The Structural Evolution of "Criticism and Self-Criticism"

Lowell Dittmer

" Criticism and self-criticism," or inner-Party struggle as it is sometimes called, has always been a major mechanism of inner-Party decision making and discipline among Chinese political elites, but during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution it emerged as a form of mass mobilization and education as well. I shall argue here that this came about as a result of political decisions made in the context of a series of non-reversible structural changes in the Chinese system of communications.

One of the bases of the apparent elite solidarity which persisted with rare interruption prior to 1966 was the operation of a particular process of mediated and regulated conflict among members of that elite. As Richard Solomon has correctly pointed out, the introduction of regulated and mediated conflict marks a significant departure from prevailing cultural patterns of emotional expression and conflict management, according to which annoyance would be repressed until it reached a certain threshold, whereupon it would explode in chaos.[1] Under the mediated system, so long as conflict took´ place within a stipulated organizational context and according to certain rules, it was considered beneficial for both the Party and the individual. According to Liu Shao-ch'i:

Experience proves that wherever a comrade in a responsible position seriously practises sincere and necessary self-criticism before the Party membership and the masses . . . internal solidarity will develop . . . work will improve and . . . defects will be overcome; while the prestige of the responsible comrade will increase instead of being undermined. There is a great deal of evidence, both in the Party and among the masses, to prove this. On the other hand, wherever a responsible comrade lacks the spirit of self-criticism, refuses or fears to reveal his own defects or mistakes, or tries to cover them up; when he expresses no gratitude for criticism and instead of being pleased to be told of his faults blushes to the ears and makes acrimonious retorts or looks for a chance to revenge himself on his critics, the result is just the opposite.[2]

1. Richard H. Solomon, " Mao's effort to reintegrate the Chinese polity: problems of authority and conflict in the Chinese social process," in Doak Barnett (ed.), *Chinese Communist Politics in Action* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969), pp. 271–365.
2. Liu Shao-ch'i, " On the Party " (May 1945), *Collected Works of Liu Shao-ch'i* (Hong Kong: Union Research Institute, 1969), II, 65.

"Criticism and self-criticism" was meant to facilitate the open airing of differences among Party members and encourage the discussion of alternative policies. A refugee with experience under both the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) contrasted the catharsis achieved through criticism and self-criticism with the KMT's tendency to stifle the expression of grievances: "The Communists always encourage people to talk, and to express their opinions. . . . If you talk about problems you prevent misunderstandings and maintain unity in work. During the Nationalist era things were not this way; you would hold back your opinions and eventually you would become enemies." [3]

Schurmann describes the process of criticism and self-criticism as a small-group disciplinary technique:

Essentially, the technique consists in the usually temporary alienation of a single member from the group through the application of collective criticism. One member is singled out for criticism, either because of faulty ideological understanding, poor work performance, or some other deviance. He is not only subjected to a barrage of criticism from the members, but also joins in and begins to criticize himself. . . . The avowed purpose is to "correct" (kai-tsao) the individual. Under normal circumstances, the individual is "reintegrated" into the group after the "temporary alienation." The experience of temporary alienation of the one criticized and collective criticism by the group members is, in theory, supposed to have the general effect of maintaining the group's cohesion and effectiveness. Great fear exists on the part of those potentially criticized that they may become victims of a more permanent alienation. Fear of such permanent alienation serves to strengthen the bonds within the group. [4]

But for the person criticized, criticism and self-criticism could be an exceedingly trying experience. During the 1959 Lushan Conference, P'eng Teh-huai was said to have used obscene language to characterize his forced admission of a self-criticism after 40 days of " struggle " at a 1945 North China conference, and complained that the Lushan Conference, which had criticized Mao's policies, did not last long enough. [5] P'eng's wife divorced him after his fall in 1959, compounding his misfortunes. [6] During the Cultural Revolution, when Chu Teh was forced to make a self-criticism, Lin Piao described the incident by saying: " it was the Party Centre which made him take off his pants." [7]

3. Quoted in Solomon, " Mao's effort."
4. Franz Schurmann, " Organization and response in Communist China," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 131 (1959), p. 57.
5. " The wicked history of big conspirator, big ambitionist, big warlord P'eng Teh-huai," *Current Background* (Hong Kong: U.S. Consulate General), 851.
6. " Shen-hsü Pu An-hsiu " (" Investigate Pu An-hsiu "), in Ting Wang (ed.), " Chung-kung wen-hua ta ko-ming tzu-liao hui-pien," *Ming-pao yüeh k'an* (Hong Kong), 15 June 1969, pp. 17–18.
7. *Ko-ming kung-jen pao (Revolutionary Workers' Paper)* 5 (19 February 1967), p. 4, quoted in Tang Tsou, " The Cultural Revolution and the Chinese political system," *CQ* 38 (1969), pp. 63–91.

The disciplinary and decision-making institution of criticism and self-criticism, as practised in China, seems to be unique among ruling Communist Parties, differing appreciably from the pattern of external control networks and occasional " show trials " based on the extraction of false confessions which has prevailed in the Soviet Union and Eastern European Communist states. China owes this development partly to her cultural legacy from " traditional " China which has influenced the development of criticism and self-criticism in at least two ways. First, at the time of the birth of the CCP, China was aptly characterized as a " sheet of loose sand," consisting of a congeries of small, exclusive, self-regulating units (including guilds, secret societies, *Landsmann-schaften*, etc., as well as political parties) modelled more or less after the clan. The CCP resembled these other groups in drawing a clear distinction between in-group and out-group. This was reflected in two categories of " struggle ": principled redemptive struggle against deviant insiders, and expedient struggles against outsiders. Second, the noticeably positive impact of " self-criticism " upon social solidarity derives in part from the integral position of confession in traditional moral and legal codes, which in turn derives from a Confucian emphasis on educating and transforming the wrong-doer rather than simply punishing him. According to the Ch'ing code, if confession is voluntary (*i.e.*, antecedent to demonstration of guilt), punishment must be waived or mitigated but, if the accused refuses to confess in the face of evidence proving his guilt, the application of torture to extract confession is sanctioned. Confession is a prerequisite of sentencing in either case, but its relationship to the verdict depends upon the particulars of the case.[8] In the pre-Cultural Revolution " operational code " of criticism and self-criticism, public self-criticism was also a signal that the period of criticism had ended, and was followed by the disposition of the case by granting forgiveness or imposing sanctions of various kinds.[9]

The development of inner-Party struggle was also favoured by the

8. Derk Bodde and Clarence Morris, *Law in Imperial China, Exemplified by 190 Ch'ing Dynasty Cases* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 42 and 97–98; also George Alexander Kennedy, *Die Rolle des Gestaendnisses in chinesischen Gesetz* (Berlin: n.p., 1939), pp. 5–12 and 37.

9. For instance, in June 1957, two deputy chairmen of the Democratic League were accused of leading a nation-wide clique to overthrow the Party; neither admitted this, and so " the campaign against them was pushed relentlessly forward until January 1958 when Shih Liang claimed that they had confessed their crimes and their clique had been destroyed." Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Hundred Flowers* (London: Stevens and Sons, 1960), p. 263. Similarly, Ch'en i sought to exempt Liu from criticism by alleging that " Liu and Teng have been thoroughly defeated and have confessed their crimes." In the first case confession resulted in punishment whereas in the second Ch'en meant it to result in the accused's atonement. In general, once confession or self-criticism is accepted as adequate or satisfactory, the process of criticism and self-criticism of the particular individual concerned comes to an end and a decision is made on the individual case. But the process of criticism and self-criticism continues on policy issues raised by that individual's mistakes.

particular socio-political circumstances surrounding the CCP's accession to power. The Russian Party, prior to the October Revolution, was split into two different environments staffed by different types of activists who rarely interacted, especially during the 1914–17 period. On the one hand, there were cosmopolitan ideologue-intellectuals such as Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin and Rykov. On the other hand, there were the organization men who never left Russia and spent most of their time hiding or in prison, such as Stalin, Kuganovich, Molotov, Ordzohnikidze, and Kirov. Because of the security threat posed by the Tsarist Okhrana and its network of informers, these men abrogated democratic principles to create a secret and highly centralized "organizational weapon." The Russian Party seized power through a quick urban coup d'état, followed by a short and conventional civil war to consolidate its urban power base. The Party then assumed control of the apparatus of state, thereby coming into possession of an apparatus of control and manipulation which it had previously lacked: the governmental bureaucracy. The ideologues, after the premature death of Lenin, lacked any appreciation of the importance or workings of the bureaucracy. Trotsky, for instance, declared on his appointment as the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, "I will issue a few revolutionary proclamations to the people of the world and shut up shop." Also lacking any alternative means of creating a mass power base, they soon succumbed to the organization men, who proceeded to use the methods with which they had learned to survive in enemy-occupied territory to organize and operate the state apparatus.[10]

The CCP's elite structure initially bore a strong resemblance to that of the Russian Party during the early years, when it was centred in the cities and dominated by ideologue-intellectuals such as Li Ta-chao and Ch'en Tu-hsiu. However, the repressive measures undertaken by Chiang Kai-shek in the April 1927 coup and afterwards nearly wiped out the Party's urban base and forced its survivors into the countryside, where it underwent a basic change of tactics which coincided with the rise of a new leadership under Mao Tse-tung and the eclipse of the Soviet-educated urban intellectuals. For the next 20 years the Party engaged in continual warfare, during which it controlled extensive regions, but was unable to seize the state in Bolshevik fashion, because the balance of coercive power was initially overwhelmingly in favour of the KMT and could be reversed only through "protracted struggle." But due to the lack of political unity and extensive social dislocation, the KMT regime could not effectively control many areas in China. This enabled the CCP to create its own base of support through nationalist appeals and social reforms, wooing a constituency by skilfully intermixing

10. The Trotsky citation is from E. H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1913-23* (New York: Macmillan, 1953), III, 16. See also David Luck, "Soviet and Chinese political development," *Survey*, 74–75 (1970), pp. 29–49; and Bodo Zeuner, "Inner-Parteilliche Demokratie," *Zur Politik und Zeitgeschichte* (Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 1968), nos. 33–34, pp. 26–28.

ideology with the manipulation of popular interests and discontents. In these years when the CCP was trying to capture national power, it could not rely exclusively on bureaucratic methods of control, which require a reasonably settled political order to function effectively. Since centralized control from the top was thus impossible, the Party granted wide autonomy to local units, which were to maintain discipline, commitment and enthusiasm through small-group activities such as "criticism and self-criticism." Cadre policy had to be managed with great care in order to avoid alienating the "wavering" petty and national bourgeoisie, whose support or at least neutrality was seen as being essential for achieving victory. Thus, the fact that the CCP was a Party out of power during its formative years led it to tolerate a sphere of legitimate freedom of expression within the Party and to develop a mobilizational rather than an administrative approach to the masses.

Within the Chinese Communist Party, however, there were important differences on the question of criticism and self-criticism, the nature and significance of which only became fully apparent during the Cultural Revolution. The CCP elite was split between those in the "Red area" forces, comprised of peasant armies and guerrilla generals under Mao Tse-tung, on the one hand and those in the "White area" forces consisting of urban students, workers and peasants operating under Liu Shao-ch'i on the other and, during the war years, contact between these two elite groups was minimal. The CCP elites in both the Red and White areas relied extensively on mass mobilization and inner-Party criticism and self-criticism but, whereas the Red area forces operated from secure base areas, the White area forces were "fish" in a non-Party "human sea" and exposed to much more serious security problems. The security of the Red area bases is one reason for Mao's fairly uncomplicated approach to inner-Party struggle(the other having to do with his distinctive political style). Mao made a habit of calling for inner-Party struggle whenever he noted tendencies within the Party which he wished to see corrected, as he had in his 1929 resolution, "On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party," [3] which demanded the rectification of "absolute equalitarianism, absolute democratization, adventurism," etc.[11]

Liu Shao-ch'i, however, as the senior Communist leader in "enemy occupied areas" during most of the war – from 1936–42, he was secretary of the North China Bureau (1935), secretary of the Central Plains Bureau (1939) and secretary of the Central China Bureau (1941)–elaborated a rather more complex system of ethics laying down detailed rules for the *institutionalization* of inner-Party struggle which was intended to make the process invulnerable to the loss of any particular leader. He stressed the need to "organize well, prepare well and have good leadership." The reason for this more centralist approach was discussed

11. *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1967), I, 105–114.

in a speech in 1944 when he dealt with the feasibility of using the Yenan rectification methods behind the enemy lines:

Some of it can be used, but much cannot be used. . . . If you use Yenan's method and hold a discussion meeting in which you say all you want to say, of course sometimes you talk one day, two days . . . you're not finished in a month! But before the talking is finished the enemy will break in . . . so if you want to convene a discussion meeting it is just as well . . . not to talk so much, to keep it under your belt. . . . When you come back here, you can relax a bit, it doesn't matter if the meeting breaks up in confusion.[12]

Liu added that it was of little value to " say generally, ' Our work shows errors of bureaucracy or liberalism,' you want to say that this affair is such-and-such, this person is such-and-such . . . you should speak of concrete matters." [13] Yet these " concrete matters " should concern " points of issue," and not be a " struggle against a certain Li or a certain Chang." In an attempt to strike a balance between " excessive and mechanical " struggles and " liberalism," he drew a basic distinction between " principled " and " unprincipled " struggles, which had the general effect of repressing personal and idiosyncratic grievances and rationalizing political conflict. " Principled " struggle involved " the methods of observing and treating problems according to general rules of development. . . . If errors arise in principle, not only specific errors arise, but also systematic, consistent errors." Questions of principle must be settled through struggle: " no compromise or ' middle road ' will bring about a solution," wrote Liu. " We must resolve these through debate and reach unanimity." But " unprincipled " conflicts over more practical or idiosyncratic problems can (" and must ") be resolved through informal compromise. Liu noted that " it is impossible to judge who is right and who is wrong in such unprincipled disputes," and concluded that:

Issues such as that a certain comrade does not fully trust another or still suspects another, etc., should in general not be brought up for discussion, because discussion on such issues will be of no avail. Such issues can be settled, and a particular comrade can be proved trustworthy and can be cleared of suspicion, only in the course of his work, his struggle and his practice.[14]

In possible connexion with the need for security in the White areas, Liu also insisted on a sharp distinction between " inner " and " outer." He suggested a theoretical relationship between struggle inside and outside the Party, saying that the former is coeval with and " reflects "

12. " Lun fa-yang min-chu " (" On the expansion of democracy "), in *Liu Shao-ch'i wen-t'i ts'ai-liao chuan-chi* (*A Special Collection of Materials on Liu Shao-ch'i*) (Taipei: Institute for the Study of Chinese Communist Problems, 1970), pp. 134–142.

13. *Ibid.* p. 138.

14. Liu Shao-ch'i " On inner-party struggle " (July 1941), *Collected Works*, I, 330–367.

the latter, but precluded any practical relationship between the two. The prescribed social context for struggle, he maintained, was " inside the Party " (*tang-nei*), and he condemned those comrades ("although they cannot still be called comrades ") who availed themselves of extra-Party resources, such as " newspapers, magazines and various conferences outside the Party and even those of the bourgeoisie and the enemy," to influence the outcome of disputes within the Party. Once a decision was reached, Liu maintained, the minority was obliged to follow the majority, but " on condition that they absolutely abide by the decision of the majority in respect to organizational matters and in their activities," those who disagree with the decision might preserve their opinions against the possibility that they might eventually prove correct. " One must in principle," Liu wrote, " hold on to one's opinions." [15]

A retrospective comparison with Mao's writings on criticism and self-criticism within the Party reveals four underlying differences. First, Liu's criteria for successful " struggles " stressed adherence to certain prescribed forms, while leaving the substantive content of the argument open; Mao's corresponding criteria paid scant attention to form but emphasized " correct " substance. For instance, Mao's famous distinction between " antagonistic " and " non-antagonistic " struggle purports to be a matter of form but is, in fact, one of substance, based on whether the criticism strengthens " the leadership of the Communist Party " and " socialist solidarity ": if it does not, it is " antagonistic," and should be " resolved by the practice of dictatorship." [16] Second, Liu's distinction between principled and unprincipled struggle is based upon characteristics of the object; Mao's corresponding distinction purports to be objective but, by resting partly on the way contradictions are " handled," turns out to be a subjective distinction ultimately dependent on the definition of an authority standing above the conflict. [17] Third, whereas Liu put strong emphasis on the rationalization of conflict (*e.g.*, disputes should be " appropriate and well-regulated "; conducted " within proper limits "; " unprincipled disputes should in general be forbidden,"

15. *Ibid.* p. 363.

16. According to Mu Fu-sheng, *The Wilting of the Hundred Flowers* (New York: Praeger, 1962), pp. 166–68, Mao listed no criteria in his original speech to the Central Committee on 27 February 1957. In the amended version published in July 1957 by the *People's Daily* he listed the following criteria for distinguishing between actions which are right or wrong: " 1. Help to unite the people of our various nationalities . . . ; 2. Are beneficial to . . . socialist transformation . . . ; 3. Help to consolidate . . . the people's democratic dictatorship; 4. Help to con-solidate . . . democratic centralism; 5. Tend to strengthen . . . the leadership of the Communist Party; 6. Are beneficial . . . to unite Socialist solidarity and the solidarity of the peace-loving peoples of the world." The most important of these criteria were said to be the last two. If contradictions did not conform to these criteria, Mao warned, they " can turn into an antagonistic contradiction as between ourselves and the enemy."

17. Robert Fahrle and Peter Schoettler, *Chinas Weg: Marxismus oder Maoismus?* (Frankfurt: Verlag der Marxistischen Blaetter, 1969), pp. 85–115.

etc.), an emphasis which is incidentally quite consistent with his conception of " cultivation " as the repression of undue emotion, Mao placed greater emphasis on the maximum possible involvement of the " uncultivated " masses, thus being more tolerant of dramatic displays of emotion and demonstrative attacks " against the person." Mao, for example, spoke approvingly of the 1927 Hunan peasant uprising as " a mighty storm, like a hurricane, a force so swift and violent that no power, however great, will be able to hold it back. They will smash all the trammels that bind them and rush forward along the road to liberation." He " listened attentively to their reports and collected a great deal of material " on how peasants paraded humiliated landlords in tall hats and placards, etc.[18] Fourth, whereas Liu's distinction between struggle inside and outside the Party was consistently applied to the CCP, conceding a theoretical but never a practical relationship between social conflicts and inner-Party struggle, Mao has been groping for some time for a formula which would include the masses within the in-group. His first attempt to do so, in 1956–57, was by introducing a distinction between " people " and " enemies of the people " which cut across class categories: " Within the ranks of the people," Mao said in 1957, " the contradictions among the workers are non-antagonistic, while those between the exploited and the exploiting classes have a non-antagonistic aspect in addition to an antagonistic aspect." [19] Following setbacks in the Hundred Flowers campaign and at the Lushan Plenum, he returned to class categories, and introduced the idea that there were " bourgeois elements " within the Party, a warning that was made more specific in the 1965 " 23 Points " of the Socialist Education Campaign which referred menacingly to " Party persons in authority taking the capitalist road," some of whom might be in the Departments of the Central Committee.[20]

Changes in the Framework

Between the publication of Liu's paradigmatic essay on inner-Party struggle in 1941 and the launching of the Cultural Revolution in 1965, criticism and self-criticism underwent six basic changes. The first three occurred in 1949, when the CCP obtained a monopoly control over the instruments of violence, state patronage and mass communications.

The first of these changes meant that leaving the Party or defecting to the KMT was no longer a possibility for those who were

18. " Report on an investigation of the peasant movement in Hunan " (March 1927), in *Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tsetung* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1971), pp. 23–40.

19. *People's Daily*, June 1957.

20. Richard Baum and Frederick Taiwes, *Ssu-ch'ing: The Socialist Education Movement of 1962–66* (Berkeley, Calif.: Centre for Chinese Studies, China Research Monographs, No. 2), Appendix F, pp. 118–126.

criticized or who disagreed with the Party line.[21] In other words, there was now no escape from the coercive sanctions which the post-Liberation leadership could adopt as a final resort if ideological or organizational sanctions failed. The post-Liberation Party leadership was no longer inhibited by the possibility that dissidents could opt out or defect. It continued to feel the need to demonstrate exemplary organizational behaviour to the masses who were not Party members, but was less inhibited by this than before, since the Party's survival was, in any case, assured by its monopoly over legitimate violence.

Secondly, control over governmental patronage greatly increased the disciplinary powers of organizational elites over middle- and lower-level cadres, by placing criticism and self-criticism within a bureaucratic context. This, in effect, eliminated the possibility of any but manipulated struggle at all but the highest levels, where power was more equally distributed. Seizure of the state apparatus gave the Party dispensation over an increased quantity and variety of resources (e.g. power, wealth and deference), thus making it necessary for cadres to exempt their superiors or colleagues from avoidable criticism.

Thirdly, through their control over the mass media, CCP elites could take advantage of a technology whose rapid expansion across the country introduced a qualitatively different communication system to China.[22] The traditional face-to-face oral communications network became augmented by a network through which any message issued from the Centre could in theory reach everyone simultaneously in identical form.[23] This innovation had important implications for the " mass line," which was based on the assumption of two-way communication " from the masses, to the masses." The primarily oral communication system established under more primitive conditions for the rectification (cheng-feng) move-

21. According to Chang Kuo-t'ao's account, this is the way the 1937 dispute between himself and Mao was resolved. When a stalemate developed with Mao in control of the Politburo and Chang in control of the 2nd Provisional Central Authority, Chang simply stopped attending Politburo meetings for three months. When Mao sent Tung Pi-wu to ask him to stop " sulking," he replied: " I don't want to attend Politburo meetings, or to receive comrades to discuss Party affairs. Furthermore, I wish to withdraw from the Central leadership of the Party. I'm now teaching economics with you at the North Shensi Public School; isn't this just fine?" Chang's Introduction in Collected Works of Liu Shao-ch'i, p. vii. For a more detailed account of this episode, see Chang Kuo-t'ao, " Wo-ti hui-i," Ming-pao yüeh-k'an VI: 2 (1971), pp. 85–90.

22. Newspaper circulation increased from 3·4 million in 1951 to 15 million in 1958; magazine circulation jumped from 900,000 to 17 million over the same period: Frederick T. C. Yu, Mass Persuasion in Communist China (New York and London: Praeger, 1964), p. 90. China claims that her radio transmitting power is now almost five times greater than the total transmitting power under the KMT in the 20 years 1928–47. The Great Leap Forward of 1958 produced more than a million radios; 10 years before, there were scarcely more than a million sets throughout the whole of China: Hugh Howse, " The use of radio in China," CQ 2 (1960), pp. 59–69.

23. Paul Kecskemeti, review of Nationalism and Social Communication, in Public Opinion Quarterly XVIII: 1 (1954), pp. 102–105.

ment made this technically feasible,[24] but the new media made it easier for the elite to transmit their own message more reliably without simultaneously increasing the capacity of the masses to do the same, and thus time subtly altered the nature of mass contact with human transmitters. Instead of oral agitators roving the countryside (the oral agitation system atrophied quickly after 1953, as the CCP shifted emphasis to communication by mass media), human transmitters were assigned to each medium, resulting in newspaper-reading groups, radio-listening groups, book-reading groups and film-discussion groups.[25] The integration of human transmitters and mass media tended to increase the authority of the former (the cadre could now point to a passage in the newspaper, which the peasant was often unable to read), while decreasing his flexibility in tailoring the message to his audience, and reducing his susceptibility to feedback.[26] The mass network also made steady inroads on the limited copy, limited access organizational network [27]; this had little immediate import, since the two networks normally operated in tandem and were co-ordinated by the same Propaganda Department bureaucracy, but the growth of the mass media created the possibility for high level elites to short-circuit the bureaucratic hierarchy and gain immediate contact with the masses. The structural conditions existed for " Caesarism " by elites prepared to use publicity skills to create a mass following; a possibility which was first fully realized in the Cultural Revolution.

Thus, the CCP's acquisition in 1949 of monopoly control over the instruments of governmental patronage, legitimate violence and mass media resulted in the differentiation of inner-Party struggle into two distinct arenas. The first comprised a relatively clandestine and orderly purge mechanism within the Party which relied upon control over

24. Mark Selden, " The Yenan legacy; the mass line," in Barnett (ed.), *Chinese Politics in Action*, pp. 99–105. Chou En-lai discusses the *cheng-feng* movement in " Premier Chou talks about why firepower must be concentrating on criticizing the top Party persons in authority taking the capitalist road," *Hung chan pao* (Canton, Red Guard paper), 15 (9 November 1967), pp. 1 and 4, in *Joint Publications Research Service (JPRS)* 44574 (4 March 1968).

25. Alan P. L. Liu, *Communications and National Integration in Communist China* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1971), p. 115

26. I owe these points to a personal communication from Alan Liu. Two other scholars have also noted that efforts to increase the flow of information between elites and masses through multiplicative media have tended to be combined with an increase in political control, making the communicative process increasingly one-way. F. W. Houn, *To Change a Nation* (New York: Free Press, 1961), pp. 230–37, and James R. Townsend, *Political Participation in Communist China* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1967), last chapter.

27. For example, in 1954–55 the " propaganda outlines " (*hsuan-chuan ta-kang*) and " propaganda handbooks " (*hsuan-chuan shou-ts'e*) periodically diffused through organizational channels by the Central Propaganda Department during mass movements were superseded by Party newspapers such as *Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien (China Youth)*, *Hsüeh-hsi (Study)* and later *Hung ch'i (Red Flag)*. Yu, *Mass Persuasion in Communist China*, pp. 88–89.

patronage but which was enforced by an implicit threat of coercion. This resulted in the appearance of a monolithic elite structure which masked a constant shifting of positions. When conflict was irreconcilable, organizational sanctions were applied with relatively little ex post facto publicity, following the Soviet mode. The second consisted of a series of well-prepared, highly organized mass criticism campaigns directed by the elite against carefully "labelled" targets through a nationally co-ordinated network of oral meetings and mass media.[28]

The fourth structural change in criticism and self-criticism took place as a natural extension of the Party's United Front policy of accommodation with traditional elites. Throughout the post-Liberation era, although periodic campaigns were launched against dissident leaders of the cultural world, between campaigns there was a steady co-option of cultural notables. At the same time, certain sectors of the bureaucracy began to build up defences in order to protect themselves from purge, forming "independent kingdoms" of interlocking interest and mutual protection with their immediate "families" of colleagues and protégés and becoming less responsive to Central directives.[29] The campaign against Wu Han which initiated the Cultural Revolution may have originally been intended as a normal continuation of the series of criticism campaigns against cultural leaders which had taken place periodically since 1949 [30] but, if so, it ignored the extent to which the cultural establishment had grown interlocked with the governing elite. As Chiang Ch'ing said in 1967, "I did not realize until I was told by the Premier that once a person like Wu Han was exposed there would be many more like him. That was where the real difficulty lay." [31] When this elite was threatened from the outside it united so tightly that "you couldn't stick a pin in," as Mao put it. This made it impossible for him to isolate and pick off the "handful" of his enemies, even assuming he knew who they were and, as each victim was disgraced,

28. For studies of these earlier campaigns, see Yang I-fan, *The Case of Hu Feng* (Hong Kong: Union Research Institute, Communist China Research Series, Vol. 18, December 1956); Chalmers Johnson, *Freedom of Thought and Expression in China: Communist Policies Toward the Intellectual Class* (ibid. Vol. 21, May 1959); Theodore H. E. Ch'en, *Thought Reform of the Chinese Intellectuals* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960); Guy Alitto, "Thought reform in Communist China: the case of Chou Ku-ch'eng" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Chicago, May 1966), and Clifford Edmunds, "Historicism, ideology and political authority in Communist China: the case of Chien Po-tsan" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Chicago, December 1968).

29. Michel C. Oksenberg, "Policy making under Mao, 1949–68: an overview," in John M. H. Lindbeck (ed.), *China: Management of a Revolutionary Society* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1971), pp. 108–109; Adrian Hsia, *Die Chinesische Kulturrevolution: Zur Entwicklung der Widersprueche in der chinesischen Gesellschaft* (Neuwied: Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, 1971), p. 139.

30. See above, n. 28.

31. "Chiang Ch'ing's speech at the enlarged meeting of the Military Affairs Committee of the CCP Central Committee on 12 April 1967," *Issues and Studies* VI:10 (1970), pp. 82–91.

others (" black backers ") were exposed who had been patronizing him, leading to the purge of entire chains of officials linked by formal or informal organizational ties, prior association, etc. It seems to have been the exposure of these hidden links that fed Mao's suspicions of an oppositionist conspiracy and finally made him decide to launch an almost indiscriminate attack on the establishment.

In the early 1960s two further structural changes took place, the one a corollary of the other. First, a perceptible and permanent gulf gradually developed between two factions in the top ranks of the leadership. The key stipulation in the original and tacitly assumed rules of the game which permitted this to occur was the right of the dissenting minority to " reserve opinions." This right was compatible with the continued efficacy of inner-Party struggle only if the various adversaries did not coalesce. If " opinion groups " hardened into permanent factions, the sense of solidarity and mutual trust necessary for the proper functioning of criticism and self-criticism was lost.[32] Available evidence about policy-making in the 1950s indicates that there was a constant turnover of opinion-group membership within the inner core of the leadership,[33] but during the 1960s it seems clear that a group close to Mao began to " reserve opinions " [34] and, as a consequence, inner-Party debate and the exchange of opinions became much less open and frank, tending to follow organizational channels less closely than before.

There seem to have been two reasons for the disaffection of the Maoists. First, Mao noticed a systematic distortion of his directives when they were transmitted through the Party apparatus, resulting in a policy output subtly different from the Maoist input. When he left the bureaucracy to its own routine, its policies also differed from those he desired so that periodically he had to intervene. Second, as Parris Chang has shown, the key locus of decision-making in the Party shifted in the 1960s from the *ad hoc* meetings, which Mao had frequently used in the 1950s and could easily dominate, to the large and formal " central work

32. For a perceptive analysis of the theory and practice of " opinion groups," see Schurmann, *Ideology and Organization in Communist China* (2nd ed., Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1968), pp. 48 ff.

33. See Roderick MacFarquhar, " Communist China's Intra-Party Dispute," *Pacific Affairs* XXXI:4 (1958), pp. 323–336; Parris H. Chang, " Struggle between the two roads in China's countryside," *Current Scene* VI:3 (1968), p. 1 ff.

34. That Mao reserved his opinions is revealed by a passage in Liu's first self-criticism: " As Mao was not in Peking then [1962], I went to him and delivered a report. *Afterwards* I learned that Chairman Mao was not at all in agreement with my appraisal of the situation." *Collected Works of Liu Shao-ch'i*, III, 361 (emphasis added). Mao also permitted Chiang Ch'ing to prepare the original attack on Wu Han in secret, as she revealed in a speech in 1967: " I asked the Chairman if I could reserve my opinion. He said I could. . . . Because he promised me to reserve my opinion on it it gave me courage to proceed with writing that article and to keep it secret. The secret was kept for seven to eight months during which the article was revised countless times." See above, n. 31. Nor did Mao reveal the existence of this article to P'eng Cheng when he asked the latter, on 10 October 1965, to carry out a rectification campaign against Wu Han.

conferences," in which those in control of the Secretariat were able to exercize control over the agenda and preparation of policy proposals. Since the policy-making process was relatively open, not monopolized by a few leaders but accessible to a significant number of Party officials below the Politburo, the importance of the Politburo (and its standing committee) in the policy process tended to decline.[35] This growth of inner-Party democracy did not completely deprive Mao of his influence over policy – his national stature permitted him to intervene in the process and achieve his ends throughout the 1960s – but he may frequently have been in the minority, as at the important 11th Plenum of August 1966 when he obtained a " slight majority " only with extra-ordinary effort and strenuous manoeuvres. The sheer frequency and size of these new meetings reduced the impact of a Supreme Leader with only a small personal staff whose style was to rule by occasional fiat.[36]

The second structural change followed from the first. Those involved in inner-Party struggle sessions have always had access to extra-Party power bases, such as Field Armies (in pre-Liberation China), local constituencies, government bureaux, etc. A cardinal rule upon which successful operation of the process was predicated was forfeiture of access to these extra-Party resources, thus throwing each participant's fate to the mercy of a closed circle of intimates. Charges against both P'eng Teh-huai in 1959 and Kao Kang in 1955 included the accusation, for example, that they cultivated supporters outside the Politburo. The growth of organization (with its attendant maintenance and enhancement needs) outside that circle and the erosion of trust within it led its members to consolidate their hold over extra-Party power bases, result-ing in " parallel and competing bureaucracies." It was at this time that the alliance between Mao and Lin Piao was formed.

As the log-jam of repressed hostilities slowly broke into open conflict in the winter and spring of 1965–66, the sixth structural change occurred: open appeal by participants in the struggle process to extra-Party power bases to break the deadlock. As Tang Tsou has observed:

Political conflicts which cannot be resolved by elite groups or politically relevant groups within the existing pattern of participation-mobilization will give rise to attempts by one or both sides to enlist active support of other groups to break the deadlock, thus changing the scope and form of . . . participation-mobilization.[37]

35. Chang, " Research notes on the changing loci of decision in the CCP," *CQ* 44 (1970), pp. 169–195.
36. There were 19 central work conferences in 1960–66: one in 1960, three in 1961, four in 1962, three in 1963, four in 1964–65, and four in 1966, according to Chang (*ibid.*). In addition to work conferences there were a number of other meetings, some with institutional labels, such as " enlarged Politburo meetings," others known only by the place and time they were held.
37. Tang Tsou, " The People's Liberation Army and the Cultural Revolution: a study of civil-military relationships in China " (unpublished paper, University of Chicago, 1971).

The case of Liu Shao-ch'i however suggests two qualifications to this theory. First, the temptation to break the deadlock by introducing out-side forces depends on a decisive preponderance of outside resources, or on an asymmetry between resources within and outside the Party available to one of the participants. If all participants were equal in their control of resources the deadlock would conceivably continue indefinitely; Mao's special temptation (and justification) for violating the established rules derived from the disproportion between his diminishing power inside the Party and his decisively preponderant power outside it. The second reservation seems more decisive. Breaking a deadlock could not have been Mao's *sole* intention, for this end was achieved at the 11th Plenum with the criticism and demotion of his enemies within the Central Committee and passage of the 16 points laying down the pro-gramme for the Cultural Revolution; yet the August Plenum marked the beginning, not the end, of the Cultural Revolution. Because Mao's victory over his inner-Party opposition was already assured at the outset, we may safely assume that his motives for " pushing the Great Pro-letarian Cultural Revolution through to the end " went beyond a desire to break a deadlock and depose his enemies. He could presumably have used the PLA to purge his enemies (as he later used the PLA to subdue rebel groups),[38] but he refrained for two reasons: first, his enemies had earned sufficient backing among the masses by their remarkable resuscitation of the economy after the Great Leap for Mao to feel it necessary to legitimate his purge through a mass educational campaign; second, he wished to prolong the criticism campaign in order to gain popular backing for a domestic reform programme of unprecedented sweep and depth.

The Cultural Revolution criticism campaign employed rhetoric which had its origin a quarter of a century previously (*e.g.*, " unity – struggle – unity," and " struggle – criticism – transformation ") to characterize a struggle which took place under drastically altered circumstances: a struggle which was thrown open to the masses through an unprecedented proliferation and decentralization of informal communication media, including big-character posters, mimeographed leaflets, and tabloid news-papers (of which there were more than 100, some with nation-wide circulations). Any nationally co-ordinated defence by the Party apparatus was rendered ineffective by the early demotion and subsequent purge of its leaders, Liu and Teng. The Maoist strategy was to destroy the Party's legitimacy by systematically circumventing its control over communications between the Centre and the masses, and to recruit *ad hoc* paramilitary bands from disaffected sectors of the populace to

38. As has also been noted in a 1 July 1971 *People's Daily* editorial which observed that some people have asked, " Since Liu Shao-ch'i . . . usurped part of the power . . . it needs only an order from Chairman Mao to dismiss them from office, why should the present method [of the Cultural Revolution] be adopted? " Quoted in Parris Chang, *Radicals and radical ideology in China's Cultural Revo-lution* (Columbia University) (Research Institute on Communist Affairs, 1973).

" bombard the bourgeois headquarters " with the tacit (and later official) backing of the PLA. In this altered context an institution originally designed to achieve political redemption and renewed unity within a closed circle of the elite resulted in non-redemptive purges and rampant factionalism in society at large, with the result that unity and order were restored only by the reassertion of dictatorship.

The original institution of criticism and self-criticism was premised upon solidarity (" unity ") among all participants (Liu's " family " metaphor for the Party is not accidental), which had been disturbed by an offence committed by one of them. To induce remorse in the offender, he is isolated from the others and criticized; he then confesses and solicits forgiveness from the others. In so doing he affirms that he has indeed committed the acts of which he is accused, but denies that he is " in " them; his appeal for forgiveness is a demonstration that he transcends his acts and his past and is not identical with them. In accepting his self-criticism and granting forgiveness, the others in turn acknowledge that their earlier criticism was partly incorrect or incomplete. The process is resolved in the externalization of the offence and the reintegration of the offender into a group newly purified and united by this emotional opening and surrender on the part of both the person criticized and his critics.[39]

The Cultural Revolution and the New Form of Criticism

Both the structural evolution of criticism and self-criticism in the years since its inception and the special circumstances characterizing the Cultural Revolution made this process unworkable, for the following reasons.

(1) Criticism and self-criticism was ultimately based on the distinction between inner and outer, but Mao tried to destroy this, along with most other conventional distinctions, in order to facilitate his own mobilization of the masses. " To say that ' there is a difference between inside and outside ' is to be afraid of the revolution," Mao said in July 1966. " It will not do to fix frames for the masses." [40] This distinction was destroyed by members of the elite writing anonymous articles in the press denouncing other members of the elite, by " leak " to Red Guard media, and by open manipulation of outside pressure groups through speeches and " instructions " to influence inner-Party verdicts. In these circumstances, the closed circle could be penetrated almost at will, with

39. Joseph Beatty, " Forgiveness," *American Philosophical Quarterly* VII:3 (1970), pp. 246–255.
40. " Address before leaders of the CC " (1966), translated in *JPRS* 41884 (18 July 1967) and quoted in John Bryan Starr, " Mao Tse-tung's theory of continuing the Revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat: its origins, development and practical implications," (unpublished ph.d. thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1971), p. 417.

the result that ties to outside pressure groups pre-empted commitment to the group's decisions, and the underlying assumptions of ultimate " unity " no longer stood.

(2) Enfranchisement of the " uncultivated " masses resulted in a breakdown of the distinction put forward by Liu Shao-ch'i between principled and unprincipled criticism and permitted the expression of non-rational grievances. Opening the doors to the masses augmented the original circle of comrades with great numbers of newcomers to the political process – particularly middle school and university students and young workers not yet sufficiently socialized into the rules of criticism and self-criticism. Naturally enough, they translated the political issues involved into a more familiar framework to which they could emotionally relate. Mao was perceived as a father figure, Liu as an ambitious and unfilial son; and Liu's personal foibles became matters of great importance.[41] The area of criticism was progressively widened by the increase in participants, each of whom wished to translate Liu's crimes into his own terms and make a critical contribution, with the result that so many aspects of his life and thought were drawn in and attacked from various perspectives that he could not hope to atone for his " crimes " without becoming all things to all men. Certain groups acquired vested interests in the criticism movement, and exploited it to storm the power structure and expropriate offices. Such people needed to discover more and ever more serious " crimes " in order to sustain the indignation of the masses that propelled the campaign, and this added to the pressure for polemical escalation. Liu then could be seen as " resisting " the campaign in the sense that his definition of his crimes (in his self-criticisms) failed to keep pace with the expanding popular indictment.

(3) Previously criticism and self-criticism was conducted according to what Max Weber has called the " principle of collegiality " within a forum of formal equals, all of whom could use the same theoretical calculus in a fairly objective way to determine guilt or innocence.[42] With the opening of the conflict to public participation, this principle was in effect superseded by the principle of autocracy, for the popular conception of its leadership is monolithic rather than collegial. This autocracy was, however, effective only ideologically, for the organization was reputed to be riddled with " capitalist-roaders." The Maoists thus utilized the mass media to promote Mao's Thought as a new calculus for determining innocence or guilt. This ideological calculus eclipsed the elaborate and time-consuming procedures which were normally enforced by the Party organization prior to " labelling " criticism

41. *E.g.*, such questions as whether Wang Ch'ien stole a golden shoehorn and belt-buckle from Liu when he divorced her or whether he gave it to her and then falsely accused her.

42. Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, New York: Bedminster Press, 1968), I, 271–282.

targets,[43] just as the rise of the Red Guards eclipsed the organization itself, even though Mao's Thought proved impossibly vague as a criterion for selecting targets. A former Red Guard said about selecting targets for criticism:

This was a calculated risk and we won by sheer luck. . . . If we aimed at the wrong target . . . we would have been put down as counter-revolutionaries. Many times, we Red Guards had this kind of worry.[44]

Mao's Thought provided a *structural* critique which said no more than that the oppressed were " justified " in rebelling against " authorities " who were " taking the capitalist road "; thus leaving rebel factions considerable latitude in choosing targets, particularly at provincial and local levels. But the indeterminacy of Mao's Thought as a calculus of innocence or guilt meant that criticism had no intrinsic limits. Once someone came under attack, there was an inevitable dynamic to the criticism process which propelled it towards his destruction. The target was isolated, since any contact with him ran the risk of implication. His self-criticisms were indignantly rejected, for to be resolute and merciless was to be " Left," whereas to accept a self-criticism was to risk siding with a condemned man. This inherent dynamic vitiated the intended function of criticism as a sort of ordeal by fire for aberrant cadres, simply because no target could possibly " pass the test " unless he managed to secure the outside intervention of Mao, Chou En-lai or Lin Piao. Even if one faction forgave him, a competing faction was sure to assail the verdict and demand a reversal.

Due to the indeterminacy of Mao's Thought as a calculus, and to rejection of organizational criteria, there was a tendency for rebels to act on cues from their leaders or revert to ascriptive criteria. Targets were labelled on the basis of various " contagion patterns " linking them with those who had already been disgraced, such as prior association or place of origin. Such criteria tended to operate on a domino principle, making it possible to implicate entire chains of officials. By 28 May 1967, for instance, no fewer than 2,500 members of Liu's faction were said to have been thus discovered by the Red Guards.[45] Similarly, " comradeship " as a basis for political loyalty gave way to " friendship " [46] or even kinship, which began to assume an importance unprecedented in CCP history as a criterion for recruitment and the formation of coalitions among elites.[47]

43. For a discussion of " labelling " in the Cultural Revolution, see Gordon A. Bennett, " Political labels and popular tension," *Current Scene* VII : 4 (1969), p. 1 ff.

44. Ivan London and Ta-ling Lee, " The making of a Red Guard," *New York Times Magazine*, 4 January 1970, pp. 8–68.

45. *Yomiuri*, 4 April 1967, quoted in Edward Rice, *Mao's Way* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1972), p. 345.

46. See Ezra Vogel, " From friendship to comradeship: the change in personal relations in Communist China," *CQ* 21 (1965), pp. 46–61.

47. Chiang Ch'ing named her first daughter, Hsiao Li, as " person in charge " (chief editor) of the *Chieh-fang-chün pao* (*PLA Daily*) after the reorganization

As Edgar Snow has noted, the emergent pattern of conflict resolution bears a certain resemblance to the western " critical election," in that deadlocked elites tend to seek a decisive popular constituency to win backing for a political platform and defeat an opposition by employing all available communication media for mass mobilization.[48] However, it differs in at least two respects. First, in China there was no precisely measurable calculus of consent. Opinion was expressed exclusively through criticism, and not everyone had equal access to the media. Anyone could write a wall poster, but the mass media, including the pacemaking sector of the official press as well as the Red Guard tabloids (*hsiao-pao*), were seized by radical publicists, who reached their positions by dint of their demonstrated polemical skills. The criticisms they wrote were not meant to persuade an inert majority to vote one way or the other, but can be considered as " performative utterances " which themselves constituted " votes," for it was thought that the appearance of a sufficient number of telling criticisms could in itself destroy a person's legitimacy and make it impossible for him to rule. Under this arrangement, Mao's opponents had, of course, no chance to defend the alternative platform they were said to uphold, nor did the " silent majority " have any real avenue of expression, but the Party's monopoly over authoritative opinion was broken and this control was temporarily distributed among a network of young symbol specialists, who gave the movement its radical thrust.

Second, the Maoists had no alternative " slate " of candidates, as Mao came to realize in the course of the January 1967 " storm." In Jack Ch'en's words: " Sometimes one [Red Guard faction] seized power and excluded the other. In other cases, both claimed to have seized power. Occasionally, while one group seized power at the top, the other seized power at the lower levels." [49] Mao concluded that if the rebels seized power one day they might be " swept away " the next and found it necessary to persuade the cadres who had been disgraced and purged to " liberate " themselves from bourgeois thinking and reassume leadership positions on the Revolutionary Committees.

The Cultural Revolution was clearly no election, and yet its most significant departure from previous decision-making procedures was in penetrating the distinction between inside and outside the Party and in

of the editorial board on 23 August 1967, and placed her second daughter, Li Ming, in one of the subordinate units of the science and technology commission for national defence, a department in charge of the nuclear weapons testing programme. Lin Piao appointed his wife Yeh Ch'ün as one of the nine members of the reorganized PLA Cultural Revolution Group in 1967, placing her sixth in order of precedence, and his daughter, Lin Tou-tou to the editorial staff of *K'ung-chün pao*, the Air Force paper. Chien Yu-shen, *China's Fading Revolution : Army Dissent and Military Divisions, 1967–68* (Hong Kong: Centre for Contemporary Chinese Studies, August 1969), p. 125.

48. Edgar Snow, *The Long Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1972), p. 67.
49. " Biting the bullet," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 7 August 1971, pp. 21–23.

establishing a liaison between certain leaders and constituencies of extra-Party masses and polemicists. Michel Oksenberg has suggested that this innovation in making important decisions might become institutionalized in a form of " interest-group politics," arguing that modernization and industrialization will result in increasing functional differentiation, that, as these new professional and functional groups acquire greater resources and society becomes more complex, so their backing will become indispensable to maintain economic efficiency, and elite factions will increasingly seek backing from the interest-group concerned to promote a given policy proposal.[50] This projection seems based on the assumption that " revisionism" will return to post-Cultural Revolution China. The tendency for elites to become identified with particular interest-groups was apparent under Liu Shao-ch'i, most notably in the case of P'eng Chen, Lu Ting-yi, and the cultural-educational establishment. Yet Oksenberg overstates his case by overlooking the passivity of Chinese interest-groups: a passivity which can be attributed to the absence of any ideological legitimation for the concept of pluralism in China. Even during the " revisionist " heydey, " interest-group politics " consisted of a paternalistic solicitude on the part of certain elites rather than any active pressure for favours by the interest-groups themselves. Furthermore, " revisionism " was thoroughly repudiated during the Cultural Revolution, and with it the prospect of interest-group representation within the leadership. This is not to say that it will not reappear, but that ideological sanctions would tend to militate against its reappearance.

What then of the prospect of a continued liaison between the masses and certain high-level elites? The mandate that was issued to Red Guards to participate in the political process by writing polemics or demonstrating has been revoked: they still exist as a mass organization in the schools, but the rival factions have been disbanded, their printing presses confiscated and their nation-wide liaison networks broken up.[51] Nonetheless, the big-character posters remain a feature of the political scene at the lower levels, introducing competition into local elections which were previously rubber-stamp affairs. A place has been made for " mass-representatives " on Revolutionary Committees at all levels, and even if their power is only nominal, this is an important concession in principle to the idea that the non-Party masses should have permanent representation on those political and economic decisions immediately affecting their lives. Under the slogan, " better troops and simpler administration," there has been a drastic cut-back on secretarial and

50. Oksenberg, " Occupational groups in the Chinese society and the Cultural Revolution," *The Cultural Revolution : 1967 in Review* (Michigan Papers in Chinese Studies, 1968), No. 2, pp. 1–45. See also Barbara Jancar (whose study makes the same prediction), " The case for a loyal opposition under communism : Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia," *Orbis* XII:2 (1968), pp. 415–441.

51. John Gittings, " Inside China : in the wake of the Cultural Revolution," *Ramparts* X:2 (1971), pp. 10–20.

staff personnel, and while it is possible that this may impair the technical and planning functions of the leadership, it may also contribute to decentralization and make government more responsive to the masses.[52] Finally, and of far-reaching structural importance, the Cultural Revolution emancipated ideology from organization, legitimating the formation of non-Party groups and permitting them to attack established elites. As late as the winter of 1970–71, for instance, " radicals " in various provinces attacked the local authorities for failing to implement the more egalitarian norms implicit in Cultural Revolution polemics, and agitation continued until *The People's Daily* published an edict from Chairman Mao on 18 February 1971 proscribing further alteration of the commune system.[53] This suggests the way in which disadvantaged groups may continue to use Mao's Thought to legitimate the expression of grievances without going through formal channels, and at the same time shows how the integral link between ideology and Supreme Leader provides a court of last resort to arbitrate conflicts arising from ambiguities in the ideology.

At the highest level of leadership, however, Mao has clearly moved to re-establish the old distinction between inner and outer. As he said at the first Plenum of the 9th Central Committee in April 1969:

We adopted the method of issuing a communiqué so that foreign newsmen could no longer get our news [laughter]. They said we had a secret meeting; we were both open and secret. . . . We may have eliminated all the traitors and spies they planted in our ranks. In the past, news about every meeting immediately leaked out and then appeared in the tabloid newspapers of the Red Guards. Since the overthrow of Wang [Li], Kuan [Feng], Ch'i [Pen-yü], Yang [Ch'eng-wu], Yü [Li-chin], and Fu [Ch'ung-pi], they have been shut out from any news about the Central leadership.[54]

Whereas pre-Cultural Revolution Plenums were given considerable publicity, usually including publication of important speeches and reports (for example, at the 8th Party Congress, every address was immediately released to the public), beginning with the 12th Plenum of the 8th Central Committee in October 1968, Central Committee meetings have been held under quasi-secret conditions, publicized only by the release of a communiqué, if that.

In short, the emerging distribution of authority precisely reverses the

52. Tang Tsou, " The Values of the Chinese Revolution," in Michel Oksenberg (ed.), *China's Developmental Experience* (New York: Praeger, 1973, pp. 27–41.

53. In the autumn of 1970, after peasants had been urged to increase their investment funds by expanding side-line occupations and industries (Hung-ch'i, No. 3, 1970), radicals began attacking the commune system, agitating for the commune as unit of accounting, relating wages to need rather than work, etc. (Shensi Radio Service, 9 September 1970). During the winter, criticism continued in Shantung and Shansi until the 18 February *People's Daily* article.

54. " Mao's speech to the 1st plenary session of the CCP's 9th CC " (28 April 1969), in *Issues and Studies*, March, 1970.

pre-Cultural Revolution pattern. Whereas at lower levels of the bureaucracy there has undoubtedly been an increase in " democracy," at the Centre there has been an increase in " centralism." [55] Under the Liu-Teng collective leadership, policy was made by three bodies (each of which frequently convened enlarged sessions), the Central Committee, the Politburo, and the Secretariat; in the post-Cultural Revolution leadership, the Secretariat has been eliminated, the Central Committee meets infrequently, and the Politburo has been halved in size (21 to 10) as a consequence of continuing purges.

At the highest level, there appear to be two forms of conflict resolution in this new authority structure. First, the normal mode of redemptive inner-Party criticism and self-criticism seems to have been reinstituted in much the same form as it functioned in 1949–66. For example, a recent *Red Flag* editorial reassured apprehensive cadres:

Of course, in the course of bearing responsibilities, weaknesses or mistakes may also appear. But this is not serious; in our Party we have always had an old rule, which is to undergo criticism and self-criticism, publicly to expose one's weaknesses and promptly and fundamentally to reform, and then it's all right.[56]

Second, under special circumstances, a precedent exists for opening the process of mediated and regulated collegial conflict to the public to maximize participation and mobilization. The circumstances under which this may take place are undefined, but they seem to include the existence of an enduring stalemate at the highest policy levels, elite access to alternative avenues of mass mobilization, and the presence of groups which can be mobilized without seriously disrupting economic production, such as students or the underemployed.

The introduction of this second form of conflict resolution, and the fluid relationship between the two modes, seems to have an ambiguous impact on the continuing structural evolution of criticism and self-criticism. With regard to relations between the elite and the masses, the second method entails the legitimation of public opinion to decide major issues of state. It remains to be seen whether " mass representatives " will become institutional foci (" ombudsmen ") for the aggregation of public opinion, but in any case a precedent has been set for an occasional " jubilee " in which disadvantaged and normally inarticulate sectors of the populace are encouraged to express their grievances and achieve redress.

With regard to relations within the elite, it seems that the prospect

55. In Liu's formulation of the pre-Cultural Revolution pattern, " Leaders in the Party and higher-level organizations should pay more attention to democracy, and subordinates in the Party and lower-level organizations . . . to obedience." *Collected Works*, I, 397. The post-Cultural Revolution pattern follows Mao's prescription, " Concentrate the great authority, diffuse the small authority." Quoted in Schurmann, " Organizational contrasts between Communist China and the Soviet Union," (unpublished paper, Hong Kong, March 1961), pp. 29–30.

56. *Hung ch'i* 11 (30 October 1972), pp. 19–22.

of a transformation of the normal modes of dispute into the extra-ordinary entails a significant escalation in the disciplinary sanctions available to those elites who can command a mass constituency. With the monopolization of means of production, legitimate violence, and mass communication, there is now the potential for the " nationalization " of guilt.[57] Memories of the Cultural Revolution and the spectre of its repetition seem likely to make the normal mode a somewhat less candid and more provisional " game," since each player is aware of the option of " turning the tables " and suddenly raising the stakes from defeat on the issue at hand to that of political survival. The prospect of becoming a national guilt symbol is so unnerving that its likely targets might prefer suicide, a pre-emptive bid for total power or even flight, as the bizarre Lin Piao episode suggests. While this has surely made life at the top much more dangerous, it has also given the regime a means to generate a mandate for political change and to avoid that loss of impulsion which is said to characterize the Soviet collective leadership.[58]

57. Georges Henein, " Autocritique," *Petite Encyclopedie Politique* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1969), pp. 16–19.

58. Michel Tatu, " Possibilities of evolution in the Soviet Union," in *The Atlantic Community and Eastern Europe: Perspective and Policy* (Boulognes: The Atlantic Institute, 1967), pp. 19–25.