widespread anxiety about the future of China. A political struggle at the center began almost immediately. Articles in the press created the impression that Mao had left some form of testament. The
faction around Jiang Qing apparently hoped to discredit Hua Guofeng and other leaders through this device. Hua ordered their arrests on October 6 and the following day he was appointed Chairman of the Party's Central Committee. This was justified by publication of the text of a note to Hua from Mao stating "With you in charge, I am at ease". On October 8 followers of the "gang of four" in Shanghai tried to organize armed resistance but the attempt fell through. At our school we and our students heard reports of the arrests on the Voice of America a few days after the event, but official word did not filter down for a week. Nevertheless, many teachers and cadres began to celebrate with their friends immediately. When it was official, a rally was held at our school that was attended by peasants from the surrounding commune. At that rally and at celebrations that were held in the following days we witnessed spontaneous expressions of mass, public, overt joy the likes of which we had never seen in China before. People called it "our second liberation".
Notes: Chapter Three, "Meetings and Mass Movements"


2 "The Men of Teng Hsiao-ping", China News Analysis (CNA), No. 1059, Nov. 5, 1976, p. 3.


5 Chou En-lai, "Report to the Tenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China", The Tenth National ..., p. 5. As Zhou mentions in this report, this is a quote from the political report to the Eighth Party Congress in 1956. Today in China the position quoted is affirmed as correct.

6 Ibid., pp. 31-33. May 7th cadre schools were farms run by administrative units or schools on which a portion of their cadres worked in agriculture and engaged in political study. Cadres went in turn and had to apply to go. Social pressure assured that just about everyone who was fit applied. When they were first established in the late '60s they served the purpose of cooling down factional tensions. When the term of study was only a few months many people looked forward to going. It was a break from the daily grind at the office. When we taught at the Guangdong Foreign Languages Institute, the demand for places in city-run cadre schools was so great that our school had to set up its own on land near our campus. However, in some units the schools were used as labor camps where people spent long years at hard labor.


9 Fang Chun-kuei, "An Analysis of the Tenth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party", Chinese Law and Government, Vol. V88, No. 1-2, 1974, pp. 44-105. As Fang himself states, the percentages are tentative. Since many cadres wear more than one hat it is sometimes difficult to place a person in either the military or civilian spheres. In this study individuals whose backgrounds were not known were put in the category of those who had come to power during the Cultural Revolution. This may have led to an overestimation of that group. Fang does not define his "veteran", "Cultural Revolutionary" and "military" cadre categories. They are somewhat problematic because they combine background factors with descriptions of present positions. The usefulness of his analysis lies in its projection of a general picture of groups represented in the upper levels of the Party. See also: Kenneth Lieberthal, "The Foreign Policy Debate in Peking as Seen Through Allegorical Articles", China Quarterly, No. 71, Sept. 1977, pp. 528-54 for further examples of the use of historical allegory.


16 Chung Tse and Sung Hsin, "Is Such an Appraisal Consistent with Historical Reality", Hongqi, No. 11, No. 1, 1973, SPRCM, No. 763-64, pp. 84-90.

17 "Carry the Struggle to Criticize Lin Piao and Confucius through to the End", Peking Review, No. 6, Feb. 8, 1974, pp. 5-6.


Yu Fan, "The Bankruptcy of Lin Piao's Counterrevolutionary Tactics", Hongqi, No. 5, May 1, 1974, SPRCM, No. 775-76, p. 22.


Lao Lu, "To Combat Revisionism, It is Necessary to Criticize Confucius", Hongqi, No. 3, March 1, 1976, SPRCM, 76-8, pp. 33-35.


Issues and Studies, ibid., pp. 103-4.
28 Ibid., p. 103.


30 "Communique of the Second Plenary Session of the Tenth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China", ibid., p. 6.

31 "Press Communique of the First Session of the NPC ...", ibid., p. 6-7.


36 An English translation of what were called in China "the thirty-three quotations" can be found in Peking Review, No. 9, Feb. 28, 1975.


38 Chang Chun-chiao, "On Exercising All-Round Dictatorship over the Bourgeoisie", Peking Review, No. 14, April 4, 1975, pp. 5-11. See especially his elaboration of the significance of the quote on p. 7 and his return to the topic on p. 8.

39 Ibid., p. 9.


Ibid., p. 39.

Lieberthal describes how the leak occurred with the "Outline Report on the Work of the Academy of Sciences" in his editor's introduction. Ibid., p. 19-27.

"Nothing is Hard in this World if you Dare to Scale the Heights", Peking Review, No. 1, Jan. 2, 1976, p. 9.


Kuei Chih, "The Right Deviationist Wind of Reversing Verdicts and Bourgeois Right", Hongqi, No. 3, March 1, 1976, SPROCM 76-8, pp. 17-23. Before liberation cadres were not paid salaries but only provided with rations and pocket money. The attitude of the author is similar to those in the Soviet Union who celebrated "War Communism" as a new social system.

Chao Yuan, "It is Impermissible to Tamper with the Five Criteria for Successors to the Revolution", Hongqi, No. 3, March 1, 1976, SPROCM 76-8, p. 27.


Chih Heng, "From Bourgeois Democrats to Capitalist Roaders", Hongqi, No. 3, March 1, 1976, SPROCM 76-8, p. 4.

"Counter-Revolutionary Political Incident at Tien An Men Square", Peking Review, No. 15, April 9, 1976, pp. 4-5.

"Resolution of CPC Central Committee on Dismissing Teng Hsiao-ping From All Posts Both Inside and Outside Party", Peking Review, No. 15, April 9, 1976, p. 3.

"People in Afflicted Area Fight Quake", Peking Review, Nos. 32-33, Aug. 9, 1976, pp. 6-10.


"The Indictment Against Lin Biao-Jiang Qing Cliques", op. cit., p. 33-34.
Chapter Four: Industry

Media discussions of industrial policy questions during the mid-seventies largely focused on relations of production within industrial enterprises. Typical topics included worker participation in management, cadre participation in production, factory regulations, methods of remuneration ... These topics are all related to a central concern within Marxism for the development of workers' self-management. Marx envisioned that post-revolutionary policy would produce a reversal of the trend in capitalist society in which ordinary workers find themselves further and further removed from centers of decision-making, be it in politics or production.¹ Lenin saw this reversal as the central purpose for the creation of Soviet power: "It gives those who were formerly oppressed the chance to straighten their backs and to an ever increasing degree to take the whole government of the country, the whole administration of the economy, the whole management of production, into their own hands".²

In order to explore whether or not the workers of China were "to an ever increasing degree" taking "the whole management of production into their own hands", I will describe the Beijing No. 2 Machine Tool Plant as an example of the state of progress in this direction by the mid-seventies, discuss media treatment of the issues of management policy and describe how progress in this area was subverted by factional political considerations.
Factory Organization in the Mid-Seventies: Beijing No. 2 Machine Tool Plant

The organization of factories in China during the mid-seventies followed a pattern that emerged during the Great Leap Forward and was re-emphasized during the Cultural Revolution. Beijing No. 2 Machine Tool Plant is a large, state-owned enterprise. This plant has been chosen as an example because while I was a student at Beijing University together with half a dozen classmates and our Chinese roommates, I had the opportunity to work, live and do social investigation there during the spring of 1975. Through informal discussions on the factory floor, in the single workers' dormitory and in formal discussions with cadres at various levels, we were able to get a relatively comprehensive understanding of how the factory was organized. In visiting and working at other factories I found that they were also organized along very similar lines. Examples of innovations in administration and organization publicized in the media, but not present in the Beijing No. 2 Machine Tool Plant, will be discussed later in the chapter.

This plant had 4,800 employees at the main factory plus an additional workforce of 1,100 at a molding and casting operation outside the city. Two-thirds of the workforce was under thirty-five, slightly over forty percent were women and administrators made up about seventeen percent of the total workforce. As in most large Chinese factories, the machine tool plant was a social unit as well as a workplace. Housing was provided on the factory grounds for more than half the workers. There was a dining hall, clinic, daycare center, store, workers' college and a recreation center with a swimming pool on the factory grounds.
The factory had four levels of administration. At the factory level the decision-making core was the Revolutionary Committee and the factory party committee. The functional divisions at the factory level included administrative offices normally associated with a factory, such as general administration, design, technique, production, personnel, purchasing and accounting. There were also other offices that reflected the wider range of activities carried out within the unit, such as political propaganda, health care, food services, daycare, capital construction and militia organization. Below the factory level were three further levels organized according to the divisions in the productive process. Different workshops carried out the different major production processes, such as pattern making, molding and casting, machining, painting and assembly. Below the workshops were work sections again reflecting further divisions of labor according to specialization. Below them were work teams consisting of between fifteen and thirty workers. A number of the administrative functions were carried out "on the shop floor" in the sense that the cadres and their offices were located in the workshops rather than in a special administrative wing of the factory. These functions included the day to day direction of production, political propaganda, organizing technical innovation, issuing of supplies and tools and supplying meals in the workshops.

Cadres were also present on the workshop floor as workers. The plant had instituted a system where at any one time one-third of the administrative cadres would be released from administrative duties to work full-time as ordinary workers. The remaining cadres, who were not taking their
turns at full-time production tasks, spent at least one day a week "at the bench". On average, administrative cadres contributed one hundred days of productive labor a year. This cadre participation in labor was considered an important means of narrowing the gap between mental and manual labor, between management and workers.

The complementary policy implemented to close this gap was worker participation in management. We were told in our initial briefing by the factory leadership that the workers had representatives on the factory Revolutionary Committee and in the leadership groups at the workshop and work section levels. These representatives spent most of their time in production and did not attend the meetings discussing day-to-day decisions. They were only brought in when important policy decisions were being made. This process, which was really one of consultation, though stressed by the leadership, was not perceived as very important by the workers with whom we discussed it. They had heard of the policy but did not consider it to have a great deal of practical significance. What was more immediately significant to them was the organization of leadership on the factory floor at the work team level. Base level administrative functions were divided among "eight officials" ("bab" dayuan) elected by the members of the team. These included the team leader who was generally in charge of production and who led the pre-shift meetings at which progress on the monthly plan and the day's work assignments were discussed. As well there was a trade union representative, a person in charge of politics and propaganda who organized weekly pre-shift political study sessions and maintained a blackboard newspaper, a person in charge of theoretical study who prepared the
content for the study sessions, a person in charge of quality control, a team accountant, a person in charge of safety and equipment maintenance and a person in charge of welfare and culture whose duties ranged from organizing sports meets and distributing theatre tickets to arranging welfare payments to families of workers in financial difficulty and doing propaganda for the national birth control campaign.

The workers were able to elect these "officials" who served as intermediaries between themselves and the management of the factory in those areas which were of immediate concern to their lives as workers and as members of the factory community. In our discussion with the factory leadership they stressed that the "eight officials" system was a foundation on which the conditions could be prepared for the workers' full control of production. They also explained that the workers participated in mass meetings held at the work section (gongduan), workshop (chejian) and factory (gongchang) levels to discuss the yearly and quarterly plans. From discussions with the workers in our shop it appeared that these were rather formal affairs of a consultative nature at best. Decisions as to the content of the plans were not taken at these meetings, which were often little more than assemblies to announce targets and rally enthusiasm.

The plant also had a trade union organization. A representative of the trade union in the factory explained in an interview that the trade unions had been criticized during the Cultural Revolution for being concerned almost exclusively with the question of raising wages. Its present priorities were now political education, increasing production, and handling questions of welfare. The union ran a political night school which
trained the persons in charge of theoretical study at the team level, was involved in organizing technical upgrading courses and coordinated the activities of the persons in charge of culture and welfare activities. In discussions on the shop floor we discovered that the workers viewed the trade union as a part of the management system. In a discussion concerning the inclusion of the right to strike in the national constitution, we asked the workers in our team over what issues might they strike and whether or not the trade union would provide leadership in a strike. They explained that they would not strike over wage issues because the wage levels and seniority were determined at the national level, so the factory had no control over this area, besides people in financial difficulty could be helped through the welfare system. The only condition under which they would consider striking would be if they felt that the leadership of the factory had become "revisionist' and was not functioning in the interests of the workers or the nation. They assumed that in such a situation the leadership of the trade union would undoubtedly be revisionist as well and the workers would have to create their own organization to lead a strike.

Individual workers had an opportunity to participate in decision-making through the organization of "three-in-one" technical innovation teams. If a technical innovation was proposed or if technical problems emerged in production, a team consisting of experienced workers, technicians and cadres would be organized to deal with making the technical and administrative changes necessary.
In discussions plant leadership cadres explained that an important condition for the workers increasingly being involved in management was the raising of the workers' political consciousness. To this end the plant had developed a number of systems of political study. Management and staff all participated in weekly political study sessions organized at the team or office level. The Communist Youth League had organized 150 spare-time theoretical study groups in which 1,600 young workers participated. The trade union organized evening study groups and the team leaders and persons in charge of theoretical study had their own study groups. Over a period of four months in the spring of 1975 the party leadership had organized eighteen mass meetings at which eighty-eight people spoke about their own or their group's experience and difficulties in studying. At the apex of the organization of political study was the workers college, which gave courses not only on technical subjects, but in political theory as well. Of fifty-six worker-students enrolled in the full-time courses at the workers' college, twelve were taking a one-year course in political theory.

Last but not least, we were told that the workers were represented in the factory leadership through the Communist Party. The party's purpose was to represent the interest of the working class. Party members, who included ordinary workers, were to maintain close contact with the workers and to reflect their concerns and needs in the party which was itself supposed to form the "core of leadership" at all levels of administration from top to bottom.
As can be seen from the picture of relations of production at the Beijing No. 2 Machine Tool Plant sketched above, the most significant area where aspects of worker self-management were developing was at the base, at the team level. The workers were able to select from among themselves those who would organize their work, ensure their safety and deal with important aspects for their health, welfare and study. From my experience in working in Chinese factories and from what I have been told by workers, this power resulted in relationships of cooperation and mutual help among the "eight officials" and the workers. But real participation ended there. The worker representatives on the different levels of leadership were not responsible to any organized body of workers. Workers' congresses which existed before the Cultural Revolution were no longer functioning. Mass meetings to discuss production and political study were not decision-making or representative bodies. How well the worker representatives reflected the needs and interests of the workers depended largely on their own energy and inclinations. They had no institutionalized mechanism for learning or representing the opinions of their constituencies. The trade union which previously had been concerned with the economic interests of the workers had taken on political education and welfare duties instead. The party whose function it was to represent the class (and not necessarily the immediate) interests of the workers was directly involved in the management of the plant and thus involved in an ambiguous relationship with the workers.

According to Marx the only thing that separates the party from the class it leads is their level of political consciousness. This is why political study was stressed as a precondition for further advances in
worker self-management. We were told that as the workers studied Marxism-Leninism and applied it to analysis of the nature of class struggle in their factory, they would be more and more able to see beyond their immediate needs and interests to those of their class and of the people as a whole. As this consciousness developed, the party could turn more and more of its leadership functions over to the workers and the tutelage of the party over the class could end.

**Worker Participation in Management**

The media treated the question of worker participation in management as a central issue and as a question of political principle. In the words of one article: "How to treat the masses is the focal point of the struggle between the Marxist line and the revisionist line in enterprise management". And yet the question was treated abstractly and in defensive terms. What was feared was a return to a situation where the management of Chinese factories would be in the hands of "professionals" whose relationship to the workers would be essentially the same as that in a capitalist factory. Quoting Marx in *Capital*, one article points out that "The capitalists assign to specially employed workers the function of exercising direct and constant supervision over individual workers and groups of workers' so that they may, like 'officers (managers) and non-commissioned officers (foremen) in industry, guide in the name of capital the process of labor. Supervisory work is fixed as their special duty'. This has vividly revealed the class origin and class essence of professional management, which is a tool for the exploitation and oppression of workers by capitalism".
Although its importance was stressed, the media had little to say about concrete experiments to increase the scope of worker self-management. In the summer of 1976, during the movement to criticize Deng Xiaoping, there were references to some innovations. A lead and zinc mine in Liaoning province developed a formal elaboration of the suggestion box. The leadership provided the workers with a special form on which they could give their opinions of the mine's management. The form would be sent to the departments concerned and there was a space on the form for them to elaborate what changes or improvements had been made. The forms were then returned to the workers who had submitted them to express any final comments. The article reported that the party committee of the mine monitored the process and often added its own views.\(^{11}\) The purpose behind formalizing this whole procedure seems to have been to ensure that management in fact responded to workers' criticisms and that someone assumed responsibility for acting on the matters raised. What this procedure calls into question, however, is the efficacy of workers' attempts to channel complaints and/or suggestions through their representatives in management or party committees.

In the spring of 1976 some factories in Shanghai were reported to be experimenting with new management methods which applied the methods of establishing technical innovation teams to other areas of worker participation in management. According to one report, "Workshops or the factory proper set up 'three-in-one' combination production command groups and drew the first-line workers to take part in planning, and in technical, labor and financial management. Workers investigation groups were set up according to needs for investigating problems arising from production and
putting forth solutions". This elaboration on the model of the technical innovation teams meant that more workers had the possibility to be involved in more aspects of management. But it had the same limitation as the original model. The individuals selected "represented" the workers only inasmuch as they were themselves workers but it failed to institutionalize a method whereby the workers, as a group, discuss alternatives and participate in management decisions in an ongoing manner.

The Red Banner Shipyard in Dalian was cited as a model for establishing a "mass management network". This was an expansion of the eight "officials" system described earlier. The workers elected committees at the work section, workshop and shipyard levels. At each level there were committees concerned with political propaganda, production planning, product quality, accounting, safety, and public health and medical care. In all 4,200 workers were involved in the network. In order to insure that these workers' committees would in fact be consulted, "The shipyard party committee also stipulated that the relevant departments should not report certain major problems related to enterprise management to the party committee without passing through discussion by the 'mass management' network". This statement is indicative of the actual situation in Chinese factories during this period. All the important decisions were being made in the party committee of the factory and the party committee was deeply involved in day-to-day decision-making. This occurred in spite of the fact that the juridical center of decision-making was the revolutionary committee. The party committee's central role in decision-making was greatly augmented in 1956 when the "one-management system" originally
copied from the Soviet Union was replaced by a system of "director responsibility under the leadership of the party". In spite of subsequent changes in form of management, the locus of decision-making remained the same. When the party organization disintegrated during the Cultural Revolution, the revolutionary committees temporarily served as decision-making bodies in those factories where party leadership had not yet been re-established. But as the party organization was re-established, cadres on the revolutionary committees formed the nucleus of the new party organization, which then assumed control. Party leadership of the revolutionary committee and of the mass organizations in the factory assured that they could all be coordinated to carry out party policy. Therefore, although systems of mass management could broaden worker participation in the consultative process that led up to decision-making and participation in the making of subsidiary decisions involved in the process of policy implementation, the workers as a group were not directly involved in the policy decisions themselves. Regardless of form, worker participation in policy-making was limited to their representation by the party. In other words, instead of the party striving on the basis of principles to influence workers' decisions (decisions made through institutions of democratic self-management), the party made the decisions based (ideally) upon consultation with the workers and then would strive to mobilize the workers to accept and carry out these decisions (ideally) made on their behalf.

After the fall of the "gang of four", the press reported that Wang Hongwen had initiated an experiment in a workshop in the Shanghai No. 17 Cotton Mill where he had begun his political career. The management section of the workshop was abolished and a system "without regulation,
without management, and without leadership" was instituted under the slogan "everybody takes part in management". The article did not give any details as to how this experiment actually worked except to report that it resulted in chaos and losses in both output and quality. It is therefore not clear whether this was a serious experiment or the trying out of a disruption tactic to be used in factional struggles in other places. When I visited the factory in July 1976 I was given a detailed account of Wang Hongwen's activities but this experiment in mass management was not mentioned.\textsuperscript{17}

Cadre Participation in Labor

On Party Day (July 1) 1976 the lead editorial in several national newspapers made public for the first time excerpts from a directive issued by Mao Zedong in 1964. The editorial underlined the importance of cadre participation in labor as a means of narrowing the gap between workers and managers. The excerpt from Mao bore down on the danger involved in not closing this gap.

Management itself is a matter of socialist education. If the managerial staff do not join the workers on the shop floor, work, study and live with them and modestly learn one or more skills from them, then they will find themselves locked in acute class struggle with the working class all their lives and in the end are bound to be overthrown as bourgeois by the working class. If they don't learn any technical skills and remain outsiders for a long time, they won't be able to do management well either. Those in the dark are in no position to light the way for others.\textsuperscript{18}

The policy of administrative personnel engaging in productive labor was a product of the Great Leap Forward period when the process was first popularized.\textsuperscript{19} In 1968, during the Cultural Revolution, a directive on
the process of "struggle, criticism, transformation" ("doupigai") was issued from the center calling for streamlining organization by sending office personnel to lower levels. The advantages cited for this innovation were that it added to productive capacity, it forced the development of simpler management procedures, it transformed the ideology of the cadres and countered the notion that equated downward transfer with a loss of face, and it opened up more opportunities for younger cadres. The system used in the mid-seventies, as described in the example of the machine tool plant, maintained most of the goals of the more drastic Cultural Revolution method while insuring the cadres did not permanently lose their positions. The one-third of the cadres who were sent down to labor at any one time could return to their administrative posts with a much clearer conception of the situation and problems on the factory floor.

The main concern in the press was that the system was being eroded because factory leaderships were allowing cadres to slip back into old habits of avoiding labor. It was argued that this could lead to ideological degeneration and create openings for the spread of revisionist thinking.

The problem with this orientation to cadres' participation in labor can perhaps best be seen through a publicized incident that occurred in the Beijing Machinery Plant. During the campaign to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius a group of workers put up a big-character poster entitled "Where are the party committee members' hammers?". The story behind the poster is as follows. In 1971, when the factory's new party committee was formed, the workers presented each member with a hammer with the slogan "Never be divorced from physical labor, never be divorced from the masses"
painted on them in red characters. Despite this attempt by the workers to symbolize the importance of cadre participation in labor, however, as time wore on some cadres spent less and less time on the factory floor. In the winter of 1973-74 Lin Biao was accused of opposing cadre participation in labor and calling it "unemployment in disguised form" in order to "serve his scheme of changing the Party's basic line and restoring capitalism". It was in the context of this criticism that the poster appeared. In response, the party committee held a meeting with the workers at which the committee criticized themselves. It was resolved to hold a "hammer meeting" each quarter to check up on each cadre's participation in labor.

The press report included excerpts from the speeches at the self-criticism meeting that reveal why the issue was considered an important one. They also reveal how the issue was understood at the time. One of the party cadres stated "Once one becomes divorced from labor, one gets closer to revisionism and the bourgeoisie and further away from Marxism and the proletariat. We must never forget this lesson!" Another cadre elaborated on this point. He stated that "bourgeois ideas of every description are poisoning the air and class enemies are using every trick to corrupt our cadres. If we are not vigilant and get divorced from labor and the masses, we can easily become corroded by bourgeois ideas and stumble down the blind alley of revisionism ... Only by continuing to take part in physical labor and mixing our sweat with that of the working people can our hearts beat as one with the workers, and only in this way can we retain the fine qualities of the working class".
One of the workers attending the meeting replied that "We ask cadres to take part in labor not because we lack manpower. What we want is for you to keep in close touch with the masses, listen to their opinions and demands and get to know what's on their minds and what they are doing so that you'll be able to implement Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and policies better".  

The opinions expressed by the cadres and workers at this meeting and selected for publication graphically and accurately express the prevailing view of the importance of cadre participation in labor. Physical labor itself was seen as an antidote to the corruption of bourgeois ideology. Physical labor among the workers would produce empathy with the workers so that the cadres could better administrate in their interests. The closing of the gap between mental and manual labor in this relationship was to occur in the mind of the administrator. But in this relationship the most important aspect of the gap between mental and manual labor is a knowledge gap. The cadre has an overall understanding of the operation of the factory derived from the synthesizing of the general knowledge of the workforce as a whole. Each worker through his/her labor shares only a fragment of this knowledge. In capitalist industrial organization this specialization and fragmentation disqualifies the workers for self-management. Cadres' participation in physical labor could provide cadres with a very useful opportunity for informal dissemination of a great deal of information about the operation of the enterprise and discussion of management problems and options. Without closing the knowledge gap, transcending the traditional division of labor with a system of
self-management is necessarily reduced to administration by others on the workers' behalf. But this was not part of the general understanding of the significance of cadre participation in labor. I witnessed a few instances where individual cadres did use the opportunity in this way but the general emphasis was on cadres humbly learning from the workers with the result that the flow of information tended to move in one direction only. There were also institutional barriers to the flow of information from cadres to workers. Party members (and most important cadres were party members) were not permitted to discuss the content of policy debates with non-party members or with members who were at a lower level of leadership within the party than they were. As well, attitudes toward security often meant that individual cadres did not have access to information outside their area of competence. Given the narrow understanding of the role of cadre participation in labor, the dissemination of information that the workers would need for informed and responsible participation in decision-making was largely neglected. The alternative method for the dissemination of (another kind) of information was worker participation in political and theoretical study. The significance of this method will be discussed later in the chapter.

Rules and Regulations

The issue of the role of rules and regulations was one area of factory management presented in the media in the form of a "debate". During the campaign to criticize Deng Xiaoping in 1976 he was accused of advocating a "dictatorship of rules and regulations" from the center down to
the factories and within the factories. The case against Deng on this issue was elaborated on two levels. On one level he was accused of attempting to reintroduce the methods of "vertical rule" which were applied during the 1950's. This meant that decision-making would be centered in the ministries and bureaus in Beijing and local factories would retain very little initiative. It was argued that this meant that not only would decision-making be further removed from the workers in the hands of a small elite at the center but that industrial development would be hindered. One article compared the progress made on the construction of new port facilities at Dalian with the lack of progress in an expansion project at the Benqi Iron and Steel Company (both in Liaoning province). According to the article, the reimposition of a "dictatorship of rules and regulations" at the Iron and Steel Company held up the progress of capital construction by preventing the local party organization from mobilizing locally available manpower and resources.

These accusations against Deng Xiaoping were based on a document drafted under his direction for discussion in September 1975. The document was entitled "Some Problems on the Acceleration of Industrial Development" and was popularly referred to as "the twenty points". The text was not made public in China at the time. The general public had only excerpts quoted out of context in the press while at least some party members had the full text.

A reading of the document reveals that Deng and his supporters were by no means advocating a return to the command structures of the early fifties. The document affirms the system of decentralizing industry but points to problems that arose from decentralization without proper
preparation by the local authorities. What was advocated as a solution to the problem was the strengthening of local management, not reversion to central control. What the document objected to was not local initiative but the wholesale disregard of national needs:

At present, some localities and units disregard the interests of the whole and the unified stipulation of the center, institute their policies at will, violate state plans, freely change the direction of production of enterprises which are sent down, interrupt existing relations of cooperation, fail to fulfill the task of sending products to higher levels, randomly introduce projects of capital construction and expand the scope of construction, freely draw and use goods and materials and funds, increase the number of staff and workers and enlarge the total amount of wages at will, and arbitrarily change commodity prices. This cannot be permitted.\textsuperscript{34}

One problem emphasized here and repeated later in the document was the random introduction of capital construction projects. Under the section on capital construction it was reemphasized that:

No regions, departments, or units are allowed arbitrarily to enlarge the scale of construction and raise the standard of construction, or to change at will the speed of progress in the work of construction. Nobody has the power to divert the materials, equipment, and funds earmarked for key projects of the state to other construction projects.\textsuperscript{35}

The problem being articulated here was that local authorities or individual units were authorizing capital construction projects that required far more resources than were in fact available. This undermined the whole structure of planning. This was a commonplace problem in China during this period. For example, at the Guangdong Foreign Language Institute the leadership wanted to build a swimming pool for the students and staff. There was a serious shortage of building materials so nothing could be procured through normal channels. However, the school was
fortunate in that one student's father was a high level cadre in the provincial construction bureau. The necessary materials were thus procured but not without at the same time exacerbating the general problem. I strongly suspect that it was this sort of problem that lay behind the delays in capital construction imposed by higher levels in the comparison of units in Liaoning province cited above rather than simply a stultifying "dictatorship of rules and regulations".

On another level Deng was also accused of extending the "dictatorship of rules and regulations" into the factories themselves. According to the accusations, "The various 'rules and regulations' are themselves independent and can be carried through to the basic level, totally barring out the leadership of the Party committees at all levels over economic work". It was thought that this would have two negative effects. Management would be concerned solely with the development of production and political questions would have no place. Furthermore, management in the factories would be in the hands of specialists who would "vigorously control, check and suppress the workers" resulting in a situation where "the power of leadership in the enterprises is again in the grasp of the capitalist-roaders and the bourgeois 'specialists' and 'authorities' who have not been successfully remolded".

In fact, the "twenty points" document stresses the need for workers to take part in management, for cadres to take part in collective productive labor and for the role of the three-in-one technical innovation groups to be enhanced. The section referring to the relationship between the party committees and factory management reads as follows:
All enterprises should, under the unified leadership of the Party committees, set up a strong, powerful, and independent system for managing and directing an enterprise's daily production activities, handling promptly problems arising from production and ensuring the normal operation of production. The Party committees cannot always deal directly with all big and small matters and be prevented from grasping the major issues. It is necessary to set up certain compact and efficient functional organs according to the needs of production and to the principle of having fewer and better troops and simpler administration. These organs must face the masses, the grass-roots level, and the front line of production. In close integration with management by the masses, they should do a good job of management planning, technical management, labor management, and financial management.

What was being argued in "Some Problems on the Acceleration of Industrial Development" was that the key problem at the time was quite different from what was being stressed in the media. While the media were pointing to the danger of workers being shunted aside and placed at the mercy of new overlords, the document being criticized stressed that the present danger to worker management came from factional disruption of the rational ordering of production. The basis for this assertion will be dealt with later in the chapter. What is significant for the issue of the proper role for rules and regulations was that open debate of the real issues under contention was suppressed.

On October 30, 1975 the Anhui Provincial Radio broadcasting out of Hefei broadcast an editorial which did appear to reflect the spirit of "the twenty points". The broadcast raised the question of disruption of production indirectly through historical reference.
Before 1971, under the influence of the revisionist line pushed by Lin Biao and company, who preached that "politics can oust everything" and "spiritual conditions can substitute for material conditions", for a time all rules and regulations were abolished indiscriminately at our plant. This adversely affected production.

The author of this broadcast was the Chairman of the revolutionary committee and vice-secretary of the party committee at the Hefei Mining Equipment Plant. He went on to outline what "the necessary rules and regulations for socialist enterprises must embody".

They uphold the spirit of the constitution of the Anshan Iron and Steel Company, adhere to the principle of independence and self reliance and making foreign things serve China, and embody the party's mass line. They also clearly stipulate that three-in-one groups composed of workers, cadres and technicians must be set up from the plant down to the workshop levels, to rely on the masses to the enterprises well ... They must be conducive to strengthening the system of personal responsibility. The system of personal responsibility is the key link in all rules and regulations. In the past, the system of personal responsibility was for some time abolished in designing work. When problems popped up, only drawings, and not people could be found. Now, we have clearly defined in our rules and regulations a reasonable system of personal responsibility for full-time and part-time designing personnel. We also have strengthened the system of personal responsibility for the workers, effectively improving the quality of products ...

They must be conducive to the workers acting as masters and making the decisions and bringing into play the masses enthusiasm.

... We have set up the positions of leaders and five other types of managerial personnel through the plant, namely shift and work team leaders, output recorders, quality examiners, time keepers, storekeepers and daily life supervisors, totalling some 650. In addition to taking part in the management of shifts and work teams, they also work together with cadres responsible for various parts of the plant, guiding each other.40
This description of the strengthening of the rules and regulations in a mining equipment plant concretizes the policies advocated in the "twenty points". Regulations were not seen as limits on workers' self-management rights imposed by bureaucratic authorities but as a system of rights and responsibilities formulated and enforced by the entire personnel (production and managerial staff) of the enterprise. But in 1976 when this direction was criticized it was done in terms of a personal attack on the motives of Deng Xiaoping rather than a substantive discussion of the issues involved. This is the way the "debate" was redirected in People's Daily in July 1976:

If we simply examine what Deng Xiaoping has said, we can get a clear view. Didn't he want to invite the "hermits" to power? Didn't he want to entrust important responsibilities to those who "have made up their minds" and "have no fear of being toppled a second time"? Didn't he clamor that "if we are not good at technical and vocational work we should let others do it"? This fully testifies that his reimposing the "dictatorship of rules and regulations" means inviting the handful of capitalist roaders in the Party and the bourgeois "specialists" and "authorities" who have not been remolded to give direct orders to the enterprises so that the capitalist roaders may push the revisionist line from the top to the bottom, practice dispersionism, establish "many centers" against the central authorities, practice despotism toward the local authorities and the broad masses and exercise dictatorship over the proletariat.  

Material Incentives

Both Lin Biao and Deng Xiaoping were accused of advocating the use of material incentives such as bonuses and piecework as the primary means for increasing the productivity of labor. Lin Biao was accused of using the promise of material reward to attract people to his faction. It was asserted that this was based on a confusion between the philosophical
materialism that was the basis of the Marxist view of reality and the vulgar understanding of materialism as a desire for material possessions. The essence of the accusations against Lin was that he was manipulating Marxist terminology in the pursuit of factional ends.\textsuperscript{43}

The accusations against Deng involved broader issues. Deng was accused of advocating "putting profits in command" as a means of stimulating economic development and pushing the economy in a capitalist direction. The use of material incentives within the factories was identified as one aspect of a more general policy. The heart of the argument was that using profitability as the means to evaluate management and allocate investment in industry would put pressure on managers to use material incentives to increase profits by getting the workers to work harder:

Very obviously, if we act according to "profits in command" advocated by Teng Hsiao-p'ing, bourgeois rights will inevitably follow a pattern of malignant inflation. To pursue profits, the leading personnel of certain enterprises will naturally exploit their authority to adopt the dual policy of the carrot (material incentives) and the big stick (control, check and suppression) in a desperate bid to exploit and squeeze the workers. The broad masses of workers will inevitably be again plunged into the miserable plight of being exploited and enslaved.\textsuperscript{44}

This accusation against Deng is based on an interpretation of the contents of the "twenty points" which is not corroborated by a reading of the original document.\textsuperscript{45} Deng's critics admit that opposition to "profits in command" does not mean negating profit as one goal of socialist production. The same article as quoted above goes on to say:
True, in criticizing the capitalist principle of doing business by putting "profits in command", we do not mean that we don't want socialist profits. The profits realized by the socialist state-run enterprises are an important source of the financial income of our state and a main source of socialist accumulation.⁴⁶

The claim was that Deng was making profit the central overriding goal of production. But in the passage in the "twenty points" that refers to profits it is mentioned as one of a number of goals to be fulfilled by an enterprise.

All enterprises should get a grip on the following principal economic and technical targets: (1) the target of output, (2) the target of variety, (3) the target of quality, (4) the target of the consumption of raw material, other materials, fuel and power, (5) the target of labour productivity, (6) the target of cost of production, (7) the target of profits, (8) the target of the use of circulating funds, and so forth. Not fulfilling these targets and not fulfilling the contracts of supplying goods according to specified quality, quantity, and schedule cannot be considered as fully carrying out the state plan.⁴⁷

In analyses of material incentives descriptions of the influence of material incentives used in the factories before the Cultural Revolution emphasized how bonuses and piecework split the working class into competitors for an extra piece of the pie. Even technical innovation was affected because "the introduction of awards for new products made certain people block technical data from each other".⁴₈ Material incentives were seen as the breeding ground of individualism through which people would think only of personal gain and become slaves to money so that the relationships between people would become mercenary cash relations. The inevitable result, it was asserted, would be a reversion to the capitalist system of ownership.⁴⁹ For this reason it was claimed that:
To develop production, our socialist state does not rely on putting profits in command or material incentives but on Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line, on putting proletarian politics in command, on taking class struggle as the key link and on powerful political and ideological work. This is fundamental in running the socialist enterprises well.\textsuperscript{50}

In spite of this claim, material incentives were in operation in a number of units during this time. These examples call into question the notion that material and ideological conditions for the elimination of material incentives existed in China at that time. The examples all involve work situations that involved a great deal of physical labor. An investigation of Huangpu harbor near Guangzhou showed that from 1964-66, when piece work was used, the dockers labor productivity averaged 3,089 tons per year. When piece work was eliminated at the end of 1971 labor productivity dropped to 2,423 tons per year, 72.9\% of the earlier average. Based on this experience piece work was restored in 1974 and labor productivity rose to its earlier levels.\textsuperscript{51} The Guangzhou docks experimented with the elimination of piece work in 1972 with similar results. When piece work was reinstituted in 1973, labor productivity rose 25.34\%. While workers' average wages went up, the cost of handling each kiloton of goods dropped 4.33\% and the accident rate dropped 16.84\%.\textsuperscript{52} An example from the construction industry in Tianjin involved bonuses paid for the return of undamaged paper cement bags. The bags cost the unit fifty fen each. A bonus of three fen was given each time a worker returned an undamaged bag. This produced a 60-70\% return rate of undamaged bags. When the system was abolished virtually all the bags were damaged on first use. When the old system was restored in 1974 it became possible for the unit to save 14,000 yuan with an outlay of 900 yuan for bonuses over the period 1974-76.\textsuperscript{53}
Under conditions where mechanization was not highly developed and therefore productivity was more directly correlated to labor input, the imposed "egalitarianism" of straight-time wages produced resentment among the workers who viewed it as unfair. Under the existing conditions political awareness could not substitute for material incentives to keep productivity high. And China could no more afford that loss of productivity than she could afford the loss of all those paper cement bags after one use.

What the elimination of material incentives was producing was a gap between official policy and propaganda and the real experience and thinking of the workers. There were hints of this in the media. The following paragraph appeared in an article in *People's Daily* in July 1975 about the situation at the Tianjin Railway Station.

Some time ago, certain individual young workers of the Eastern Goods Yard Workshop tended to compare their wages rather than comparing their contributions. To counter this problem, the Party branch launched in the whole yard activities to prepare statements of accounts about the hardship of slaving as draft animals in the old society and the happiness as the master of the house in the new society. Everyone was guided to discuss "how to be a proper master of the socialist enterprise". Education was conducted to foster the great ideals of communism. Everyone was made to see clearly the historic mission shouldered by the working class and raise consciousness in working with the communist spirit. The workers said, "We must be the master of the goods yard and can in no way be the slaves of money. We must devote our time to the principle of "from each to the best of his ability" and can in no way move in circles around "to each according to his work". They assiduously studied theory, consciously transformed their world outlook and feared no hardships in doing labor. They worked as one man, fought in unity and overfulfilled the transportation task.  

56
This inspiring story hid a less inspiring reality that I became aware of working in the Beijing Machine Tool Plant. The focus of political study at that time was the movement to study the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat. One topic of discussion was the example of bourgeois right inherent in the eight-grade wage system. The system operated ideally as follows. As a worker built up his or her seniority and skills, he or she was moved up the scale, getting higher wages. In this factory the scale went from thirty-six yuan to one hundred and eight yuan per month. The theoretical point was that two workers on the same level earning equal pay according to the formula "to each according to his work" could have unequal needs. Thus the wage system was an example of bourgeois right because apparent equality hid real inequality. This holdover from bourgeois society would one day be replaced in communist society by a system of distribution according to need.

This discussion provided an opening for the workers to raise questions about wages and needs. What had happened was that, when material incentives had become a political issue during the Cultural Revolution, disagreement over wages policy at the center led to a freezing of the system. This meant that remuneration in each of the levels did not increase and individuals no longer moved up the scale as they accumulated experience or responsibility. The center made some improvements in 1971. Workers who began work before 1958 were moved up one level but anyone who had entered the factory since 1966 could not get past the second level. Since the wage rates for the first two levels were based on the assumption that the young worker was still living with his or her family, the wages
were not sufficient for workers who were older, independent and trying to raise a family. This is what the workers were interested in discussing. They were concerned with achieving the "equality" of bourgeois right first and then discussing how to move beyond it. It was explained to them that first it was necessary to gain a clear understanding of the theory. Specifics could be discussed at some later stage of the movement.

It was Yao Wenyuan with his widely promulgated and studied essay "On the Social Basis of the Lin Biao Clique" who had argued most strongly for the restriction of bourgeois right. Yao argued that "the existence of bourgeois right provides an important economic foundation for their emergence". Ironically, Yao goes on to quote Lenin to prove his case:

Lenin said, "... in the first phase of communist society (usually called socialism) 'bourgeois right' is not abolished in its entirety, but only in part, only in proportion to the economic revolution so far attained, i.e., only in respect of the means of production ... However, it continues to exist as far as its other part is concerned: it continues to exist in the capacity of regulator (determining factor) in the distribution of products and the allotment of labour among the members of society. The socialist principle: 'He who does not work, neither shall he eat', is already realized; the other socialist principle: 'An equal amount of products for an equal amount of labour', is also already realized. But this is not yet communism, and it does not yet abolish 'bourgeois right', which gives to unequal individuals, in return for unequal (actually unequal) amounts of labour, equal amounts of products".

Lenin, however, like the workers at the machine tool plant, was actually arguing that the task of socialism was to realize, safeguard and guarantee the principle of bourgeois right promised but never fully realised in bourgeois societies. This is evident in the text immediately
following the paragraphs quoted out of context by Yao Wenyuan. Lenin continues as follows:

    This is a "defect", says Marx, but it is unavoidable in the first phase of Communism; for if we are not to indulge in utopianism, we must not think that having overthrown capitalism people will at once learn to work for society without any standard of right; and indeed the abolition of capitalism does not immediately create the economic premises for such a change.

    And there is no other standard than that of "bourgeois right". To this extent, therefore, there still remains the need for a state, which, while safeguarding the public ownership of the means of production, would safeguard equality in labour and equality in the distribution of products.

    The state withers away in so far as there are no longer any capitalists, any classes, and consequently, no class can be suppressed.

    But the state has not yet completely withered away, since there still remains the safeguarding of "bourgeois right", which sanctifies actual inequality. For the state to wither away completely complete Communism is necessary.58

    Yao Wenyuan repeatedly associates bourgeois right with "bourgeois influence", "capitalist ideas of making a fortune", "speculation, graft and corruption, theft and bribery". Thus workers were surprised to learn that "to each according to their labor" was based on "bourgeois right". Their confusion was described by one worker at the machine tool plant.
In studying Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Program* there was a question of how to understand the nature of distribution in the socialist system. Why did Marx and Engels say that the socialist principle of "from each according to their ability, to each according to their work" was an application of bourgeois right which continues to exist in socialist society? Many older workers compared the system of distribution before liberation with the present. They described how the workers' wages could never keep up with the rampant inflation under Chiang Kai-shek. In the end, they said, paper money was worth less than toilet paper. They argued how can this situation be compared with the present when wages have been steadily rising and prices have remained stable and even dropped on some commodities? They said that the system of money exchange under capitalism had profits as its center, under socialism it had people as its center. They were as different as night and day. They said the capitalists' and landlords' wealth was not proportional to their labor, but to how much they could exploit other people's labor. How could the socialist principle of "to each according to his labor" be described as an application of bourgeois right? They said that they had always thought of it as a socialist right.\(^{59}\)

The other side of the situation these veteran workers were describing is of course their own proletarian struggles in the old society for a fair wage based on the principle of bourgeois right. Notions of equity and justice developed by the bourgeoisie in their struggles against feudal privilege and power became subversive to the capitalist system when the proletariat transcended the limited demands of the bourgeoisie to fight against the class for the full realization of the principle of bourgeois right.
However, it was not Yao Wenyuan who first raised the question of "restricting bourgeois right" in China, it was Mao Zedong. This is what he said:

China is a socialist country. Before liberation, she was much the same as a capitalist country. Even now she practises an eight-grade wage system, distribution according to work and exchange through money, and in all this differs very little from the old society. What is different is that the system of ownership has been changed.

Our country at present practices a commodity system, the wage system is unequal, too, as in the eight-grade wage scale, and so forth. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat such things can only be restricted. Therefore, if people like Lin Biao come to power, it will be quite easy for them to rig up the capitalist system. That is why we should do more reading of Marxist-Leninist works.

It is important to note that Mao is not arguing like Yao Wenyuan that bourgeois right provides an economic foundation for the emergence of bourgeois right but that it offers no obstacle to the restoration of a capitalist system. But what did Mao mean by "restricting" bourgeois right? I think that the workers at the Beijing Machine Tools Plant uncovered a part of the answer. At the same time that they discovered the need to adjust the wage system so as to realize and safeguard the principle of equality in distribution according to labor, they also through their investigations realized a need to restrict bourgeois right not by abolishing it but by transcending it in some aspects.
In all the shops we found that equal wages were being paid to workers whose work, because of differences in skill, experience, strength, etc., was not equal and whose needs were also not equal. One worker might have many children or be supporting parents or younger brothers and sisters while another had less financial burdens and was therefore able to live at a higher standard of living. From this we saw the importance also of limiting bourgeois right and modifying the application of the principle of "to each according to their labor". Nutrition allowances, sick leave and maternity leave with pay, paid holidays for workers whose families are not in Beijing and numerous fringe benefits distributed to veteran workers and apprentices alike are all instances of the application of the communist principle of "to each according to their need" and not according to their labor.61

Worker Theorists

Spare-time theoretical study groups became widespread in Chinese factories during the Cultural Revolution. In the campaign to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius, the training of worker theorists to give direction to political study played an important role in the expansion of the numbers of workers involved in theoretical study groups.62 During our stay at the Beijing Machine Tools Plant we spent one full afternoon interviewing a cadre named Wang who was head of the factory's Propaganda Department and several leading members of the plant's theoretical contingents (lilun duiwu). Wang explained the organization and roles of the teams of worker theoreticians. The contingents were organized on three levels: 1) work team, 2) workshop and work section, 3) factory as a whole with 460, 250 and 17 people respectively at each level. Practical organization of the teams was in the hands of the Propaganda Department but leadership was in the hands of the factory party committee and ten
party branch committees. The factory level team included top and middle-level party cadres, technicians and workers. There were twenty-three teams of five to twenty people each at the workshop and work section level. These teams were based on the principle of double three-in-one combinations of workers, technicians, and cadres and young, middle-aged, and older members. The younger members, however, usually constituted 70 to 80 percent of the teams. At the work team level the worker theorists functioned as tutors and played a leading role in the work teams' political study meetings.

The worker theoreticians performed a number of concrete tasks. They helped the party branches work out study plans and gave individual tutoring to workers struggling with basic Marxist concepts and terminology. They took the lead in organizing meetings to criticize revisionism. They also wrote study materials to help their fellow workers' own study. Wang was very proud of the fact that in the movement to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius, the theoretical contingents produced articles, essays, pamphlets and books adding up in length to one million characters (equivalent to about 250,000 typewritten pages if translated into English). They had written criticisms of six books by Confucian scholars and twenty-three articles explaining works of the Legalist school. One of these articles was published in People's Daily. They worked with the trade union and the Youth League in setting up and running night classes in political theory. They ran special classes for the production leaders and study group leaders of the work teams. The Youth League alone had 178 small study groups with 1,800 participants receiving assistance from worker
Theorists. This was eighty percent of the young workers in the factory. The worker theoreticians also helped the party branches to do ideological work by carrying out investigations into organizations, economic and administrative problems at team, section or shop level.

The first such theoretical contingent was organized in Beijing's Electronics Factory in 1973. Soon after its formation an article in the party journal *Red Flag* appeared calling on other factories to study the experience of Beijing's Electronics Factory. By 1976 Shanghai factories had trained a total of 300,000 worker theorists through the formation of 20,000 theoretical contingents. Tianjin was reported to have trained 300,000 worker theorists. Beijing at that time had a total of 160,000 worker theorists including 16,000 enrolled in 2,000 special interest contingents dealing with such areas as philosophy, political economy, scientific socialism, international issues, law and history. They published a total of 170 books and 1,200 articles.

The study sessions for worker theorists in the theoretical contingents differed from ordinary political study in that they were conducted during working hours, whereas the regular political study sessions which all workers attended once to three times a week were conducted before or after their shifts. As these study groups, writing groups and other specialized groups in the factories expanded it meant that an increasing number of workers were being taken out of production. At the Beijing Machine Tools Plant worker theoreticians were given one day a week off for political study plus time to attend week to ten-day long party organized short courses and special short courses at Beijing University. This
meant that the rest of the workers had to carry an extra burden due to the regular absence of their workmates. This phenomenon was strongly criticized in the "twenty points" document.

It is necessary to improve labor organization, to do well the work of compiling a list of personnel and labor quota well, to reduce the number of non-productive personnel and personnel detached from production, and to raise the utilization rate of working hours. Whichever activities should be conducted in spare time are not permitted to occupy the time for production. At present some enterprises have set up a large number of athletic teams, cultural and art propaganda teams, militia, writing groups, and so forth which are all isolated from production, as well as created various assignments under numerous pretexts, so that many young and strong workers have departed from the front line of production, and the proportion of non-productive personnel of these enterprises has reached as high as 30 to 40 percent. All these specialized units which are isolated from production are to be abolished. All personnel who are not entitled to depart from production must return to their posts of production.67

After the arrests of the "gang of four" the worker theorist study and writing groups during this period were criticized from another perspective. It was charged that the faction around Jiang Qing had used the movement to train theoretical contingents to expand their own faction's network and influence. It was asserted that articles written by the writing groups under their control were published and made required reading for theoretical study and the groups were used to propagate "Zhang Chunqiao's thought" and the "road of Yao Wenyuan". From the descriptions in one article, it appears that the "gang of four's" influence was greatest in Shanghai but even in that city there were instances of theoretical study groups opposing positions taken in the media controlled by Yao Wenyuan.68 Although it is not clear from the charges made to what extent
the "gang of four" were able to directly control or manipulate the movement on a national scale, it is clear that the political atmosphere created by the media had a considerable impact on the content of theoretical study. In China during this period there was no distinction made between theoretical study and the needs of the current campaign. Theory was viewed quite simply as a weapon in the immediate struggle and had to conform to the needs of that struggle. For example, when I was studying philosophy at Beijing University in 1974-75 the media were attacking Confucius as a philosopher who articulated the interests of the slaveowning class. Consequently, my Chinese roommate was assigned the task in his course on Western philosophy to derive a revolutionary philosophy articulating the interests of slaves as a class from Aesop's fables. The materials in the press concerning the worker theorists point out that they were in the vanguard of the campaign to criticize Confucius, the movement to study the theory of the dictatorship and the campaign to criticize Deng Xiaoping. Where the contents of the materials being written were described, it was clearly material geared to the current movement such as historical and philosophical analyses of the debates between the Confucian and Legalist schools or background historical or explanatory notes or commentaries on Marxist-Leninist classics being studied at the time. Thus the worker theorists were not studying according to individual or group concerns or to the needs of their unit but were part of a system that was propagating and elaborating on the themes raised in the media.
While it is not clear to what extent theoretical contingents became fronts for factional networks, it is clear that they were seen as a means of extending party control over spontaneous and autonomous organization of theoretical study. During our discussion at Beijing Machine Tools Plant we asked about political study before the Cultural Revolution. A woman activist in the theoretical contingents replied that there was study before. But, she said, it lacked the organization and mass character of the present movement. She explained that at the time that Liu Shaoqi's influence was fairly strong in the party, there were "three spontaneities" (sange ziliu) in command of study. By this she said she meant that the choice of time, content and study group members were up to those inspired to organize themselves into a group. Such spontaneous organization of study still existed, especially among young people, but it was in addition to the study organized by the party, Youth League, trade union, worker theoreticians and work teams. The problem with the past form of spontaneism, she said, was that few people studied and those who did often fell into factionalism.70

What this woman worker meant by "factionalism" was not a problem involving organized networks of factional groups directed from above, but a situation in which a group of people studying and discussing theory on their own could come to conclusions different from the party's interpretation of theory. This could lead to opposition to party policies based upon independent theoretical study and critical discussion. The party exercised leadership by organizing study and determining its content and direction. The problem was that as long as the party determined what was
to be studied, by whom and when, as well as providing the authoritative interpretation of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought on each question raised, the possibility of workers using these ideas to critically analyze and evaluate party theoretical positions, policies and practice was severely limited. And yet mass supervision of the party was supposed to be a major tenet of the party's theory and policy.

The Theoretical Framework and the Limits on Debate

Examples have been given in the earlier sections of situations where debate on substantive issues and policies was diverted by attacks on the motives of persons charged with advocating certain positions. Advocacy of views other than those presented in the media as correct was often branded as counterrevolutionary propaganda aimed at the subversion of the socialist system. The impression being created was that class struggle was so intense and the danger of capitalist restoration so imminent that such dissenting views presented a real and immediate danger.

The theoretical basis for this contention is contained in the notion that class struggle, in the form of a struggle between the working class and the bourgeoisie, continues after the establishment of a socialist society. This was articulated by Chairman Mao in 1957.
In China, although in the main socialist transformation has been completed with respect to the system of ownership, and although the large-scale and turbulent class struggles of the masses characteristic of the previous revolutionary periods have in the main come to an end, there are still remnants of the overthrown landlord and comprador classes, there is still a bourgeoisie, and the remoulding of the petty bourgeoisie has only just started. The class struggle is by no means over. The class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the class struggle between the different political forces, and the class struggle in the ideological field between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie will continue to be long and tortuous and at times will even become very acute. The proletariat seeks to transform the world according to its own world outlook, and so does the bourgeoisie. In this respect, the question of which will win out, socialism or capitalism, is still not really settled.

This concept was being expanded to include the notion that a new type of bourgeois class was emerging within socialist society. As Zhang Chunqiao was quoted as saying, "Now, a network of capitalist roaders has been formed at all levels throughout the country, controlling the socialist economy and resulting in a system of ownership by capitalist roaders".

How was it in a system where industry had been nationalized and individuals could not own property in industry that a "system of ownership by capitalist roaders" could emerge?

According to the analysis presented in the media, "In an enterprise, the nature of the system of ownership is determined by what line is carried out and which class takes the reins of leadership in its hands". In a book on political economy being prepared by a writing group in Shanghai linked with the "gang of four", it was argued that vestiges of private ownership still existed within factories in a socialist society.
Because differences still remain between mental and manual labor, cadres within the factories hold power because it is they who manage the means of production. In formal terms, the cadres and workers are equal in regard to ownership of the means of production but in reality they are not equal. This "bourgeois right" was seen as a basis for the emergence of what in reality was private ownership. In the press this concept was explained in terms of class relations. People's Daily in discussing "What does strengthening professional management imply?" argued that "because there are still differences between mental and manual labor as well as bourgeois right in the historical period of socialism, therefore between the professional management personnel and the broad masses of workers, there are still in fact inequalities, and the relations between the two are essentially class relations".

According to the theoretical framework being promoted in the media, this class relationship would become one between enemies: "Once the leading cadres of enterprises are subjected to erosion from bourgeois right and ideas, the relationship between cadres and masses changes from one between revolutionary comrades to one between rulers and subjects". This notion of the emergence of a new ruling class was given new weight through the publication in July 1976 of a quotation (out of context) from a directive Mao had written back in 1964: "The bureaucrat class on the one hand and the working class together with the poor and lower-middle peasants on the other are two classes sharply antagonistic to each other". Although it is impossible to tell from this brief quote what Mao was concretely referring to as a 'bureaucrat class', it was taken to mean at
the time that a bourgeois class of a new type was developing among enter­prise, government and party cadres. What was unique about this class is that membership was not determined by relationship to the means of pro­duction. It was determined by political attitude. A position of leader­ship within an enterprise, government or party structure qualified a per­son for potential membership in this newly emerging class. However, the determining factor was ideological, i.e., whether or not the individual comprehended, accepted and followed revolutionary principles and policies. 

Given this kind of subjective class criterion, dissenting from official views could lead to serious trouble because one's class member­ship or allegiance was determined by one's thoughts. Following the arrests of the "gang of four" reports of resistance to their policies appeared in the press. I will deal with just one instance that graphi­cally illustrates the limitations imposed on debate by this particular interpretation of the "continuation of class struggle". The conscientious objector in this case was a technician in the Wuqiao County Machinery Plant in Hebei province. His name was Li Lianxing. In 1975 during the movement to study the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, Yao Wenyuan's article, "On the Social Basis of the Lin Biao Anti-Party Clique", was chosen for study. Li read the article and came to the conclusion that it had nothing to do with criticism of Lin Biao. As far as he could see its purpose was to attack veteran cadres who had been restored to their posts in the last few years.
Everyone began discussing Yao Wenyuan's article at a study meeting of the technical section held after working hours. Without making an analysis, some people said: "It's quite a great work". "It is a piece that is theoretically profound and new in spirit". Upon hearing this, Li Lianxing rose to his feet in a flash and said in a loud voice: "I have found something wrong with this article. It can never be taken as the party's guideline or policy". This shocked all those present. Everyone feared for Li's safety.78

After this first encounter, Li considered the probable consequences of his opposition. "He had pondered the worst that could happen to him: being branded a 'counterrevolutionary' and clapped in jail ..."79 But he decided to maintain his position and to write an article explaining his views. "He bought a lock for a drawer in order to keep materials criticizing Yao Wenyuan".80 In preparing his article, Li studied relevant works by Marx, Lenin and Mao in order to compare their analyses with the one presented by Yao Wenyuan. He surveyed the media. Since his job took him to other factories, he was able to investigate conditions in units other than his own. In his article he concluded that Yao Wenyuan's article was providing political justification for factional attempts at "power seizures", that Yao's analysis was philosophically idealist rather than materialist, and rather than developing Marxist-Leninist theory, Yao had fundamentally revised it.

Li Lianxing sent the critical article to the then responsible persons of the county party committee on 15 July. He fervently hoped that the leadership would wake up and not play into the hands of Yao Wenyuan. He threw the letter into the green letter box, feeling a great sense of relief as if he had shot a wolf.

Li Lianxing was arrested and thrown in jail as an active counterrevolutionary.81
Li Lianxing refused to recant at his trial and in prison where he remained until December 7, 1976.82

Factional Disruption

One of the most important factors in the political crisis that led to the arrests of the "gang of four" was the disruption of industry and transportation that became a part of the political movements being launched in the media. By 1975 the situation had deteriorated sufficiently to prompt the distribution of a directive dealing with the problem. It was issued June 4 after being approved by Mao Zedong. Investigations of industrial enterprises were to be carried out to determine the political atmosphere in the units including "whether bourgeois factionalism has been overcome, whether party policies have been implemented conscientiously and whether class enemies engaged in sabotage have been powerfully punished".83

The draft of "Some Problems on the Acceleration of Industrial Development" drawn up on September 2, 1975 further emphasized the problem of factionalism in a section advocating strengthening of party leadership in industrial enterprises.
At present, the leadership of the Party committees of enterprises is generally of the following four types:

i. Resolutely following the Party's line, plans and policies, having the courage to take the lead and to take responsibility, being united as one, and grasping well both revolution and production.

ii. The leadership group has, to varying degrees, problems of "flabbiness, disorganization and indolence". Leaders of these units are always in fear, do not dare persist in principle, do not dare commend the good or criticize the bad, and allow the Party organization to be in a position of weakness. Others are not united, engage in bourgeois factionalism with each blowing his own trumpet and singing his own tune; they are unable to form a nucleus core. Still others are declining in their revolutionary will, let things drift, take a long rest for a minor illness, groan without any pain, do their work as a routine and in conventional ways, and never take the initiative.

iii. Petty intellectuals who have not reformed themselves and the "bold elements" are in power. These people know nothing about politics and have no experience in production; however, they are gesticulating and trying only to rectify others, they make only high sounding speeches, do nothing practical, always accuse people with such labels as "restoring old things", "going backward", being "a conservative force" and "only pulling the cart but not watching the road", and thus they suppress the enthusiasm of the vast number of cadres and the masses.

iv. Bad people are in power. Some of them are corrupt elements, thieves, and speculators. Others are rightists who are anti-Party and anti-socialism. They use their position and power to fool around. On the one hand, they have won over and corroded a part of the people, cultivated their own power and influence, and on the other hand, they attacked and incriminated good revolutionary cadres and workers, exercised the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, and engaged in restoration and retrogression.

Those belonging to types iii and iv are few in number but their harm has been very great. These units are unable to change their serious situation for a long period of time, because behind the scenes there are people giving support.
After the downfall of the "gang of four" there were numerous reports in the media of enterprises that had suffered factional disruption and production stoppages at some point between the beginning of the campaign to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius in 1974 and the campaign against Deng Xiaoping in 1976. The reports describe attacks on leaders at different levels in the enterprises, disruptions of production under slogans like "don't produce for the capitalist roaders" and attempts at power takeovers. Besides disruption of individual enterprises, industry throughout China was affected by factional disruption of the railway system especially at the north-south east-west interchange at Chengzhou. In the spring of 1977 numerous articles describing disruptions of railway traffic since 1974 appeared in the Chinese press. The situation was reported to have come to a head in 1976 when a total of ten trunk lines were affected.

In 1977 I had the opportunity to visit the Jiangxi Tractor Plant and interview the head of the revolutionary committee and the vice-director of the plant. Their descriptions of the recent history of their plant provide a first-hand account of one of the instances of disruption reported in the press. They reported that the factional group that had controlled part of the leadership of the plant had originally been part of Lin Biao's factional network and had connections within the provincial party committee. The struggle within the plant was part of a larger struggle to gain control of the province. By paralyzing production at one of the province's largest plants, they hoped to discredit their opponents in the provincial party committee. In 1973 during the movement
to criticize Lin Biao and rectify work style, the situation in the factory was relatively healthy. They produced a record 5,500 tractors that year. But toward the end of the year the factional leaders in the plant and at the provincial level established connections with the "gang of four's" network in Beijing. In 1974 during the campaign to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius, the "gang's" faction in Jiangxi province managed to gain control of the people's militia headquarters in Nanchang, which is the provincial capital and the site of the Jiangxi Tractor Plant. With access to the militia weapons supplies, they were able to instigate armed factional fighting in an attempt to take over the city and provincial leadership. During this conflict there was fighting in the factory and twenty-one workers were wounded. During 1974 the factory ceased production for nine months. The party central committee intervened in the crisis and the attempted power takeovers failed. But the factional network remained, its leaders retaining their positions after having made self-criticism. Political tension and factional struggles continued until the summer of 1975 when the provincial party leadership was reorganized and the factional leaders were removed from their posts. Within the factory those cadres who were involved in factional activities were set aside and required to participate in a "study group" in an attempt to get them to reform. However, when the campaign to criticize Deng Xiaoping was launched, the leading cadres in the factory were attacked as the "return home corps" of capitalist roaders and armed struggle broke out again. By August 1976 the factory had been turned into an armed camp with machine guns mounted on the roofs and in the doorways to the workshops. A small
faction was able to "lock out" the majority of the workers who wanted to maintain production but feared the destruction that would likely result if they attempted a physical assault to get into the shops. The factory leadership were surrounded, harrassed and finally taken captive. The faction gained control of the public security forces in Nanchang and the factory leaders were held for four days in an attempt to get them to reveal the names of the workers who supported them. Although they refused to cooperate, two of the more outspoken workers were arrested. Of the almost five thousand workers at the plant, the faction had the support of only about one hundred but they were able to completely paralyze management. When workers attempted to carry on production alone, they were physically attacked and production finally stopped when water and electricity supplies were cut off. Order was not restored in the factory until the fall of the "gang of four". In the period 1974-77 production was stopped for a total of twenty-one months. The value of production losses totalled 120 million yuan.

It was the repetition across the nation of events similar to those described above that forced Hua Guofeng and other leaders at the center to close this "debate" over factory management by arresting Jiang, Zhang, Yao and Wang in Beijing in October 1976.
Notes:  Chapter Four, Industry


4 The foreign students class, of which I was a member, spent from May 30, 1975 to June 17 living at the Beijing No. 2 Machine Tool Plant. The students divided research tasks before leaving for the factory in anticipation of cooperating in the writing of a book based on our experience in the factory. The project was never completed. The information on the machine tool plant is taken from the incomplete manuscript for that book. I had a return visit to the plant in September 1975 shortly before my wife and I left Beijing to teach in Guangzhou.

5 I worked in the Beijing Jeep Plant in 1974 and the Guangzhou Clock Factory in 1976. Both had essentially the same organization as the machine tool plant. In other factories I visited the main difference seemed to be the number of "officials" at the team level.

6 We met with representatives of the plant leadership on June 1, 1975. The main speaker was Chen Xianbao from the "Office to Learn from Daqing" (the production office) but the group included cadres in charge of planning, political propaganda, the Communist Youth League and the Trade Union as well as two veteran workers from the machinery workshop. The discussion was based on a list of questions we submitted to the plant ahead of time and took the entire morning.

7 On June 7, 1975 we attended one of these classes in political theory. The subject of the lecture was Lenin's Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism.

8 "They (the communists) have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole ... theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement." Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party" in Selected Works, Vol. I (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962), p. 46.
9 "Deepgoing Reform of Enterprise Management", Guangming Daily, March 5, 1976, SPRCP, 76-19, p. 228; see also: "Rely on the Masses to Develop the Electric Power Industry", Hongqi, No. 4, April 1, 1974, SPRCM, 773-4, p. 97.

10 "What Does Strengthening Of Professional Management Imply?", People's Daily, Oct. 3, 1976, SPRCP, 76-42, p. 10. If anything, the quote from Capital indicates ambiguity in Marx about the "class origin" of these "specially employed workers" functioning in the role of managers and foremen.


12 "Deepgoing Reform ...". op. cit., p. 229. See note 9 above.

13 "They are Laborers As well As Management Personnel", Guangming Daily, July 19, 1976, SPRCP, 76-37, p. 11.

14 Ibid., p. 15. Charles Bettelheim in his Cultural Revolution and Industrial Organization in China (N.Y.: Monthly Review, 1974) describes a similar system of "workers management teams" in the Beijing General Knitwear Factory in 1971. He points out that "The workers' management teams focus on orientation, inspection, investigation, ideological work, and correct style of work, rather than on management as such, which is the responsibility of the revolutionary committee". See pp. 21-26. The "mass management network" was reported to have begun experimentally in 1973 and reached its final form in 1975. But it seems that what was being publicized as a new model in 1976 was a reworking of methods experimented within other enterprises as early as 1971.

15 "One man management" refers to a management system instituted in the early 1950's when China was modeling her economic system after the Soviet Union. Under this system the factory director was personally responsible for running the factory and major decision-making was concentrated in his hands. At each level within the factory there was a single responsible person. This was replaced with a system in which policy decisions were the collective responsibility of the party committee and director's role was to implement policy. For a Chinese analysis of the two systems and the reasons for the changeover see Li Hsueh-feng, "Strengthen the Party's Leadership Over Enterprises and Implement the Mass Line", in People's Handbook (Beijing, 1957), pp. 111-13, translated in Chinese Law and Government, Vol. XIII, No. 1, pp. 25-38. The topic is also treated in Andors, op cit., Ch. 3, and in Franz Shurmann, Ideology and Organization in Communist China (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1968), pp. 239-296.
In the last few years new methods have been developed to increase the worker's involvement in decision-making. Election of leaders is being instituted at higher levels within the state enterprise structure and elected congresses of workers and staff have been given broader supervisory powers over management. What is most interesting is that the trade unions have been given the task of supervising the management when the workers' congresses are not in session. For a description of the relationship between the trade unions, workers' congresses and elected management see: Kang Yonghe, "China's Trade Unions", Beijing Review, No. 23, June 8, 1979, and Xiang Rong, "How China's Grass Roots Trade Unions Work" in the same issue. In discussions of political reform the question of the necessity of separating the party from government administration and economic management has been stressed as a means of increasing democracy and freeing the party to carry out ideological leadership. See: Fen Wenbin, "Reforming the Political Structure", Beijing Review, No. 4, Jan. 26, 1981.

Interview with Xu Yueqi, Vice-Director of the Shanghai No. 17 Spinning and Weaving Mill (Cotton Mill), July 6, 1976.

"Build the Party in the Course of Struggle", People's Daily, July 1, 1976, and Beijing Review, No. 27, July 2, 1976, p. 7.


"Deepgoing Reform ...", op. cit., pp. 234-35. See note 9 above.


"Where are the Party Committee Members' Hammers?", People's Daily, March 31, 1974, SCMP, 74-6, p. 733. Also in Beijing Review, No. 20, May 17, 1974, pp. 21-24.

Ibid., p. 22.

Ibid., p. 23.

Ibid.

Ibid.
"Intelligence in production expands in one direction because it vanishes in many others. What is lost by the detail labourers, is concentrated in the capital that employs them. It is a result of the division of labour in manufacture, that the labourer is brought face to face with the intellectual potencies of the material process of production, as the property of another, and as a ruling power. This separation begins in simple cooperation, where the capitalist represents to the single workman, the oneness and the will of the associated labour. It is developed in manufacture which cuts down the labourer into a detail labourer. It is completed in modern industry, which makes science a productive force distinct from labour and presses it into the service of capital." Karl Marx, *Capital* (New York: Modern Library, 1906), pp. 396-97. This problem is the basis of the analysis of the workers' role in capitalist industry in Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (New York: Monthly Review, 1974).

Nor was it Mao's understanding, at least in his public statements. See the 1964 quotation at the beginning of this section.

When I worked in factories I noticed that those working with me seemed to have very hazy notions of how the enterprise as a whole was managed. Since my fellow workers did give me very clear analysis of the organization and management of their work team and workshop, I attributed this haziness to lack of interest. However, later while working at the Guangdong Foreign Languages Institute I was asked to prepare an interpreters' manual for the Guangzhou area. This included writing up English introductions to every enterprise in the area that was accepting tours. Since I knew that introductions to factories for tourists were read off from a prepared text, my first plan was to write all the factories and request a copy of their brief introductions. This procedure turned out to be unacceptable and I ended up visiting each of the factories in order to listen to and record a verbal rendition of the introductions. The manuscripts I saw were marked "confidential".

I do not intend to suggest here that cadre participation in labour is the only form in which dissemination of the necessary information could take place. Reports to workers' congresses or the distribution of written reports are other methods. The dissemination of technical information by technical staff and technical training is also essential to enable workers to analyze the political and social implications of technical decisions.


33 "Some Problems in the Acceleration of Industrial Development", Chinese Law and Government, Vol. XII, No. 1-2, Spring-Summer, 1979, pp. 61-103. I know that a party secretary in our department at the institute in Guangzhou had a copy but despite complaints it was not available to the teachers even though press articles criticizing excerpts from the document were being used for political study.

34 Ibid., p. 86.


37 Ibid., p. 245.

38 "Some problems in the Acceleration ...", op. cit., pp. 82-83.


40 Ibid., p. G3.

41 "Teng Hsiao-ping's Sinister Intention ...", pp. 241-42. See note 31. "Hermits" here refers to cadres who had been attacked during the Cultural Revolution and set aside from their posts. It is an allegorical reference to officials dismissed from office in the time of Confucius who often became reclusive scholars during their eclipse. Confucius, like Deng, was charged with wanting to restore such dismissed officials to their original offices.


Ibid., p. 192. See also "Reorganization of Enterprise Management Seeks to Crush the 'Charter of the Anshan Iron and Steel Company'", People's Daily, June 16, 1976, SPRCP, 76-32, pp. 54-56.

Cheng Chin, op. cit., p. 195.

"Some Problems in the Acceleration ...", op. cit., p. 83.

"Deepgoing Reform ...", op. cit., p. 231. See note 9.


Chung Shih, op. cit., p. 10.


Wu Ching-lien et al., "On Socialist ... (Conclusion)", Guangming Daily, Dec. 12, 1977, FBIS, 20 Dec. 77, p. E3. One hundred fen equals one yuan which equals approximately seventy cents Canadian.


The Beijing No. 2 Machine Tool Plant was able to alleviate the workers' situation to a small degree by granting an across the board monthly 5.50 yuan supplement. But not all factories had the funds to do this.


Ibid., p. 5-6. Emphasis in the original.


These are two quotations from Mao widely quoted in the press in 1975 but for which no sources or context were ever given.

Discussion with Liu Kuifei. See note 59 above.


"Shanghai Workers are the Main Force in the Anti-Right Deviationist Struggle", NCNA, April 30, 1976, SPRCP, 76-19, pp. 81-2.


"Peking's Contingents of Worker Theorists Grow in Numbers and Quality", SPRCP, 76-19, pp. 85-86. The article reports that of Beijing's one million workers, 800,000 were involved in some form of theoretical study.

The amount of political study varied according to the intensity of the political movements.

"Some Problems in the Acceleration ...", op. cit., p. 84.


See for example "Shanghai Steelworkers Criticize Productive Forces Theory", NCNA, April 29, 1976, SPRCP, 76-19, pp. 22-24, and articles cited in notes 60, 61 and 63 above.

This paragraph was based on discussion at the Machine Tools Plant in Beijing on June 7, 1975.


"This Verdict ...", op. cit., p. E14.

"Build the Party in the Course of the Struggle", op. cit., p. 7.


Ibid.


Ibid., pp. E12-16.


Ibid., pp. 78-79.


Interview with Liu Baoyi, Head of the Revolutionary Committee and Li Dehe, Vice-Director, Jiangsi Tractor Plant, Nanchang, August 8, 1977.

For published descriptions of factional disruption at the plant see: Tien San-sung and Chao Yi-ou, "Why the Three Ups and Downs", Beijing Review, No. 41, Oct. 7, 1977, pp. 40-42. This article contains the following table of tractor production at the plant:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Tractors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>4,510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>5,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>1,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>2,110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>1,517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan.-June 1977</td>
<td>2,814</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See also: "Kiangsi Industrial Front Exposes Crimes of Gang", Kiangsi Provincial Service, Feb. 6, 1977, FBIS, 10 Feb. 77, pp. G5-8. In 1975 a broadcast on Kiangsi radio discussed the effects of factionalism on the province: "The enemy is using factionalism and factionalism is hiding the enemy. This is the peculiarity of the present class struggle... the revolutionary line of Chairman Mao and the implementation of policies have suffered heavily and party leadership on all levels and the unity of the revolutionary ranks have been wrecked", see Kiangsi Provincial Service, Oct. 18, 1975, CNA, No. 1026, Jan. 9, 1976.

"Return home corps" refers to armed groups organized by landlords during the land reform. Their objective was to return home, reclaim their land and take revenge on the peasants.
Chapter Five: Science and Technology

At liberation China had limited scientific and technical forces. In 1949 there were only thirty to forty specialized research institutes and a few hundred professional research workers in the whole country. Funding was inadequate and equipment outdated. In 1950 the new government formed the Chinese Academy of Sciences, which was modeled after the Soviet system of organization of scientific resources. Policy was determined by the party fraction within the Academy and the Academy itself was both a research organization and a government agency charged with organizing and supervising science related activities. Institutional memberships in the Academy expanded from twenty research centers in 1950 to 120 in 1966. Besides the research under the Academy of Sciences, during the 1950's the central ministries involved in production, public health and defense also set up their own research institutes and universities began setting up research facilities as well. During the Great Leap Forward in 1958 a wide range of scientific research organizations were established at provincial and county levels and even within individual factories and villages. The aim was to develop a comprehensive scientific network to carry out scientific and technical research at various levels and popularize scientific and technical innovations. To coordinate this vast network, which developed largely outside the Academy of Sciences and its institutes, a Science and Technology Commission was set up in 1958. It was this organization that supervised the carrying out of a twelve-year scientific research plan drawn up with Soviet help in 1956.
The creation of this network of organizations to coordinate the planned development of science and technology led to tensions between scientists, many of whom were trained in the West, and administrators and party cadres in charge of the various institutes and organizations. The scientists, although they were patriotic Chinese dedicated to their country's development, considered themselves part of a scientific community that was international in scope and whose concerns often reflected the needs and objectives of the highly developed Western societies. This international scientific community was tied together through the publication and circulation of research papers, the topics of which, at least on the surface, were determined by the individual scientists. The administrators on the other hand were concerned with the coordination of research to meet the specific needs of technology and production in China at her particular level of development. This meant that the research interests of the scientific community within China had to be subordinated to China's most urgent needs as determined by party and government leaders.6

The party viewed this as essentially an ideological problem. Thus the scientists were articulating a "bourgeois ideology" that had its roots in their backgrounds, training and positions. It was considered necessary for the scientists to undergo "ideological remoulding" so that they could better appreciate the needs of the society in which they were living and reorient their efforts to the meeting of those needs. Remoulding through political study began in the 1950's in a rather low key manner. During the Great Leap political education intensified and
scientists were urged to learn from the masses by participating in labor and in the activities of the non-professional scientific and technological organizations established at the base. In fields such as medicine there were calls to combine the insights of traditional Chinese practice with Western science. Scientists were exhorted to mobilize themselves to meet the need to develop production.7

In the period of retrenchment following the Great Leap, organized ideological remoulding efforts were limited by recognition that scientists needed more time for scientific study and research. But discussions of the relationship between the needs of production and scientific research continued. The scientific network with worker and peasant participation in scientific and technical groups at its base also continued to function.8

At the beginning of the Cultural Revolution there were efforts to prevent the movement from disrupting scientific and technical research. In August 1966 the Central Committee issued the "Sixteen Points" directive which defined the scope and direction of the movement. In essence it stated that the political upheavals of the struggle should not interfere with scientific work.

12. Policy Toward Scientists, Technicians, and Ordinary Members of Working Staffs

As regards scientists, technicians and ordinary members of working staffs, as long as they are patriotic, work energetically, are not against the party and socialism, and maintain no illicit relations with any foreign country, we should in the present movement continue to apply the policy of "unity, criticism, unity". Special care should be taken of those scientists and scientific and technical personnel who have made contributions. Efforts should be made to help them gradually transform their world outlook and their style of work.9
Nevertheless, factional fighting led to paralysis in the Academy of Sciences and its member institutes and the collapse of the Scientific and Technological Commission. Leaders of these organizations were attacked for following Liu Shaoqi's line by allowing bourgeois intellectuals to control scientific and technological research and depending upon the import of advanced technology from abroad. Although press reports during the Cultural Revolution concerning worker and peasant involvement in scientific experiment and technical innovation indicate that the scientific network continued to function at its base, the institutes involved in higher level research ceased to function until the early 1970's.10

In 1975 and 1976 political issues connected with the revival of the institutes under the Chinese Academy of Sciences were given prominence in the media. However, other issues such as the import of foreign technology and the role of the masses in scientific and technical work were brought up first. Since the earlier issues provided the context to the final debates which lead to the crisis at the end of 1976, I will deal with them first.

Transcending the Division of Labor: Mass Participation in Technical Innovation and Scientific Experiment

Throughout the 1970's the media stressed the importance of mass participation in scientific and technical activities. During the campaign to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius this was explained in philosophical terms. Both Lin and Confucius were charged with despising ordinary working people and advocating the "theory of innate genius" to explain innovations
in the development of science and technology. Numerous examples from Chinese history were used to refute this notion. The press argued that:

All these examples fully show that scientific and technical inventions and discoveries are results brought about by the working people through repeated practice and by unremittingly summing up their experience and raising standards in class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment. They are definitely not created out of thin air by some "genius" "born with knowledge" as Lin Biao alleged. ¹¹

As was mentioned in the description of factory organization in the last chapter, workers participated in technical innovation through three-in-one technical innovation teams. This method had been developed during the Great Leap and was almost universal in Chinese factories during the seventies. The logic behind the combination was explained in an article describing the method in one factory. The workers were involved because they were "familiar with production conditions and the properties of the equipment", the technical personnel were called upon to contribute their technical and theoretical knowledge and the cadres were "mainly in charge of organizational and guidance work in the technical innovation groups". ¹²

The many articles on individual factory experiences stressed that the system made a significant contribution to increasing production. It was reported that in Beijing alone 20,000 technical innovations were introduced each year. ¹³ Individual factories reported being able to operate at two to four times planned capacity after instituting technical innovation movements. ¹⁴ Improvements included ability to produce larger, more modern and more technically sophisticated equipment. ¹⁵ The design and installation of automated assembly lines is another area where the technical innovation teams were reported to have made breakthroughs. ¹⁶
In many of these efforts technical innovations were the result of the cooperation of a number of different factories. First in Shanghai and then in other cities, centers for exchanging technical information were established to facilitate contacts between factory based groups. In addition, industrial and mining enterprises organized their own research institutes. Gansu province had twenty-three such institutes in 1976 employing seven thousand researchers, most of whom had originally been ordinary production workers. These new worker-technicians were trained in factory-run workers' colleges or in short-term training courses given by the technicians in the factories. By 1976 1,400 factory-run workers' colleges had been set up in Shanghai. Some were run individually by the larger factories and others were run cooperatively by a number of smaller enterprises. There were 60,000 workers enrolled in these factory-run colleges in 1976 and they had graduated six thousand worker technicians since 1973. Students in the factory-run colleges were trained in specific technologies needed in their places of work. The colleges filled a need for technicians that could not be met by the regular educational system. For example, in the Shanghai Machine Tools Plant forty-five percent of the technical staff were worker-technicians in 1968 whereas by 1976 this had increased to sixty-five percent. In that period 310 workers had been trained as technicians. Of those 110 were graduates of the plant's workers' college.

Mass participation in scientific and technical work was not limited to the urban areas. The scientific network extended down to the villages as well. The media reported that in the communes in the suburbs of
Beijing 40,000 people were involved in the scientific experiment network in 1976. In the same year in Hubei province there were 100,000 scientific groups each group running one or two experimental plots and dealing with immediate problems of agricultural production. Fifty thousand peasants in the province were involved in experiments in microbiology, using bacteria to control insects and plant diseases.

Throughout China the rural scientific network operated at four levels. An agricultural sciences institute in county towns coordinated scientific research activities in the communes of that county. Each commune had a small scientific research station where materials for research could be stored and meetings held. Ideally there was a research team in every brigade and a group in every production team. The rural scientific network was an organ for mass mobilization for experimentation and for the popularization of new agricultural techniques. In one county in Fujian province with a population of 140,000, 20,000 people were involved in the network. Special efforts were made to involve women in scientific research. A report from Guangxi Autonomous Region noted that 337,000 women commune members were active in special women's scientific experiment teams. In order to support the work of these teams, the communes and brigades supplied daycare, plots of land, funds and technical advisors.

The media stressed that it was necessary for the higher level research organizations in the universities, under the Academy of Sciences, and in the central ministries to orient their work toward serving the mass movement in scientific experiment and technical innovation. Pre-Cultural Revolution research was castigated as having been divorced from the masses.
and from the needs of production. An article on the Liaoning Provincial Coal Research Institute reported that before the Cultural Revolution an "academic committee of bourgeois academic authorities held power". They were said to have controlled the selection of research topics and the formulation of plans as well as controlling personnel decisions. Research into the history of scientific and technological organizations cited earlier indicates that the validity of this charge is highly suspect. Although scientists may well have been consulted, policy-making was clearly in the hands of the administrative and especially the party committees in the institutes. And in fact the article's description of changes in the leadership of the Coal Research Institute tends to corroborate the centrality of the party organization in decision-making. The article reported that of the twelve members of the standing committee of the party committee of the institute, three were veteran coal miners and eight were of worker or peasant origin. Twenty-two cadres of worker or peasant origin held leading posts in the thirteen party branches in the institute. In this account there is no suggestion that these new cadres of worker and peasant background had replaced academics in leadership positions, but rather that they had attained positions of responsibility inasmuch as they had entered the real center of decision-making, i.e., the party leadership structure.

This involvement in party leadership by workers and peasants, or at least cadres of worker or peasant origin, was said to have resulted in policy changes in the research organizations. One policy innovation cited was the running of institutes in an "open door" manner. Many
scientific and technical researchers left their laboratories in institu-
tutes and universities to conduct research along with workers and
peasants in production units. Research organizations forged direct
links with factories and communes in order to facilitate this new policy.
Scientists going out into the "real world" of productive activity were
credited with helping to create breakthroughs in such diverse areas as
production of rechargeable batteries, eliminating mildewing in optical
instruments, developing methods to prevent blockage of industrial pipes
by freshwater mussels and discovering inexpensive herbal remedies for
fish diseases.\(^{29}\)

Criticism levelled at research institutes before the Cultural
Revolution asserted that earlier research had had little direct relevance
to production. Research organizations were now to be involved in trial
production in workshops set up in schools and institutes. Research was
to be geared to the demands of production. The Tianjin Electrical Con-
veying Machinery Research Institute was cited as a typical example. The
institute had been established in 1958 to carry out research toward the
development of automated production lines. Between 1958 and 1965 it
conducted forty research products but only nine produced results that
were actually incorporated as new productive forces. Since 1966 the insti-
tute had established close ties with about two hundred factories and in
conjunction with them carried out research, design work, trial production
at the institute, and sent its researchers to the factories to incorporate
new technologies into production. By 1976 eighty percent of the insti-
tute's researchers were working in factories rather than at the institute.
In the period 1966-75 the institute carried out 250 projects with eighty percent going into production. Thus there was a fundamental shift in this period away from basic research (which may not have immediate application in production) towards research into production technologies and product development.

One of the stated goals of running research institutes in an "open door" manner and gearing research to production was that of remoulding the ideology of the scientists and researchers. Through contact with workers and peasants and experience in production, individualistic striving for prestige would be replaced by a willingness to serve the people without thought to self. Hua Logeng, a scientist cited in the press as a model in thought remoulding, explained his original thinking in this way.

In the past, behind the closed doors of the ivory tower, I buried myself in foreign books and ancient Chinese classics. After scaling some "heights", I was full of conceit. But how many peaks were there? What benefits did the people get? I knew nothing! This way of scaling the heights only ended up in my climbing to the boots of foreigners.

In another article Hua compared scientific knowledge with the common sense wisdom of the masses. He discussed the problem of conserving oil in the production of a kind of deep fried bread twist (youtiao).
To achieve this, if scholastic philosophy is adhered to, how many factors have to be taken into consideration? There are such factors as the percentage of water and flour, the amount of alum and soda to be added, the temperature of the oil, the time taken for frying, etc. Scholars and specialists think that it is below their dignity to take up problems of this sort. Even if they were willing to come off the high horse, since such problems are so complicated, it is also not easy for them to yield results within a short time.

However, those worker comrades frying youtiao did not ponder problems so scholastically, but were good at grasping the principal contradiction. Laying hold of such a principal contradiction as that "oil is wasted due to unnecessary evaporation", they tried to select the right oil temperature, and after several experiments, they found the proper oil temperature. As soon as the specific oil temperature was reached, they closed the door to the draft hole of the stove to keep the oil temperature from rising further. This led to a big drop in oil consumption.

Some scholars may belittle such a research project, but if it is popularized throughout the country, how much oil can be saved.\(^3\)

What is being belittled in this example of the importance of small scale experiments, is the contribution that scientists and scientific knowledge could make in problem-solving. While stressing the importance of scientists learning from the masses, the media ignored the necessity for working people to also learn from scientists and technicians.

In actual practice the flow of information was not always as one-sided as the media portrayed it. When I was working in the Beijing No. 2 Machine Tool Plant in 1975, they had just completed the trial production of an automated machine tool of impressive size and complexity. A technician who was involved in the effort described the process in some detail.
The machine being trial produced is referred to in the west as a Machining Center with an Automatic Tool Changer (MC-ATC). In China it is known as a numerically controlled, automatic tool-changing, boring press. Machines of this type began to be produced in the west in the late sixties. It has a significant advantage over earlier technology. Before, because of the size and weight of the work pieces to be machined, transporting the pieces from one machine to another meant that only twenty percent of production time was used for actual processing. But with a multiple function machine such as this one, seventy-five percent of production time is used for actual processing. This greatly decreases the time necessary for production of each unit thereby increasing productivity. We had many difficulties producing this machine. Tolerances had to be very exact, certain parts had never been produced in China before and we lacked a boring press large enough to make the tool storage drum. We solved this last problem by modifying a boring press so it could be attached directly to the part.

Normally such a project would have been broken down into three steps. The first step would have been to master the techniques of building numerically controlled machines. Second would have been to master the special problems of tool-changing machines. The third would have been to combine this knowledge and apply it to the production of an automatic tool-changing machine. But the whole country is involved in a daring drive to fulfill the twenty-five year plan called for in Premier Zhou Enlai's speech to the Fourth National People's Congress. Therefore, we decided to make a great leap into the combined product in one step.

When the task of designing the machine was handed over to the design department, it organized a small group including veteran workers to gather and study research materials and draw up a design program. The designers and veteran workers took the program to every production team for discussion so that everyone in the plant was aware of the nature of the project and the suggestions of the workers were taken into consideration. After the revised program was drawn up, several teams of seven or eight persons were organized to make the blueprints. These teams included workers who were familiar with the types of parts they were designing. Only in the final stage was each blueprint drawn up by a single individual. This process is similar to Chairman Mao's military strategy of annihilating the enemy bit by bit by concentrating overwhelming forces.
An ordinary machine has more than one thousand parts and this was no ordinary machine. For a few individuals working alone, the job of drawing the blueprints would have been an enormous task. An ordinary machine, from conception to production, usually takes from six months to a year. Without the large scale participation of workers with their specialized knowledge of production of similar parts, the job could not have been completed in less than three or four years. Even then there would have been costly and time-consuming retrials.

The workers had to have a clear understanding of the machine in order to participate in its design and then to build and assemble it. To enable the workers to conceptualize the problems, the technicians gave technical classes in every workshop to give everyone the necessary basic knowledge.

In the building of the machine problems often cropped up. If a part had been inadequately designed and didn't fit as it should, the workers called the attention of the designers to the problem and together they devised solutions.

In the final assembly too the technicians worked in the workshops alongside the workers to deal with problems together as they came up. Technicians on the shop floor are worth several times as much to production as technicians in offices.

The entire project, from conception to final assembly took less than two years. A second identical and a third smaller machine are now in trial production. Because the workers can see where their own work fits into the country's needs and the overall plan, they are relatively easily mobilized for special projects like this machine. 34

In contrast to press reports about scientists and technicians passively learning from the fine qualities of laboring people, the concrete process in this plant was one of mutual cooperation and learning. In this process the workers were gaining from the technicians knowledge that is crucial for overcoming the dehumanization of the factory system's division of labor. The most important thing that separated the technicians
and scientists from ordinary laboring people was not attitudes toward labor or unwillingness to serve the people but differences in scientific and technical knowledge. In order to move from being cogs in a machine to being masters of their enterprises and their society, working people have to first comprehend the technology they use and the implications of its use. The interchange between the technicians and workers in this plant was an important step in overcoming the inherited division of labor and its implications described by Marx. Marx traces the transition from the use of tools by individual skilled workers to the introduction of machinery into the production process in capitalist society.

... In the machine, and even more in machinery as an automatic system, the use value, i.e., the material quality of the means of labour, is transformed into an existence adequate to fixed capital and to capital as such; and the form in which it was adopted into the production process of capital, the direct means of labour, is superseded by a form posited by capital itself and corresponding to it. In no way does the machine appear as the individual worker's means of labour. Its distinguishing characteristic is not in the least, as with the means of labour, to transmit the worker's activity to the object; this activity, rather, is posited in such a way that it merely transmits the machine's work, the machine's action, on to the raw material - supervises it and guards against interruptions. Not as with the instrument, which the worker animates and makes into his organ with his skill and strength, and whose handling therefore depends on his virtuosity. Rather, it is the machine which possesses skill and strength in place of the worker, is itself the virtuoso, with a soul of its own in the mechanical laws acting through it; and it consumes coal, oil, etc. (matieres instrumentales), just as the worker consumes food, to keep up its perpetual motion. The worker's activity, reduced to a mere abstraction of activity, is determined and
regulated on all sides by the movement of the machinery, and not the opposite. The science which compels the inanimate limbs of the machinery, by their construction to act purposefully, as an automaton, does not exist in the worker's consciousness, but rather acts upon him through the machine as an alien power, as the power of the machine itself ... The production process has ceased to be a labour process in the sense of a process dominated by labour as its governing unity. Labour appears, rather, merely as a conscious organ, scattered among the individual living workers at numerous points of the mechanical system; subsumed under the total process of the machinery itself, as itself only a link of the system, whose unity exists not in the living workers, but rather in the living (active) machinery, which confronts his individual, insignificant doings as a mighty organism.35

An absolutely crucial aspect of the transition process in socialist society is the transcendence of the capitalist division of labour. In modern industry a crucial aspect of this process of transcendence is the kind of interchange that went on between the workers and technicians at Beijing No. 2 Machine Tool Plant. Its significance becomes clear if one traces the development of the division of labour in capitalist society and describes what changes would be necessary in socialist society to overcome that division.

Transcending the Capitalist Division of Labor

The capitalist division of labour emerged when labour power became a commodity on a significant scale. When a substantial part of the population had lost control over the means of production and in order to live, had to sell their labour power to capitalists who controlled the means of production. Therefore, the first crucial step in the transition
process is the elimination of private property in the means of production through nationalization and collectivization. By 1956 China had basically accomplished this.

An early stage of the evolution of the capitalist division of labour was the domestic or putting-out system in which the capitalist supplied the materials and owned the product but the worker worked at home. Thus the labourer lost control over the product but retained control over the labour process. To regain this aspect of control over their products, producers must have a means to participate in larger decisions about what to produce, for whom and why. The transition to socialism requires self-government as well as self-management of the production process. This requirement introduces a contradiction into the relationship between producers and planners (in China between the producers and the Party), itself a division of labour that has to be overcome. It is also not sufficient for the party to represent the labouring people in the planning process. And in fact, the party, as a separate leading organization, must work towards its own eventual elimination.

With the rise of manufacturing and the assembling of workers into factories, the producers lost control over the process of production itself. They no longer controlled their hours of work and the organization of work which they had retained in the domestic system. Their choice was reduced to submitting to factory discipline or not working at all. In the factory the labour process was eventually decomposed to the point where an individual's contribution was so limited and deskilled that he or she could be easily replaced by any other person or by a machine. This
meant a total separation between conceptualization and execution of work. Since, as Marx points out, the ability to conceptualize the product and the work process beforehand is what separates human work from that of other species, it is quite accurate to describe the separation of conceptualization from execution in the evolution of detail labour as de-humanization.

Management gained control of the work process by appropriating knowledge of the entire collective process. In the last chapter I stressed the importance of workers gaining both the institutional means and the knowledge necessary for self-management. To continue the process of transcending this aspect of the capitalist division of labour it is necessary to free individuals from immersion in one work process for their entire life so that they can at least become familiar with the entire work process in their immediate work environment. For this there needs to be communication and some rotation between the organizers and executers of work so that eventually the collective can recapture knowledge of the entire production process, thus making collective participation in conceptualization possible. In the last chapter I discussed the progress made in this direction in China.

But what Marx is talking about in the *Grundrisse* is yet a further development of the capitalist division of labour. With the transformation of tools into machines, the tool as an extension of the worker's powers is replaced by the machine and the worker is thereby reduced to a mere extension of the machine's capacity. But Marx was not a technological determinist. He did not see this reduction of the worker as the product of some inherent power in machine technology. Rather it was the product of
the division of labour. The scientific knowledge incorporated in the technology as dead labour does not exist in the workers' consciousness. It becomes an alien power towering over them. Transcendence of this aspect of the capitalist division of labour requires the study of science and technology. The acquisition of this knowledge provides the basis upon which working people can overcome the division of labour. With the comprehension of science and technology provided by the interchanges described by technician Yang together with a mass movement to study and teach science and technology, it is possible for ordinary working people to individually and collectively become both planners and producers. Only when the knowledge embodied in technology is part of the workers' consciousness, can machine production become creative work through the restoration of a "tool character" to modern technology.

It was clear from our discussions with technician Yang and with the workers in our own workshop who had participated in the design and building of the MC-ATC that they regarded it not as something alien from themselves but as their own creation. In their own view it was a wonderful new tool for augmenting their own productive powers. They understood the technology involved and the implications of its use for the overall productive process in their plant. These workers were not alienated from either their machines or their products because they had made significant progress in overcoming the old division of labour.

But the political orientation of the media at the time meant that the positive responsibility of technicians and scientists in overcoming the traditional division of labour by expanding and sharing their knowledge by making it intelligible and accessible to ordinary workers and
peasants was not brought out in media discussions of technical innovation and scientific experiment. Instead the "scholastic" knowledge of the experts was denigrated and pitted against the practical wisdom of workers and peasants. This had its impact in practical policy. As has been discussed earlier, research carried out in an "open door" manner was tied directly to the immediate needs of production. This meant that "pure" research necessary to accumulate the knowledge needed for major innovative breakthroughs was neglected. Western visitors familiar with various technologies, noted during this period that the innovation going on was by and large adaptation of foreign designs. This is particularly ironic in light of a second major theme being stressed in the media during the entire period: self-reliance in economic development.

Shipbuilding and Self-Reliance

With considerable fanfare, the Chinese press announced that the Chinese-built freighter, the Fengqing, had completed a 32,000 nautical mile trip to the Mediterranean and safely returned to port on September 30, 1974. This was a high point in a struggle over the import of foreign technology to support Chinese industrial development that continued throughout the seventies. The question at issue, as expressed in the media of the period, was the contradiction between self-reliant development and the introduction of advanced foreign technology to speed up that development.

In 1972 China began to import complete sets of equipment to produce man-made fibers for the textile industry and chemical fertilizers for agriculture. The purpose of these imports was to bring the level of
technology in these areas up to the latest world standards. In 1973 China began a program of exporting crude oil to earn the foreign exchange necessary to pay for technological imports. This policy was instituted by Zhou Enlai with the approval of Mao Zedong and the central leadership at that time including the members of what was later known as the "gang of four". This general policy initiative also involved the shipbuilding industry. China had been heavily dependent on the renting of foreign-owned ships to carry out her international shipping. In 1964 Premier Zhou introduced a program to replace rented ships with ships built in China or purchased from abroad. It was recognized that the purchase of foreign-built ships would in the long run mean a considerable savings of foreign exchange from rental fees. In 1970 Zhou Enlai issued instructions to the effect that by 1975 the majority of ships in the Chinese merchant marine should be owned by China.\footnote{38} In order to carry through this policy a number of foreign ships were purchased in the ensuing years and especially in the summer of 1975.\footnote{39}

Reports on the voyage of the Fengqing focused on this issue. It was reported that the Fengqing was the first 10,000 ton-class freighter built in China to venture outside the immediate vicinity of China's coastal waters. It was further reported that China built her first 10,000 ton freighter during the Great Leap Forward and had produced a number since then. But none of these ships had been granted permission to sail the high seas. The responsibility for this situation was placed at the doorstep of revisionists in the leadership who "worshipped things foreign" and had no confidence in the products of Chinese technology.
The struggle over whether or not the Fengqing would be permitted to sail to Europe was seen as a conflict between those who favored the policy of self-reliance and those who looked towards dependence on foreign technology to develop Chinese industry. According to the press, those who objected to the suggestion that the Fengqing attempt a transoceanic voyage demanded that at least the Chinese-made radar system and longitude comparator be replaced with imported models. In response the only remaining foreign equipment, the direction finder, the UHF radio equipment and the nylon cables were replaced by Chinese-made equivalents. That the entirely Chinese-built and equipped freighter successfully completed its voyage was treated as a major victory for the policy of self-reliance. Those who had lacked confidence in the ability of an entirely Chinese-made ship to complete such a voyage were offered a cure for the disease of worshipping things foreign.

We sincerely advise those struck down by this disease to go among the masses regularly to hear their opinions and observe their lofty will and robust spirit during the current movement to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius. This is an excellent medicine to cure this type of illness.

According to material published after the arrests of the four, the target of this kind of criticism was the author of the policy of purchase of foreign ships, Zhou Enlai.

Another similar incident occurred in 1976. A 14,000 ton Japanese passenger-freighter was purchased at scrap metal prices for refitting and reuse. The purchase was attacked at a mass meeting in Shanghai. The charge was that "a scrapped yacht was bought as a highly valuable vessel."
The attack on the policy of importing foreign technology and equipment came to a head in the campaign to criticize Deng Xiaoping in 1976. Deng was accused of shifting the policy of industrial development from one based on self-reliance to one which depended on the import of foreign technology. Deng's policy was described as rooted in a "slavish comprador" philosophy:

The core of this major policy is to oppose Chairman Mao's policy of "maintaining independence, keeping the initiative in our own hands and relying on our own efforts" and to shift the foothold of industrial development toward relying on the introduction of foreign technology and equipment.\textsuperscript{44}

The question of using foreign technology was raised in the "poisonous weed" on "Some Problems on the Acceleration of Industrial Development" which was under criticism at this time. The document stresses the importance of developing export markets to pay for imports of foreign technology.

All industrial departments must study the needs of the international markets and make positive efforts to increase the production of goods which can be exported and which are also high in the rate of exchange. It is necessary to develop production as quickly as possible and to export as much as possible. (We) cannot consider only the requirements of import without thinking of how to augment the source of goods for export. Our country takes the domestic market as primary and the foreign markets as subsidiary; however, foreign markets are very important and should not be neglected.\textsuperscript{45}

But the emphasis in the section devoted to technology imports stresses the need to adapt those imports to China's needs and insure that independence is maintained.
It is necessary to persist in the policy of combining study with independent creation. (We) must modestly learn all advanced, fine things from foreign countries and import in a planned way and with selective emphasis advanced technology from abroad and put it at our disposal so as to accelerate the speed of development of our national economy. We must persist in independence and regeneration through our own efforts and oppose slavish comprador philosophy and crawling at a snail's pace; nevertheless, we cannot assume the air of self-importance, keeping ourselves in exclusion and refusing to learn good things from foreign countries. All industrial departments and scientific research units must grasp firmly the favorable opportunities which the victory of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line of diplomacy has created for us, and learn to master as quickly as possible the new techniques which we urgently need.

As regards the advanced technology imported from abroad, (we) should train the necessary technical forces to master it quickly. It is necessary to adhere to the principle of "using, criticizing, reforming and creating" and, in the course of using, familiarize ourselves with it, reform it, and develop it. It is necessary to oppose copying it mechanically or transplanting it without discrimination, and also to oppose changing and touching it at random before having learned about it.46

In the media however it was maintained that Deng's real purpose was to restore capitalism in China.

Deng Xiaoping's desire to introduce some more advanced technology from other countries is false. What he really wants is to introduce the capitalist system and turn China into a satellite of imperialism or social imperialism.47

The issue raised in this debate is a complex one which can profoundly influence the direction of national development policy. It is central for all third world development. But in China during this period it was turned into a factional issue used to attack specific individuals within the leadership. This factional use of the issue prevented a real debate over alternative policies.
This "debate" was further inhibited by the use of repression. Two individuals, Li Guodang and Gu Wenguang, were assigned work on the freighter Fengqing. They were pressured to join the attack on the policy of buying foreign ships. They offered the opinion that buying ships was a better method of dealing with the problem than renting them. In the ensuing debate on board the ship they denounced the roles of Wang Hongwen, Jiang Qing and Yao Wenyuan in promoting the Fengqing's transoceanic voyage as a means to attack members of the central leadership. An accusation against them was drawn up during the voyage and when the ship returned to port they were detained on charges of having been involved in a counter-revolutionary incident. They were not released until after the arrests of those they had dared to criticize.48

This campaign against "worshippers of foreign things" also had a disruptive effect on the shipbuilding industry. In order to enhance the image of self-reliant shipbuilding, the Shanghai shipyards were ordered to concentrate on the construction of prestigious 10,000 ton vessels. They were given a construction target of thirty such large size vessels. This meant that vessels needed for harbor construction and inland shipping and other smaller ships were not produced and the production of spare parts and repair services in the shipyards were disrupted.49 This situation, in which the form of the debate blocked any serious discussion of the issues and disrupted production as well, was not unique to the shipbuilding industry.

An article on foreign trade policy published after the fall of the faction around Jiang Qing reported that factional maneuverings over the question of oil exports led to disruptions of production in other areas.
According to this report, a series of meetings were held by the center between March and June 1976 at which oil export policy was debated. In preparation for this struggle, members of the faction around Jiang Qing had factories in the sectors they controlled in Shanghai and Liaoning province switch from using coal to using petroleum for fuel. Since this switchover was outside the 1976 plan for fuel allocations, an artificial petroleum shortage was created. Factories in some areas had to stop production, oil refineries ran out of crude and some irrigation networks in the countryside were affected. Attempts to deal with the imbalance led to oil exports being affected as well.  

The Outline Report on Science and Technology

The debate over science and technology policy came to a head during the summer of 1976. Accounts published in China both before and after the arrests of the factional leaders in October 1976 provide a background to this struggle. After the Fourth National People's Congress in January 1975, Hua Guofeng was given responsibility for overseeing scientific and technical work. At that time factional strife was impeding the work of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Hua and other central leaders informed the Academy that measures should be taken to rectify the situation and that a report should be prepared and sent to the central leadership. The report was drawn up and discussed at a meeting of the State Council in September 1975. The State Council approved the report in principle and issued a series of directives based on the findings and suggestions in
the report. It was then sent to Chairman Mao for final approval and he issued some directives for making a few changes in the text. The report however was not made public.51

Early in 1976 supporters of the "gang of four" in the Academy of Sciences obtained copies of the minutes of the September meeting of the State Council and sent them to Shanghai where materials on the Outline Report were being collected. Excerpts from the minutes, from talks given by Hua Guofeng, Ye Jianying and Deng Xiaoping as well as excerpts from the directives issued by Mao Zedong were compiled and distributed by the factional network controlled by the "gang". The sources for the materials were not given.52 Big character posters containing some of this material appeared at the language institute in Guangzhou shortly after the beginning of the campaign to criticize Deng Xiaoping in April 1976. There were quotes of discussions involving Deng Xiaoping, Hua Guofeng, Ye Jianying and the then minister of agriculture, Chen Yonggui. But the identities of other leaders quoted remained obscure. These posters had been copied by students from ones appearing first at Sun Yatsen University in Guangzhou which in turn had been copied from originals that had been written earlier in Shanghai.

At the beginning of August 1976 the Shanghai materials that had up to that point been distributed surreptitiously appeared in articles in the press as part of a campaign to discredit the "three poisonous weeds". In Shanghai a booklet containing the materials was published. They were used in a press "debate" which had been going on since the beginning of the year.53 The content, context and limitations of that "debate" had been made clear at its beginning.
... Should the new things emerging from the great cultural revolution be supported or opposed? Should we wholeheartedly rely on the working class and unite, educate and transform the intellectuals or rely on the bourgeois intellectuals in scientific research work? Should we run the laboratory on an open-door basis and take the road of "three-in-one combination" or conduct the "academic type" of research behind closed doors and take the old road of "divorced from three things?" [i.e., divorce from labor, practice and the masses R.H.] Should we adhere to the policy of maintaining independence, keeping the initiative in our own hands and relying on our own efforts, and take the road of developing science and technique ourselves in China or promote the slavish comprador philosophy and the doctrine of trailing behind others at a snail's pace? Should a scientific research unit grasp the revolution and promote scientific research or promote the theory of productive forces and grasp scientific research for scientific research's sake? And so on and so forth.54

In spite of the one-sided nature of the "debate", issues were raised that are important for an understanding of the role of science and technology in the process of socialist construction. Those who disagreed with the positions advocated in the media were accused of opposing the stress on "open door" scientific research because it made people afraid to engage in more theoretical research in laboratories. The rejoinder was that "Science comes from production and theory comes from practice. Science divorced from production and theory divorced from practice would be like a body of water without a source and a tree without roots".55 A paragraph from Engel's *Dialectics of Nature* was cited to "prove" that science is dependent on the needs of production for its development.
... First of all, astronomy, which, if only on account of the seasons, was absolutely indispensable for pastoral and agricultural peoples. Astronomy can only develop with the aid of mathematics. Hence this also had to be tackled. Further, at a certain stage of agriculture and in certain regions (raising of water for irrigation in Egypt), and especially with the origin of towns, big building operations, and the development of handicrafts—mechanics. This was soon needed also for navigation and war. Moreover, it requires the aid of mathematics and so promotes the latter's development. Thus, from the very beginning the origin and development of the sciences has been determined by production.\textsuperscript{56}

But the Marxian understanding of the relationship between science and production is more complex than a reading of this single quote would seem to indicate. In his introduction Engels points out that the development of specific areas of science was dependent on prior discoveries within the sphere of science itself, unrelated to the immediate needs of production.\textsuperscript{57} Although economic forces have played an important role in the development of science, within science itself different disciplines develop at different rates. This aspect of development depends upon the possibilities opened up by the understanding of reality achieved by science at each stage of its development rather than simply the demands of production. It is simultaneously a question of supply of scientific knowledge and demands for solutions to production problems. Marx, in discussing the relative pace of development of agriculture and industry in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries argued that under certain circumstances the development of science could influence the development of production.
... Mechanics, the really scientific basis of large-scale industry, had reached a certain degree of perfection during the eighteenth century. The development of chemistry, geology and physiology, the sciences that directly form the specific basis of agriculture rather than of industry, does not take place till the nineteenth century and especially the later decades.\textsuperscript{58}

Nathan Rosenberg sums up his study of this issue by outlining what he believes Marx and Engels understood the relationship between science and production to be.

There are several possible meanings which can be attached to the statement that "the origin and development of the sciences has been determined by production".
1. Science depends upon industry for financial support.
2. The expectation of high financial returns is what motivates individuals (and society) to pursue a particular scientific problem.
3. The needs of industry serve as a powerful agent in calling attention to certain problems (Pasteur's studies of fermentation and silkworm epidemics).
4. The normal pursuit of productive activities throws up physical evidence of great importance to certain disciplines (metallurgy and chemistry, canal building and geology). As a result, industrial activities have, as a by-product of their operation, provided the flow of raw observations upon which sciences have built and generalized.
5. The history of individual sciences, including an account of their varying rates of progress at different periods in history, can be adequately provided by an understanding of the changing economic needs of society.

I believe that Marx and Engels subscribed to propositions 1-4 without qualification. I believe they often sounded as if they subscribed to the fifth proposition. However, I think ... that they subscribed to the fifth proposition only subject to certain qualifications - qualifications which strike me as being, collectively, more interesting than the original proposition.\textsuperscript{59}
As Rosenberg points out, Engels in the *Dialectics of Nature* grants science a certain autonomy from the needs of production inasmuch as he perceives the historical sequence of development of individual sciences as reflecting their increasing complexity and the interdependence of knowledge of one for the understanding of another. Thus Engels traces the development from the inorganic to the organic, from mechanics to physics to chemistry to biology. Marx also grants science a certain autonomy inasmuch as his analysis of capitalism deals in part with how the division of labour in manufacturing makes possible the application of already known principles of mechanics and chemistry to the development of production technologies in modern industry.

Rather than a one-sided determinism there appears to be a dialectical relationship between the development of science and production. In many cases entirely new technologies are preceded by breakthroughs in scientific theoretical work. This point was made in an article on scientific research appearing in *Beijing Review* in July 1977.

... People study natural science in order to understand and transform nature and carry out production of material things. Their rational knowledge of nature, therefore, must also precede and provide guidance to practice in production.

The progress of contemporary science and technology, too, fully proves this point. Since the beginning of the 20th century, the establishment of the theory of relativity and quantum mechanics has played a tremendous role in the development of modern physics and helped bring forth a series of new technologies. Research on nuclear fission in the 30's created a new source of energy. Research on high polymers in the 40's gave birth to a brand-new branch of materials industry which today makes itself felt in all aspects of production and human life. The development of electronic computers in the 50's has technically made feasible the complete automation of entire production processes.
This is particularly true because (in spite of the analysis in the Chinese media in the early seventies) production is not the only practice available to science. Scientific experiment, cited by Mao Zedong as one of the "three great revolutionary movements for building a mighty socialist country", provides an alternative means of understanding the laws of nature. Experimental methods and sophisticated equipment, provided to science through the development of production, allow for the development of understandings not possible in the ordinary process of production.

The media at the time, however, denied the possibility of science playing a leading role in promoting production. This was done in order to deny the possibility that scientists and technicians could and should play a leading role in this area. It was felt that to do so would be to deny the role of working people in the development of science. Therefore, according to this logic, "open door" scientific research directly connected to production was the only legitimate form research could take. To deny this was to "keep the broad masses of workers, peasants and soldiers away from scientific research and confine the broad masses of scientists and technicians in tall buildings and on campuses so that they will gradually become spiritual aristocrats in positions above the workers, peasants and soldiers". For the sake of preventing the emergence of a potentially privileged strata, whole sectors of scientific research had to be eliminated.

This tendency to turn scientific research and production into exclusive and antagonistic categories did not go unchallenged. As early as 1973 Zhou Peiyuan, then vice-chairman of the revolutionary committee at
Beijing University attacked the idea that basic scientific research is useless and the notion that such scientific theoretical work is divorced from practice. He stressed the importance of strengthening basic research in the natural sciences. But this challenge was circulated only within academic circles. Only the opposition to these positions appeared in the public media. According to a press report in 1977, during the State Council meeting in September 1975 Hua Guofeng and other central leaders again raised the topics discussed earlier by Zhou Peiyuan and challenged the notion that Marxist philosophy could replace scientific theories.65

This drew a response from members of the faction around Jiang Qing. In a talk given to supporters, Yao Wenyuan stated that "the foundation for basic theory is Marxist philosophy and the most basic theory is Marxism. How can there be theories in natural sciences without Marxist theory?"66 During 1976 this concept was repeated in the media as part of the attack on Deng Xiaoping and other unnamed central leaders.

... in the "Outline" there is a passage which specially attacks the study of Marxist philosophy by scientists for guiding scientific research since the great cultural revolution. It talks nonsense saying: "It is also wrong to hold the view that the general principles of philosophy can be over-simply relied upon to draw conclusions on concrete scientific problems without relying on the diligent work of science itself and its accurate demonstrations." This fallacy thus stands philosophical theory and scientific practice against each other, and subsequently imposes "fabricated" charges on opponents for malicious attack ...

... Marxist philosophy is summed up from the experience of the three major revolutionary movements - class struggle, struggle for production and scientific experiment, and is the most universal law of the natural world, human society and thinking. Therefore, the study of natural science must be guided by materialist dialectics of Marxism, otherwise it cannot be emancipated from the idealist and metaphysical ideas of the bourgeoisie.67
The problem, according to press reports throughout the mid-seventies, was that many scientists did not accept the notion that "Marxism has scientifically and correctly reflected the basic laws governing development in the natural world and human society and is a universally applicable truth. It is not only a beacon guiding the proletarian revolution but also a reliable guide for the study of the natural sciences".\textsuperscript{68} That this notion was not met with much enthusiasm in the scientific community is understandable. What was being demanded was not only that they accept Marxism as a guide to orienting their work to serve the interests of the people but that they reject scientific theories, not because they fail to correspond to known reality determined through experience and practice, but because they appear to conflict with philosophical positions of an official dogma. In the sciences the "hundred schools of thought" in contention advocated by Mao in 1957\textsuperscript{69} were to be replaced by one school known as "Marxism". And contention within this school was delimited by the principle of democratic centralism. How this worked in practice will be elaborated in the discussion to follow.

This logic was elaborated by two authors of an article in Guangming Daily on "Scientists and their World Outlook" in July 1975.

\textellipsis\ There were certain scientists in history who believed in experience and rejected and even opposed the guiding role of the world outlook of materialist dialectics toward scientific practice ... The world outlook of materialist dialectics cannot arise spontaneously but can only be gradually embraced in the process of studying Marxism and in the course of practice ... Therefore, the conscious submission of the workers in natural sciences to the domination of the correct philosophy and the establishment of the dialectical materialist world outlook are of tremendous significance to the development of and progress in science.\textsuperscript{70}
The authors unapologetically use terms like "conscious submission" to "domination" in this context because they view scientists as bourgeois intellectuals who should be subjected to "all-round dictatorship".

The natural science departments at Jilin Normal University were cited in the press as a model in achieving this "conscious submission" to the "domination of the correct philosophy" through the study of dialectical materialism. A report of the party committee of the university explained how Engel's *Dialectics of Nature* was studied by the scientists and their students. The report emphasized that this type of theoretical study had to be closely integrated with the current political movement. The campaign then in progress was the movement to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius. They discovered that Lin Biao had written a note above an article on the term "anti-particle" which appeared in a lexicon. Lin's note read, "Guard against antagonism beyond the limit, for it will destroy unity". Although it was clear to them that Lin "basically understood nothing about anti-particles", they produced the following analysis of his commentary.

The teachers and students studied the teaching of Engels. "So-called objective dialectics, prevails throughout nature and so-called subjective dialectics, or dialectical thought is only the reflection of the motion through opposites which asserts itself everywhere in nature, and which by the continual conflict of the opposites and their final passage into one another, or into higher forms, determines the life of nature." In association with the historical experience of the struggle between Confucianism and Legalism, they used a host of facts, including mutual transformation of basic particles, the history of the development of chemistry and the actual process of
chemical motion, to make criticism of the reactionary fallacy of Lin Piao. Everybody pointed out that the actual process of production and chemical motion of any new basic particles is produced and completed by the two old sides in contradiction through destroying the old unity to arrive at a new unity under the condition of "antagonism beyond the limit". Because of this, without "antagonism beyond the limit" there would not be any new basic particles emerging, there would be no development in the science of chemistry, and there would be no motion in chemistry itself. In advocating "guarding against antagonism beyond the limit" Lin Piao's sinister motive was to tell us not to make revolution or go forward, so that he could practice restoration and regression. This kind of viewpoint is not only scientifically fallacious but also politically very reactionary.

This account is remarkable for the way in which the scientists were able to turn a potentially dull exercise in criticizing a totally abstract remark by Lin Biao into a discussion of basic scientific theory. However, it is also an example of the convoluted manner in which this kind of study had to be conducted in order to keep in line with the requirements imposed by the leaders of the current political movement.

The party committee in their report also stressed that the focus of political study had to be the transformation of the ideology of the scientists. The report expressed the problem in this way.

Not long after the opening of the reading class, there emerged among some teachers the phenomenon of making greater effort in the discussion of academic problems but less effort in linking themselves up with the problems of world outlook.  

What was meant by this was that the scientists became enmeshed in the theoretical issues involved without producing the individual ideological changes that were the point of the whole exercise in the first place. In other words instead of "consciously submitting to the domination of a philosophy" they were trying to consciously master philosophical
concepts. The great danger in this notion of ideological remoulding as "conscious submission to the domination of a correct philosophy" is that it too easily leads to submission to the domination of official guardians and interpreters of that philosophy. This can be seen from another section of this same report.

... the members of the Party committee set the pace in study and practice. The secretary of the Party committee personally grasped study, and a deputy secretary and a member of the Party committee were held responsible for directing study. Under them there was set up a group for the study of dialectics of nature in the school which constantly took the initiative in leading the revolution in education. After studying the "Dialectics of Nature", a responsible comrade of the Party committee went to the Department of Biology to attend a course on hereditary factors in seed breeding. In his lecture the instructor said that while the conservative character of the seed was absolute, its variability was relative. The responsible comrade of the Party committee felt that this version was incompatible with dialectics because the conservative character and the variability of the seed stood for the unity of opposites and the instructor should describe the struggle character and the variability as absolute and the conservative character as relative. After the lesson, he studied the works of Marx and Lenin and the relevant expositions of Chairman Mao together with the instructor and discussed things with him. The teacher was thus greatly enlightened and he made up his mind to study the dialectics of nature.\(^7\)

Regardless of the actual known characteristics of hereditary factors in seeds derived from experience, the exposition of those characteristics had to conform to the philosophical tenets of dialectical materialism as interpreted by the "responsible comrade of the Party Committee". The principle of the absolute nature of change and relative nature of equilibrium is here treated as an apriori assumption, a methodological approach which is in contradiction with dialectical materialism not as a dogma but as a method of investigating reality.
The implications of what was being demanded are made clear in an article dealing with the "theory of the heat death of the universe". In 1867 the German physicist Clausius maintained that all types of energy in the universe will eventually be transformed into heat and that this heat will be diffused from those parts of the universe with a high temperature to those parts with a low temperature. At that point all kinds of motion will come to an end and the universe will enter a state of "heat death". This is the famous second law of thermodynamics. The article points out that this theory was "applauded by the Pope" because it opened the possibility of scientific support for the religious notions of "genesis" and "doomsday". The article reports that Engels opposed this theory.

Engels held that the motion of matter forever possesses the infinite possibility of being transformed from one form of motion into another form of motion, and that the process leading to the dissipation of energy in the universe is necessarily linked closely with the process leading to the concentration of energy. He scientifically envisioned that "heat radiating into space surely can, through a certain path (to pinpoint this path will be the task of natural science in the future) be transformed into another form of motion, and in form of motion, it can be concentrated and put in action once again."74

What the article failed to report was that Engels stated that the refutation of Clausius' theory depended upon the further development of scientific understanding of the evolution of the universe rather than on apriori dismissal of the theory on philosophical grounds.
... The question as to what becomes of the apparently lost heat has, as it were, only been nettement posée since 1867 (Clausius). No wonder that it has not yet been solved; it may still be a long time before we arrive at a solution with our small means. But it will be solved, just as surely as it is certain that there are no miracles in nature and that the original heat of the nebular ball is not communicated to it miraculously from outside the universe.75

In contrast to Engels, the authors dismiss Clausius' theory on two grounds. The first is the politically reactionary way in which the theory can be used.

... They precisely used this kind of spurious scientific propaganda to oppose the theory of dialectical materialism and to disseminate pessimism so as to benumb the revolutionary will of the people and attain the goal of upholding the bourgeois rule and opposing the proletarian revolution.76

Their second and more significant argument for dismissing the theory was based on the fact that it did not conform to reified tenets of dialectical materialism.

Dialectical materialism holds that the universe is the universal, eternal material world that extends infinitely in space and develops infinitely in time. The theory of the infinitude of the universe as verified by the prolonged development of philosophy and natural science is the materialistic world outlook. The infinitude of the universe in space has precluded the existence of the spiritual world. The infinitude of the universe in time has negated any activity pertinent to the creation of the world by God. Therefore, faith in the infinitude of the universe means adherence to materialist atheism.77

In taking this position the authors transform Marxism from a scientific theory based on investigation of reality into a "faith" based upon apriori principles which are not hypotheses based on observation and
experiment but are immutable truths that exist over and above the real world. The ideological transformation demanded of scientists in the mid-seventies seen in this context was both a threat to science and to dialectical materialism.

In the media the debate over the role of science and scientists and technicians was set within the context of class struggle. This orientation was emphasized in an article discussing the debates going on within scientific and technical circles.

The advocates of the Right-deviation wind to reverse verdicts have used "the special nature" of the scientific and technical front to cover up the acute class struggle in the sphere of science and technology in order to preserve this "hereditary domain" for the bourgeoisie and to render service to the restoration of capitalism. Actually this old set of things for the bourgeoisie and revisionism to conduct scientific research in the sphere of science and technology still stubbornly exists, and some branches of learning are actually under the control of a small handful of bourgeois intellectuals who rely on their superior knowledge in certain fields to conduct a test of strength with the proletariat.78

Not only was the field of science and technology viewed as an arena for class struggle, but it was maintained that struggles in this area were even more acute than in other parts of society.

Furthermore, speaking in a certain sense, the struggle between the two classes, the two roads and the two lines and the struggle between the proletariat, which tries to transform and restrict the bourgeoisie, and the bourgeoisie which resists such transformation and restriction, are even more acute, complicated and protracted in the field of science and technology than in other fields. If things are not handled properly, it is quite possible that capitalism may stage a comeback in the field of science and technology to form a beachhead for the all-round restoration of capitalism.79
This was the case because the remnants of the old exploiting classes and their representatives within the party had made this area a target for infiltration and subversion.

... The agents of the landlord and bourgeois classes within the Party like Lin Piao are extremely afraid of and hostile to the dictatorship of the proletariat. They always desire all ways and means to insert the trash of feudalism, capitalism and revisionism into the socialist sphere of scientific research and advocate such trash as "the wise of the highest class and the stupid of the lowest class", purely technical viewpoint, fame and gain in command, material incentives and running of the institute by experts, in a pipe-dream to turn the grounds of scientific research into a unified empire monopolized by the bourgeois intellectuals. They oppose and weaken the Party's leadership over scientific work, oppose placing scientific research in the service of proletarian politics, oppose the combination of scientific research with productive labor, oppose the restriction of bourgeois right in the sphere of scientific research, and vainly attempt to change the socialist orientation of scientific research and to drag scientific research work into the quagmire of capitalism and revisionism. The realities of the living class struggle and two-line struggle on the scientific research front in the past two decades and more since liberation have fully shown the necessity for the proletariat to exercise all-round dictatorship over the bourgeoisie in the sphere of scientific research.80

According to the media, the susceptibility of the science and technology sectors was determined by the class nature of the majority of the people who worked within them.

... for a long time the set of old traditions, old concepts, old order and old habits followed by the bourgeoisie in conducting scientific research has really been very deep-rooted in the scientific research units where the intellectuals are concentrated. Some branches of learning are in fact still dominated by bourgeois intellectuals. After a series of political movements, although the overwhelming majority of intellectuals have made progress politically and ideologically to varying extents, the majority among them still basically cling to the bourgeois world outlook.81
In the process of socialist construction a discussion of the role of science and technology is essential for the transformation of the technology inherited from capitalist society into one suitable to the goals of socialism. Scientists and technicians must, on the basis of their understanding of their specialized fields of knowledge, be called upon to analyze the political implications of various applications of science and technology to problems of development. How can the development of industrial technology aid the overcoming of the division of labour rather than reinforcing it? How can foreign technology be adapted to the needs of socialist construction without importing the exploitative relations of production in which that technology was first developed? Chinese scientists and technicians could have made important contributions to a discussion along these lines. But with their knowledge denigrated as useless theory divorced from practice and their social position defined as at least potentially antagonistic to the working people, their right and responsibility to participate in the "debate" over science and technology was obfuscated in the ideological struggle to win their passive submission to the domination of a line and policy decided in a debate in the center — a debate about which they had only the vaguest notions and no reliable source of information.
Notes: Chapter Five, Science and Technology

1 "China Develops Science and Technology Independently and Self-Reliantly", NCNA, Sept. 25, 1974, SCMP, 74-41, p. 139.


6 For a discussion of this problem with examples of scientists responses to what they viewed as bureaucratic interference see: Suttmeier, ibid., pp. 211-12.

7 Ibid., pp. 215-17.

8 Ibid., pp. 220-21.


11 "Science Comes from Practice and from the Masses", People's Daily, May 29, 1974, SCMP, 74-28, p. 64.


13 "Scientific, Technical Progress as Peking Intellectuals Integrate with Workers and Peasants", NCNA, March 13, 1976, SPRCP, 76-12, p. 34.


17 "Scientific, Technical Progress ...", p. 35.


21 "Scientific, Technical Progress ...", p. 34.


23 "Northeast China County Achieves Good Results in Scientific Research", NCNA, May 5, 1976, SPRCP, 76-19, pp. 242-44.


27 See footnotes 2 and 3.

28 "The Great Proletarian ...", p. 25.


31 "Stimulate the Remoulding ..", p. 149, and "Central China Scientists ..", p. 86.

32 Hua Lo-keng, "Join Hands with the Workers and Peasants and Scale the Pinnacles of Science", Guangming Daily, Jan. 4, 1976, SPRCP, 76-6, p. 146.


34 Interview with Yang Shifu, technician at Beijing No. 2 Machine Tool Plant, June 8, 1975.


40 "32,000-Mile Voyage ..".

41 Chin Feng, "Down with Underestimation of Oneself", Study and Criticism (Xuexi Yu Pipan), No. 8, Aug. 20, 1974, SPRCM, 74-15, p. 3.

42 "Shanghai Shipbuilders Charge ..", p. 67.

43 Ibid. See also: "Shanghai Shipbuilders Criticize ..", p. 67.


46 Ibid., p. 93.

47 "Telling Exposure ...", p. 109. See note 44.


52 See: "Serious Struggle ...", and "The Struggle Around ...", ibid.

53 Ibid.

54 "Take Class Struggle As the Key Link and Properly Run Socialist Laboratories for Scientific Research", Guangming Daily, Jan. 22, 1976, SPRCP, 76-6, pp. 2-3.

55 "Take Class Struggle as the Key Link and Thoroughly Criticize the Revisionist Absurd Arguments in Scientific and Technical Circles", Guangming Daily, Feb. 12, 1976, SPRCP, 76-10, p. 54.


59 Nathan Rosenberg, ibid., p. 137-38.

60 Engels, Dialectics of Nature, p. 267. See also Rosenberg, ibid., p. 136, and footnotes 28 and 29 in Rosenberg.

61 See Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. I, Ch. 15, Section 1.


63 Ibid., p. 11.

64 "Take Class Struggle ...", p. 55.


67 "In What Does Teng ...", p. 6.


70 All quotes in this paragraph are from Liu Te-ming, p. 143.


72 Ibid., p. 54.

73 Ibid.

74 "Spurious Science is Unable to Cover Up the Political and Spiritual Bankruptcy of the Bourgeoisie", Guangming Daily, April 14, 1975, SPRCP, 75-17, p. 126.

76 "Spurious Science ...", p. 129.

77 Ibid.

78 "Take Class Struggle ...", p. 58.


81 "Take Class Struggle ...", p. 2. This rather bleak assessment of the outlook of intellectuals can be contrasted with that of Mao as early as 1957. See: Mao Zedong, "Speech at CPC Conference on Propaganda Work", Selected Readings, p. 481-83.
Chapter Six: Agriculture

The struggle over agricultural development policy in the mid-seventies took a different form from those in industry, science and technology and education. The polemics in the media attacking Deng Xiaoping's "three poisonous weeds" and the "right deviationist wind to reverse correct verdicts" in education did not openly extend to agricultural policy. The goals promulgated at the national meeting in the fall of 1975 that sparked the movement to "learn from Dazhai in agriculture" remained unchallenged official policy. But materials published after 1976 revealed that there was opposition. This opposition took a number of forms. Direct interference in the movement itself led to serious disruptions and indirect interference through media emphasis on goals different from those officially promulgated through publicity given other models caused confusion which affected production and morale. Despite the lack of open debate, alternative roads forward for China's agriculture were posited. This chapter will examine these alternatives, the struggles over them and the consequences of these struggles for agricultural development in the years 1973-76. Finally I will examine a common misconception of the road forward that was shared by both sides in the dispute, which caused havoc during this period and continues to cause confusion today.

Changes in the Relations of Production in Chinese Agriculture

Since the debate that emerges during this period largely concerns whether further changes in the relations of production were necessary and
possible, it is important to set the dispute in the context of the changes in relations in rural production that led up to the prevailing situation by the early seventies.

The Chinese describe the system prevailing in the rural areas in pre-liberation China as "feudal". The specific form was one in which land was legally private property which could be bought and sold. Although there were independent smallholders, the bulk of the land was owned by landlords who rented their land or hired labor to work their holdings. The majority of the rural population had to rent land or hire themselves out because they either had no land of their own or had so little land that it could not support their families. Through extraction of rents (that could be as high as sixty percent), usury, and manipulation of the market, the landlord class appropriated a surplus such that they were able to live in relative comfort while the majority of the population lived in abject poverty.\(^1\) The revolution that brought the Communist Party to power was at its base a peasant revolt against these conditions. As the People's Liberation Army drove the Nationalists out of one area after another in the civil war that broke out after the defeat of Japan, work teams organized by the party led the peasants in carrying out a land reform that lasted into the early fifties. Procedures were developed for determining the class status of every family in the countryside and land was redistributed on a roughly equal basis. The landlord system was destroyed but private property in the ownership of land remained. The peasants became independent smallholders.\(^2\)
There were two important problems inherent in the situation that emerged in 1952. Although there was rough equality in the output potential of the plots of land as distributed, there remained differences in other factors of production such as labor power, tools, draft animals, etc., available to each family. As less well-endowed families were forced to sell parcels of their land, a tendency towards polarization set in. Land ownership alone could not guarantee freedom from poverty. For the majority of people in the rural areas, only a pooling of their resources through cooperation could insure an increasing standard of living.

From the point of view of the needs of the nation as a whole, small-scale agriculture could not provide the surpluses necessary for the development of industry. Nor could it provide a market for agricultural machinery or the products of light industry. As Mao Zedong explained in 1955, only collectivization of agriculture could solve the dilemma.

... If we cannot fundamentally solve the problem of agricultural cooperation in a period of roughly three five-year plans, that is to say, if our agriculture cannot make a leap from small-scale farming with animal drawn farm implements to large-scale mechanized farming, including extensive state-organized land reclamation by settlers using machinery (the plan being to bring 400-500 million mou of wasteland under cultivation in the course of three five-year plans), then we shall fail to resolve the contradiction between the ever-increasing need for marketable grain and industrial raw materials and the present generally low yield of staple crops, we shall run into formidable difficulties in our socialist industrialization and shall be unable to complete it ...

In the second place, some of our comrades have not given any thought to the connection between the following two facts, namely, that heavy industry, the most important branch of socialist industrialization, produces tractors and other farm machinery, chemical fertilizers, modern
means of transport, oil, electric power, etc., for agricultural use, but that all these things can only be used, or used extensively, on the basis of large-scale cooperative agriculture. We are now carrying out a revolution not only in the social system, the change from private to public ownership, but also in technology, the change from handicraft to large-scale modern machine production, and the two revolutions are interconnected. In agriculture, with conditions as they are in our country, cooperation must precede the use of big machinery (in capitalist countries agriculture develops in a capitalist way).\(^4\)

Collectivization proceeded in a series of stages which produced profound changes in the relations of rural production. It began with the formation of mutual aid teams, beginning in most areas in the early fifties. Families in a mutual aid team pooled their labor, tools and draft animals and worked the land collectively. But individual families retained the products from their own plots after compensating the other families for any extra inputs they had contributed.\(^5\) This system was not without contradiction inasmuch as each family was naturally anxious that their land be tilled, seeded, weeded, harvested ... at the most opportune time. Eventually there was a growing realization that the continued existence of small, scattered individual plots inhibited production. These problems were overcome by advancing to the stage of elementary producers' cooperatives. Under this arrangement families pooled their land as well and divided the total product. But the connection with private ownership was maintained. Approximately twenty percent of the harvest was distributed according to the amount of land, major implements and draft animals contributed.
It was not until the stage of advanced producers' cooperatives was reached in the mid-fifties that the connection with private property was broken. Draft animals became cooperatively-owned after compensation to their former owners and distribution was carried out according to labor only. By this time the advantages of cooperation and larger units of production had become evident through practice. The majority of peasants willingly went along with a change in the relations of production from those based on private property to those based on collective property. Five percent of the land was set aside for the peasants' use for "private plots". On this land families could grow food for their own consumption, fodder for raising pigs or chickens, or other produce to sell to the state or at free markets that were held periodically in the countryside. However peasants could not buy or sell their "private plots". Although in areas close to urban markets and in the poorest regions private production could make up a significant portion of a family's income, for the vast majority the bulk of their income came from work in the collective. Although this change in the relations of ownership meant that peasants worked as part of a larger group than the family, the organization of work was still based on small-scale production. Work in the fields was carried out in the traditional manner using traditional implements.  

In the campaigns to construct major irrigation systems during the winter of 1957-58, the advantages of larger organizations and new work relations became apparent. The advanced cooperatives usually centered on a single village were not large enough to develop the major water control systems needed to increase the productivity of the land. In the process
of cooperating to build large-scale dams and irrigation and drainage networks, cooperatives in some parts of China began to amalgamate into larger units. These federations of cooperatives formed the basis of the people's communes that emerged in 1958.7

The communes represented a new stage in the process of cooperativization. By the end of 1958 some 750,000 cooperatives had merged to form 23,384 communes ranging in size from five thousand to 100,000 people. They were organized on three levels, the commune level which also corresponded to the lowest level of state organization (the former "xiang" or administrative village), the brigade level which corresponded to the previous advanced cooperatives and the team level which corresponded to the previous elementary cooperatives. This new organization was to form the infrastructure for the modernization of the countryside. Besides organizing large-scale capital construction and agricultural production, the new larger units were capable of accumulating funds for purchasing farm machinery and setting up small-scale mining and industrial operations. The communes also organized the rural education system, provided a cooperative health care network and medicare scheme, set up scientific research stations and ran the peoples' militia which maintained order in the countryside and functioned as the lowest level in the national defense network. The commune was also the peasants' economic link with the rest of society through its role in handling the purchase of grain and other products by the state.8 Thus the communes were much more than enlarged producers' cooperatives and represented an extension of socialization beyond production into a whole range of social and political functions.
In the early stages ownership of land and major tools was vested in the commune level. This meant that work was organized from the commune center, accounting was done at the commune level and distribution was carried out on a commune-wide basis, ignoring differences in productivity between the sub-units. The work organization that had been used in the large irrigation projects was applied to agricultural work. The traditional organization of labor in which all peasants participated in the labor of the entire agricultural cycle within their own village was broken down. Labor was militarized. Peasants were divided into specialized groups (companies, brigades, squads ...) which, led by their commanders, marched to their "battlefields" when and where they were needed in different parts of the commune. Agricultural labor was diverted into mining, iron and steel smelting, and small industrial projects as well as capital construction. This created a labor shortage and nurseries and canteens were established to allow more women to participate in agricultural labor. The objective was to narrow the gap between the city and the countryside by diversifying production in the rural areas and introducing specialized organization of labor similar to that in the factory.\(^9\)

The attempt failed. The Chinese in the mid-seventies attributed the failures of the Great Leap Forward as a whole to three factors: three years of bad weather leading to poor harvests, the withdrawal of Soviet aid, experts and blueprints in 1960, and mistakes in organization. In agriculture these mistakes in organization derived from an attempt to alter relations of production beyond what was desirable given material, organizational, and ideological conditions. Though it was "objectively possible" to impose new relations of production from above, these
relations would not and could not be a higher level of socialist relations because of their bureaucratic and undemocratic character. The diversion of large numbers of laborers away from agricultural production without first establishing a sufficient material basis for that shift through mechanization of at least some agricultural activities led to a labor shortage and tremendous losses when unharvested grain rotted in the fields. Had the party and the commune and state administrations had sufficient organizational structures and skills, mistakes in the allocation of labor may not have occurred. But in spite of a program of sending down cadres from the cities and higher levels to reinforce the grass roots, a situation emerged in which no one really knew what was going on. The commune proved to be too large a unit to effectively organize production and carry out financial accounting. Euphoria coupled with fear of being labeled "rightest" or "conservative" led to gross exaggerations that were passed up to planners at higher levels. The attempt to create specialized work organization modeled after the division of labor in modern industry was abandoned and responsibility for organizing work devolved down to the brigades and later in most cases to the teams. Although some commune and brigade-run industries proved viable and were retained, and the communes and brigades continued to coordinate projects beyond the scope of the teams, agricultural work was again organized within the villages. In some areas, by the early sixties families were being assigned responsibility for particular sections of land which, however, remained the property of the team.¹⁰
A retreat was also sounded in the areas of accounting and marketing. The setting of the accounting unit at the commune level was an egalitarian measure designed to eliminate the differences in income among the co-operatives that joined together to form the commune. In the early enthusiasm many places decided to provide food and other products and services "free", that is without regard to labor contributed. When it became clear that prosperity was not just around the corner and people's living standards actually dropped during the "three hard years" (1959-61), many of the more productive teams and brigades expressed resentment at the impact of levelling on their standards of living as their surpluses were absorbed by other units which were not as well-endowed with land, labor power or management ability or simply did not work as hard. Accounting at the higher levels tended to cover up these inequalities of performance and capacity. In 1960 the brigade was made the accounting unit and by 1962 in most communes the team became the accounting unit. Furthermore, the communes were subdivided in order to reduce their size. By 1963 the size of an average commune was one-third that in 1959. The total number of communes increased from 21,600 in 1959 to 74,000 in 1963, approximating the number of traditional marketing areas that had existed before the formation of the communes. Apparently the size of the original communes was too large to allow for efficient marketing. In the organizational structure that emerged in the early sixties the commune center is the equivalent of the traditional market town, the brigade the equivalent of the village and the accounting unit, the team, the equivalent of a section of a larger village or a small village itself.11
Within the teams, after deductions are made for the accumulation fund and the welfare fund and after production and management costs have been covered and the agricultural tax (generally 5-7%) has been paid, the greater part of the team's income is distributed to its members according to the principle "from each according to ability, to each according to work". At the end of each agricultural year team members receive amounts of grain and cash according to the number of workpoints they have accumulated. In the mid-seventies, in theory, the number of workpoints assigned to each member was determined at periodic meetings of the team at which each individual was assigned between six and ten workpoints per day according to a consensus reached by the group. The criteria for assigning more or less workpoints were the type of job the person did, the quality of labor performed and the person's attitude towards collective labor. There were variations on the system however. Where consensus proved impossible, the team leader and accountant simply assigned workpoints to individuals according to the type of work they were doing. When I participated in agricultural capital construction in Huaxian county in Guangdong province, I learned that with certain types of labor, like carrying earth on shoulder poles, workpoints were awarded according to piece work. In addition to the income received from collective production, peasants can get ready cash during the year by selling produce from their private plots or using the plots to provide food for pigs or other animals which are then sold for cash. When the communes were first established, in many places private plots were eliminated.
But when it was found that this resulted in a shortage of ready cash for the peasants and major gaps in urban market supplies, the necessary role of private plot production was acknowledged and in most areas they were reinstituted.

Ideally, production planning is carried out through consultation between the three levels in the commune. County authorities assign production targets for various products to the commune according to a national agricultural plan. These serve as the basis for the commune's production plan which is then sent down for discussion and amendment to the brigades and teams. After consultation the yearly plan for the commune and its sub-units is set. In this way the peasants have some input into the plan under which they work.12

The form of the people's communes of the mid-seventies was established during the retreat from the overly large, centralized and egalitarian communes established at the beginning of the Great Leap Forward. The commune and the brigades continued to supply the infrastructure through which agriculture was being mechanized and industry brought to the rural areas. The commune headquarters was also the cultural, educational and marketing center for the villages that surrounded it. But the team, roughly equivalent to the previous elementary cooperative (and often the natural village), was the basic unit of production, accounting and distribution. The aim of closing the gap between city and countryside had not been abandoned however. As industrial production in the commune and the brigades makes up a more and more significant portion of the commune's total income and mechanization frees labor to move into
these new forms of production, the material basis is being laid for making the larger units the center of the overall productive process. As the commune and brigades are able to accumulate more capital, some of it can be applied to improve the productive capacities of less well-endowed teams. As the teams' incomes become roughly equal because of the increased productivity of the poorer ones and the increasing relative size of surpluses generated by brigade-level enterprises, the brigade could again become the basic accounting unit without any deleterious effect on any team's standard of living. In the more distant future, when agricultural production is basically mechanized and industrial income much more significant in the rural economy, the commune could become the center of production organization, accounting and distribution. Finally when mechanization and industrialization closes the gap between rural and urban per capita productivity, collective ownership would be replaced by ownership "by the whole people". This plan was rooted in the notion that the bigger and more public the ownership, the more socialist.

This was the road forward projected for Chinese agriculture in the mid-seventies. The party admonished the peasants to push forward along this road by joining the movement to learn from Dazhai. This movement reached its peak during this period at the national conference to learn from Dazhai held in September and October 1975.

The Dazhai Model

The unit taken as a model for modernizing agriculture, during the 1973-76 period was Dazhai, a production brigade in Dazhai People's Commune,
Xiyang county, Shanxi province, which is located in a mountainous region about four hundred kilometers southwest of Beijing. It became nationally prominent in 1964. In the early 1960's Mao became concerned with what he identified as the implementation of revisionist policies in agriculture. During the Cultural Revolution these policies were attributed to the then head of state, Liu Xiaoqi. They included the policy known as "san zi yi bao" (extension of private plots and free markets, development of small collective enterprises responsible for their own profits and losses, and the fixing of production quotas for individual peasant households). Mao was afraid that if these and other practices were allowed to spread they would undermine the collective economy. As part of his campaign against these practices, Mao drew attention to the Dazhai brigade as a model of a unit that had persistently remained on the socialist road. In 1964 he issued the slogan "In agriculture learn from Dazhai."\(^{13}\)

Dazhai's land consists of a series of mountain gullies. When the area was liberated in 1945 the farmland around the village added up to about fifty hectares divided into 4,700 tiny plots. Sixty percent of the land was owned by one landlord and two rich peasants. The Japanese had killed forty-two of the village men in 1940 and in 1945 twenty men joined the People's Liberation Army so at Liberation there were only 190 people living in the village, mostly women, children and old men. The conditions under which the people of Dazhai were working were probably among the worst in China.\(^{14}\)
By 1974 the total population of the village had increased to 450 with a working population of 160. Total grain output had increased from seventy-two tons in 1949 to 385 tons in 1973. Grain yield had increased from 1.31 tons per hectare in 1949 to 7.69 tons in 1973. Per capita income increased from sixty-six yuan in 1955 to 176 yuan in 1973, making it a relatively prosperous community.15

The story of how the peasants of Dazhai achieved this has been repeated in many forms in the Chinese media. The basic message has been that their success depended upon self-reliance and hard work in the face of harsh natural conditions and persistence in supporting the collective in spite of pressures and temptations to move in other directions. Dazhai began the process of collectivization soon after being liberated. Two mutual aid teams were organized in 1946. Chen Yonggui, who later gained national prominence as the leader of Dazhai brigade and eventually became a member of the Central Committee and Minister of Agriculture, organized a team made up mainly of old people and children. Another group, called "the stalwarts' team" was organized by relatively well-to-do families who did not want to be burdened by non-producers. In the first year Chen's team harvested sixty jin per mu more grain than the average of families farming individually. The "stalwarts' team" had disintegrated because the members were too interested in their own land to operate collectively. By 1949 forty-nine of Dazhai's sixty-nine families had joined the mutual aid team. In 1952 the team decided to constitute itself an elementary co-operative. The county government however refused permission, considering the move premature. Permission was granted in 1953 on condition that no
more than thirty families joined. In fact all forty-nine families
joined the new cooperative but the county government did not find out
about it until after the harvest when it was too late to do anything
about it. This incident was described as an example of Dazhai's struggle
against "the revisionist line" which is alleged to have held that at the
time it was a "wrong, hazardous and utopian socialist concept in agri-
culture to elevate mutual aid teams to agricultural producers' coopera-
tives".16

Dazhai is also famous for its struggles with nature. In 1953 the
villagers drew up a plan to terrace the gullies and develop an irrigation
system. Flooding frustrated their efforts on a number of occasions,
culminating in a disastrous flood in 1963 that destroyed much of the
terracing and most families' homes. Dazhai refused government relief,
built stronger terraces and built a modern new village. These stories
about Dazhai have been told again and again in films, songs, comic books
... and they are very widely known in China.

By 1974 terracing and the irrigation system had been basically
completed and the peasants were concentrating on blasting off hill tops
to fill in the gullies and turn the mountains into one vast plain and
completing the mechanization of transport and farming.

One of the things that impressed me when visiting Dazhai was the
contrast between the image of Dazhai projected in the media and what was
emphasized at Dazhai itself. In the press the story of Dazhai was a
combination of the correct line, self-reliance and hard work. At Dazhai
much more emphasis was placed on the importance of developing scientific
farming methods. The exhibition hall in the village had displays describing the engineering problems encountered in building terraced fields and irrigation systems and the methods Dazhai used to analyze the soil in every field and to develop appropriate organic compost to improve soil quality. The hundreds of peasants who came every day in delegations from all over the country were given a tour of the brigade that described its history but also emphasized the importance of mechanization and scientific farming methods.

Other aspects of the Dazhai model that had been mentioned in the press were not played up as part of the movement to build Dazhai-type counties that began in 1975. These involved the egalitarian thrust of policies instituted in Dazhai. In contrast to most places in China the accounting unit at Dazhai was the brigade. When Dazhai became an advanced cooperative the village had been divided into two teams. In the aftermath of the Great Leap Forward experiments, Dazhai Brigade became the accounting unit in 1960. But the teams were never reformed. The reason for this may be because Dazhai brigade is quite small, with a total population of 450 in 1974. This is the size of many teams in the plains areas especially in more densely populated south China. Nevertheless this was also held up as an important indication of Dazhai's advanced level of socialization. In 1967-68 accounting was raised to the brigade level in all the communes of Xiyang county where Dazhai is located. This followed a power struggle in the county during which Chen Yong-gui became secretary of the county party committee.17
In 1960 when the rest of China was retreating from some of the egalitarian excesses of the Great Leap, Dazhai instituted a system of "self-assessment and public discussion" in fixing workpoints. At an annual meeting in December each person in the brigade was asked to evaluate him or herself on the basis of the type of work done, quality of the labor, and the political criteria of attitude toward the collective. The rest of the brigade then discussed whether or not the self-assessment had been accurate. The figure decided upon became the person's workpoint assessment for each day worked through the year. Brigade members' income was allocated on the basis of this annual assessment. Grain was distributed in a similar manner after 1967 when the yield reached nine hundred jin per mu. Each brigade member stated his needs and if the rest of the brigade agreed that was what he or she got. This method was facilitated by the fact that there was no free market in grain allowed in the area. During the 1963 flood the peasants' homes and private plots were destroyed. The brigade decided not to rebuild the private plots, which had been scattered through the brigade near the cave homes built into the hillsides. From that point on the brigade members derived all their income from labor for the collective. Up to that time the families in Dazhai brigade, like families in other communes in China, had owned their own homes. When the brigade's housing was rebuilt, it was constructed as row housing in the Dazhai village. Although by 1974 the brigade members had almost twice the living space available to them as before, it was no longer privately owned. The houses belonged to the brigade and the members paid a small fee to the brigade for upkeep.
Although the housing was basically uniform, the brigade construction team installed latticework of different designs according to the wishes of each family when constructing the windows and doors.

These policies in regard to workpoint allocation, grain distribution, private plots and housing were not emphasized as part of the national campaign to learn from Dazhai. In 1979 and 1980 some of these practices and finally Dazhai brigade itself were criticized in the press. According to one article the inclusion of political criteria in the allocation of workpoints led to a situation where in some places:

... Whoever managed to recite more quotations from Chairman Mao or mouthed revolutionary platitudes more glibly got more work points! Anyone who could not do so got less. This vacuous spouting of politics proved disastrous to agricultural production.\(^19\)

Another article maintained that under the slogan "do whatever Dazhai and Xiyang have done", when Dazhai and Xiyang made the brigade the basic accounting unit all the communes in Shanxi province were ordered to follow suit. When free markets and family sideline production were banned in Dazhai and Xiyang, the same policies were implemented in the rest of the province regardless of local conditions. The most telling criticism was the revelation that Xiyang, the county in which Dazhai is located, had received more than 25.6 million yuan from the state from 1966 on. The money went into capital construction and irrigation projects. The article asked "How could other places afford to learn from such a model fed and fattened with so much money?"\(^20\)
The National Conference on Learning From Dazhai in Agriculture

Although the Dazhai model is now under a cloud, it was the center of the movement to modernize agriculture that began at the first national conference to learn from Dazhai which opened on September 15, 1975. The conference was attended by 3,700 delegates from across the country invited by the State Council. The purpose of the conference was to exchange and sum up experience in the eleven-year movement to learn from Dazhai and to discuss how to meet the goal of basically mechanizing farm work by 1980. Key speeches were made by Deng Xiaoping, Chen Yonggui and Hua Guofeng. Only Hua's speech summarizing the results of the conference was fully reported in the press. Deng's speech was given little coverage and only a general outline of Chen Yonggui's speech was reported. In addition, the Minister of Health, Wu Guixian, spoke on the importance of birth control and Jiang Qing also spoke during the conference.

Deng Xiaoping's speech opening the conference was relayed to a wider audience through a series of meetings at which the contents of talks given at the conference were transmitted orally to the lower levels. I learned about its contents through an oral report at the language institute by a member of the leadership who had attended the Guangdong provincial level meeting at which the information was passed on. He reported that Deng began his speech by saying that the danger of war was increasing. In order to prepare for the possibility of war it was necessary to consolidate and speed up socialist construction. The key to this process was the modernization of agriculture. Deng stressed that despite sabotage by the
revisionist line, Chairman Mao's revolutionary line had been carried out in the past twenty-five years. But in the next twenty-five years development would have to be even faster. Although there had been great advances, the situation was uneven. Deng concluded by saying that Dazhai's most outstanding characteristic was never being satisfied with its achievements and this was the spirit with which to learn from Dazhai.

There were different emphases in the outline of Chen Yonggui's speech reported in the press and the report of his speech as transmitted orally. In the version in the press Chen is reported to have stressed the importance of summing up the experience of the movement thus far and the importance of mechanization. He pointed out that there had been important achievements in capital construction, soil improvement and water control. This enhanced agriculture's ability to resist natural adversities. Industrial support for agriculture was developing and the technical transformation of agriculture in terms of the use of machinery and scientific methods was moving ahead. But the rate of growth of agricultural production was still not fast enough. Greater efforts would be necessary to reach the target set at the Fourth National People's Congress to build China into a powerful, modern socialist country before the end of the century.

The reported version of Chen Yonggui's speech transmitted orally touched on other subjects that were not mentioned in the outline published in the press. In summing up Dazhai's experience, he pointed out that class struggle in the countryside was continuing. In some areas the problem of capitalist tendencies was fairly serious. The party needed to give serious consideration to these problems. He stated that many
problems and policies needed to be researched including the impact of the economic relationship between agriculture and industry on the worker-peasant alliance. The Central Committee had not yet made investigations but the question of adjustment of some policies had been raised. The level of accumulation from agriculture, he suggested, might have to be lowered, the implication being that the state was extracting too much surplus from agriculture in order to invest in industry.

Chen also raised the question of accounting workpoints. He said this was more than a question of method, it was a matter of policy, of line. The method of accounting, he argued, had to be carefully studied. If workpoints were assigned each day, counting them a little too high or low was not a serious problem. But if they were assigned only every six months or every year, then the matter was much more serious. He called for further study of this problem. He went on to stress two other points. Learning from Dazhai did not mean doing exactly what Dazhai did, mechanization had different meanings in different concrete contexts. And finally, in order to make progress in agriculture, leadership was important. The counties, communes and brigades must have stable leadership groups made up of cadres who are close to the masses and not afraid of hard work. Regardless of what errors an individual made in the past or what faction he had belonged to in the Cultural Revolution, if he had a good sense of party policies and was committed to carrying them out, he should be permitted to lead. Without solving the problem of leadership, Chen said, there would just be empty talk and no hope for China's agriculture.
The main policy statement at the conference was the summing up report given by Hua Guofeng on October 15, 1975. In it he made clear the purpose of the campaign was to develop "Dazhai-type counties" across China.

To build Dazhai-type counties all over the country means enabling every county in China to achieve stability and unity on the basis of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and go all out to build socialism with millions united as one. It means that every county will implement the general principle of taking agriculture as the foundation and industry as the leading factor in developing the national economy, undertaking large-scale farmland capital construction, basically realize the mechanization of agriculture, take grain as the key link and ensure an all-round development so that production of grain, cotton, oil-bearing crops, pigs, all industrial crops and forestry, animal husbandry, side-occupations and fishery will surpass the targets set in the National Programme for Agricultural Development and outstrip the state plans.25

In reviewing the progress made in the movement to learn from Dazhai since 1966, Hua placed emphasis on the following areas. He said that in the political movements in the countryside significant victories had been achieved and there had been "a tremendous rise in the socialist forces and a drastic fall in the capitalist forces"26 He felt that in this situation "We must guide the cadres' and masses' socialist enthusiasm engendered in the course of vigorously criticizing capitalism on to the great drive to develop socialist agriculture".27. In other words, the necessary changes in the relations of production had been secured. On that basis the time had come to advance the forces of production. Hua pointed out that in this area there had been significant advances as well. Since 1970, more than three hundred of the 2,200 odd counties in China had become advanced units in learning from Dazhai. In that time
about 100 million people had participated in capital construction, bringing 1.6 million more hectares of land under irrigation. The amount of irrigation equipment, chemical fertilizer and tractors produced since 1970 had exceeded the amounts produced in the previous fifteen years. Seven hundred twenty-five counties had already over-fulfilled the grain yield targets set in the National Program for Agricultural Development.

Ideologically and materially great progress had been made, the main problem was that the advance had been uneven. The work necessary to push the movement forward was outlined by Hua in terms of the standards that would have to be met in order for a county to qualify as an advanced model.

Through discussions and study at the conference, the present standards for a Dazhai-type county are as follows: (1) The county Party committee should be a leading core which firmly adheres to the Party's line and policies and is united in struggle. (2) It should establish the dominance of the poor and lower-middle peasants as a class so as to be able to wage resolute struggles against capitalist activities and exercise effective supervision over the class enemies and re-mould them. (3) Cadres at the county, commune and brigade levels should, like those in Xiyang, regularly participate in collective productive labour. (4) Rapid progress and substantial results should be achieved in farmland capital construction, mechanization of agriculture and scientific farming. (5) The collective economy should be steadily expanded and production and income of the poor communes and brigades should reach or surpass the present level of the average communes and brigades in the locality. (6) All-round development should be made in agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, side-occupations and fishery with considerable increases in output, big contributions to the state and steady improvement in the living standards of the commune members.
Although general political criteria were included in the standards set, the general emphases of the speech was on the development of the productive forces. Changes in the relations of production, in terms of the transition to "ownership by the whole people", would be dependent on the development of the productive forces and would only occur over a relatively long period of time.

...For most parts of China, the rural people's communes' present system of "three-level ownership with the production team as the basic accounting unit" is in the main still in harmony with the growth of the productive forces in the countryside. However, we must also note that, with the spread and deepening of the movement to build Dazhai-type counties, with the expansion of large-scale socialist agriculture, and especially with the growth of the economy at the commune and brigade levels, this system of ownership will make a step-by-step transition to the system of ownership that takes the production brigade or even the commune as the basic accounting unit when conditions are ripe. In the still more distant future, the people's commune will undergo the transition from the system of collective ownership to the system of ownership by the whole people and then from the socialist system of ownership by the whole people. Therefore, although the economy at the commune and brigade levels today is only incipient and small, herein lie our great, bright hopes.

The analysis that emerged from the conference was consistent with that which underlies the drawing up of the "three poisonous weeds". The conference was being held at the same time as the "General Program", the "twenty points" on industrial development and the "outline report" on science and technology were being prepared for presentation to the State Council. The goal of the movement to build Dazhai-type counties throughout China was to develop agriculture as part of the effort to realize the goal of achieving the four modernizations outlined by Zhou Enlai in his
speech to the Fourth National People's Congress. As such, the conference represented as much a threat to the positions of the faction around Jiang Qing as the reports being prepared for the State Council.

Following the conference the country was mobilized to carry out the movement to modernize agriculture. A report in People's Daily underlined the importance of the task.

The doctrine of the importance of agriculture is extremely clear. Any person's first need is to eat, to eat every day. Whatever his job may be, he cannot get away from eating, from food. Eating is the first great thing. This is a simple, self-evident truth.31

As part of the campaign 1.6 million cadres from party and government were sent to the countryside to help organize the effort. Their tasks consisted of explaining the political significance of the movement to the peasants, consolidating the leadership of the party organizations at the county level and below by helping them to improve their workstyles and achieve unity and helping organize capital construction projects for the winter of 1975-76.32 During the late fall of 1975 our political study at the language institute took up the movement to learn from Dazhai. We studied the speeches made at the conference and discussed how our institute could contribute towards modernizing agriculture. The institute was called upon to make a concrete contribution to the effort when the capital construction projects for the countryside in the Guangzhou area were organized. About 10,000 city residents were mobilized to work on the projects. Our institute was to send two groups, the first to work in Dongguan county beginning at the end of November and returning at the end of December. I went with the first group which, consisted of about half
the able-bodied teachers, staff and students in our institute. We were
greeted with great enthusiasm by the peasants who were levelling fields
in order to prepare for the introduction of tractors. The second group,
scheduled to leave some time in January, never left the school. We were
told by friends that the cadres leading the projects had come under
criticism for carrying out the "theory of the primacy of productive
forces" (wei shengchanli lun). Because of confusion over whether or not
the aims of the movement were politically correct, the effort ground to a
halt.

Opposition to the Movement to Learn from Dazhai

What was not known publicly at the time was that there was consider­
able opposition to the movement within the party leadership. Jiang Qing
and her supporters within the central leadership saw the main issue at
the time to be the struggle against those in the leadership they considered
to be moving China away from continuous revolutionary change and toward
regression to capitalism. They described the concern with developing
production that was at the center of the movement to learn from Dazhai
as an attempt to divert the revolutionary struggle away from the goal of
weeding capitalist roaders out of the party leadership. For them politics
in command did not mean the political issues embodied in technical choices
in agricultural or industrial development but always referred to power
struggles in the leadership.
The question had been raised by Jiang Qing even before the convening of the Dazhai conference. In July the Party held a national conference on professional work in agriculture. Jiang Qing sent a letter to be read to the delegates which revealed her concerns in this area. She called upon the delegates to "oppose the concept that 'the people regard food as the first requisite, so when revolution and production are in conflict the grasp of revolution should be somewhat slackened, and in calamities where agricultural production cannot catch up, revolutionary movement should be postponed' ..." For Jiang Qing revolution was external to the struggle for production itself and therefore overconcern with this "apolitical" issue was a manifestation of "bourgeois" politics. She made the central issue of agricultural policy the question of political power.

On many occasions we have been willing to yield. But no matter how high our good will, we cannot yield to the degree of letting political swindlers like Liu Xiaqí and Lin Biao have their way ... 'Yielding the position to more talented persons' is yielding power ...

I mentioned in the last section that the press reported Jiang Qing had given a speech at the national conference to learn from Dazhai. The content of the speech was not reported in the press nor was it relayed at the meeting at our institute to pass on the contents of other speeches given at the conference. The circumstances under which the speech was given and excerpts from it were not made public until after the arrest of Jiang Qing. According to the reports, Jiang Qing arrived at Dazhai where the first part of the conference was held with an entourage of 120 people. The speech mentioned in the press was not given
at the conference itself but to a meeting of Dazhai brigade members. It was not about agriculture but concerned a movement that had recently been launched in the press to criticize the traditional Chinese novel, *Water Margin*. The book concerns a peasant uprising during the Song dynasty. In a casual conversation about the book with a friend, Mao apparently remarked that in his opinion the merit of the work lay in its portrayal of capitulation. This remark was used to launch a campaign in the press to attack "capitulationists" in the party leadership. In her speech Jiang Qing stated that "the crux of the book *Water Margin* was to make Chao Kao a figure head". (Chao Kao was the original leader of the uprising. After his death he was replaced by a leader who capitulated to the emperor.) "At present", Jiang Qing went on, "there are people in the Party Central Committee who are trying to make Chairman Mao a figurehead". Her speech was an attack on the organizers of the conference, Deng Xiaoping and Hua Guofeng. Had tapes and transcripts of the speech been distributed at the conference as Jiang Qing demanded, the conference would have been seriously disrupted. Mao was eventually brought into the struggle and he forbade their distribution.

Although the conference was not disrupted, efforts to derail the movement began almost immediately. Yao Wenyuan, through his authority over the media, blocked the publication of Hua's speech in the party's theoretical journal, *Red Flag*. He also ordered that the movement be given minimal coverage. In Heilungjiang province Hua's speech was not published locally and meetings to study and implement it were forbidden. An article in June 1977 described how the movement had been disrupted in
Fujian province. In late 1975 work teams totalling 50,000 members were sent to the countryside to begin the movement. But the campaign was vigorously attacked. The opposition claimed that the six criteria listed by Hua "did not take class struggle as the key link" and that "the work teams were persecuting rebels". What seems to be behind this last charge was the fact that the work teams' efforts to strengthen unity of the leading groups in the rural areas were threatening a factional network that had grown up under Lin Biao and later gone over to the faction around Jiang Qing. In the resulting struggles the movement was crippled.

Very similar patterns of factional disruption were reported from Zhejiang and Yunnan provinces. An article on disruption of the movement in Gansu province describes the attacks on local cadres who were leading the movement. In one commune, of fifty-nine brigade and team level cadres, thirty-eight were driven out of their positions. Agriculture was so severely disrupted that grain had to be supplied to the commune by the state. An article on Henan province reported that leading groups in 110 counties were paralyzed by factional opposition to the movement to learn from Dazhai.

How was it that a movement that at least publicly had the official sanction of the party and state leadership could be so seriously disrupted? I think a key factor was the political atmosphere that existed in the rural areas at the time the movement was launched. The political movements that preceded the conference to learn from Dazhai created a
situation where charges of implementing policies based on the "theory of the primacy of productive forces" could lead to the paralysis of a leading group. The next sections will deal with these movements and other models put forward by them.

Xiaojinzhuang and He'ertao

During the movement to criticize the "gang of four" after their arrests, two villages were named as examples of models which had been promoted by members of their faction. In both cases what had been emphasized had not been developing the forces of production through hard work but rather changes in the relations of production. They were models in overcoming the backward mentality of the peasants and in struggling against capitalist tendencies in the countryside.

Xiaojinzhuang brigade, located about one hundred kilometers east of Beijing, enjoyed the patronage of Jiang Qing. Chen Yonggui claimed that it had been set up specifically to challenge Dazhai as a model for Chinese agriculture. During the Cultural Revolution a political night school was set up in the village. During the campaign to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius the villagers, using the night school as their base, began developing a wide range of cultural activities. Traditional local operas had been very popular in the area. As part of a campaign to "wipe out pests in the mind" that began during the Cultural Revolution, the traditional opera troupes were disbanded and the old operas driven from the stage. It was argued that "seeing too many old operas made people want to go crooked and start exploiting others". The secretary of the brigade's party branch explained that "we want to drive the old ideas
that these old operas spread out of our heads. That was the object of
the mass campaign to repudiate the ideas of Confucius and his follower
Mencius which the party has led since last winter".48

It was during the anti-Confucian campaign that Xiaojinzhuang became
a model. An article in Guangming Daily outlined the "ten new things in
Xiaojinzhuang" that were held up as worthy of emulation. By 1974 the
evening political school that had been set up in 1971 had expanded to the
degree that all the more than 250 adults in the brigade were attending
classes three evenings a week. In order to assist the party branch in
organizing study, a "contingent of peasant theorists" totalling fifty-eight
had been developed to prepare materials for study and lead dis-
cussions. The main activity at that time was study of the history of the
struggle between Confucian and Legalist schools. Other cultural acti-
vities were also being developed. Of the 250 adults in the village 220
learned to sing parts of the model revolutionary operas sponsored by
Jiang Qing. All meetings of the brigade began with singing led by the
cadres. The brigade members were quoted as saying, "The more we sing
and listen to them, the redder our hearts and the greater our enthusiasm
for socialism". In order to present the full operas and other revolu-
tionary dramas and skits, a "spare-time literary and art propaganda team"
was organized to give performances during the slack season and on holidays.

The writing of songs and poems had been popularized and politicized
at Xiaojinzhuang. During the movement to criticize Confucius six mass
poetry contests had been held with 170 people composing impromptu poems.
Telling revolutionary stories was also reported to have become a popular
pastime in the village. To provide materials for story telling and other cultural activities and to replace the "bad novels" that had been popular before the Cultural Revolution, a library of revolutionary materials was set up in the village. Sports were not neglected. According to the report, "over 150 male and female commune members constantly take part in athletic activities".49

The final "new thing" cited had to do with the purpose of all these activities. It was to change the customs and habits of the peasants. Examples of these changes included the elimination of betrothal gifts and fancy wedding ceremonies, the encouragement of late marriages and birth control, the sharing of household chores by men and women and the introduction of cremation of the dead. According to the article, the key to developing agriculture was a revolution in the superstructure.

The tremendous changes in Hsiaochinchuang vividly show the importance of paying proper attention to the revolution in the superstructure. Ideas representative of the advanced class, once grasped by the masses, will be turned into a tremendous source of material strength in transforming society and transforming Nature. Because vigorous effort is directed toward the revolution in the superstructure, the Hsiaochinchuang brigade has given impetus to the rapid development of socialist agricultural production.50

Shortly after the article explaining the "ten new things" to be emulated in Xiaojinzhuang appeared, an article in People's Daily cited the Red Star commune near Beijing as an example of a unit carrying out the superstructural changes pioneered in Xiaojinzhuang.51 They had established a "May 7 Peasants Political School" and a similar set of cultural activities. From the end of November till the middle of
December 1974 I lived with a peasant family in the Dongcheng brigade of Red Star commune. As a part of the social investigation we were carrying out, we students from Beijing university were able to observe the political night school classes and other cultural activities that were being carried out. The events in the brigade were an example of how a political movement like the campaign to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius can be used at the grass roots to promote positive changes. At the time we were there Confucian notions of male supremacy were under attack in the political study classes. This led the women in the brigade to challenge the customary practice of assigning more workpoints to men than women. To counter the argument that "men's work was harder than women's", competitions were organized to see how well men did at "women's work". In the end the men admitted that some "women's work" was at least as hard as work assigned traditionally to men. Arguments that women should be paid less because they had to leave work early to cook supper and take care of the children provoked a campaign to encourage the sharing of household work. When we paid a follow-up visit to the brigade during the following year, they had set up their first permanent daycare facility. In this case political study resulted in important changes in the relationship between men and women at work and at home.

Unfortunately not all changes provoked by the admonitions in the press to emulate Xiaojinzhuang were positive. Nearby Nanchan brigade was later cited as a typical example of what happened to units that attempted to duplicate the "Xiaojinzhuang experience". In order to become a model in learning from Xiaojinzhuang, they took a great deal
of labor power out of production in order to carry out all the necessary political and cultural functions. This seriously affected productivity. For example, in 1973 their grain yield was 810 jin per mu. By 1975 it had dropped to 627 jin. They were producing 11,000 jin per mu of vegetables in 1973. In 1975 the figure dropped to 7,000 jin per mu. In this case the "revolution in the superstructure" not only failed to provide "impetus to the rapid development of socialist agricultural production" but actually undermined it.

Another model promoted in the press during the 1975 campaign to study the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat focused attention on "the remnants of capitalism" in the countryside. The He'ertao commune in Changwu county, in Liaoning province began to receive publicity early in 1975 for its "socialist fair". One means the peasants have of gaining extra cash income during the year is by selling the products of their private plots at periodic village fairs. Since they involve both private production and trade, these "free markets" were politically suspect. I experienced the effect of politics on these fairs in Guangdong. The language institute is located outside the city of Guangzhou in the middle of a commune about an hour's ride by bus or bicycle from the city and the state-run vegetable markets. The peasants from the nearest brigade used to hold a miniature version of these fairs each noon at a crossroads on the institute campus. It was possible to gauge the level of political tension by observing the number of peasants who ventured out to sell their produce. At the height of political campaigns it became quite difficult to get fresh vegetables.
At the "socialist fair" pioneered at He'ertao the sellers were not individual peasants but state trading companies and collectives such as brigades or teams. The fair was supposed to exemplify how the collective economy was replacing the individual economy at He'ertao. Films of the fair were produced to propagandize this new development. Materials published in 1977 and 1978 claimed that the reality of the He'ertao experience was quite different from what was portrayed in the media. The peasants had not taken this step forward in changing the relations of production voluntarily. The fairs were staged performances that the peasants were ordered to attend. Rehearsals were held before the final performance at the commune level on January 5, 1975 when the provincial leadership and the press were brought in. Collective commerce did not replace individual commerce because it was superior but because free markets, private plots and individual sideline production were banned through administrative fiat. The peasants were even forced to cut down pumpkin vines growing in their courtyards as part of the effort at "educating and transforming small producers".

Class Struggle in the Countryside

The models promoted in the media stressed the transformation of the peasants' ideology and the destruction of remnants of capitalism in the rural economy. These were the targets of what was defined as class struggle in the countryside during the mid-seventies. Historically class struggle in the countryside had meant the struggle between the peasants and the landlord class. But the notion of class struggle was maintained even after the landlords were expropriated as a
class during land reform. Persons designated as landlords during land reform continued to carry this designation with them and the stigma was passed on to their children and even grandchildren. Former landlord (and rich peasant) families were living reminders of past oppression and exploitation and were objects of continuing suspicion and scorn. Descriptions of the "continuation of class struggle under socialism" in the countryside uniformly contained examples of how a person's attitude toward collectivization and other advances towards socialism was directly derived from his or her class position before land reform. It was inevitably landlords or rich peasants who attempted to sabotage the way forward because they longed for the good old days when they were in control. Given the situation they found themselves in, it is not surprising that some did in fact play out the antagonistic role assigned to them. Theoretically through physical labor and good behavior a landlord could convince the authorities to remove the class designation. When my class from Beijing university was carrying out social investigation at Red Star commune, we wanted to study how the program of reforming landlords was being carried out. We were refused any information or interviews with landlords who had gone through reform. We were told that being interviewed by a foreigner would give a landlord prestige and this was inadvisable. Granting such permission would probably have been most inadvisable for any cadre as well. Most landlords continued to be deprived of civil rights and to bear the stigma of being designated class enemies until reforms in this area were carried out in 1979. Until then they were the most visible targets of class struggle in the countryside. 57
But in the mid-seventies, especially during the campaigns of 1975-76 a new analysis of class struggle by implication broadened the target to include all the peasants. In the campaign to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius what was often attacked in rural areas were remnants of feudal ideology such as fatalism in the face of natural disaster, chauvinistic attitudes toward women and superstitious practices and beliefs. Although too often carried to extremes in attempts to destroy innocuous forms of traditional culture, the attempt at changing people's thinking did play a positive role where carried out well at the local level. In the campaign to study the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat the target shifted from feudalism to capitalism. In the countryside the danger of restoration of capitalism was said to have its source in the continued existence of small production and small producer mentality. A dialogue published as a guide to leading political study among the peasants has the tutor explain that:

... After the Russian October Socialist Revolution, Lenin gave an important discourse on how to consolidate and strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat. He pointed out that: 'Small production engenders capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale'. The struggle against the capitalist tendency of small production is an 'incomparably difficult task and is bound to be a long-term task' of the proletariat in thoroughly triumphing over the bourgeoisie.

The commune member asks the tutor to explain what is small production. The tutor replies:

Small production is production based on individual private ownership of means of production and on individual labor. Both individual handicrafts and individual agriculture are small production. It is characterized by a small scale of production and limited output, using one's own means of production for scattered operation and mainly relying on one's own labor to produce.
The peasant in the dialogue pointed out that in the collectivization process individual property had become collective property and individual production collective production. In other words a change had occurred in the relations of production. Small production, as defined by the tutor had ceased to exist. The peasant then asks, "under such a situation, how could capitalism arise?" The rest of the dialogue is concerned with clarifying the tutor's response to this question. In his response the tutor makes two major points. First, there still exist remnants of small production and capitalism in the rural economy.

... But with the remnants of private ownership still existing in our countryside and with bourgeois right still existing in the fields of exchange and distribution, those rich peasants who want to traverse the capitalist road will carry out capitalist activities through certain legal and illegal channels, taking advantage of the money and private plots in their hands and the products from family sidelines, thus giving rise to such acts of capitalist exploitation as converting commodities and money into capital and taking labor as a commodity. It can be seen that with the commodity economy in existence, small production will give rise to capitalism and the bourgeoisie.59

Second, the ideology of small production continues to exist in the minds of the peasants.

Other than these, I feel there is something else. It is the mentality of private ownership and habits of small producers. Lack of attention to education will also give rise to capitalist tendencies. From the disintegration of the primitive commune, the concept has been formed for several thousand years and is deeply imprinted. The mentality of small owners is strong, particularly among the peasants who for long have farmed on a family basis, using plows and rakes.60
If the soil of capitalist restoration exists in the private plots, free markets and peasant families' sideline production and in the minds of the peasants themselves, how will a capitalist class grow from this soil? In spite of the examples of speculation and illegal activities given as proofs that capitalism could arise within the collectivised economy, the usual argument was not that the rich peasants accused of these activities would become a new capitalist class. Rather the argument was that these activities create the environment in which a new capitalist class could emerge. They provide the soil, not the seeds. The new capitalist class was to be found rather among the leaders in the rural communes, brigades and teams. As an article on this question pointed out "... there are differences between the cadres and the commune members due to division of work ..." and a danger that the cadres will "... degenerate into overlords riding roughshod over the people". Another article describes the process of degeneration.

Owing to the existence of bourgeois right, commodity system and exchange by means of money and due to the spontaneous forces of small producers surrounding the proletariat on all sides, there are also some personnel in state organs who have followed the bourgeois lifestyle. Taking advantage of their positions, they have made private gain at the expense of the public, borrowed money from public funds and spent money extravagantly. Some accepted illicit money, became gluttonous and lazy and degenerated into new bourgeois elements. Exploiting some power they hold within the Party, state organs and enterprises, they work for capitalist restoration and have actually become bourgeois agents. Life itself tells us that large-scale speculative activities under the dictatorship of the proletariat involve some cadres in one way or another. If the leadership of the socialist collective economy is not in the hands of genuine Marxists and the poor and lower-middle peasants, the socialist economy, though it will remain as such in name, may actually degenerate into a 'collective capitalist organization', like the collective farm in today's Soviet Union. This is very dangerous.
The key element in determining whether or not a unit remained socialist was however the political line pursued by the leading group in that unit.

... The historical experience of the dictatorship has profoundly shown that the correctness or incorrectness of the ideological and political line decides everything. The road taken is determined by the class that exercises leadership and the line carried out. This applies to a small unit as well as to a large country.63

The correct political line toward learning from Dazhai was explained in an article in the spring of 1976 as: "Dazhai's experience tells us that to consolidate the rural socialist position and guard against capitalist restoration, we must make a point of studying and solving the problems in the superstructure and in the relations of production in the countryside".64 Units that emphasized hard work to increase productivity and develop their productive forces were working with the wrong orientation: "Today, there are many reasons why some units have failed to learn from Dazhai properly, but the most important one is still that they have not grasped class struggle as the key link".65

It was the atmosphere created by this kind of analysis in the media that allowed charges of "following the theory of the primacy of the productive forces" and "pulling the cart without looking at the road" to disrupt the movement to learn from Dazhai in many places. This analysis had a profound impact on popular thinking not merely because it was repeated constantly in newspaper articles like the ones quoted above. Much more universal and penetrating was the effect of feature films on class struggle in the countryside. The plots of these films almost always centered on struggles against capitalist tendencies among rich peasants, small producer mentality among ordinary commune members and neglect of politics by
cadres in charge of production. This conception of ongoing class struggle in the countryside provided the context to justify the banning of private plots, family sideline production, and free markets in those areas that took up the campaign to cut off the capitalist tails. Peasant resistance to the forced elimination of important sources of income could be dismissed as examples of remnants of small producer mentality that should be dealt with by further revolution in the superstructure.

"Equalitarian, Crude Communism"

In his speech at the national conference to learn from Dazhai, Hua Guofeng discussed the possibility, given the growth of the productive capacity of industrial and other enterprises at the brigade and commune levels, of the transition to brigade and then commune-level ownership. The increasing importance of production at the higher levels would mean that income differences within the larger units could be gradually narrowed and eliminated. This narrowing of income gaps through raising the level of ownership was stressed in the media at the time as a means of restricting bourgeois right. In an article about agriculture, Deng Xiaoping was criticized in 1976 for maintaining "that restriction of bourgeois right lacks a 'material base'". The context for Deng's statement was not given and it is not clear whether he actually saw the transition to a higher level of rural accounting as an instance of "restricting bourgeois right". However, it is impossible to say whether such a transition represents either a restriction or a realization of bourgeois right without concrete investigation into whether what is actually occurring is the realization of the principle of "to each according to work" (i.e., realization of
bourgeois right) or the restriction of this principle through levelling. However, according to materials published after 1976, Deng's warning was correct inasmuch as the conditions were not ripe for the transition to a higher level of accounting in the vast majority of cases.

Yet even in areas where ownership remained at the team level, that right of ownership was often violated by the higher levels. The teams' manpower, materials and land were only too often used without consultation or compensation. In production planning the teams were simply assigned quotas as part of plans made at higher levels. At one point in Sichuan province provincial leaders simply ordered all communes in the province to grow one crop of wheat and two crops of rice annually. The order was imposed on lower levels regardless of concrete conditions. When the peasants protested that it would not work, the leadership declared that, "Growing three crops or not is a question of political line". As a result, total yields dropped.

In some areas experiments were carried out with what became known as "transit regardless of poverty". The accounting unit was raised to the brigade level regardless of differences between teams. This form of radical egalitarianism proved to be very harmful. More productive teams, who felt they were simply being expropriated, slaughtered their pigs and distributed their grain reserves. Morale fell and production was disrupted.

The form of thinking inherent in this kind of egalitarianism was described by Marx as "crude, equalitarian communism".
... In negating the personality of man in every sphere, this type of communism is really nothing but the logical expression of private property, which is this negation. General envy constituting itself as a power is the disguise in which avarice re-establishes itself and satisfies itself, only in another way. The thoughts of every piece of private property — inherent in each piece as such — are at least turned against all wealthier private property in the form of envy and the urge to reduce to a common level, so that this envy and urge even constitute the essence of competition. The crude communism is only the consummation of this envy and of this levelling-down proceeding from the preconceived minimum. It has a definite, limited standard. How little this annulment of private property is really an appropriation is in fact proved by the abstract negation of the entire world of culture and civilization, the regression to the unnatural simplicity of the poor and undemanding man who has not only failed to go beyond private property, but has not yet even attained to it.

The community is only a community of labour, and an equality of wages paid out by the communal capital — the community as the universal capitalist. Both sides of the relationship are raised to an imagined universality — labour as a state in which every person is put, and capital as the acknowledged universality and power of the community.  

The tendency toward a form of crude communism appeared first during the "communist wind" period at the beginning of the Great Leap Forward. Up to that point the changes in the relations of production that were part of the collectivization process flowed from the concrete experience of the peasants. They involved a clear understanding that the new forms of organization removed impediments to the development of production and led to increases in income for all. At each level the peasants collectively maintained control over the work process. The broadening of the peasants' horizon to take in higher levels of socialization came through their own work and organizing experiences or through observation of experiments by their neighbors.
During the mass mobilization that characterized the "communist wind" however, peasants were encouraged to leap into relations of production that were beyond their concrete experience. Overenthusiastic cadres spun tales of universal prosperity in the new communist society just around the next corner in the collectivization process. A slogan popular at the time promised "three years of hard work and one thousand years of heaven". The key to this rapid progress was seen to be the fact that the people's communes were "big and public" (yi da, er gong). Socialism was equated with large-scale and state rather than collective ownership. Consequently a form of "equalitarian, crude communism" emerged when the collective property of the team was appropriated by the commune and along with it the team's control over its own land, labor, tools and machinery. All private property was negated when private plots, animals, tools and even kitchen implements owned by the peasants were turned over to the commune. In distribution levelling took the form of free distribution of available goods and services. This "negative abolition of private property" resulted not in the universal appropriation of collective wealth by all individuals, i.e., the positive promise of socialism's transcendence of the former system of private appropriation, but rather just the opposite, the universal expropriation of all wealth in a community of universalized poverty. Rather than expanding their powers of disposal over their labor and the products of their labor, the peasants lost these powers to commune authorities over whom they had little or no control.
In spite of denials by Zhang Chunqiao, the "communist wind" was blowing again in the mid-seventies. One indication of the tendency towards crude communism in the countryside was the emergence of what Marx called "the abstract negation of the entire world of culture and civilization". Jiang Qing's cultural reforms began with a wholesale negation of a cultural heritage. Old plays, operas, books, stories, jokes, etc., were forbidden. At Xiaojinuzhuang and other places that emulated Jiang Qing's model village, culture was "promoted" through restriction and politicization of form and content. Culture was reduced to political propaganda. To put on a play or opera simply for the sake of entertainment was to spread poisonous bourgeois or feudal ideology.

The other manifestation of crude communism can be seen in the attempt to abolish remaining forms of private property as "tails of capitalism". In areas that followed the He'ertao model private plots, sideline production and free markets were eliminated. Even in the movement to learn from Dazhai sponsored by Hua Guofeng and Deng Xiaoping the road forward was described in terms of a march towards state property in agriculture. Handicraft and industrial production were viewed in the same way in the urban areas. State-owned enterprises were considered more socialist than collectively-owned ones. Socialization was equated not with expansion of workers' or peasants' self-management but with the transition from collective to state ownership and management.

Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan, like Stalin, pointed to the continued coexistence of the collective and state-owned sectors of the economy as the main reason for the necessary persistence of commodity production,
commodity exchange and bourgeois right. In the countryside, the campaign to restrict bourgeois right led to political pressure to ignore the property rights of the team and cast suspicion on those who tried to defend these "small property rights". In conflicts of interest between the team and the commune, the interests of the smaller collective were usually subordinated to those of the commune on the grounds that the latter represented the more general will and that as all team members were also commune members, it represented their interests as well. This conflict of interests was further obscured by the fact that the commune represents not only the interests of the largest collective but at the same time represents as well the interests of the state as the lowest level of state administration in the countryside. Because the transition to state-ownership is seen as the necessary destiny of rural and urban collectives, the subordination of their interests to those of the state is viewed as in principle progressive. And yet, state appropriation of all property was not for Marx the goal of the communist movement but rather a manifestation of "crude and despotic communism". For Marx the goal of the communist movement was the positive appropriation of the achieved social wealth by the freely associated producers and the abolition of the state machine so as to finally once and for all transcend the traditional division of labor. In the productive sphere this means the restoration of the unity of conceptualization and execution in the collective laborer. For peasants to lose their right to plan and organize their own production collectively to higher level bureaucrats over whom they have little or no control is a step backwards and not forward in the socialization process.
There is nothing in Marx that suggests the necessity for state appropriation of the collective property of associated producers but rather that state appropriation of capitalist property is necessary to make social appropriation by associated producers possible.
Notes: Chapter Six, Agriculture

1 For a Chinese description of the economic situation in the countryside just prior to liberation see: Chen Po-ta, A Study of Land Rent in Pre-Liberation China (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1966), pp. 67-82, and Chen Han-seng, Landlord and Peasant in China (N.Y.: International, 1927).

2 The most detailed account of this process can be found in William Hinton, Fanshen (N.Y.: Monthly Review, 1966). Hinton was part of a work team that organized the land reform in a village in Shanxi province.


5 E.L. Wheelwright and Bruce McFarlane, The Chinese Road to Socialism (N.Y.: Monthly Review, 1970), pp. 33-34. During November and December 1974 I lived in Dongchang brigade of Red Star commune near Beijing. The general description of the changes in the relations of production is taken from an interview with three older peasants, Li Futian, Pang You and Gao Xunxia who had participated in all the changes as lower level cadres. The interview extended over two days, November 29 and 30, 1974. Footnotes are references to discussions of comparable examples from literature on the period.

6 For another description of this process see: Franz Schurmann, Ideology and Organization in Communist China (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), pp. 442-64.


The description and history of Dazhai brigade given in this section is based on an interview with Jia Laiheng, Vice-chairman of the Revolutionary Committee of Dazhai Brigade on Aug. 7, 1974 during a three-day visit to the brigade.


Kuo Feng-lien, p. 20. See note 12.


This method of distribution of grain was not mentioned in the interview with Jia Laiheng in 1974, nor was it mentioned in the Chinese press. This method of distribution was "discovered" by Tang Tsou in a visit to Dazhai in 1977. See: Tang Tsou, Marc Blecher, Mich Misner, "Organization, Growth and Equality in Xiyang County (I)", *Modern China*, Vol. 5, No. 1, Jan. 1979, pp. 24-26.

Xu Zhigang and Zhou Jinghua, "Economic Policies in Rural Areas", *Beijing Review*, No. 16, April 20, 1979, p. 21. This same article explains that in 1979 many teams and brigades began to experiment with a new remuneration system known as "fixed quotas and allocated work points according to the work done". Particular tasks, eg., planting of a cotton field, are assigned a fixed quota of points to be allocated to the production group in charge and distributed individually according to the amount of work done. This system unlike the old system has the advantage of encouraging labor productivity through mechanization and organization as opposed to labor intensification. See also Zhou Jinhua, "Appraising the Dazhai Brigade", *Beijing Review*, No. 16, April 20, 1981, pp. 24-28.


22 Hua Kuo-feng, "Mobilize the Whole Party, Make Greater Efforts to Develop Agriculture and Strive to Build Tachai-Type Counties Throughout China", Beijing Review, No. 44, Oct. 31, 1975, pp. 7-10 and 18.

23 Talk given for teachers at the Guangdong Foreign Languages Institute by Shi Chu, head of the Administration Group of the Revolutionary Committee on Nov. 20, 1975. At this talk he also outlined the contents of the speeches given by Wu Guixian and Chen Yonggui. Wu's speech dealt specifically with the question of birth control and was not a policy statement.

24 Chen's speech was outlined in "National Conference on Learning ..." and was outlined orally by Shi Chu. See notes 20 and 22.

25 "Mobilize the Whole Party ...", p. 7. See note 21.

26 Ibid., p. 8.

27 Ibid., p. 9.

28 Ibid., p. 8.

29 Ibid., p. 8.

30 Ibid., p. 10.


34 Ibid., p. 87.

35 See note 21.

"Tachai Fights ...", p. 16. See footnote 35 above. Excerpts of Jiang Qing's speech appear in: "Document of the CC of the CCP, Chung-fa (1977) No. 37 (Part IX), Issues and Studies, Vol. XV, No. 4, April 1979, p. 107. This statement was particularly significant because everyone at the conference would have known that Mao had complained during the Cultural Revolution that Liu Xiaochi and Deng Xiaoping had treated him like a dead parent at a funeral, i.e. with ceremony but no communication. See Edward Rice, Mao's Way (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 264.


Hinton, p. 34. See note 36. Chen Yonggui's hindsight here may not be too accurate. Edward Friedman in his "The Politics of Local Models, Social Transformation and State Power Struggles in the People's Republic of China: Taichai and Teng Hsiao-ping", China Quarterly, No. 76, Dec. 1978, pp. 842-72, argues that Dazhai's opposition to the "gang of four" may not have been as unambiguous as later claimed and that the two models, Dazhai and Xiaojinzhuan, may have been complimentary rather than in contradiction. My own impression is that Xiaojinzhuan was posited as an alternative in the sense that it stressed changes in the superstructure to the exclusion of everything else following the "gang of four" position: "make revolution and production will follow of itself". But Dazhai independently pursued policies on private plots, workpoints and grain distribution that were similar to those advocated by the faction around Jiang Qing. These policies were not publicized by Hua Guofeng and Deng Xiaoping at the national conference to learn from Dazhai.


Ibid.


Ibid., p. 114.

"Use Socialism to Occupy the Ideological and Cultural Battlefront in the Countryside", People's Daily, Aug. 28, 1974, SPRCP, 74-37, pp. 78-84.


"Why is it that Small Production will Engender Capitalism", People's Daily, April 10, 1975, SPRCP, 75-21, p. 8. This quotation from Lenin had very wide currency in China at this time. But in most cases it was used in a manner that did not make clear that Lenin was writing in the period before agriculture was collectivized in the Soviet Union.

Ibid., p. 10.

Ibid., p. 11.

"Transformation of Small Production is a Long-Term Task of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", People's Daily, Aug. 17, 1975, SPRCP, 75-36, p. 5.
62 Chiang Wei-ching, "Further Strengthen the Dictatorship of the Proletariat in the Rural Areas", Hongqi, No. 5, May 1, 1975, SPRCM, 75-16, p. 15.

63 "Transformation of ...", pp. 6-7. See note 61.

64 Lu Yang, "In Learning from Tachai We Must Take Class Struggle as the Key Link", Hongqi, No. 4, April 1, 1976, SPRCM, 76-11, p. 71.

65 Ibid., p. 71.

66 Ibid., p. 72.


68 Fei Hsiao-tung, "Szechuan: Calamity and Recovery", China Reconstructs, No. 1, Jan. 1979, pp. 61-62. This pattern of administrative fiat from above was repeated in different forms all over China. While I lived in Guangdong, under the slogan "take grain as the key link" sugarcane was taken out of production in many areas to grow rice. As a result the province which was one of China's chief sugar producers was itself short of sugar. In Inner Mongolia grassland was plowed under for wheat production leading to considerable soil erosion. The number of comparable examples reported from other areas is unfortunately quite extensive.

69 Xu Zhigang and Zhou Jinghua, p. 22. See note 18.


71 Ibid., p. 100. Emphases in the original.


Chapter Seven: Education

Socialist construction involves two interrelated processes - the development of the forces of production and the creation of new social relations including new relations of production. Education is intricately involved with both these processes. One aspect of the forces of production is labor itself. Therefore developing the forces of production includes enhancing the skills and technical expertise that the producers bring with them into the productive process. These include not only the specific vocational skills brought to any particular point of production but also the general cultural level of the workforce and the ability to mobilize science and technology to increase productivity. It is the education system which provides skills and knowledge necessary for the rapid development of the forces of production.

The education system also plays an important role in the restructuring of the relations of production. This change involves not only the removal of the relations of domination and subordination in those social relations which are a part of the productive process but also the elimination of all forms of domination in society. In traditional Chinese society as well as in modern Western societies, the education system reinforces relations of domination. The most talented members of the dominated class can utilize the education system as a means of upward mobility. But the ideological function of the system is the inculcation of the values of the dominant classes. To the degree that the system performs this function, individuals who pass through it are absorbed into roles assigned to them within the
general system of domination. In a hierarchically structured school system, students are trained to comply with demands made upon them to perform. This habit of compliance is important to the development of a repressively disciplined workforce. On the other hand, for the children of the dominant classes the education system provides, through enrollment in the better universities, the possibility of replacing their parents in positions of power and privilege.¹

Because of the role the education system played in the old society, reform is essential to ensure that it is made compatible with the development of socialist relations. During the period under discussion it was maintained that for the seventeen years before the Cultural Revolution the education system, dominated by bourgeois ideology, was producing a generation with elitist tendencies which represented a potential threat of restoration of relations of domination and subordination throughout society.

Development of the Education Infrastructure

For China the development of the forces of production through the dissemination of skills necessary for building a technologically advanced industrial society has meant a concerted effort to extend literacy among the adult population, to provide universal basic general education, to develop vocational and technical training in practical skills needed to expand and rationalize industrial and agricultural production and to expand higher level education in the natural and social sciences and the liberal arts. Although overall statistics have rarely been made public and estimates of progress made by different Western analysts are sometimes
contradictory, it is clear that China has made considerable progress in the thirty years since liberation in 1949.

As can be seen in Table 1, the number of institutions of higher learning had doubled from two hundred at Liberation to four hundred in 1963. The decline to 183 in 1953 represents a consolidation that was part of the initial reorganization carried out in that year. During experiments with new forms of education that were part of the Great Leap Forward, the total number of universities and colleges shot up to 840. Even after the retrenchment of the early sixties, four hundred remained in 1963 including twenty-three universities, twenty polytechnical universities, one hundred engineering institutes, ninety agricultural colleges and 120 medical schools. As can be seen from Table 2, enrollment at all levels has increased significantly. During the Great Leap Forward enrollment in higher education increased from 440,000 in 1957 to 660,000 in 1958. But enrollments probably fell during the early sixties. By 1965 enrollment at the post-secondary level had increased to 674,000. From 1966 to 1970 there were no new enrollments in post-secondary institutions because such schools had ceased to function. No overall figures for the period from 1966 to 1976 were issued but it is clear that even when the colleges and universities were reopened they were taking in far fewer students than earlier. When we entered Beijing University in 1974 we were told the student body numbered about 8,000, about half the past peak enrollment. Some universities in Beijing such as People's University, had not yet reopened. Moreover postgraduate education was not restored for over a decade. In the wake of the assessments of damage and losses
Table 1

Total Number of Postsecondary Institutions in China, 1940-1963

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Institutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

Enrollment in the Chinese Education System, 1949-1978 (in Thousands)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Postsecondary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>...............</td>
<td>24,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>54,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>71,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>660</td>
<td>97,990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>212,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>1,020</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources:


incurred due to the disruption of education during the Cultural Revolution, in 1978 priority was assigned to the rapid expansion of education especially at the postsecondary level. By 1978 there were 850,000 students attending 600 colleges and universities, 65,480,000 students in 160,000 secondary schools and 146,240,000 in 950,000 primary schools. By late 1979 1,020,000 university students were enrolled in 633 colleges and universities. In the same year over 600,000 were enrolled in university-level courses for credit through the Central Broadcasting and Television University. Although access to higher level and especially university education is still quite restricted, considerable progress has been made in building up an educational infrastructure.

Access to education is not only available through the regular full-time school system. Part-work part-study and spare-time education has also been developed. For example, by 1960 there were 25 million people involved in spare-time remedial, vocational and technical training, some of it equivalent to higher technical school courses. Another aspect of access that was central to the debates of the seventies was the question of the degree of access to higher education afforded to the children of workers and peasants. In the early years after liberation access was limited because so few adolescents and young adults from worker or peasant homes had graduated from secondary or even primary schools before liberation. As can be seen in Table 3, in the 1952-53 school year only 20.4% of students in postsecondary schools were from worker or peasant families. But during the fifties as opportunities in primary and secondary education opened up and as special schools modeled after the "Worker-Peasant Middle
Table 3

Percentage of Students from Worker or Peasant Background in Chinese Postsecondary Institutions, 1952-1965

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>20.46 a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>48.0 a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>64.6 b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


School" established by Beijing University in 1950 to train worker and peasant cadres and assist children from worker or peasant families went into operation, the proportion of students from these sectors increased. By 1958 of university-level students 48% came from worker or peasant families and by 1965 this increased to 64.6% in colleges and universities and 77.9% in secondary schools.

The Two Assessments

Although progress in establishing an educational infrastructure had been made, the prevailing view put forward in the media during the debates of the seventies was that the attempt to establish a socialist education system had been completely subverted during the "seventeen years" between liberation and the Cultural Revolution because the education system continued to reproduce unliberated social relations. The first assessment was that the bourgeoisie through the revisionist followers of Liu Shaoqi exercised a dictatorship over the sphere of education for the entire period. In particular, it was stated that the children of laboring people were by and large denied access to higher education and that of those who did make it to university many were corrupted by the bourgeois ideology that dominated the schools. The struggle against this domination was the focus of the "revolution in education" which was still in progress and its outcome, it was argued in the media in the mid-seventies, had by no means been finally decided.

The second assessment followed from the first. It was maintained that not only the intellectuals trained before liberation or trained abroad, but also all those trained in the "seventeen years" after
liberation were basically bourgeois in their ideology. Only the worker-peasant-soldier" (gong-nong-bing) students who had entered university since the Cultural Revolution were not automatically assumed to be bourgeois intellectuals. But they had to guard against being influenced by their teachers. It was also maintained that the process of reforming intellectuals was a protracted one involving a constant danger of backsliding.  

These assessments of the "seventeen years" were not in fact the same as those made at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. In a history of the policy debates of the fifties and sixties published in 1967 there is a detailed account of how Liu and his supporters promoted a "revisionist" line in education. But the account is that of a struggle between two lines. The period from 1953-57 is characterized as an "affirmation of socialist educational policy". The Great Leap Forward in this account is presented as a period of radical experimentation in which policies such as schools running their own factories and farms and establishing locally managed and work-study schools were developed. Even the period of retrenchment in the early sixties is analyzed as one of struggle rather than of domination by a revisionist line.

According to information that has been made public since the fall of the "gang of four", the "two assessments" were first pushed in 1970-71. Zhang Chunqiao initiated a "Forum on the Educational Revolution in the Liberal Arts" held at Fudan University in Shanghai during July 1970. It was at this meeting that the idea of the "two assessments" was first raised. It was brought up again at a similar forum held in the faculty of
science at Fudan in September. There was apparently considerable resistance to this analysis at these meetings. On the 9th of September a "compensatory course for the consolidation of Party organs" began. It lasted 81 days during which about 1,000 meetings were held. Twenty-five of the most "recalcitrant" cadres were selected as "key targets" and isolated and questioned for nine months.\textsuperscript{12}

At the national level Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan introduced the concept of the "two assessments" at a national conference on education held in July 1971. According to current description, supporters of Zhang and Yao controlled almost half of the conference's leading posts. Of the 631 delegates only about one-third had experience in educational work and only fifty senior cadres from the education field were present. Most delegates had no direct experience in education during the "seventeen years".\textsuperscript{13} Zhou Enlai attended the conference and made two speeches. He is reported to have said that: "Chairman Mao's red line illuminates the education front" and "the majority of intellectuals accept the Communist Party's guidance and serve socialism" and that it was necessary to "make an analysis of teachers and students who have been brought up after liberation and take a dialectical view of all questions".\textsuperscript{14} It has been reported that, in spite of the lack of experience of most delegates there was opposition from the floor as well.\textsuperscript{15} But this opposition and the content of Zhou's speeches were not publicly known until after 1976.

Chairman Mao's role in the debates of the summer of 1971 were also not publicly known during the struggles over education policies from 1973 to 1976. Although apparently he did not attend the national conference on education in 1971, he did issue a series of "instructions" which seem
to be comments on the debates at that meeting. One of these concerns what is known as the "sixty points". These are a set of "Temporary Work Rules under the Ministry of Education" (Draft), a document which summed up the experiments in education during the Great Leap Forward. It was discussed at a work meeting of the Central Committee held at Lushan in 1961. Mao presided at this meeting. The standing committee of the political bureau approved the document and had it distributed nationally as an official document for trial enforcement. An essential aspect of the "two assessments" was the complete negation of the "sixty points".

People's Daily in late 1977 reported that among Mao's 1971 "instructions" on education was a comment on the appraisal of the "sixty points". The paper quotes Mao as having said, "The sixty points on higher education still have some good points. Is it possible that there is not a single good point? What is wrong must be criticized, but we should only criticize things that are wrong". 16

An article in the December 1977 issue of Red Flag which was subsequently broadcast within China described Mao's response to the "two assessments". His reaction was certainly at odds with the outlook which dominated the media at the time. 17 The article states that:

The essential spirit of Chairman Mao's directives was: 1) Do not overdo the evaluation of the seventeen-year period. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, those who carried out an incorrect line were not the great majority, but rather a small proportion of people.

Mao's position was in marked contrast to Zhang Chunqiao's position. Zhang asserted that "Liu Shaoqi and his ilk recruited a handful of renegades, enemy agents and capitalist roaders to hold power in education
departments". For Zhang the question of proletarian leadership over education departments was "basically not settled yet". Mao is talking about erroneous lines carried out under the dictatorship of the proletariat while Zhang is talking about a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie over education.

With reference to the second assessment, Mao was paraphrased as having said:

2) It is still the case that the majority of intellectuals support the socialist system. It is still the case that those who carry out a feudal, bourgeois, or revisionist line are a minority of people. "The first year down to earth, the second year westernized, the third year they refuse to acknowledge their own parents." Nevertheless they do acknowledge them. It's just that they're worried about what others might think. Although they don't acknowledge them at the time, they will still acknowledge them in private. It's just that bourgeois ideology is still around, when it's not around they'll acknowledge them again.

During this time attempts to get the education system in motion again were being frustrated by problems with discipline, especially in the middle schools. Students had been told that they had a responsibility to exercise supervision over their teachers who were conscious or unconscious purveyors of bourgeois ideology. Anxiety and tensions over misunderstandings were added to a catalogue of occupational hazards experienced by teachers. Mao reacted against the codification of the prejudice against teachers in the "two assessments":
As for those who are teachers, they must still be respected. As soon as they say something incorrect, they get criticized. Is it after all possible to always say the right thing? So they say something incorrect, so what. So what if they say something wrong, it doesn't matter. Everyone has this in common when they investigate something. How is it possible to immediately arrive at a totally correct explanation? It's impossible.

The attitudes expressed by Zhou and Mao in 1971 were quite different from those conveyed by the "two assessments". But during the period from 1973-76 both the media and the Ministry of Education were dominated by the faction around Jiang Qing. This meant the opposing views, even those of central leaders (not to speak of ordinary citizens), would not see the light. It also meant that press campaigns were followed by orders from the center to implement the policies favored in the press.

Areas of Struggle: 1973-1976

The press campaigns that characterized the "revolution in education" from 1973 to 1976 did not discuss all aspects of the Cultural Revolution reforms in education. Reporters did write stories about the successful implementation of policies in a wide range of areas. But other reports focused on certain policies identified as "new socialist things" which were under supposed attack by "those attempting to reverse the correct verdicts of the Cultural Revolution". These "new socialist things" included the method of enrollment into postsecondary institutions, "open door" education, the integration of productive labor into the curriculum, and new relations between teachers and students. Three major campaigns in the "revolution in education" in the early years of the period under
discussion focused attention on these particular policies. In late 1975 and through most of 1976 themes from all three earlier struggles were brought together in a single campaign that contributed to the increasing tension that led up to the arrests of the "gang of four". These four campaigns will form the basis of the following analysis of the policy debates in education.

Zhang Tiesheng's Blank Exam Paper

This dispute over how to enroll students into institutions of higher education began in 1972 but did not become the subject of a press campaign until the latter half of 1973. A general orientation to enrollment emerged from the Cultural Revolution. Mao summarized it: "Students should be selected from among workers and peasants with practical experience, and they should return to production after a few years study".20

In practice this meant selecting entrants from among those with at least two years experience working in cities or rural areas or serving in the PLA. The popular term for these enrollees was worker-peasant-soldier students. In 1972 two questions emerged: whether or not this should be the only type of student enrolled and what form the enrollment process should take.

The first question arose out of the need to rapidly expand the corps of highly trained scientists and technicians. Because all the universities and many research institutes had ceased functioning from 1966 to the end of the decade or even later, there were no new graduates for many years. But China desperately needed more trained personnel to carry forward agricul
tural and industrial research and development. In 1972 a visiting
delegation of Chinese-American scientists suggested that China could rapidly develop a generation of young scientists by beginning their training early and having them participate in labor while they were in university. Zhou Enlai took up the idea and issued the following instruction:

The present revolution in education is still in the experimental stage. It is desirable to select a number of outstanding middle school graduates who show aptitude for research work and send them directly to college where they can spend a certain amount of time in manual labor each year. Those who show promise in the social and natural sciences need not take out two years for manual labor after graduation from middle school. They can go on with their study while doing some manual labor.

Zhou is also reported to have said that this form of enrollment could be carried out in parallel with the system of recruiting worker-peasant-soldier students. This instruction, along with others concerning a wide range of education policy questions, was not made public at the time. In 1976 there were references to the emergence in 1972 of a "reactionary trend of thought calling for capitalist restoration on the education front". This was apparently a reference to Zhou's instructions but no description of the contents of this trend of thought was given in the press.

Zhou's instruction was not implemented but the issue did not die. The Chinese-American scientists paid a return visit to China in 1974. On May 30 they were received by Chairman Mao. The visitors again raised their suggestion for training young scientists. Mao is reported to have expressed his support for this suggestion. Word of this never reached the public and the proposal, though supported both by Zhou and Mao, was not implemented. It was reported in 1977 that Zhang Chunqiao, working
through followers in the Ministry of Education, was able to sidetrack the issue. Zhang claimed that "Chairman Mao's remarks made at the reception had been misrecorded". However, another aspect of the policy discussions concerning enrollment did see the light of day. And it was this aspect that became the subject of the first major campaign on the education front. This concerned the procedure for enrolling students into university. The State Council decided that this would involve first voluntary application by the individual, then evaluation by fellow workers, peasants, soldiers, etc., of the applicant's attitude toward work and working people to ensure that those chosen would use their education to "serve the people" rather than merely to advance their own interests, then the granting of approval by the leadership of the applicant's work unit and finally an examination to ensure that the applicant had the necessary skills to allow him or her to perform well in university. Thus both politics and ability were to be taken into consideration. It was stressed that neither could be neglected.

In the recruitment of students, their political and ideological condition is in the first position. Nevertheless, their cultural level and state of health should also be seriously examined and put under strict control. The erroneous practice in which level, physical health, and other essential conditions are ignored is inimical to the bringing up of successors to the cause of the proletarian revolution.

In practice this meant that the final stage of the enrollment procedure involved a formal written examination of the applicant's mastery of various subjects taught in middle school. The State Council in April
1973 issued a directive on enrollment which outlined implementation procedures. That summer applicants who had been approved by their work units sat for entrance examinations.

One of those sitting for the examination in Liaoning province was Zhang Tiesheng, a middle school graduate who had settled in the countryside in 1968. He had since become the leader of a production brigade. At the end of the examination he handed over a letter to the leadership in which he sharply criticized the examination system:

I am not willing to answer the questions at random without basing myself on books; this would just waste the time of the leadership in reading my paper. So I would rather observe discipline, stick it out, and pull out honestly. Frankly speaking, I just can't reconcile myself to those bookworms who have for years just loafed about without any regular employment. I have a strong feeling against them. The examination is being cornered by this group of college fans. When at the height of summer hoeing and production, I just couldn't bear to drop production work and shut myself in a small house. This would be too selfish.

Zhang Tiesheng's letter first appeared in the Liaoning Daily in July 1973 and was reprinted in the Shanghai and Beijing papers in August. Following its publication in People's Daily, the paper received more than two thousand letters of protest but none of them were printed. Articles appearing in the press at the time praised Zhang Tiesheng for handing in a blank test paper and complained that the examination system systematically excluded revolutionary young people like him. The press attacked the examination system as an attempt to resurrect a revisionist line in education:
Any attempt to mix this kind of cultural test with the past system of entrance examination dominated by the revisionist line in education, to regard it as a "check point" and to take the "marks" as the principal criterion for admitting a student is an expression of the force of the old ideas and old habits.  

The education departments involved in the examination accepted Zhang Tiesheng's criticism and "confirmed his qualification for college education on account of his high level of consciousness of class struggle and the struggle between two lines and his excellent record in the countryside". He was admitted to Liaoning Agricultural College. In September 1973 he was admitted into the CCP and joined the Party's leading group at the agricultural college. Fifteen months later he was catapulted into a position on the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. He played a prominent role in the campaigns against "capitalist roaders" in 1975-76.

Certain aspects of Zhang Tiesheng's case were not publicized at the time and were only revealed after the fall of the "gang of four". They are interesting because they exemplify the kind of distortions that characterized the model promotion function of the press during this period. The examination was an "open book" test. Candidates could refer to textbooks during the examination. It was not the "ambush" type of surprise test criticized by Chairman Mao during the Cultural Revolution. In the editor's note that was published with Zhang's letter it was stated that: "Although Zhang Tiesheng returned his papers unanswered, he had, with regard to the political line in college enrollment, returned an answer which is clear and calls for deep thought". In fact, Zhang had taken the examination and failed. He received a score of sixty-one points
in math, thirty-eight in Chinese and six in physics and chemistry. As well, his letter was edited to exclude such passages as: "This is what I have always dreamt of and wanted. Will the leadership at all levels please give consideration to my application?" With these complicating factors suppressed, Zhang was publicized as a model of the type of person who should enter university. The message was clear. Overt political behavior had completely superceded academic skills as a criterion for entry into university. This had ramifications for the outlook and behavior of many young people all over the country.

As the campaign progressed, the academic aspect of the application process was altered through proposals for reform. The idea of the reforms was to change the examination to stress practical ability. Key articles in the newspapers argued that:

The educational test is given to verify the students' practical experience and ability to analyse and solve questions in practice by using fundamental knowledge. Thus the selection can be made on the basis of moral, intellectual and physical qualities, not on the basis of memorization of middle school tests.

An article in People's Daily suggested the organization of a forum to substitute for the formal examination. A "three in one" group formed of experienced workers or peasants, local leaders and cadres in charge of enrollment would meet with the entire group of candidates in each unit. Each candidate would be asked to analyse the manifestations of class struggle in his or her unit. A veteran worker or peasant would evaluate the candidate's ability to use his or her knowledge to solve production problems while working through a problem together and the results would be
presented at this forum. During the forum one candidate could question another. It is not clear whether this method was ever actually tried. However, after the '73 entrance exams, although informal evaluations of candidates' academic abilities were sometimes made, formal examinations were no longer given.

Although procedures varied somewhat from place to place, the ups and downs of the "revolution in education" produced a more or less comparable pattern of shifts in enrollment policy throughout the country. The Guangdong Institute of Foreign Languages first began enrolling students in the fall of 1971. This group of students came directly from middle schools on the basis of entrance examinations. They were recruited in essentially the same manner as students before the Cultural Revolution. Also like their pre-Cultural Revolution predecessors, theirs was a five-year program. No students were enrolled in 1972. The class of '73 was recommended by fellow workers, peasants, etc., after working two or more years. They did, however, take entrance examinations. From 1974 to 1976 there were no formal entrance exams. A team of teachers and cadres went out to check over the candidates to be selected but they were only supposed to ensure that the candidates had no physical or mental disability that might handicap them in studying foreign languages. In fact, the teams did attempt an evaluation of academic ability but the evaluations were necessarily very subjective.

The changes in recruitment procedures created a number of tensions and difficulties within the institute. One of these was directly political. There was considerable prestige in being considered a worker-peasant-
soldier student. The students who entered in 1971 were, of course, out of the running because they had entered under the "old system". The problem arose mainly between the students who had entered in 1973 and in 1974. For reasons that were no fault of their own and which will be discussed later in the chapter, the performance of the class of '74 was in general more uneven than those who had entered the previous year. There was considerable discussion among teachers and students about the problems of the class of '74. This distressed some of them who felt it a loss of face to be so compared. Someone told them that even though the 1973 students were academically superior, they were not "real" worker-peasant-soldier students because they had been enrolled on the basis of entrance exams. When word of this got around to the '73 students, they felt very threatened and there was considerable tension between the two grades.

Since enrollment in '74 did not involve any objective test of academic performance, students' abilities and experience varied over quite a wide range. At one extreme were students who had actually taught English in rural middle schools. In the same classes were peasant students from remote rural areas who had had no previous contact with a foreign language, had never studied grammar even of a Chinese dialect and even some who had difficulty with putonghua, the national dialect which was the language of instruction in postsecondary schools. The gap between the city and the countryside as manifested in urban vs. rural primary and secondary schools had a significant impact in the classroom. Teaching such classes was quite difficult. University courses were shortened to three years and much secondary level material had to be covered because of the inadequate
preparation for university of many students. There was much concern about the impact of these problems on the skills and knowledge of graduates.37

There were a variety of attempts to overcome problems caused by disparities in students' backgrounds. A method developed before the Cultural Revolution was continued. Classes were divided up into "small groups" of five or six. These groups, which studied and prepared for classes together, included both students who were doing well and students in difficulty. This provided some support for the latter and helped the former to consolidate their understanding and develop some teaching skills. As well, most teachers spent considerable time outside the classes assisting students with problems. While this did result in some cases of remarkable progress, it also resulted in extra pressure on the handicapped students, who felt they were holding back the rest of their class and taking up too much of their teachers' and classmates' time. In a situation where the gaps were so great, these methods could not provide an overall solution to the problem.

When this problem of disparity first arose with the 1973 students, some teachers who were anxious to help them in a more organized fashion proposed concentrating resources on the students with the greatest need for help. These teachers were among the best in the English department. They were clearly concerned that the attempt to open the doors of the universities to a wider spectrum of the population turn out a success. Based on the experience of the first semester, they proposed that the students be redivided and those having the most difficulty be placed in special smaller classes taught by the best teachers. They hoped that
after getting a solid foundation during the next semester, the students could be reintegrated into regular classes for their remaining two years. But some of the students who were targeted for this experiment reacted against the proposal. Big character posters appeared accusing the teachers involved of "looking down upon the worker-peasant-soldier students" and attempting to impose a bourgeois system of streaming patterned on Western education methods. Under heavy political attack from the students, who were backed by some Party cadres, the teachers dropped the suggestion.

The stated objective of dropping any formal evaluation of candidates' academic qualifications had been to ensure that the children of ordinary working people would not be discriminated against in the process of enrollment. The new students were to be drawn from among the workers, peasants, and soldiers. While at Beijing University in 1975 we discovered that some question remained as to whether or not this goal had been achieved. We found out that students in the Philosophy department who had entered in 1973 had noted that there appeared to be some discrepancy between the goal and the reality. They took an informal survey among their classmates and discovered that less than five percent of their fellow students came from ordinary peasant families. Of these most had entered university not as peasant students, but through the army.38

The root cause of this phenomenon was confusion over Marxist categories of class. The general idea seems simple. A person's class position is derived from his relation to the productive process. However, the concept of class has taken on new meanings in the Chinese context. For
example, on everyone's work record there are two categories that relate to class. One refers to family background. It means the class status of a person's family at liberation. This designation affected one's life chances. We were told that persons with "bad class backgrounds" (i.e., children and grandchildren of landlords, capitalists, counter-revolutionaries, rightists, etc.) would not be permitted to enter the language institute. In fact, the offspring of petit-bourgeois merchants, professionals, etc., were also discriminated against. The second category refers to a person's present occupation. There could be, however, variations on the strict Marxist model. At the time "intellectual" was a term of disapprobation. Therefore, teachers (since they engaged in mental labor) were intellectuals, but other people such as party cadres who did much theoretical work and organized and carried out political study programs were not. As party members they were "proletarian revolutionaries" and could not be designated intellectuals.39

What directly affected the enrollment system was the fact that a young person, having worked in a factory or having left the city to work in the countryside after graduating from middle school became, for purposes of enrollment a worker or a peasant. Thus the majority of "peasant" students in the Beijing University case were urban middle school graduates who had been transferred to rural areas as a part of the national movement to send young people "up to the mountains and down to the villages".40

This rather "flexible" method of assigning class status, combined with an enrollment procedure that involved subjective evaluation led to widespread suspicion that the most important factor in university admissions was pull. There was a folk saying at the time that can be
translated: "Before Liberation - money, after Liberation - grades, after the Cultural Revolution - power" (Jiefang qian - qian, jiefang hou - cheng, wenge hou - quan). In 1974 a student who had entered university through parental influence asked to be sent back to his work unit. This incident sparked a press campaign against "going in the back door" that did not seem to get very far.  

Through discussion with teachers and cadres at the language institute we discovered that the problem of "going in the back door" was a very complicated one. We were told that the school investigated cases where it was felt influence had been a factor. Often in cases where influence was involved, neither students nor their parents were aware of what had occurred. Associates, subordinates and others who reasoned that doing a favor for the child of a high cadre might prove useful to their team or brigade or to their own career carried out the necessary maneuvers on their own initiative. In a certain sense it was a natural outcome of networks of mutual obligation. As one cadre put it, "If there were no back doors, we would never get anything done".

But people involved in these investigations concluded that the "back door" was not the main reason large numbers of urban educated youth were entering university as "peasant" students. The main reason was that peasants themselves recommended the urban young people. The educated youth sent down to the countryside were highly visible. They were motivated to "integrate themselves with the poor and lower middle peasants". Many peasants were touched by the struggles of the urban youth to overcome difficulties. It was, after all, the urban and not the rural youth who were suffering from sunburn, sore muscles and blisters. Since secondary
education in the cities was superior to that in the countryside, the skills the urban youth brought with them stood out and were appreciated. Many peasants reasoned that the urban youths would do better in university. Moreover, many did not want to lose their own children, who would be assigned jobs in the cities after graduation. Thus it was "natural" that the urban youth were favored in the selections by the peasants. In a few cases the peasants had actually used the opportunity of university enrollment to rid themselves of urban young people who had not "fit in" with the rural community.42

Confused conceptions of class precluded the keeping of records that would have indicated whether or not a higher percentage of children of ordinary working people had an opportunity to attend university under the enrollment system that developed during the campaign around Zhang Tiesheng's "black examination paper". In conversations at the language institute we were told that the pressure of influence was felt most at the more prestigious universities and less so at agricultural and technical institutes. Although we did have some students from peasant families at our school they were a small minority, perhaps two or three in each class of seventeen or eighteen, if you include base level rural cadres in the category of peasants. Our general impression was that for the peasants, who were a majority of the working people and of the population, compared with before the Cultural Revolution, their representation had not improved at all. At this basic level the reforms had failed to achieve their goals. And it was the rejection of any form of objective academic criteria with the substitution of total reliance on subjective "political" criteria that was central both to the reforms and to their failure.
A spin-off from the campaign to reform university entrance examinations began with a series of articles in the press criticizing academic exams of all sorts. In October 1973 *People's Daily* printed a letter from a group of students in a middle school in Shanghai. The letter and accompanying commentary concerned an incident during which two students were reprimanded for cheating when they read another student's paper to find out how to solve a math problem. The commentary reported:

The young fighters said: "The old system of examination has basically still not been reformed. In the present examination, the questions are not made public, and the students are not allowed to refer to books, to consult with one another, much less to copy the answers of others. The moment a student enters the examination hall, he feels like 'a person under surveillance'". They said emotionally, "Actually, are Chairman Mao's directives on examinations ever going to be implemented?"³⁴

In their letter the students suggested that the students and teachers debate the following questions:

Is the present method of examination consistent with Chairman Mao's thought on education? Isn't giving a grade of zero to a test paper for "cheating" and demanding that the offender write a self-examination tantamount to using examination marks to oppress the students? By doing so, is the teacher actually practicing materialism or idealism?⁴⁴

Other articles were printed analysing the problem of how to reform examinations. The authors argued that closed book exams threatened to undermine the revolution in education. A *People's Daily* editorial argued "... if the old system of examination is still put into practice, the students will be pulled back to the old road of learning by rote, and this actually negates the achievements in the other fields of reform"."⁴⁵
Other forms of examination were suggested including open book tests, oral tests in which students gave verbal answers to teachers' and fellow students' questions. It was also suggested that group projects be substituted for exams. Many interesting innovations were suggested in the debates but the practical outcome we experienced was the elimination of anything that involved the evaluation of the performance of a single individual.

One reason for this was that the movement went beyond verbal debate. First at Shenyang Medical College and later in schools in Beijing, university teachers were "ambushed". They were lured into lecture halls to attend a meeting and forced to take examinations that demanded recall of fundamental knowledge in a wide range of fields. Many failed. Even those who did well were informed that they had failed politically because they "lacked a correct understanding of Zhang Tiesheng's examination paper". The purpose of this exercise was to allow the students to "turn the tables" on their professors and humiliate them. It apparently had another purpose as well. It has been reported that Jiang Qing used the results of the examinations to attack university entrance examinations at a meeting of the political bureau held in January 1974.

After incidents like the surprise exams teachers were very reluctant to debate the issues involved in the question of the proper role of exams. An incident at the language institute brought the problem home to me. No examinations were given at the institute. In the 1975 spring semester second year students put up big character posters denouncing two of their teachers for planning an ambush and treating them like enemies. In talking to the teachers and students involved, I discovered what was at issue was
a proposal to have a quiz the following week to assist both the teachers and students to assess whether they had mastered the basic concepts of a lesson just completed. It would be neither a surprise test nor for their records. Nevertheless, the teachers backed down under pressure from the students who were supported by some Party cadres. When I discussed the issue with the students who had written the posters, I discovered that they were afraid to take any sort of examination. They had had virtually no previous experience with tests. Since they had rarely had the opportunity to have their performance evaluated in the past, they were quite unsure and very subjective about their own abilities. This insecurity coupled with ideological confusion about the role of intellectuals in socialist society lay behind the vehemence of their criticism of their teachers.

The problem was that in the end evaluations of individuals had to be made. The process of job assignment required it and the units where the students were to work demanded an evaluation of their abilities and deficiencies. Teachers in the final year were required to write these evaluations. With no examinations of any sort the process was necessarily subjective. Teachers told us that fear of criticism for "looking down on worker-peasant-soldier students" caused many teachers to evaluate all their students as highly as possible.

From the Commune, To the Commune: The Movement to Learn from Chaoyang Agricultural College

The policies that were part of the Cultural Revolution reforms of education included a wide range of motives and methods for integrating study
with productive labor. In December 1967 the leading organs of the Party, Army and state published a document entitled "Chairman Mao on Educational Revolution". The preface stated that, "This is the basic guide for returning to classes to carry on the revolution ...". One of the themes running through this series of quotations was the importance of integrating study with productive labor. Several advantages made this integration desirable. It would assist students to understand the nature and importance of productive labor and broaden their appreciation for the key role of ordinary working people in socialist construction. It was a method of developing the connection between theory and practice so important to the learning process. And it could create important new links between the school and society. One of the most important statements from Mao that appears in the '67 document is the text of a letter to Jiangxi Communist Labor University which had been established in 1958. Mao singled out those elements that he found praiseworthy in the structure of the Communist Labor University.

... half work, half study, hard work and inexpensive study, seeking no funding from the state, establishing elementary schools, middle schools, and universities and situating them throughout the province in mountainous areas, with few on the plains — schools of this sort are indeed excellent.

In May 1971 Red Flag published a special issue on the proletarian revolution in education. The articles summed up a variety of educational experiments, including a number of attempts to integrate productive work with study. Nan'an county in Fujian province was cited for having developed an education system geared to the needs of agricultural production, including special secondary schools in which terms corresponded to the work
cycles of herders, tea pickers or young people who worked on the sea. Classrooms and equipment were provided by local brigades and texts were written to meet local needs. The extra teachers needed to staff this expanded system were drawn from demobilized soldiers, educated youth who had settled in the area and from among the peasants themselves.50

Another article in the same issue spotlighted a primary school in Heilongjiang province as a good example of combining work and study to build a school that would not be a drain on society. The brigade-run school had its own farmland, pastures, fishponds and animals. Teachers related classwork to students' work on the farm. The school accumulated twenty thousand yuan between 1958 and 1971. The article stressed the importance of avoiding either of the extremes of "using work to replace study" or "teaching books behind closed doors".51

Another article in the same issue of Red Flag described "open-door education" at Tongqi University in Shanghai. Running the school in an "open-door way" was an attempt to overcome the ivory tower isolation of academic study and discussion abstracted from practical life activity. It was a two-way process. Workers, peasants and soldiers were brought into the school to give lectures or the teachers and students went out of the school to carry out social investigations, or to join in technical projects. They usually lived or worked in the units where the open-door education was going on. Tongqi University facilitated this process by organizing a "May 7 Commune" with the Shanghai Construction Engineering Bureau and the Shanghai Industrial Construction Designing Institute. They organized a combined teaching force consisting of the 117 original teachers, ten industrial designers, and sixteen full-time and one hundred
part-time worker-teachers. The students were able to combine their studies in engineering with design and construction projects.\textsuperscript{52}

In January 1975 the press began to publicize an experiment with a new twist. This was the Chaoyang Agricultural College in Liaoning province, which carried the concept of integration of labor with study beyond the earlier policies of the Cultural Revolution. Guangming Daily launched a movement to learn from the experience of Chaoyang with an article that summed up its experience in three points:

Because Chairman Mao instructed that all agricultural colleges should be removed to the countryside, the Party committee of the Ch'aoyang Agricultural College overcame all kinds of resistance and resolutely brought the school to the doorstep of the poor and lower-middle peasants.

Because Chairman Mao instructed that "students should be selected from among workers and peasants with practical experience, and they should return to production after a few years' study," the Party committee of the Ch'aoyang Agricultural College resolutely implemented the practice of drawing students "from the commune" and sending them "back to the commune" after graduation to lead the life of peasants and earn workpoints.

Because Chairman Mao instructed that "all work in schools is carried out for the sake of transforming the thoughts of the students", the Party committee of the Ch'aoyang Agricultural College put above all work in school the raising of the socialist consciousness of the students.\textsuperscript{53}

The essence of this summary of the Chaoyang approach is summed up in the following assertion from the same article: "We do whatever Chairman Mao says. This is a fundamental experience responsible for the proper operation of the Ch'aoyang Agricultural College". In other words this "fundamental experience" was in essence a fundamentalist experience.
Chaoyang Agricultural College was the site of an "on-the-spot" conference of educators from agricultural and forestry institutes from across the country in December 1974. One of the key movers behind this conference was Mao Yuanxin, Mao's nephew and a close associate of the faction around Jiang Qing. In a very short period Mao Yuanxin was able to climb to the top ranks of the Party hierarchy in Liaoning to become a vice-secretary of the provincial party committee. In late 1977 articles in the press reviewed the conference proceedings and linked the timing and speeches of the meeting with factional maneuverings to discredit Zhou Enlai before the Fourth National People's Congress. The conference focused a great deal of attention on the notion that "whether or not the agricultural colleges are removed to the countryside is not just a question of a site but a question of whether or not Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in education is carried out". Zhou Enlai and the State Council had approved the transfer of the North China Agricultural University from northern Shaanxi province to an apparently more urban environment in Hebei province. At the conference the transfer was specifically attacked as a "counterattack against the Cultural Revolution". In fact, the purpose of the transfer had been to achieve a more rational distribution of agricultural universities throughout the country.

Chaoyang was originally part of Shenyang Agricultural College. In 1970 it moved out of the city to Chaoyang prefecture in spite of some reported opposition from teachers and staff. The decision to move the college and decentralize the campus to four locations was taken by the Liaoning provincial party committee. The objective was in essence two-fold: to bring the college closer to the people it was supposed to
serve - the peasants and to remove it from the corrupting influences of urban life. Newspaper accounts of Chaoyang stressed a policy known as "from the commune, to the commune" (she lai she qu) which was described as a "new teaching system" but which had actually been developed by Jiangxi Communist Labor University in 1958. The general idea was that students, who were being trained as agro-technicians, would return to their villages during the peak periods of the agricultural cycle. They could apply what they had learned in class in the field and bring back unsolved production problems for discussion and further efforts to find a solution in the classroom, laboratory or school-run farm. In their first year Chaoyang students spent two weeks to a month doing social investigation in the villages (the nature of this social investigation will be discussed below). The second year students spent seven months at school and five months at home during the busy seasons, while the third year students spent only five months at school.

While at school the students also engaged in productive labor. The form was similar to a policy implemented at Jiangxi Communist Labor University in 1958 called "combining teaching, scientific research and production". However, Chaoyang developed a further refinement of the policy based on a "three in one combination lesson group" (made up of teachers, students and peasants), through which they claimed that "the line of demarcation between the teachers and the students has been shattered". But what was really going on at Chaoyang had little to do with teaching or scientific research. Students and teachers were divided into small groups and were given a number of fruit trees or a farm plot to manage.
Teaching meant practical demonstrations of pruning methods and scientific research meant discussions of aspects of pruning the students did not understand. Critics of Chaoyang have pointed out that what was being neglected was any aspect of learning that did not have immediate practical use.62

At the on-the-spot education conference at Chaoyang the Jiangxi Communist Labor University was criticized for not keeping up with new developments in the revolutionary movement. A speaker at the conference said that "the Jiangxi Communist Labor University hasn't functioned properly over the past few years".63 The propagandists for Chaoyang gave the concept of "from the commune, to the commune" a new twist. In order to "restrict bourgeois right" Chaoyang was going to "dismantle the ladder of learning used by the exploiting classes for climbing up to the privileged strata".64 What was meant by this was that so long as graduation from university meant the possibility of a higher income or higher status, the generation of bourgeois ideas of self-advancement would be inherent in the system. The only way to insure against this was to eliminate any possibility of improved income or status derived from having attended college. At Chaoyang graduates were supposed to again become peasants laboring in the fields to earn workpoints. A survey in December 1975 of the first two classes of graduates showed that that was not quite what happened but that the graduates did remain in the rural areas. Of the 125 graduates surveyed, eight percent were working in their original teams, 40.8% became cadres or technicians at the brigade level, 34.3% held similar positions at the commune level and 16.8% worked
as teachers or technicians at the county level. However the "lesson" of Chaoyang promulgated in the press was not that graduates should return to their original geographic locations but that they should return to their original jobs.

Another new meaning given to the policy of "from the commune, to the commune" had to do with the third "lesson" to be learned from Chaoyang. This was that the most important work of any school was the "raising of the socialist consciousness of the students". The idea of "politics in command" (zhengzhi guashuai) was not new but Chaoyang made certain innovations in implementation. Political instruction began when the new students entered the school to deal with an ideological problem. It seems that freshmen were inclined to suffer from "naive class feelings". They were motivated by a desire to master technical knowledge in order to help transform the lives of the people of their home villages. The danger was that this could lead to them falling for the revisionist line of "putting vocation first" (zhiye diyi). To overcome this danger their first trip back to the commune was for the period of social investigation mentioned earlier. They were taken to backward villages in their area as part of their political education. "This made them understand that the basic cause of backwardness of their own village lay not in its 'weak foundation, poor conditions or low technical level' but in its failure to adhere to the basic line of the party."66

The students' political education continued throughout their stay at Chaoyang. Their activities in the villages were viewed as integral to transforming their consciousness. Of the activities of students and graduates featured in the press campaign after the on-the-spot conference
at Chaoyang, the overwhelming proportion focused not on production problems but on struggles against capitalist tendencies in the countryside. One of the graduates, Wang Yuwen, summed up a year's struggle against capitalist tendencies saying, "Hereafter I have to make the horns on my head harder and the thorns on my body sharper, criticize capitalist tendencies more vigorously and take still bigger strides in learning from Dazhai".67 This imagery of horns and thorns was taken directly from the words of the thick-skinned, sharp-tongued Zhang Tiesheng.

On a less graphic but more ominous note, another student challenged the local leadership. She was said to have discovered "that some cadres were unable to lead the masses in following the socialist road". She "took the initiative to tell the higher levels that when she returned to the countryside after graduation, she would boldly shoulder heavy burdens for the revolution ...".68 Chaoyang had a hand in determining the character of the "heavy burdens for the revolution" shouldered by their graduates. The Chaoyang administration guaranteed that former students maintained a connection with their alma mater. They returned to campus at regular intervals and whenever a new political movement was underway.69 This led to charges in 1977 that under the guise of "serving as an instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat", the college had acted as a center for a factional network in Chaoyang prefecture attempting to get into positions of power within production units to which graduates returned. This factional maneuvering was also said to have been facilitated through a variation on the policy pioneered by Tongqi's "May 7 Commune" discussed above.70 In this case the various departments at Chaoyang were integrated
with relevant bureaux of the prefecture's party organization. Students staffed the joint offices and the school was able to accrue considerable power at this level as well as coordinating graduates' struggles for power at the base.

Before going on to Chaoyang's role as a model on the national level we must examine the results of the school's role as a model in its own locality. Information on this topic is provided in two *New China News Agency* articles, one written in 1976 and the other in 1978, but both covering the same events. In 1976 it was reported that "May 7 Peasant Colleges" had been set up in all six counties of Chaoyang Prefecture. A total of 194 people's communes had been involved in the setting up of 180 peasant colleges. The process had begun in 1972 when the prefectural party committee had "called upon the masses to set up more colleges through their own efforts". They were modeled after the "teaching and research centers" of Chaoyang Agricultural College. The opportunity to attend college was extended to as many peasants as possible. The one college chosen as an example had graduated 14,000 students in four years of operation. As well it had trained 900 theoretical instructors in the college's revolutionary theory study classes. The teachers were Chaoyang graduates and experienced local peasants. The article said that the students and teachers built many of the building themselves and that the colleges were financially self-sufficient. The 1978 article reported that under the slogans "college means a school everyone attends" and "colleges should become bigger and bigger and be run at lower and lower levels", numerous colleges had in fact been set up. But they were colleges in name only. In the movement to establish them middle school
buildings, funds and teachers were commandeered. Rural secondary education was virtually suspended. According to 1976 statistics the middle schools in sixty-two communes could not enroll new students that year. In some areas even primary schools had been affected.\textsuperscript{72}

Chaoyang was cited not only as a model for agricultural schools but for all other schools as well; "The way the Chaoyang Agricultural College runs its school is not only applicable to all other agricultural colleges and universities, but it is also instructive for the entire educational front concerning how to exercise dictatorship over the bourgeoisie".\textsuperscript{73} According to this analysis "Judging from history, the separation of mental labor from manual labor enhanced the progress of science and culture. However, following the development of social production, the exploiting classes exerted themselves to widen the difference and opposition between mental and manual labor, thus creating a great barrier to the advance of science and culture ... If we do not reduce it step by step but uphold it and even broaden it, we not only add to the soil engendering capitalism and revisionism but also impede the progress of science and culture".\textsuperscript{74}

However, the national movement to learn from Chaoyang widened rather than reduced the opposition between mental and manual labor. The notion of using productive labor to instill respect for labor and laboring people became distorted. The concept that simple physical labor in itself could remold a person's ideology, which had existed before the movement, gained even wider acceptance. From this it followed that the more primitive and arduous the work, the greater its efficacy in thought-remolding. What this meant in too many schools was an absolute break between the content of
study and the form of labor. Thus the ideal of integration of study with productive labor tended to be lost. What was even worse, the amount of time devoted to labor came to be used as a measure of the revolutionary content of education.

This problem of non-integration of study and labor also affected the practice of open-door education. Too often bad planning and poor co-ordination between schools and production units exacerbated the ideological problem and resulted in relatively meaningless stints of labor in factories or rural brigades.

Several experiences with open-door education between 1973 and 1977 brought home to me some of the problems involved in organizing open-door education. First, it was not easy to find units willing to accept large numbers of students for periods up to two months. Food, accommodations, work assignments and other activities all had to be negotiated. The results were quite uneven. Some kinds of work were clearly unsuitable because it was impossible for the students to communicate with the workers or peasants either because they were not there or because of work conditions. In one instance I experienced it became clear that the factory's warm welcome was based on the leadership's desire to get as much free labor out of the situation as possible. They overfulfilled their quotas but the students were not provided with an opportunity to carry out any kind of social investigation.75 Because there was no workers' housing attached to the factory, the students were unable to visit with the workers after shift even though they themselves were living in make-shift accommodations on the factory grounds. They spent their days assembling alarm clocks
under work conditions which greatly limited communication. They spent their evenings studying English in their rooms. The effect of this form of open-door education was simply to impede their progress in language studies.

I also experienced other attempts at open-door education that were more successful. But making a success of it meant that the cadres had to struggle against two factors that would otherwise sabotage the whole project. On the one hand, because requesting help in organizing social investigation and opportunities for formal and informal discussions with workers or peasants could lead to the work unit refusing to participate, it was easy to accept the widely held notion that labor itself could provide ideological remolding, agree to provide the free labor of students, and call it open-door education. On the other hand, to insist on integrating the process with what the students were studying could lead, especially if you were an intellectual, to charges that you were attacking the Cultural Revolution and Chairman Mao's correct line on education by putting "vocational study first".

This tendency to use labor as a measure of the revolutionary content of education reached its height in the movement to learn from Chaoyang. At Beijing University the incoming freshman class, many of whom had just arrived from the countryside, were sent out to spend an entire year doing construction and agricultural labor on the university-run farm in the suburbs of Beijing. In the beginning they held regular classes, but as the movement developed labor time was expanded. There was no connection between the work they were doing and the liberal arts course work they tried to squeeze in between work stints.
At the language institute the freshmen spent every morning working on the school farm. This program caused considerable consternation among the students and teachers trying to squeeze in a full year's program to tired students by tired teachers on a half-day schedule. In particular, those students who grew up in the countryside protested that they had come to school to learn a foreign language and not how to do agricultural labor. One student from a remote mountain village was particularly outspoken arguing that her fellow Hakka villagers would have strong objections to her spending her time at university doing farm work which she could do just as well back home. She was quite anxious because she feared she would not be able to do her job after graduation because she knew she had to work twice as hard as the other students just to keep up with the class. However, she was told that her attitude revealed that a process of bourgeois degeneration had already set in and that she was trying to escape her peasant origins. The following year her position was vindicated but the damage had already been done. The freshman class of 1974 never fully recovered from the effects of the weak foundation laid in their first year.

The movement to learn from Chaoyang also affected the job assignment process for graduates of the language institute. Normally graduates had been assigned work according to a national plan based on the need for people with foreign language competency in government ministries, research institutes, schools, factories and the tourist industry. In 1975 the Chaoyang experience was used by the "gang of four" as a lever to influence a work conference of the Central Committee and the State Council on
enrollment and allocation of students. The result was that the graduates of the language institute were also subject to the Chaoyang policy of "from the commune, to the commune". In practice this meant that graduates were to be sent back to the work units from whence they came. Thus the national plan based on need was destroyed. The final irony of this situation concerned the students who graduated in the spring of 1977. Although the "gang of four" had been overthrown and the policy of "from the commune, to the commune" had been repudiated, the bureaucracy moves so slowly that no alternative allocation system had been drawn up as the time for graduation drew near. The students asked to be kept on at the school until a new policy could be put on stream. They argued that they had a right to further preparation before going out to work on the grounds that their education had been severely disrupted by the vicissitudes and turmoil of the past three years. Nevertheless they graduated on schedule and most returned to their original units. Eventually graduates who had been assigned to units which could not use their skills were transferred to more appropriate locations.

The Role of Intellectuals: The Case of Huang Shuai

In the winter of 1973 a middle school student named Huang Shuai got into a conflict with her teacher. In a diary she kept as part of her homework she criticized him for reprimanding her for giggling in class. The teacher reacted negatively and she continued to deepen her criticism of his attitudes and methods. She attacked him for maintaining the feudal attitude of the "teacher's absolute authority". The teacher was quoted
as having said, "In this struggle you cannot become a figure like Zhang Tiesheng". But that is exactly what she did become — a twelve-year-old Zhang Tiesheng. On December 12th she sent a letter giving her version of the conflict to Beijing Daily. It was reprinted with editorial comment in the major newspapers and a new movement began.

There was some resistance to the original thrust of this movement. Huang Shuai received over one thousand letters pointing out that she was handling the situation incorrectly by making her teacher out to be an enemy. Among the letter writers were three educated youth who were working on an army construction corps farm in Inner Mongolia. Huang Shuai's father passed their letter on to Party authorities and it made its way into the hands of Yao Wenyuan and Jiang Qing. They drafted a response to be published in Huang Shuai's name. The original plan was to publish the letter from Inner Mongolia and the reply but Yao later decided against publishing the original letter. When the reply was published in February 1974, the title had been changed from "A Reply to Comrade Wang Yaqui" (the pen name of the three young authors) to "A Reply to Comrades of the Political Department of the 19th Regiment of the Inner Mongolia Production and Construction Units". This made it appear that there were serious political problems at a fairly high level in the PLA.

The reply stated that the letter from Inner Mongolia had raised the following kinds of questions:

Is there a struggle between two classes and two roads? Are children allowed to take part in the revolution in education? Do they know how to make revolution? Have we already gone too far in the revolution in education?
The answers to these rhetorical questions being obvious, the reply went on to attack the authors of the letter:

Instead of acclaming this excellent situation, you grumbled at it and denounced it. This shows that your stand is wrong. What you advocate is the "benevolence" peddled by Confucius more than two thousand years ago, isn't it?80

The campaign against the "absolute authority of teachers" targeted teachers and other intellectuals as objects of struggle. It reinforced the idea that "it will take a long time before the world outlook of the majority of the intellectuals, which is still basically bourgeois can be changed".81 It reinforced repressive notions of supervision based on cynical distrust of intellectuals' conviction and commitment. In the words of one such cynic, "Remolding teachers is like pressing a rubber ball under the water. Press hard and it goes under, but as soon as you let go, it pops up again".82 The movement did not create these attitudes which go back to the early days of the revolution, but it gave the impression that authoritarian attitudes and practices among teachers was a widespread problem. By elevating the question of attitude to the level of political principle, it increased tension between teachers and students generally. The effects were felt most strongly in middle schools where students were urged to emulate Huang Shuai. There was a great deal of disorder in the schools at the time because the disciplinary regulations were under attack. Damage to school property was partially excused as a form of "resistance to bourgeois intellectuals" and forms of "feudal authoritarianism" and compared with the machine smashing protests of the Luddites during the 18th century.83 While it is true that in some schools the
movement to learn from Huang Shuai opened up opportunities to talk out and resolve real problems of authoritarianism in the classroom, the more general effect was a reinforcing of anarchist tendencies to reject all forms of authority among a wide sector of Chinese youth. Clashes, misunderstandings and mutual suspicion and distrust between teachers and students during this movement set the scene for extensive and severe political persecutions of educators in the mid-seventies.

In 1978 widespread rehabilitations of teachers occurred. Beijing Teacher's College reported that seventy-three leading cadres had been labeled "reactionary academic authorities" or "historical counter-revolutionaries". Twenty-three had died under this persecution. At Beijing University of 143 leading party cadres, 130 had been attacked as capitalist roaders. Among the faculty 145 of the 177 professors and assistant professors had been investigated for political crimes. A county in Shanxi province reported that 272 teachers, twenty-three percent of the total in the county at the time, suffered political persecution. An article from Qinghua University described what persecution could mean. During a campaign in the winter of 1973 to reeducate intellectuals three thousand faculty members were sent to do forced labor in an area known for its problems with endemic diseases. No precautionary steps against disease were taken. One-third of the teachers became seriously ill resulting in a great deal of physical and mental suffering.

Although not as lengthy or wide ranging as the movements to learn from Zhang Tiesheng or Chaoyang, the campaign to oppose the "absolute authority of the teacher" typifies the attitude toward intellectuals of
the period. This kind of thinking not only caused enormous suffering for thousands of individual teachers, but also through its demoralizing effects, sabotaged the whole effort to revolutionize education.

The Issues Come to a Head: The Farrago on the Education Front and the Campaign to Criticize Deng Xiaoping

In the last months of 1975 a new campaign in education was launched from the campuses of Qinghua University and Beijing University. It was the opening shot in a struggle that would broaden into the campaign to criticize Deng and that would finally be resolved with the arrests of the "gang of four". In this new campaign in education the issues of the previous campaigns were raised again but this time in a context that focused on the importance of education to the holding of political power.

In the "Outline Report on Science and Technology" and during discussion on the report when it was presented to Deng Xiaoping and other members of the State Council in September 1975, a number of serious problems were raised. These included the general deterioration of academic standards, the decline of scientific research and theoretical work, the deteriorating status and demoralization of teachers and problems with factionalism. As a result of these discussions the Party Central Committee instructed Zhou Rongxin, the Minister of Education, to work out a program for clearing up these problems in education.

Although Zhou Rongxin's speeches and writings were never made public, he is reported to have been concerned about a number of questions. He criticized the use of criteria of class background and ideological commitment as a substitute for proven academic ability in admitting students to
university. He was also critical of the role played by the Worker Propaganda Teams in the school system. Zhou felt that more time should be spent in studies and less doing physical labor and that the content of study should be more academic and less ideological. He also questioned the policy of sending middle school graduates to the countryside.  

Zhou Rongxin requested that institutes of higher education evaluate and report on the quality of education and the academic level of the students in their schools. In regard to problems in education he was quoted as having said that, "The root cause does not lie in the teachers, and perhaps not in the school leadership either. It lies in the leadership of educational departments, in those persons who are in charge of education".  

Chi Chun, a member of the leadership at Qinghua University, passed an altered transcript of Zhou Rongxin's remarks on to Yao Wenyuan. Chi Chun also instructed members of a factional network in the Ministry of Education to write Mao Zedong criticizing Zhou Rongxin. Chi Chun himself sent a copy of Zhou Rongxin's remarks to Mao Zedong asking for instructions on how to deal with it. Mao is said to have replied that the issues involved should be openly debated.  

The "debate" began on the Qinghua University campus on November 3, 1975. Beijing University soon followed suit. Using materials supplied to them by representatives of the factional network within both university Party leaderships, students began putting up big character posters attacking "the revisionist policy of the Minister of Education, Zhou Rongxin". 
On November 18th the Party committee at Qinghua called a mass meeting and opened a special area for big character posters. The gates of the university were thrown open to people from other units to come and read and copy the posters. By January 1976 over 200,000 people had visited the campus.

The "debate", again was entirely one-sided. The views of the other side appeared only as quotes out of context in big character posters or the press. The quotes indicated that a number of issues were at stake. The "advocates of the right deviationist wind to reverse correct verdicts" were accused of maintaining that the question of the orientation of the revolution in education had "never been properly solved". They were also quoted as saying that "the level of college education is even lower than that of the secondary technical schools in the past". Of "babbling" about "selecting and sending good middle school students directly to college" and of attacking party and working class leadership over education by advocating that "there must be laymen who are enthusiasts in science to exercise leadership". It was charged that: "Those who make ridiculous charges in education circles have distorted the task of open-door education as something which ignores cultural study and which only pays attention to practice-practice-practice". It was also alleged that "They claimed that the enthusiasm of the intellectuals could not be brought into full play, and that whenever there was a movement, the intellectuals were attacked".
Sources and contexts for quotations were never given. Often even who was being quoted was unclear. As the movement developed, the target broadened from people in education circles to capitalist roaders within the party and after the Tian An Men incident to "unrepentent capitalist roaders" of whom Deng Xiaoping was the example par excellence.

At the language institute the campaign started when students put up posters they had copied at Zhongshan University in Guangzhou. These in turn had been copied from posters at Qinghua and Beijing universities in Beijing. Articles in the press were also used as source materials for these big character posters. The only local issue was the question of the "black report". The students had been told by some members of the Workers' Propaganda Team that the administration had written a report on the students' competence to send to Zhou Rongxin. In fact, the leadership had only discussed preparations for a report. When the movement began, they dropped it like a hot potato. But the students were convinced that the report existed and demanded that the leadership turn it over to them for criticism. One of the institute's leaders was under political attack for having advocated doing the report and was "set aside" for the duration of the "movement". As the campaign broadened into a criticism of Deng Xiaoping and other central leaders, the school leadership showed less and less enthusiasm for it. The students, however, demanded in big character posters to know why the leadership was so cool toward this movement. The response was a series of "mass meetings" which lay bare the degree to which the process of political discussion had deteriorated. As speaker
after speaker paraphrased newspaper editorials and slogans, most of the audience (who were required to attend) read, knitted or tried to sleep sitting up.

In this movement, as in the earlier ones, a number of very important issues had been raised. On the most general level the question of the role of the education system in the process of socialist construction had been discussed. The relationship between the need to train skilled people to participate in the modernization of industry and agriculture and to raise the general cultural level of the population and the need to create an education system geared to closing the gap between city and countryside and between mental and manual labor and to strengthening socialist relations of mutual respect and cooperation had all been touched upon. As well, university enrollment policies, the relationship between study and productive labor in the training of students, the relationship between students and teachers and the role of intellectuals in socialist society had all been discussed in the press. The resolution of these issues is central to the creation of a consensus around what is meant by the creation of a modern, industrialized socialist society. But the real debate on these issues never took place. The "debate" was structured in a manner which made certain that no open airing of views, investigation of the concrete situation and experiment with alternatives could occur. By framing the debate in terms of "the continuation of class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat", dissent from the positions advocated in the press was equated with treason to the goals of socialist construction, i.e., counterrevolution.
This was most clear in the final "debate" on education in the "gang of four" era. The issues were reduced to the question of whether or not you supported socialism:

This struggle is not simply a controversy over the high or low quality of education, a controversy about how to realize the "four modernizations" or a question of leadership in a few units. The right deviationist wind to reverse previous verdicts is whipped up by people to blatantly launch an allround attack on the proletariat, politically, ideologically and organizationally.102

Those who questioned the policies advocated in the press were castigated as arrogant overlords who despised the people:

Those who whip up the right deviationist wind to reverse correct verdicts despise the laboring people and consider themselves as one cut above other people. Actually they are the most stupid. They have totally disregarded the Marxist truth that "the masses are the real heroes, while we ourselves are often childish and ignorant". This Marxist truth has been completely forsaken by them.103

Dire consequences were predicted if these enemies were not defeated. In the words of one worker-peasant-soldier student, "Should the right deviationist wind to reverse previous verdicts have its way, the restoration of capitalism would take place in China, we would be driven out of the campus, and the heads of millions upon millions of class brothers would roll in the sand".104

In an atmosphere created by the repetition of these themes over and over in the official media who would dare to say what he or she really felt? In the political discussion meetings following the arrests of the "gang of four" this theme came up repeatedly. In discussing his own actions one teacher illustrated how deep an impact the fear created by
this kind of reasoning can have. When we were carrying out open-door education at the clock factory discussed above, the teachers were searching for some way in which the students could do something more than assemble clocks and study English in the evenings. This problem was discussed with the factory leadership. They came up with a solution. The factory had purchased a high precision lathe from Japan. The manual that came with it was not in Chinese but in a garbled Japanese-English. We were told that the factory needed the manual translated in order to run the machine. We stopped the regular evening lessons in English and spent almost two months translating the manual. The job was extremely tedious and difficult as the manual was long, there were many technical terms and the atrocious grammar made the text almost incomprehensible. In the end we relied on discussions with the workers around the machine to figure out what the instructions were supposed to mean. At the mass meeting held in the factory before we left, the central theme stressed by students, teachers and factory leaders was the contribution we had made to production in the factory by translating this manual. This achievement was held up as a practical verification of the revolution in education. But after this meeting before we left the factory one of the leading cadres revealed to this teacher that in fact, there had been no need to translate the manual at all. Before our arrival the workers had themselves figured out how to run the machine. Not only had we made no contribution to production by this effort but we had interrupted the students' ongoing study. And yet this teacher kept this information to himself. He knew that he could be accused of sabotaging the revolution
in education. Appearance was more important than reality. In fact, he was one of those who extolled our "great contribution" to the revolution in education with our "successful experiment with open-door education" at a later mass meeting held at the institute. When we other members of the discussion group expressed amusement at his little tale, he pointed out that what he had done was in fact very serious and that so long as the conditions that created that form of hypocritical behavior continued, the attempt to create an education system suitable to socialist society would never succeed.
Notes: Chapter Seven, Education


3 During the Great Leap Forward, with the increase in the total number of schools, enrollments increased dramatically. Yang Hsui-feng ("Educational Work Achievements in 1958 and Arrangements for 1959", NCNA, Beijing, 1959, cited in Shi Ming Hu and Eli Seifman, Toward A New World Outlook (N.Y.: AMS Press, 1976), p. 106) reports that in 1958 there were 86 million children in primary school, 8.52 million students in ordinary secondary schools, 1.47 million in secondary vocational schools, 2 million in agricultural and other "professional" secondary schools and 660,000 in higher education. This however represents peak enrollments during the campaign to set up new schools during the Great Leap. It can be presumed that there was a decline in enrollment during the retrenchment in the early sixties.


6 Price, op. cit., p. 197.


10 Ibid., pp. 29-39.

11 Ibid., pp. 39-51.


19 This bit of doggerel, quoted by Chairman Mao was used quite often in the media to describe the process of degeneration of a university student from the countryside if he or she were not constantly on guard against bourgeois influence from teachers. In the 1975 film, "Breaking with Old Ideas", one of the characters acts out this scenario. See "Chinese Color Feature Film on Education Revolution is on Show", NCNA, May 22, 1976, SPRCP, 76-22, pp. 22-24, for a description of the plot of the film.


Ibid., p. 9.


Ibid.


"Daring Criticizer of Revisionism Makes Outstanding Record at College", NCNA, Sept. 1, 1974, SPRCP, 74-37, p. 198.


Ko Ming-wen, "Reforming the System of Student Enrollment is Geared to the Need of Consolidating the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", People's Daily, Sept. 22, 1973, SCMP, 73-41, p. 143.

The quality of education was hotly debated during the period 1973-76. The official position at the time was that the new students were politically better and were better equipped to carry out their jobs after graduation. (For eg., see Liang Xiao, "Revolutionary New Things are Invincible", Guangming Daily, Dec. 19, 1975, SPRCP, 75-53, pp. 76-83, and Yeh Hsin, "Always Adhere to Chairman Mao's Policy for Education", Red Flag, No. 12, Dec. 1975, translated in Chinese Education, Vol. IX, No. 3, Fall 1976, pp. 34-43.) We learned from teachers at Guangwai however that the shortening of schooling
and other problems had led to a situation where the units receiving our graduates were complaining about their inadequate training to do their jobs. Compared with pre-Cultural Revolution graduates there had been a deterioration. This was the official position taken after the fall of the "gang of four".

38 Talks with Chinese students in their second year in the Philosophy department at Beijing University, Spring 1975


40 For a comprehensive analysis of this movement see: Thomas P. Bernstein, Up to the Mountains and Down to the Villages, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977). Although the movement existed on a smaller scale prior to 1967, starting with that year most urban middle school graduates were transferred to the rural areas to work on communes, state farms, or in the army construction corps. Ostensibly they were sent for the rest of their lives but enrollment in university was one route back to the city.


42 See also Bernstein, op. cit., pp. 132-42 and 212-34.


Ibid., p. 23


"It is Good to Run Socialist Agricultural Colleges This Way", Guangming Daily, Jan. 17, 1975, SPRCP, 75-9, p. 108.

"A Stone that was used to Wildly Attack the Party", NCNA Domestic Service, No. 22, 1977, FBIS, 29 Nov. 77, pp. L3-4.

"It is Good to Run ...", op. cit., p. 103.


See: "College Students Selected from Among Peasants", NCNA, April 5, 1975, SPRCP, 75-16, p. 182, and Hsu Ming, "Train New Men Who Will Fight to Consolidate the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", People's Daily, June 5, 1975, SPRCP, 75-26, p. 2. Hsu Ming was the secretary of the party committee at Chaoyang.

"It is Good to Run ...", op. cit., p. 104.


"New Teaching System Combined with Productive Labor", NCNA, April 6, 1975, SPRCP, 75-16, pp. 143-44.

Hsu Ming, op. cit., p. 7.


Ibid., p. E2.

Hsu Ming, op. cit., p. 3. See note 60.

"A New Type of College for Bringing up New People", Guangming Daily, Dec. 9, 1975, SPRCP, 75-52, p. 45.
Ibid., pp. 45-47

"It is Good to Run ...", op. cit., p. 106. See also: "Schools Should Serve as an Instrument for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", Red Flag, No. 5, 1975, pp. 64-69; Chinese Education, Vol. VIII, No. 4, Winter 1975-76, p. 5-17, for further examples.

"It is Good to Run ...", op. cit., p. 107.

"A New Type ...", op. cit., p. 51.


Ibid., p. 23.

Social investigation was an organized means for the students to find out about the life and work of the people in the units where they had open-door education. It included meetings with leading cadres, talks with veteran workers or peasants about their lives before and after liberation and visits to workshops, clinics, schools, etc. Students in different disciplines integrated the results of these investigations into their studies in different ways. History students writing local or family histories, economics students analyzing the development of the collective economy in city and countryside, and enterprise management system, etc., medical students collecting data on and samples of local traditional medicinal remedies, literature students writing poetry, short stories, plays, etc., with characters based on the people they had lived and worked with, etc. Foreign language students acted as interpreters during this process and wrote reports on what they learned in the language they were studying.


79 Wang Wen-yao, En Ya-li, Hsing Cho, "Expose the Wrong Verdict on the Wang Ya-cho Case", Beijing Radio, Domestic Service in Mandarin, Dec. 23, 1977, FBIS, 23 Dec. 77, pp. E15-16. Another account is available in "Disrupting relationship between teachers and students", Beijing Review, No. 27, July 1, 1977, pp. 15-17, explains that Huang Shuai had personally replied to the three educated youth saying that she was still young and immature and that she needed further help from them.


83 "Disrupting Relationship ...", op. cit., p. 16.


88 For a partial text of the "Outline Report on Science and Technology" and the discussions with Deng Xiaoping, see: Chi Hsin, The Case of the Gang of Four (Hong Kong, Cosmos Books, 1977), pp. 277-95.


90 These views are summed up by Peter J. Seybolt in his editor's introduction to translations of articles appearing in the Chinese press in 1975 which were published in Chinese Education, Vol. IX, Nos. 3-4, Fall 1976.


95 "The Great Debate ...", op. cit., p. 258.


99 Liang Hsiao, "On the Current ...", ibid., p. 219; and "To Occupy ...", ibid., p. 273.

100 "The Orientation of the Educational Revolution Should Not be Tampered With", People's Daily, Dec. 4, 1975, FBIS, 4 Dec. 85, p. El. The term "practice-practice-practice" is to be counterposed to "practice-theory-practice" which means that theory arises out of practice and must be tested in practice.


104 "The Continuation and Deepening ...", op. cit., p. 33.
Chapter Eight: Conclusion

It appeared that there was an intense, wide-ranging, public debate over crucial questions of development policy which had focused national attention throughout the mid-seventies. The media were filled with articles, editorials, historical analyses, reports of model units, letters to the editor, stories, songs and poems reflecting a wide range of issues and controversies. The whole population discussed the issues raised in the media in political study sessions. An enormous number of people were involved in producing "big character posters", articles and speeches which discuss these issues.

Key issues in any debate over the transition to socialism were raised both directly and indirectly. How could self-management of production by working people be maintained and expanded? How could the division of labor in factories be transcended through cadre participation in labor and worker participation in technical and managerial decisions? What role should material incentives and wages play in work motivation? Could technology imported from capitalist countries be adapted to the development of a socialist society? Can technology be placed under the control of the people who use it? How can science play a role in socialist construction? How can production in collectivized agriculture best be expanded? How can access to education be expanded for working people? What is the nature of a socialist education system?
In the mid-seventies China presented a picture to the world of how a people could be actively engaged in determining the nature of the society in which they lived. China appeared to be a model of how debate and decision-making would be carried out in a socialist society. A closer examination of the struggles over policy during this period has revealed that this picture was an illusion. Open debate of the issues, to the degree that it occurred at all, occurred only in the upper levels of the Party and state hierarchy and was kept secret from the population and even from the lower levels of the Party. Public debate, orchestrated by the media, was almost entirely one-sided. The content of alternative viewpoints was barely discernable. Participation degenerated to ritualized repetition of media materials to audiences who were there because attendance was compulsory. Some of those who took the debate seriously found themselves subject to repression because of the opinions they contributed to the discussion. The form in which the "debate" took place also led to serious distortions of the underlying issues and of the theoretical framework that was supposed to be informing the debate.

It has been my argument that underlying conceptual problems were at the heart of the distortion of the form and content of the debates. I introduced these conceptual problems in the first chapter. I would like to review them here in the light of materials discussed in the description of the debates.
The Party as the "Core of Leadership"

According to the theory of Marxism-Leninism, the party as an organization of the most advanced elements of the proletariat, has the role of leading the working class and all other oppressed classes toward their own self-emancipation, toward the elimination of all relations of domination. This conceptualization of the role of the Party is a dialectical one which expresses a contradiction between leaders and led. This contradiction is to be transcended through action. The Party led the people in class struggle against the economic and ideological domination and political repression of the ruling classes in the old society. In the new society the party is to lead the working people in the suppression of attempts at restoration of prior relations of domination and in the creation of new institutions and methods through which the citizenry can organize themselves as associated producers to themselves manage the productive process and either directly or indirectly through responsible and revocable representatives take over the necessary administration of national and local affairs. With the gradual elimination of the need for a coercive power standing above the people and the elimination of the differences in consciousness between the Party minority and the majority, politics and the party will disappear. This, theoretically, is the party's role and it is a standard of judgment that can be applied to any party that describes itself as communist. The goal need not be accomplished on the morning of the revolution or even in the lifetime of the first few postrevolutionary generations, but there should be a discernable tendency in this direction given, the concrete situation in which the party is operating.
This liberating role is a part of the self-conception of the CCP. Mao Zedong had stressed the need for the Party to maintain close links with the people and its duty to articulate their interests, aspirations and needs in his famous "mass line" formulation. But the notion of the Party as the servant of the people was obscured by the concept of the need for the enhancement of the leadership function of the party inherited from the Soviet Union. This concept was accepted by Mao and expression of it through a quotation from the Chairman appeared in many contexts all over China:

The Chinese Communist Party is the core of leadership of the whole Chinese people. Without this core, the cause of socialism cannot be victorious.

The effects of this concept on the ability of people to participate in policy debate and decision can be seen from the description of the Fourth National People's Congress included in the third chapter. In theory, the National People's Congress is the highest political authority in China. It is the body which constitutionally determines national policy. As such it should be a central forum for debate. In fact, the policy documents and the lists of appointments were prepared by the Party Central Committee before the Congress met. The supreme representative body in the state structure played a purely ceremonial role rubber stamping decisions made elsewhere. The other forum for policy debate described in the same chapter was the Tenth Party Congress. The Central Committee met in secret and the delegates merely listened to reports prepared ahead of time. On a national level, the people, through their representatives in
the Party and state played no role in debate and decision-making. Even
the "representatives" who attended these "decision-making" congresses
were "elected" by acclamation after recommendation by Party authorities.

At a lower level, in the account of worker participation in manage-
ment, it is clear that centralization of decision-making in the Party
placed severe limits on the self-managing role of workers. China had
made important progress in this area at the base level of factory ad-
ministration. But at the higher levels, worker representation depended
on how well the Party, which held the real levers of power, articulated
the workers' interests through proper implementation of the "mass line"
based on the personal initiative of individuals. In spite of the exist-
ence of the revolutionary committee and other bodies in which individual
workers participated, there was no institutionalized structure through
which worker representatives could survey the opinions of their consti-
ituency and be held accountable to it.

Marx, in describing the new socialist society emerging in the Paris
Commune noted that "... science [was] itself freed from the fetters which
class prejudice and governmental force had imposed upon it". In the
chapter on science and technology I noted that Party leadership played
an important role in the organization of science and technology networks
in China. But when the Party expanded its role as representative of the
interests of the working people in the mid-seventies, "class prejudice
and governmental force" seriously affected scientific work and theory.

Attempts at Party domination of scientific theory indicate a central
aspect of the prevailing concept of Party leadership. The Party leads
because it is the repository of the theoretical framework necessary for a
correct understanding of reality. A material manifestation of this concept of theoretical leadership was the centralization of control of the media in the hands of the Party. In the mid-seventies this centralization became so extreme, it was relatively easy for a faction within the Party to monopolize control. At a lower level within a factory for example, the Party maintained control over the organization and content of political study and discussion.

This Party monopolization of the authoritative interpretation of "universal truths" led to the virtually unchallenged promulgation of serious distortions of Marxist theory for factional purposes as in the discussions of bourgeois right in Yao Wenyuan and Zhang Chunqiao's articles and in the explanation of the concepts in the factory, the discussion of the emergence of a new bourgeoisie in the chapter on agriculture, in distortion of class concepts in the enrollment policy for university, and the invention of the dubious class category, "proletarian revolutionary", to free Party cadre from the odious designation of "intellectual".

The Continuation of Class Struggle in Socialist Society

Mao Zedong developed the concept of the continuation of class struggle in socialist society in opposition to what he viewed as the revisionist notion that class struggles die out under socialism. He believed that this notion was being used by a new ruling class in the Soviet Union to disarm the people ideologically and reinforce its rule. In this sense Mao's concept can play a positive role in the process of creating a
socialist society. It implies that constant vigilance has to be main-
tained in order that the struggle for greater self-management and self-
government not be subverted by old or new privileged groups. Much the
same as Marx warned that the Paris communards needed to be on guard
against the possible degeneration of their representatives. But the
use of the term class struggle to describe this process, while under-
lining its central importance, has the danger of reducing all differences
to antagonistic conflicts resolvable only by force. Mao was aware of
this danger and dealt at length with the problem of keeping conflicts
of interest among the people at a non-antagonistic level in his speech
"On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People". In it he
deals with the question of debate:

What should our policy be towards non-Marxist ideas? As far as unmistakable counter-revolutionaries and saboteurs of the socialist cause are concerned, the matter is easy: we simply deprive them of their free-
dom of speech. But incorrect ideas among the people are quite a different matter. Will it do to ban such ideas and deny them any opportunity for expression? Certainly not. It is not only futile but very harmful to use summary methods in dealing with ideological questions among the people, with questions concerned with man's mental world. You may ban the expression of wrong ideas, but the ideas will still be there. On the other hand, if correct ideas are pampered in hot-houses without being exposed to the elements or immunized from disease, they will not win out against erroneous ones. Therefore, it is only by employing the method of discussion, criticism and reasoning that we can really foster correct ideas and overcome wrong ones, and that we can really settle issues. 5

The central question of course is who is to define who is among the
people and who is an enemy. This problem was answered by the Party almost immediately after Mao's speech when hundreds of intellectuals were repressed
during the campaign that followed the "hundred flowers" period celebrated by Mao. In the Anti-Rightist movement prominent intellectuals who expressed their opinions during the "hundred flowers" were labelled "rightists" and subjected to various forms of coercion including periods of forced labor. Mao himself used this tactic of labelling in his struggle with Peng Dehuai during the Great Leap Forward and it was applied against his adversaries in the Cultural Revolution.

This tactic played a pervasive role in the debates in the mid-seventies. It was used to intimidate individuals and whole categories of people. High level cadres for example, were labelled "capitalist roaders", In the debates over industrial policy it was stressed that managerial personnel and technicians were by virtue of their occupations in an at least potentially antagonistic relationship with the working class. In the specific example of repression given in the chapter, the technician Li was jailed as a "counterrevolutionary" for challenging the theoretical basis of this labelling tactic.

During the debates over science and technology, the whole sector was labelled an area of intense class struggle. In the specific debate over the importation of foreign technology, Deng Xiaoping's arguments were countered by labelling and crew members of the Fengqing were labelled as participants in a "counterrevolutionary" incident and jailed for defending the purchase of foreign ships.

The chapter on education opened with a discussion of the "two assessments" and its role in placing "bourgeois" intellectuals at least potentially in the category of enemy and later in the chapter the Huang Shuai
case was used as an example of how this prejudice was reinforced. Labelling played an important role in the so-called "farrago on the education front" of early 1976. In its treatment of every single issue, the media stressed the relation to the ongoing class struggle, stressed the intensity of the struggle and the danger of regression, and labelled opposing arguments as those of enemies. Every discussion was raised to the level of antagonistic class struggle. In this context, reasoned debate based on concrete investigation was made irrelevant and impotent. The issues could be settled only by force. In the mid-seventies this meant the application of the repressive force of the state against ordinary individuals or the organization of factional groups to attack leaders whose position protected them from arrest as in the Jiangxi Tractor Factory case. The general "debate" as well could be ended only by force, through the arrests of the "gang of four" and their followers.

Misunderstanding of the Relationship Between the Forces and Relations of Production

As I elaborated in the introductory chapter, in a society where tremendous development of the forces of production is required to lay the material foundations for a transition to socialism, a correct estimation of the possibility of changes in the relations of production unleashing existing potential in the forces of production is crucial at each stage of development. Attempts to push changes in the relations of production beyond what is viable, given the development of the forces of production
and consciousness of the people, leads to regression rather than progress. Determination of a correct assessment of the concrete situation necessitates wide-ranging empirical investigation and debate.

Differences over whether development of the forces or changes in the relations of production should be emphasized emerged in the different emphases in the speeches of Zhou Enlai and Zhang Chunqiao as discussed in the chapter on meetings and mass movements. This question emerged in the discussion of material incentives and the necessity of restricting bourgeois right, in the differences over which aspects of the Dazhai model to emphasize, in the discussions of the necessity of cutting off the tails of capitalism in the rural areas and it underlay the debate over whether or not to continue the "revolution in education". But in the analyses presented in the media the dialectical relationship between the two factors was obscured and the emphasis was on reforming the relations of production. To emphasize problems of developing production led to charges of advocating "the theory of the primacy of the productive forces". The idea was that if revolution were grasped, production would develop of its own accord.

This idea led to attempts to push the reform of the relations of production beyond positive possibilities inherent in the situation. In industry it led to continued drives to eliminate material incentives even after experiments had shown that their elimination in certain work situations led to serious deterioration in quality and quantity of production. In the discussions on bourgeois right in the factories the eight-grade system was attacked. The workers themselves had to point out that the
concrete situation was that the "bourgeois" right of distribution "to each according to their work" had not been realized much less transcended. Reforms of the science and technology networks that ignored the role of "pure" research in developing the forces of production in the name of making science serve the workers and peasants disrupted China's technological development and ironically made her more dependent on foreign technology.

In the chapter on agriculture I described how China had already suffered a major setback when the "communist wind" caused the centralizing tendency to get out of control. Ignoring the lesson of 1958-59, the media, in publicizing the Dazhai model, emphasized only the changes in the relations of production that had occurred at Dazhai while neglecting the impact of methods of scientific agriculture developed by the brigade. They also failed to report that an important component of the brigade's high levels of production was state aid to a revolutionary model.

At the Conference to Learn from Dazhai greater stress was given to the development of the productive forces. But the movement was subverted through the press campaigns against "capitalist roaders" and the publicity given to the Xiaoqingzhuang and He'ertao models. A new "communist wind" emerged emphasizing elimination of free markets and sideline production and "transit regardless of poverty" to the detriment of production.

In education reforms of enrollment policy, teaching methods, school-societal relations and student-teacher relations provided the content of the "revolution in education" packaged and promoted by the media. Those who in late 1975 raised questions about how these reforms were affecting
the ability of the education system to develop the technical skills and general cultural levels of working people, were charged with advocating the "theory of the primacy of the productive forces" in the education sector.

In every area of contention, one-sided emphasis on the relations of production and the labelling of any concern with the development of productive forces obstructed needed discussion of technical problems and the social implications of alternatives.

Misconceptions of the Process of Transcending the Division of Labor

The division of labor reaches its most extreme form in the technical division of labor in modern industry. Workers become appendages of machines, conceptualization and execution are completely separated and work is dehumanized. But at the same time that the division of labor provides for the exploitation and dehumanization of the majority, it also plays a progressive role. A minority is freed from drudgery and can contribute to the transformation of the work process. The division of labor promotes both domination and progress in science and technology. The levels of technology achieved by industrial society have created the possibility for a situation in which no one need engage in deskillled, mindless labor as a life-long full-time occupation. One goal of socialism is the realization of this potential. The transformations necessary to realize this potential were discussed in the chapter on science and technology. They involve the participation of all members of society in many different conceptualization processes in order to collectively control
production. While creating the material foundations for a transition to socialism in China, it is necessary to begin the transcendence of the division of labor at the same time that the technical means for that transcendence are being created. While material conditions severely limit the scope of this effort, they cannot be allowed to postpone it entirely. This approach goes beyond the conception of the dialectical relationship between the relations and forces of production in the process of development and is the most basic meaning of the slogan: "grasp revolution, promote production".

To achieve this goal the conceptualization process must be appropriated by producers on two levels: within individual production units (self-management and the appropriation of technology) and in terms of conceptualization of production in society as a whole (self-government through participation in planning).

As the descriptions of the situation in the chapters on industry and science and technology show, China has made progress in this area. In industry self-management had been achieved in the work teams with the "eight officials" system. The appropriation of technology by the producers was being encouraged through the expansion of technical training and through participation of workers in three-in-one technical innovation groups. In practice cooperation between technicians and workers in projects like the building of the MC-ATC described in the chapter on science and technology were creating the conditions for producer appropriation of technology.
But the treatment of issues connected with the transcendence of the division of labor obscured the basic questions. What was stressed was cadre and technician participation in labor. While certainly necessary, it was explained in a manner that implied that the division between manual and mental labor could be overcome by a mere transformation in the minds of management cadres and technicians. "Mixing his sweat with that of the workers" insured that a cadre would organize production in the interests of the workers and not become an overlord.

In spite of a few examples of attempts at expanding institutions of worker control to higher levels, the media treated self-management at higher levels as something which had already been achieved. It was argued that the central task was to defend the status quo against attempts by "capitalist roaders" to reimpose domination. The transparent ineffectiveness of worker representation at higher levels and at mass meetings where production plans were "decided" was ignored by a media loudly defending worker participation in management. This again was related to the notion of overcoming the division of labor abstractly through ideological means. So long as Party members at higher levels continued to carry out the proletarian line and did not degenerate into bourgeois elements, producer participation in conceptualization of production in society as a whole (self-government) was assured through the representation of their interests by the revolutionary leadership of the Party.
In the chapter on education a similar pattern emerges. Education is seen as problematic in that it can reinforce the division of labor. Access to higher education is restricted to "workers, peasants and soldiers" to ensure that it does not become a means of creating an educated elite. Labor is seen as a means of ideological remoulding, the more arduous the more effective. In the movement to learn from Chaoyang time spent in labor became a measure of the revolutionary content in education. What was lost sight of was the key issue of integrating work and study in the education process and strengthening the education system's ability to provide education at a level of technical and cultural competency which allows the producers to appropriate science and technology and manage the society themselves.

Misconception of the Nature of Chinese Society

The overriding misconception informing the debates of the mid-seventies which subsumes the other misconceptions discussed above, concerns the nature of Chinese society. Every issue was "debated" from the point of view of protecting the dictatorship of the proletariat and the socialist system. The abiding danger was that "capitalist roaders in the Party" would engineer a restoration of capitalism. My argument is that this point of view stemmed from a basic misunderstanding of the nature of Chinese society in the mid-seventies. In order to clarify this point I would like to compare two alternative descriptions of Chinese society in the mid-seventies, one extrapolated from the description of the danger of capitalist restoration presented in the media and the other based upon recent Marxist analysis of Soviet and East European societies.
The media in the mid-seventies presented the following description of China.

1. China is a socialist society in which the means of production are owned by the workers and peasants in the form of collective and state property. Remnants of private property and production exist in private plots and peasant sideline production in the countryside.

2. As a reflection of their relation to the means of production through ownership, the working class, in alliance with the peasants, is the ruling class. China is a dictatorship of the proletariat. The working class exercises its dictatorship through its representatives in the state structure and through the Communist Party which represents and serves the interests of the workers and peasants.

3. China remains a class society. Remnants of the capitalist and landlord class remain. Bourgeois and feudal ideologies still have strong influence. The continued existence of small production, commodity exchange and bourgeois right provide the economic basis for the emergence of a new bourgeois class which can collectively assume ownership of the means of production as their private property by seizing state power. Elements of this class have already emerged within the leadership of the Communist Party and are attempting a restoration of capitalism.

4. Within society a social basis for the rule of a new bourgeoisie exists. Mental workers, managers, technicians and intellectuals in general have inherited from the old society feudal and bourgeois attitudes of disdain for labor and a desire to turn their intellectual capital into privilege and authority. Without achieving ideological remoulding, they would
support a reversion to capitalism. Peasants engaged in small production and deriving part of their income from private production continue to exhibit a small producer mentality. In the absence of ideological re-moulding many, especially those who were relatively well-off before liberation, would welcome a return to private production in agriculture.

An Alternative Analytical Framework

The analysis of Chinese society presented in the media was based on two underlying premises. The distinguishing character of socialist society was said to be the elimination of private property in the means of production. In socialist society thus defined, regression could only occur in the direction of the restoration of capitalist relations of production since capitalism is the last class society based upon the private ownership in the means of production in the orthodox Marxist-Leninist schema of world history.

But it is not necessary to accept these premises in order to remain within the framework of a Marxist analysis. In his descriptions of the Asiatic mode of production discussed in the introductory chapter, Marx posited a society in which classes exist without the ruling class deriving its power from private ownership of the means of production. This allows for an alternative analysis of Chinese society in the mid-seventies.

1. Anti-capitalist revolutions in underdeveloped countries like China have produced an entirely new social formation. China is not a socialist society. It has not achieved socialism because the producers
have not been able to appropriate the means for production through self-management and self-government. It is not a capitalist society because private property and production play an extremely insignificant role.

2. In this social formation, relationships to the means of production are not reflected in ownership or non-ownership, but in different roles in the division of labor in society. Control over the means of production is based on control over the process of conceptualization. The highest levels of the Party and state hierarchy, who control the conceptualization of the productive process in society as a whole through state planning, form a ruling class. This ruling class is not an emergent new bourgeoisie. It has existed from the point when the Party gained control of the state at the end of the civil war in 1949. This ruling class exercises its dictatorship through a disciplined, centralized Party organization which is integrated into the state structure and controls the conceptualization process at the lower levels by insuring that the Party's line is adhered to in all sectors of the society. Each level of the Party structure dominates the levels below and is dominated by the levels above on the basis of division of labor.

3. China remains a class society. The division of labor between the leadership and the masses of ordinary Party members reflects and reinforces the division between the Party and the people. Exploitation continues to exist inasmuch as some of the social surplus is used to provide legal and illegal privileges for the Party-state leadership in the form of relatively 'high salaries, the provision of better housing, servants, the use of a car, access to special stores, superior medical services, exclusive
dining halls, and better education for their children. There are strict legal limits on these privileges but in the mid-seventies lack of enforcement led to greatly increased corruption and hypocrisy. But the bulk of the social surplus is used to develop the forces of production and to provide an expanding welfare and education system for the general population. These "social-democratic" reforms in China represent real and considerable progress but cannot be equated with socialism. But they are an indication of the relatively benevolent rule of the Party to date. Paternalism and not corruption has been the prevailing characteristic.

4. Within Chinese society a social basis exists for the continuation of Party rule based on the division of labor. A hierarchy of power, prestige and privilege exists in the Party, which is open to almost all members of society. In the mid-seventies entry to and promotion within the Party was based upon activism, political and personal loyalty and disciplined behaviour. An ideological basis has been created for the Party's rule through Party monopolization of ideological legitimacy. This is maintained through control over education, print and broadcast media, the arts and organized political study. This ideological basis is reinforced by the genuine prestige of the party and its leadership among the general population, especially the peasantry. This prestige is based on real progress made since liberation which is identified with socialism and the leadership of Mao Zedong and the Communist Party.

If the producers were in fact the ruling class they would be making effective interventions in any debate on issues of socialist construction. Alternative policies would be clearly articulated and openly
discussed. Decisions would be reached in an open and democratic manner by bodies directly responsible to the producers as the ruling class. The manner in which the struggles over socialist construction unfolded and the restricted and distorted role that the producers played in the debates forces the conclusion that China, in the mid-seventies, was not a socialist society. There had been tremendous achievements in the provision of a secure life for the people and significant advances in the standard of living. The basic infrastructure of an industrial society had been constructed in the cities and the technical transformation of agriculture was beginning. But the beginnings of socialist society described by Marx in *The Civil War in France*, the regulation of national production under a common plan by united cooperative societies, the control of individual productive units by associations of working people, and the creation of a "political form" through which producers could participate in decision-making and which was responsible to them, did not exist.

Although a thorough analysis of the mode of production that does exist in China is beyond the scope of this thesis, the form in which the debates took place provides sufficient evidence for a tentative conclusion that the actual situation in China is much closer to that described in the alternate description than in the Chinese media.

The mystification of the nature of Chinese society provided ideological blocks to an understanding of the necessity of radically expanding existing germs of self-management and self-government to make the transition to socialism a real possibility. There was an understanding that
there was a problem at the higher levels of the Party-state hierarchy. But the definition of the new bourgeoisie in the media obscured the nature of the problem. The identification of class position with line and a bourgeoisie within the Party shielded from view the actual class power of the entire Party hierarchy. Therefore, the problem was seen not as the need to abolish the alienation of political power in the hands of the Party, but to weed out bourgeois elements who were corrupting the Party and alienating it from the people. More than a factional tactic, this was a fundamental and general misconception that led to policies that moved China further from the transition to socialism. In order to increase self-management and self-government, it is necessary to develop institutional means through which the producers effectively intervene in the conceptualization process at higher and higher levels in the production process. This involves, in addition, the development of skills necessary for these interventions through expansion of education at many levels and the institutional means for the producers to intervene in the political process effectively at all levels.

These goals imply a critical reappraisal of the identification of state ownership and central planning with socialism and the development of alternative means of organizing production on local and national levels. They also imply a critical evaluation of the concept of Party leadership. If the Party is to lead in this process, the Party leadership must separate itself from its current sources of power in the state structure. It must gradually renounce its monopoly of political power in favor of the producers. It must work to disintegrate the Party-state ruling class
of which it is the central component. In this process leadership would have to be exercised through persuasion and discussion freed of every aspect of manipulation and domination. Only in this way could the Party carry out its function of assisting the people to themselves think through and organize their own liberation.

The obfuscation of the existence of a Party-state ruling class through emphasis on the danger of the emergence of a new bourgeoisie and the restoration of capitalism led to the strengthening of the power of the Party and a corresponding deterioration in its popular prestige. Under the slogan of "carrying out all-round dictatorship over the bourgeoisie" the Party extended its control to all spheres of social life. Through control of political study the Party limited the producers' analytical framework for critically evaluating their objective situation. Party control of planning in the rural sector, ruthless "chopping off of capitalist tails", and improper handling of conflicts between team, brigade and commune interests all tended to alienate decision-making powers from rural producers. In the name of struggling against those who would exploit and oppress the workers and peasants, dictatorship over the people was strengthened. The movement towards a socialist society suffered a "great leap backwards" in the years of manipulation and repression. It is little wonder that the population celebrated the arrests of the "gang of four" as a "second liberation".

At present there are tendencies that indicate that the great leap backward of the mid-seventies may be being at least partially reversed. In factories workers' congresses have been established as representatives
bodies with supervisory powers over management. The trade unions have been revitalized to exercise representative and supervisory functions when the congresses are not in session. The need for at least a certain autonomy from Party interference has been recognized for the effective functioning of trade unions, workers' congresses and management committees. In some factories workers now have the right to elect and recall the factory manager and management committee. Experiments in decentralizing control in the state sector are being attempted. Industrial cooperatives are being encouraged. The rights of the smaller collectives in the communes are being restored and protected. In the political sphere, direct elections are now being carried out up to the county levels and for the first time it has been stipulated that there must be more than one candidate for each office. There have been elections of candidates running on an explicitly "non-Party" ticket. There have been some adjustments to separate Party and state functions and a number of top leaders have ceased to wear two hats. There was some real discussion, contention and challenging of Party and state officials at the Fifth National People's Congress and the sacking of officials and cancelling of particular development schemes on the basis of criticism by NPC delegates. The media has opened up discussion of concrete problems and carries many critical editorials, reports on investigations by reporters, and letters of complaint by readers. The Party has been a favorite target of criticism of bad workstyle, corruption and incompetence at all levels, but particularly the national and provincial leaderships. Differing views are apparent in media treatment of issues including discussions of basic
theoretical concepts. The Party has loosened its tight control over reflection of differing opinions in scientific, literary and art circles. There has been a flowering of non-Party journals and even underground newspapers and magazines. But this new blossoming of a "hundred flowers" and contending of a "hundred schools of thought" has exhibited the same ambivalence as the analogous movement in the mid-fifties. Several prominent dissidents have been tried and jailed and freedom to criticize is limited by restrictions against "negating the socialist road, the dictatorship of the proletariat, leadership by the Party and Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought". However, interpretation of the nature of criticisms of the Party and government can no longer be decided arbitrarily by Party authorities. Charges of counterrevolution must be substantiated in court which has aroused considerable differences of opinion among the people about a number of recent judicial verdicts.

Whether these new phenomena indicate a real change in direction or are only cosmetic in nature must be the subject of ongoing critical analysis and discussion and the subject for latter work. To appreciate the significance of continuity and shifts in current policies and thinking, it will be essential to grasp the real character of the trauma of the earlier period to which they are a direct response. It is my hope that the foregoing account and analysis has provided a contribution to the ongoing effort to understand the real nature and importance of the continuing Chinese revolution.
Notes: Chapter Eight, Conclusion

1 Mao defined the process of leadership as follows: "Take the ideas of the masses and concentrate them, then go to the masses, persevere in the ideas and carry them through, so as to form correct ideas of leadership - such is the basic method of leadership". See "Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership", Selected Readings (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1971), p. 291.


5 For a description of this period see Merle Goldman, Literary Dissent in Communist China (New York: Atheneum, 1971), Chs. 8-9.

6 For a description of these prerequisites see Karl Marx, The Civil War in France, op. cit., pp. 78-91.


16 Examples of articles in the dissident press can be found in Index on Censorship, Vol. 8, No. 5, Sept.-Oct. 1979, pp. 3-11.

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