

NOTES

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CHAPTER 8

FROM "LIBERATION" TO "INDEPENDENCE": 1949-1958

When Hurley was trying to get Chiang Kai-shek to form a coalition government in 1945, he proposed that as a first step a conference be held that would include representatives of the Guomindang, the CPC, and other parties, as well as nonpartisan leaders. In 1946, after Marshall had managed to get the two sides to declare a cease-fire, a "political consultative conference" was held in Chongqing, with CPC representatives taking part. But by the end of the year the negotiations for a coalition government had collapsed, and the CPC withdrew from the conference. The CPC withdrew because Chiang had unilaterally decided to convene the National Assembly and promulgate a constitution.

The National Assembly did meet, and a constitution was adopted on December 25, 1946. It was a purely Guomindang constitution and ended all hopes for a reconciliation with the CPC. In January 1949, when the Guomindang tried once again to start negotiations with the CPC, Mao demanded that the 1946 constitution be annulled, war criminals be punished (Chiang among them), and a new Political Consultative Conference be formed "without the participation of reactionary elements" (i.e., the right-wing Guomindang leaders).

By summer 1949, when the Communists had already occupied Beijing, it was clear

that it was only a matter of time before the Guomindang would be ousted and the CPC would take over the government. In preparation for this eventuality, Mao Ze-dong directed the CPC to convene a Political Consultative Conference of its own, representing various friendly parties and personages, as its first step in the formation of a coalition government. The CPC thus took over the role of the Guomindang.

In theory, by reforming the Political Consultative Conference—now called the *Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference* (CPPCC)—Mao not only derived his authority from the Second United Front but also took over the leadership of the "bourgeois-democratic phase of the revolution."

In June 1949 Mao provided the guidelines of the government-to-be in an essay entitled "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship."¹ The article, a mix of orthodox and semi-orthodox beliefs, reflects Mao's view of the Chinese Revolution, the current national and international situation, and the direction of future CPC policies. Many elements in the essay were to cause problems later.

The article begins by stating an orthodox Marxian view that the ultimate objective of the revolution, after it had led to the extinction of classes and class struggle, was to reach the stage when the state and the party

would wither away. However, Mao argues, the conditions to achieve this end will be provided by "the leadership of the Communist Party and the state power of the people's dictatorship." This truth was above challenge.

Mao then analyzes the modern history of China to show that although Western bourgeois democratic models were tried, they could not succeed in China because the country was "suffering under imperialist oppression." Only with the advent of the Russian Revolution did socialism come to China and the Chinese entered "an entirely new era in their thinking and their life."

Internationally, the "Chinese without exception must lean either to the side of imperialism or to the side of socialism. Sitting on the fence will not do, nor is there a third road." China belonged "to the side of the anti-imperialist front headed by the Soviet Union, and so we can turn only to this side for genuine and friendly help, not on the side of the imperialist front." Evidently, Mao not only had given up his earlier idea of obtaining postwar aid from the United States but also had come to look on the United States as a potential enemy. The division of the world into two clear-cut camps, one headed by the evil American imperialists and the other by the forces of good led by the Soviet Union, did not bode well for China's future adjustment to international affairs.

Internally, the party was to form and lead the united front of workers, peasants, petty bourgeoisie, and national bourgeoisie to establish a "people's democratic dictatorship." Members of this united front were "the people," who would enforce their

dictatorship over the running dogs of imperialism—the landlord class and bureaucratic bourgeoisie, as well as the representatives of those classes, the Kuomintang reactionaries and their accomplices. . . . The combination of these two aspects, democracy for the people and dictatorship over the reactionaries, is the people's democratic dictatorship. . . . The state apparatus, including the army, the police and the courts, is the instrument by which one class oppresses another. . . . We definitely do not apply a policy of benevolence to the reactionaries.

Since anyone who was found wanting in socialist virtues could be condemned as a representative of the reactionary classes (as was frequently done later), a "'people' person" could be transformed into a "nonpeople' person" with the greatest of facility. There being no recourse to law, a victim had the option of accepting the political judgment and the punishment that went with it or committing suicide.

As had all constitutional documents that had preceded it, this document also mentions the people's rights of freedom of speech, assembly, association, and so on. But this was a meaningless concession to Western ideals, which had never been followed in China earlier and has not been followed under the Communists so far (1999).

Under the People's Democratic Dictatorship, declared Mao, the people can "educate and remold themselves on a countrywide scale by democratic methods and, with everyone taking part, shake off the influence of domestic and foreign reactionaries (which is still very strong . . .), rid themselves of bad habits and ideas acquired in the old society, not allow themselves to be led astray by reactionaries, and continue to advance—to advance toward a socialist and communist society."

This is a remarkable statement because Mao implies that the party did not represent any particular class or segment of the population, not even the working class, but all the people. Indeed, the enforced shift of the Communists from the cities after 1927 had eliminated their influence over the labor unions and the labor movement. When the cities finally were occupied by the CPC in 1947–1949, it was not through uprisings of the urban workers but through seizure by the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Liu Shao-qi, in a speech to the CPC Central Committee in March 1949, on "Questions Concerning Urban Work," was forthright in stating his suspicions about the reliability of the urban working class:

We must rely on the workers [for administering the cities and to increase production]. But are they

reliable? Marxism holds that the working class is most reliable. Generally speaking, this is correct, but we still have some specific problems. So we must strive to enable our working class to become completely reliable (emphasis added). If we ignore these problems and rely on the workers without doing any work among them, they won't necessarily be reliable.²

In his essay Mao also made particular reference to the "education" of the peasantry because, as he put it, "without socialization of agriculture, there [could] be no complete, consolidated socialism." So, in effect, Mao declared that all classes and all people needed reeducation and that only the party could guide them in this process. However, troubles would arise later, when Mao found that the party itself needed reeducation. Who was to teach the teachers? At that stage many Chinese must have felt that Mao was the sole repository of "the Truth."

INAUGURATION OF THE NEW ERA

On October 1, 1949, Mao Ze-dong proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) from Tiananmen (the Gate of Heavenly Peace), the southern entrance to the imperial palace in Beijing (Beiping was now renamed Beijing, "the Northern Capital"). It can be said without exaggeration that the vast majority of the Chinese people, exhausted by 50 years of internal upheavals and wars, welcomed their "liberation" because above all it presaged peace and the reintegration of the nation under a strong central leadership. Few would have disagreed with Mao Ze-dong's proud statement, made in September 1949, "Our work will go down in the history of mankind, demonstrating that the Chinese people, comprising one quarter of humanity, have now stood up. . . . Ours will no longer be a nation subject to insult and humiliation. We have stood up."³

In many ways the PRC found itself in an easier international environment than the one the USSR had faced at its inception: In

1918 the Soviet Union was isolated and alone, whereas the PRC in 1949 had a powerful friend in the Soviet Union and allies among the Communist states of Eastern Europe. The countries of the Third World, most of which were yet under colonial domination, looked upon China with admiration as a symbol of anti-imperialism and anticolonialism; the newly independent countries of Burma and India had hastened to recognize the PRC.

Internally, however, the PRC was confronted with a host of very acute problems. The sudden collapse of the Nationalists meant that the CPC had to expand its party network to include the vast areas that had fallen under its control. The party membership had to be increased hurriedly to undertake the new tasks; it was worrisome that since most of the new recruits had no experience of the revolution, their ideological commitment could be weak. Also, in the interest of maintaining local administration, many bureaucrats from the old regime were allowed to continue to function as before until they could undergo "thought reform."

The CPC was no longer a party in opposition, functioning with simple administrative structures in the countryside and downgrading the value of the cities. As the party in power, running the most populous state in the world, it had to fashion elaborate political and administrative institutions and learn to deal with the cities (from which it was now going to rule the country) as the centers of industry, commerce, communications, international relations, education, and culture. This task called for skills and techniques that the CPC had had no opportunity to develop.

While consolidating its hold over the country, the CPC also had to rehabilitate the shattered economy, bring inflation under control, and help the recovery of industry and commerce. Here the party was faced with a dilemma: To achieve this goal the CPC had to win over the old-style intellectuals, professionals, managerial class, and industrialists, who otherwise were considered the enemies of socialism and targets for attack. The goals of the revolution could not be achieved and the ideology of the CPC legitimized without

introducing socialist reforms; yet these reforms, if they alienated the urban bourgeoisie, would undermine economic recovery and development, which the regime could not allow.

The problems of the CPC were eased partly by its own mild policies represented in the united front approach and partly by the amazing readiness with which the urban bourgeoisie accepted the new regime. This readiness was not due to their love for Marxism-Leninism; rather it reflected a traditional attitude, ironically strengthened by the developments in the twentieth century.

Traditionally, the Chinese had always placed a high value on strong, paternalistic leadership that could protect, nurture, and look after the needs of the people and maintain the established pattern of hierarchical human relationships. To such a leadership the people readily offered their loyalty and obedience. In the postimperial period Chinese nationalism (a modern development), having risen as a response to the threat of imperialist aggression, demanded an even stronger state. This demand in turn allowed Chinese politics to turn left and replace democratic models with the Bolshevized single-party authoritarian governments of the Guomindang and the CPC. Most of the intelligentsia and leaders of society supported, rather than condemned, this development.

Although, another traditional value, the Confucian virtue of harmony, had been attacked since the May Fourth Movement as false and counterproductive, it in fact still was very much a part of the living political culture. It was reflected in the obligation of the leaders to make a public show of consensus and to demand conformity from the citizenry, which the bourgeoisie instinctively accepted.

The urban bourgeoisie had learned to live within the framework of the Guomindang-organized state, using nepotism and the corruption of factional politics as a substitute for more democratic channels to express its sectional or group interests.

There was no reason it could not adjust to the new circumstances even better since the CPC was free of corruption and recognized the bourgeoisie's importance to the nation. Had not Mao himself publicly declared,

The whole Party should try earnestly and painstakingly to make a success of the united front work. We should rally the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie under the leadership of the working class . . . it is right and necessary to unite with the national bourgeoisie, the democratic parties, democratic personages and intellectuals. Many of them were our enemies before, but now that they have broken with the enemy camp and come over to our side, we should unite with all these people, who can more or less be united with. It is in the interest of the working people to unite with them.⁴

The situation looked good to the bourgeoisie, but only time would tell what working under the working-class hegemony would entail or how the Communists intended to "struggle against them [the bourgeoisie] on the one hand and unite with them on the other."⁵ Time, however, was not on their side.

Vast and rapid changes took place within the next decade. By 1959 the so-called enemies of socialism had been eliminated or come under the stern control of the party, the political and social order had been transformed, and the economy had been reorganized. In foreign relations, by 1960 China had declared its independence of Moscow, ending ten years of Soviet domination of the China scene and replacing the fraternal alliance between the two Communist giants with a bitter hostility that was to last for the next three decades.

Naturally, Mao played a key role in all these developments, but by 1959 his colleagues in the party had begun to criticize some of his policies for attempting to apply the simplistic Yan'an approach to complex national problems. The "two lines" on China's path to modernization that emerged from the inner party conflict marked all Chinese politics till 1980, a few years after Mao's death.

Central Government and Regional Administration

The PRC was inaugurated even before all internal fighting had ended. In fact, the PLA fought a major battle in Xigang in October 1950, and Tibet was not absorbed into the PRC until 1951. As the PLA armies advanced and "liberated" the provinces, they established military control commissions to supervise the existing administration of these areas because the party lacked enough civilian personnel to replace the bureaucracy of the old regime. The result was that a civil central government was organized at the capital, but the regional administration was under the control of the military. This situation lasted until 1954, when a constitution was adopted and the government became truly centralized under the CPC.

From 1949 to 1954 the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), a multiparty body comprising CPC delegates and several hundred prominent people representing eight minor parties, professional and cultural associations, minorities, and other groups (e.g., the overseas Chinese), acted as a national assembly. The Communists were in a minority, but nobody was under any illusion concerning who ran the show.

In September 1949 the CPPCC passed the Organic Law of the Central People's Government, which set up the new structure of government and the Common Program. Noncommunists were represented in the government, but the key decision-making posts were invariably given to CPC members. The central government oversaw the administration of the entire country.

The Common Program, as the name suggests, was the CPC's statement on how the various classes in the nation were expected to work together within the framework of the new united front during the "new democracy" period. The document defines in a more systematic and detailed fashion what Mao had already enunciated in his essay "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship" and other

writings. The program gave the impression of being liberal in spirit and was designed to appeal to the intellectuals and the industrial and commercial classes. It did not mention class struggle at all and included such patently meaningless clauses as "the right of the people . . . to elect and be elected" (Article 4) and "The people . . . shall have the freedom of thought, speech, publication, assembly, association, correspondence, person, domicile, moving from one place to another, religious belief and the freedom of holding processions and demonstrations" (Article 5).⁶

The Party

The critical element in the new government's drive toward a socialist state was naturally the CPC. The party made the policies that the State Administrative Council (the government) and the mass organizations carried out. The rapid growth of CPC membership in the early years of the PRC reflected the growing needs of the party; it had 1.2 million members in 1945, 3 million in 1948, 4.5 million in 1949 (about 1 percent of the population), 6.6 million in 1953 (over 1 percent), and the figure doubled to 12.7 million in 1957 (over 2 percent); it later rose to about 4 percent of the population but by then the party and the government were well established.

The CPC constitution adopted at the Seventh National Party Congress in 1945, when Mao assumed total control, was still in force in 1949. The central leadership of the CPC was vested in three organizations: the Political Bureau (Politburo), the Secretariat, and the Central Committee. Mao Ze-dong chaired all these bodies. The Central Committee, which had about 40 members, represented the main body of the CPC and its branches in the "liberated areas" and symbolized the authority of the party. It legitimized policies by approving them, but real power lay with the Politburo, which made the policies, and the Central Secretariat, which was responsible for the administration of the party and for ensuring that the Politburo policies were properly followed. Since most of

the persons who staffed the Politburo and the Secretariat in 1949 are extremely important to the first 50 years of PRC history, their names are listed below:

Politburo	Secretariat
Mao Ze-dong (chair)	Mao Ze-dong (chair)
Liu Shao-qi	Liu Shao-qi
Zhu De	Zhou En-lai
Zhou En-lai	
Gao Gang	Added Later:
Chen Yun	Chen Yun (1954)
Kang Sheng (Plus four more)	

Added Later:

Lin Biao (1950)
Peng Zhen (1950)
Peng De-huai (1953)
Deng Xiao-ping
(1954, replaced Gao Gang)

In its Eighth National Party Congress, held in 1956, the CPC constitution introduced a Standing Committee of the Politburo. From then on this committee became the most important organ of the party and was authorized to oversee the routine work of the Central Committee. Its membership in 1956 was Mao Ze-dong, Liu Shao-qi, Zhou En-lai, Zhu De, Chen Yun, Lin Biao, and Deng Xiao-ping.

In 1949 the local party organs expanded as the PLA advanced through the country. The most important of these were the six bureaus that provided party leadership over the six military regions into which the country had been divided; 26 provincial party committees; a certain number of special district committees; and at the very bottom, 2,200 county committees.

The CPC is not a mass organization. Although anyone over 18 can apply, membership is highly selective and is based on recommendations by two party members who certify that the person's past behavior and

attitudes have conformed to the revolutionary values of the party. Theoretically, local party members at the county level elect county party congresses, which elect delegates to the provincial party congresses, which in turn elect the delegates to the national party congress. The national party congress elects the Central Committee, which theoretically functions as the highest organ of the party between the national congresses, which are supposed to be convened every five years. The Central Committee of the CPC is supposed to elect the Politburo and the Standing Committee of the Politburo. The Standing Committee of the Politburo exercises the Central Committee's functions and powers.

In practice, the system worked the other way around. Until the early 1980s, the well-recognized, great leaders of the CPC who controlled the Politburo (its composition reflected the rise and fall of factions within the top echelons of the party) nominated the members of the Central Committee, which in turn supervised the selection of delegates to provincial congresses, who helped select the delegates to the county and other local congresses. The elections were pro forma: A single slate of candidates received 100 percent of the votes. The situation has changed only slightly in the post-Mao period.

The formal structures of the party and the authority vested in them have, however, remained fluid; politics in China has depended to a large degree on the amount of power the top personalities have been able to exert to bend the structures to suit their aspirations.

The relationship between the party and the government was never clearly defined (the first attempt to do so was made only after the death of Mao), but since the leading party officials also occupied leading central and provincial government posts, the party maintained its command over the government through these overlapping appointments. The formal framework of government remained weak, and the practical problems of administration were often unaddressed, although Prime Minister Zhou En-lai was a

powerful enough figure to provide some sense of identity and security to the state bureaucracy.

REMODELING OF THE POPULATION

Two external events involving the two superpowers, each in its own way, helped the CPC to consolidate its hold over the country. One was the signing of a Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance on February 14, 1950. The treaty, designed to last 30 years, was personally negotiated by Mao and Stalin and ratified by both sides in April 1950. Directed against the United States and Japan, it linked the defense interests of the two countries; it also provided 60 million U.S. dollars worth of Soviet credits and promised Soviet aid in economic, educational, scientific, technical, and other fields. Although some conditions of the treaty were not entirely satisfactory to China (the Soviets were allowed to occupy Port Arthur and Dalian, run the main Manchurian railway under Sino-Soviet joint control until 1952, and set up certain Sino-Soviet joint enterprises in Manchuria and Xinjiang, and Beijing had to recognize the independence of Outer Mongolia), the alliance contributed to a psychological and material sense of security.

The other important event was the Korean War (1950–1953), which broke out in June 1950, two months after the ratification of the Sino-Soviet alliance. The war, started by the North Korean invasion of South Korea, brought the United States back into the East Asian scene; U.S. troops formed the bulk of the United Nations forces that were sent to help South Korea. It is doubtful that the Chinese anticipated their participation in the Korean War, but by November 1950, driven by strategic and political considerations, the Chinese forces, in the guise of Chinese People's Volunteers, were fighting in Korea and succeeded in pushing the United Nations troops out of the North.

America's fear that any expansion of the Communist bloc in East Asia would

threaten American strategic interests in that area led Washington to reverse its earlier policy of neutrality in the Chinese civil war. It now declared itself staunchly on the side of the Nationalists by recognizing the Republic of China in Taiwan as the legitimate government of all of China. Thus the cold war saved the Nationalists and halted Beijing's drive to unify the country. (The uncompleted "liberation" of Taiwan still remains a sensitive issue that continues to haunt United States–China relations even after they were normalized in 1979.) The United States, stunned by developments in Korea, began to look on Beijing as a dangerous enemy; the United States not only refused to recognize China but also got its Western allies, and the United Nations, to join Washington in doing the same and imposing an embargo on the export of strategic materials to China. Beijing was forced to depend even more heavily on the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc.

Although this unexpected war strained China's economic and military resources, it strengthened Beijing's self-confidence because the Chinese managed to fight the imperialist superpower to a halt and thus win a psychological victory. It also bolstered China's image among the peoples of the Third World, who were strongly anticolonial and anti-imperialist. Most important, the war helped the CPC in its drive to remold the pro-Western and pro-Guomindang (or anti-Communist) elements in the Chinese urban population.

Mass Campaigns

Mao Ze-dong's conviction that the masses, if actuated by "correct thinking," could change history, coupled with his theory of the "mass line," resulted in a peculiarly Chinese use of mass campaigns as an instrument of political communication and the politicization of the people. The mass line theory required the ruling elite to keep in close touch with the masses, to "study the masses" so that they could formulate policies on the basis of the "people's will." Since the "ideas of the masses" supposedly had a "revolutionary content,"

the formulated policies would naturally advance the cause of the revolution. As Mao defined it, "mass line" meant

From the masses—back 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 to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own.⁷

There was little chance that this vague process could be applied to a nation of 500 million. In practice, since the CPC leaders—Mao in particular—always seemed to know what was best for the masses, the CPC policies were taken to reflect the "ideas of the masses," and mass campaigns were used to "propagate and explain" these policies and mobilize the masses to carry them out.

Some mass campaigns were nationwide, such as the Great Leap Forward in 1958, but most were restricted to discrete segments of the population. All mass campaigns needed a real or a symbolic enemy that could provide a negative example and be used as a target for attack. The leadership always launched a mass campaign after having decided the guiding policy for the campaign. The coterie of activist cadres, who were familiar with these policies, then spread the word through party, state, and mass organizations; the media broadcast the issues; and the masses responded by holding rallies and "demanding" that action be taken according to the leaders' ideas. Those who showed lack of enthusiasm were "struggled" against, made to undergo "criticism and self-criticism," and if that did not help, were put in the category of the "enemy."

The Peasantry—Phase One: 1949–1953

The CPC did not need Soviet aid to carry out the land revolution. Their own long experience in organizing the peasantry in the countryside and Mao's guidelines were sufficient. Since 1936 the Chinese Communists had been carrying on land reform in areas under their control, although the operation lacked

the radical intensity it was to gain after 1950. It was only in 1947 that the CPC had adopted the Basic Agrarian Law, which categorically announced that "China's agrarian system is unjust in the extreme. . . . The agrarian system of feudal and semifeudal exploitation is [hereby] abolished. The agrarian system of 'land to the tillers' is to be realized."⁸ However, even in 1947 the program to uproot landlordism was moderated and slowed down to help the party gain popular support in establishing the new united front to back Mao's People's Democratic Dictatorship.

The Agrarian Reform Law of 1950, which replaced the 1947 land law, finally spelled out the CPC's land policies. The 1950 Law aimed at three things:

- First, to give all individual, poor peasants a certain amount of land confiscated from the big landlords, clan lands, and Buddhist/Taoist/Christian temple and church lands; and free these peasants from tenancy and exorbitant rents.
- Second, to avoid chaos and protect production by allowing rich and moderately well-off peasants (not to be confused with the big landlords) to keep their surplus land.
- Third, to politicize the peasantry in the process of land redistribution.

This revolutionary land reform program was completed by the beginning of 1953, except in areas belonging to the minority peoples. A little less than half of all the arable land changed hands, and 300 million peasants became independent holders of small pieces of farmland.

The land settlement, the return of peace to the country, the improvement and repair of waterworks, and the restoration of transportation networks helped the recovery of agricultural production, which now reached or exceeded the highest prewar figures.

On the political and ideological level, the land reform movement was a mass campaign intended to politicize the peasantry by inciting them to organize under the leadership of the party and "struggle" against the landlords, the "class enemy."

In the process of liquidating the class enemy it was hoped that the peasantry would become familiar with the rudiments of socialist ideology, understand the power and authority of the new rulers, destroy traditional social structures, and replace them with more socialistic patterns of relationships.

Guided by outside party activists and agitators, peasant associations, headed by the poorest peasants, were formed in the villages. The rural population was divided into five classes: landlords, rich peasants, middle peasants, tenants, and landless labor. The peasant associations held public accusation meetings in which the local tenant farmers and landless laborers were encouraged to attack the local landlords, who were brought before the audience one by one and made to kneel before their accusers. These public trials, where the peasants poured out their "bitterness," created an atmosphere of mass hysteria and often ended with the peasant mob demanding immediate death of the landlord to "settle old scores." Many landlords were beaten to death or executed on the spot; many others committed suicide to avoid the torture of the trial. The landlord's title deeds were burned and the land redistributed. A reign of terror swept through the country. It is estimated that no fewer than 5 million people died before calm returned. The children of the landlords and rich peasants became political outcasts and until the end of the Maoist era, suffered from the stigma of being "black elements"; the derogatory class designation of "landlord" and "rich peasant" was removed in 1979, three years after Mao death.

The Land Law of 1950 had prohibited the use of force, but the party followed Mao's basic approach to the problem of peasant mobilization, summed up neatly in his dictum of 1927: "To put it bluntly, it is necessary to create terror for a while in every rural area."⁹

The Urban Classes: 1949–1955

Control and Remolding Techniques. Apart from the more formal structures of control (the party, the PLA, and the government),

the CPC introduced mass organizations at the local and national levels as subsidiary instruments of control. Every citizen was forced to become a member of one or more of these organizations. The local organization was that of a "small group"; for example, the street committee, the neighborhood committee, the teachers' committee in a school, and the workers' committee in a factory. At the national level there were organizations such as Young Pioneers (children's corps); All-China Students' Federation; and All-China Federations of Trade Unions, of Democratic Women, of Democratic Youth, of Cooperative Workers, and of Literature and Art.

These organizations covered all aspects of an individual's activities: personal, social, and professional. Guided by party members, these organizations looked after local and national peace and security (arbitrating family disputes and hunting out troublemakers, petty criminals, and "counterrevolutionaries"), supervised indoctrination meetings and mass campaigns, recruited activists, and recommended applicants for party membership.

The remolding of the intelligentsia and the urban professional classes was carried out by the reeducation methods first used in the rectification campaign of 1942. These methods, employing techniques of struggle meetings (in which the subjects were criticized and made to recognize their ideological shortcomings) and self-criticism sessions, aimed at "thought reform," often referred to as "brainwashing," which is a translation of a popularly used Chinese term.

The process that the subjects underwent has been likened to a religious conversion. They were first "struggled against"; made to feel guilty; forced to undergo a period of privation, insecurity, and inner tension; and denied the company of friends or family. They were then given time to struggle with themselves, to ruminate over their guilt until they confessed their "crimes." When the deviants were considered to have fully remolded their thinking, they returned to the fold chastened and ready to wholeheartedly support the regime and the new order. Some-

times it was necessary to send the subjects to a village or a factory for several weeks to several months to labor alongside peasants and workers and undergo "reform through labor." It is debatable whether, despite the torture and the torment, there were many whose brains were actually washed clean of their past thought.

As noted earlier, in 1949 the urban professional classes were lulled into a sense of security, and indeed during the first year of the new regime the industrial and commercial groups, the "national bourgeoisie," were treated with care, their authority and properties protected, and they were given help and encouragement to expand their production. As a result, by 1952 rail and road transport networks had been restored, industrial and handicraft production had more than doubled in value, and Chinese exports had begun to expand. Coupled with other state actions, such as price controls and the creation of parity units (based on the price of essential goods) for the payment of wages, national economic recovery was more or less successfully completed by 1952, and the CPC was ready to lead the country's "transition to socialism."

Mass campaigns to reform and cleanse the bourgeoisie, the bureaucracy, and the intelligentsia were now in order. The Korean War had helped to create a climate of state terror, which made the task of the CPC much easier. Even as the administration of the six military regions was being consolidated, those who were considered to oppose the regime had been dubbed counterrevolutionaries, quickly tried by military courts, and executed. This operation was given formal approval and turned into a nationwide campaign, when the Regulations for the Suppression of Counterrevolutionaries were issued in February 1952. The term *counterrevolutionary* covered not only political acts of espionage, revolt, and sabotage, but also criminal acts, such as the looting of important public or private properties; disturbing markets or dislocating currencies; and attacking, killing, or injuring public officials or the people.¹⁰ The punishments were harsh: death penalty or

life imprisonment. The criminals were tried by mass courts, and over a million were executed. Zhou En-lai was pleased to report to the CPPCC in October 1951 that the country had "achieved great nationwide success in the suppression of counterrevolutionaries . . . [who] have been dealt very serious blows with the arrest, execution and imprisonment of large numbers of the major vicious elements who fall into the five categories of bandits, despots, secret agents, members of reactionary parties and organizations and reactionary secret societies."¹¹

In fall 1951 the party had begun an in-house "three anti" campaign directed against corruption, waste, and bureaucratism. The campaign had a double goal: It was intended to cleanse the party cadres (whose numbers had increased so rapidly that many careerists had entered the organization) of bad practices, and it put the bourgeoisie on notice that they were the next target because they had corrupted the cadres and encouraged waste and evil bureaucratic practices. Thousands of cadres were purged in the "three anti" campaign.

The "five anti" campaign, launched in January 1952, was a movement against the bourgeoisie to cure it of the evils of bribery, tax evasion, theft of state assets, nonfulfillment of contracts, and theft of state economic secrets. Since the party had no intention of liquidating this vitally important class, as it had the landlords, this was both a mass campaign (in the style of the land reform, with clerks, accountants, and other subordinate staff denouncing the head of their commercial or industrial unit) and a thought reform program that encouraged the erring bourgeoisie to seek rehabilitation by confessing their past sins and condemning their past ideology and attitudes.

All private enterprises were classified according to the gravity of their crimes and dealt with accordingly; the serious law breakers were punished publicly to teach the others a lesson. Since Shanghai was the biggest industrial and commercial center, it naturally held special interest for the party, which found 140,000 of its 164,000 firms guilty of

one crime or another. Similar determination was made about the bourgeoisie in other major cities. It is estimated that only about 500 business people were executed, although the numbers of those imprisoned ran to several thousand. When the campaign was wound down in mid-1952, the government itself declared that the cases must be dealt with magnanimously to help the rapid restoration and development of industry and commerce.

The campaign was comparatively short-lived, but it helped to destroy any illusions the capitalists may have had regarding their independence; it softened them for the next phase, which followed in 1954, when the business enterprises were made "public-private," and for the last phase in 1955-1956, when all private enterprises were socialized. The campaign also was successful in enrolling the workers into labor unions and, like their peasant counterparts, making them more politically conscious.

The Intellectuals—Phase One: 1949–1953

The class that needed thought reform most was the *zhi-shi-fen-zi* ("knowledgeable elements"), comprising virtually everyone who had had any schooling. The term is loosely translated into English as "intellectuals" by the Chinese themselves, although they sometimes refer to "higher intellectuals" as an important subgroup. For our purposes the term *intellectuals* will include only those who belong to the category of teachers, writers, artists, journalists, lawyers, and so on—those who can be considered capable of independent thinking and have the facility to express their thoughts and thereby influence public opinion.

This class has posed a special problem for the CPC, and until today the Communists have not learned how to handle it. The CPC dilemma arises out of the fact that on the one hand the country, if it is to modernize, cannot do without the intellectuals; on the other, it appears almost impossible to remold them to the party's satisfaction.

We observed earlier that most of the intellectuals had been disgusted with the fas-

cist-style Guomindang regime and shifted their support to the CPC; many of them were "liberal-leftists," and some had even joined the CPC. The League of Left-Wing Writers, for example, was heavily Communist influenced. The intellectuals were eager to see China reunified under a strong government, but they also hoped that such a government would ensure their intellectual freedom. Even those who had been in Yan'an in 1942 and undergone the rectification campaign were not convinced that the party should prescribe the contents of their artistic and literary expression.

The campaign for remolding the intellectuals was launched in late 1951 by Zhou Enlai. The intellectuals were seen as tainted by their bourgeois or petty bourgeois class background and by their education that had exposed them to Western ideas and ideologies. Mao was particularly critical of their subjective individualism, their self-conceit, and their knowledge, which according to Mao came from books and was therefore idealistic and impractical. During the campaign thousands of intellectuals, forced to undergo thought reform, were duly "struggled against" and they duly made "confessions" that were widely published. Some intellectuals working for the media were demoted or dismissed. A side aspect of the campaign was that libraries and book shops were purged of most of their holdings of Western works because they reflected bourgeois ideology and were counterrevolutionary.

If it was the intention of the CPC to remold the nation to make it a docile tool in the hands of the party, then it had largely succeeded in its goal by 1953; but if the aim was to prepare the people to become active participants in the political process and to produce from among them the new leadership of the country, it had failed miserably. The peasants, the workers, the intelligentsia, and the national bourgeoisie had all participated in campaigns that made them conscious not of their "rights" but of the capacity of the state to unleash terror. This realization had little immediate relevance to most of the population because all they wanted was a stable

government and personal security. It did matter to the intellectuals because they believed that they had a role to play in the modernization of China.

THE TRANSITION TO SOCIALISM: 1953–1957

By the end of 1952, the national economy having made a recovery, the land reform program having basically ended, and the urban classes having been remolded to accept the new political regime, the CPC was ready to initiate a more rigorous approach to socialism and a planned socialist economy. Consequently in 1953 the First Five-Year Plan (First FYP) was launched and the “general line for the transition to socialism,” introduced.

The First FYP and the transition to socialism were to go hand in hand. To achieve these goals the country needed to have a far more centralized government authority (which meant it had to end the regional administrative bureaus); collect statistics on natural resources and population; socialize industry, commerce, and agriculture; and win over the intellectuals. These multifarious tasks had to be performed almost simultaneously and required tremendous skill in manipulating the social forces.

In anticipation of the First FYP, a State Planning Committee had been created in fall 1952 with Gao Gang, the boss of the north-east region, as the chair, but his demand for a disproportionately high investment in the industrial development of Manchuria led to a leadership crisis. Gao Gang was purged in 1954 for attempting to establish an “independent kingdom” in Manchuria and for conspiring to seize state power. It is possible that one reason for Gao’s troubles was his close association with the Soviets. But since Rao Shu-shi, who controlled the east China region, was also purged on a similar charge and had no Moscow connection, it is more likely that the two party leaders had to be removed because they were trying to use their influence to strengthen their regional industrial areas at the expense of the rest of the

country, thus adding to their personal authority: Mukden in Manchuria and Shanghai in the east were two of the most advanced industrial centers in China. Incidentally, Rao was also a member of the State Planning Committee.

The 1954 Constitution

The Gao-Rao affair may or may not have hurried the decision, but the formal centralization of state authority took place with the adoption of the 1954 constitution, which replaced the temporary state structure established in 1949 that had allowed for strong regional administrative units.

The Constitution vested the ultimate authority of the state in the National People’s Congress (NPC), which headed the pyramidal system of people’s congresses: The electorate at the local city or county level “elected” the base-level congress, which “elected” delegates to the provincial congress, which sent delegates to the NPC. During Mao’s lifetime the people (men and women over 18 who had not lost their civil rights) voted for a handpicked, single list of candidates.

The 1954 NPC appointed Mao Ze-dong as chairman of the People’s Republic and placed the State Council under the premiership of Zhou En-lai. The NPC was elected for four years and was supposed to meet once a year for about two weeks to endorse policies and legislation. While it was in recess its functions were performed by the Standing Committee of the NPC.

The relationship among the NPC, the government (State Council), and the CPC can be described briefly as follows: The State Council had direct control over the central ministries of the government and the government bureaus at the provincial and county level; just as the NPC was supposed to oversee the functioning of the government at the national level, the provincial and county people’s congresses were supposed to oversee the functioning of the government at the provincial and county levels, respectively; the party Central Committee had lines of direct control over the State Council but indirect control over the provincial and county bureaus,

exercised through its provincial and county party committees. In actuality, of all the three institutions the National People’s Congress and the People’s Congresses at the provincial and lower levels were the weakest: they were no more than rubber-stamping bodies with hardly any legislative powers.

The First Five-Year Plan

The First FYP, based on Russian experience and advice, was strongly weighted in favor of the development of heavy industry. The investment distribution reflected this bias: Industry received 58.2 percent; transportation and communications, 19.2 percent; and agriculture, 7.6 percent. The plan could not have been fulfilled without Russian aid, which although limited financially (3 percent of the total plan outlay), was crucial in providing model factories, technical know-how, and technicians. The Soviets supplied 156 industrial units (the core of the industrial construction program), 12,000 engineers and technicians from the Eastern bloc, blueprints and technology for construction projects, and training for 6,000 Chinese students and 7,000 workers. The result was a dramatic growth in industrial output (e.g., steel output rose from 1.4 million tons in 1952 to 5.24 million tons in 1957), but agriculture lagged far behind, with an annual growth rate of about 3 percent, just about keeping pace with the annual population growth of about 2.2 percent.

While this industrial base was being laid, the private sector, as noted earlier, disappeared without much fuss, and all industrial and commercial enterprises still in private hands were nationalized. The capitalists and industrialists were bought out, but the monetary compensation paid to them was deposited in banks, from which they could not withdraw any large sums without permission. Most of these dispossessed capitalists were, however, retained as managers and directors of the companies they once owned.

The Peasantry—Phase Two: 1954–1956

The transition to socialism in agriculture was a more complicated affair. It was apparent

from the beginning of the land reform program that many poor peasants who had never owned land before did not have the draft animals and the tools to make a success of their farms. It was also obvious that a whole country divided into such small parcels of land could be conducive neither to agricultural growth nor to agricultural modernization. The party’s urging that peasants establish “mutual-aid teams” and cooperate with one another at the time of plowing and harvesting was willingly accepted by many. By the end of 1953, 43 percent of the peasants were in mutual aid teams of 4 or 5 families. Some of these basic units had gone a step further and established small “semisocialist” Agricultural Producers’ Cooperatives (APCs) of 20 to 30 families, who had pooled their lands and were working on them collectively. The crops were divided among the members of the cooperative on the basis of what they had contributed to the pool in the way of property (land, animals, tools) and in the way of labor and other services.

The campaign to establish lower-level (semisocialist) APCs nationwide was officially launched in December 1953, even before the mutual aid teams had been established throughout the entire country. But the party emphasized that the movement must be voluntary and the pace restrained. This go-slow policy was reflected in the First FYP target, which aimed to place one-third of the peasant households in APCs by 1957. By mid-1955 only 15 percent of the rural population had joined these elementary cooperatives.

Since agricultural output was not keeping pace with the demands of industrial production the question arose: Would the speeding up of agricultural cooperativization help solve this problem or aggravate it? Mao was one of the few in favor of rapid collectivization, which according to him would not only increase agricultural production to meet the needs of industrialization but also help to bring socialism to the countryside. In October 1954 Mao had called for a sixfold increase in the APCs and although the Central Committee had agreed to support his drive, the results were mixed. Indeed, in cer-

tain areas the APCs were dissolved soon after being formed because of local negative reaction. The party vacillated and reemphasized gradualism.

This situation was intolerable to Mao because land redistribution and the resulting private ownership of land had re-created some evils that had marred life in the countryside before 1949. As Mao put it in his speech to provincial party secretaries and propaganda officials in July 1955,

What exists in the countryside today is capitalist ownership by the rich peasants and a vast sea of private ownership by the individual peasants. As is clear to everyone, the spontaneous forces of capitalism have been growing steadily in the countryside in recent years, with new rich peasants springing up everywhere and many well-to-do middle peasants striving to become rich peasants. On the other hand, many poor peasants are still living in poverty for lack of sufficient means of production, with some in debt and others selling or renting out their land. . . . There is no solution to this problem except on a new basis . . . the socialist transformation of the whole of agriculture.¹²

According to Mao, what was needed to save the situation was not a go-slow policy but the reverse:

But some of our comrades are tottering along like a woman with bound feet and constantly complaining, "You are going too fast." Excessive criticism, inappropriate complaints, endless anxiety, and the erection of countless taboos—they believe this is the proper way to guide the socialist mass movement in the rural areas.

No, this is not the right way; it is the wrong way.¹³

The comrades Mao was referring to were the majority of the leaders in the government and the party. Indeed, just a few weeks before Mao's speech, the chair of the State Planning Committee, Li Fu-chun, while reporting on the progress of the First FYP had declared that it would take three 5-year plans, that is, 15 years, "to fulfill this

fundamental task of the transition" to socialism. There was, obviously, political opposition to Mao's views.

So, Mao, instead of following the proper channel and presenting his ideas to the Central Committee of the party, settled the issue by speaking directly to the provincial cadres, who were the ones actually to perform the task of mobilizing the peasantry. In bypassing the party high command, Mao had put himself above the party; the party was forced to give its formal approval to Mao's policy in October. And once again, as in his 1927 Hunan Report, Mao found the peasants more radical and revolutionary than the party ("the present position is precisely one in which the mass movement is running ahead of the leadership."¹⁴).

By directing the cadres to start a mass campaign from the bottom (which would exclude the rich peasants from the peasant associations and depend on the support of the poor peasants), Mao had also eschewed the planners and bureaucrats who would have liked to organize a centrally controlled, step-by-step development. Guided by enthusiastic cadres, the movement gathered an extraordinary momentum, and by the end of 1956 all of China's 120 million rural families were distributed in APCs. Mao had been fully vindicated. But his utopian dream did not stop with the establishment of semisocialist APCs. He now looked forward to their conversion to fully socialist or advanced-level cooperatives, comprising 100 to 250 families, which would no longer take into account a peasant's material contribution to the collective. This act would abolish private ownership of land and make all peasants equal. A peasant was to be allowed to retain a small private plot of land (total area of these not to exceed 5 percent of the arable land) for private use and house, but the peasant's income was to be calculated on the socialist principle "to each according to his labor."

Some fully socialist cooperatives had already emerged in 1955. In January 1956 the party announced that the task of shifting to fully socialist cooperatives would be complet-

ed by 1958. In fact, over 90 percent of the peasants were in higher cooperatives by early 1957, and the transition to socialism in the countryside could be declared to have been completed.

The Intellectuals—Phase Two: 1954–1956

The transition to agricultural collectivization and the nationalization of industry had been relatively smooth. The problem of winning over the intellectuals proved more bothersome. The early post-1949 campaigns of thought reform had fallen short of their goal to gain the wholehearted acceptance of party policies by the intellectuals.

Matters came to a head when one of the nationally recognized intellectuals, Hu Feng, decided to take a stand against the party and demand that the intelligentsia be given a certain amount of intellectual freedom. Hu Feng, a friend of Lu Xun and a longtime follower of the CPC, was on the editorial staff of the magazine *People's Literature* and a member of the NPC. In 1954 Hu Feng blamed the authorities for the failure of the development of literature and art. He said that the party policies of indoctrination; thought reform; prescriptive writing; and limiting the writers' subject matter, demanding that they seek inspiration from the lives of workers, peasants, and soldiers, were like "five daggers in the backs of the writers" because they were repressive and destructive to the creative soul of the artist.

Hu Feng's criticism gave the party an ideal opportunity to attack so-called bourgeois thinking, which the party could now declare existed even among the leftist intellectuals. Quickly the leadership switched to an all-out assault on Hu Feng and made him the target of a nationwide campaign. There was no longer any attempt to get Hu Feng to reform his thinking because it was announced that he was a counterrevolutionary. In mid-1955 Hu was arrested and incarcerated in an unknown location.

The celebrated Hu Feng case and the anti-Hu Feng campaign that was mounted in schools, colleges, universities, and the cultur-

al field cowed the intelligentsia into submission or at least effectively silenced it. The intellectuals could now be labeled *counterrevolutionaries* and punished accordingly; about 80,000 of them were put into that category, and another 300,000 were found politically unreliable and deprived of their civil rights.

By the end of 1955 the party realized that it had gone too far in alienating the members of this important class and was depriving the nation of their contributions. In January 1956 Zhou En-lai, in his "Report on the Question of Intellectuals," admonished the party for its heavy-handed policies:

It is . . . the opinion of the Party Central Committee that even though the intellectuals were influenced in various ways in the past by the imperialists and the reactionary classes, the overwhelming majority of them also suffered the oppression of the imperialists and the Nationalist Party. Some of them, accordingly, joined the revolution and some others showed sympathy to the revolution. Most of them maintained a neutral and observing attitude toward the revolution. *Only a very small number of them were counterrevolutionaries* (emphasis added). Facts clearly pointed out to the intellectuals that except for standing together with the working class and the Chinese Communist Party, there was no other way out for them. It is therefore necessary, as it is also possible, to unite [with] the intellectuals. . . .

We must confess that there are many shortcomings in our work . . . [We have failed to place] confidence in intellectuals who deserve it, such as forbidding them to visit factories which they should see and barring them from information which they should possess. . . .

Many intellectuals have the feeling that they spend too much time on non-functional conferences and administrative routines [political study and political conferences].¹⁵

In 1956 the party relaxed its controls over the intellectuals; indoctrination meetings were reduced, salaries were increased, and greater freedom of expression was allowed. It appears that the party leaders were confident that most older intellectuals had been won over. The future lay with the younger generation, who would, it was hoped, receive the

right type of education. During the First FYP the number of primary school students rose from 26 to 64 million and university students from 117,000 to 441,000. But the rub was that the academics still belonged to the pre-1949 class of urban intellectual elites.

YEAR OF REAPPRAISAL: 1956–1957

As the First FYP drew to a close, it became evident that certain tendencies had emerged in China that were not in keeping with Mao Ze-dong's ideas of how the Chinese revolution was to be continued into the future. The basic contradiction was between the Soviet model of a socialist state and Mao's concept of China's path to modernization.

The Soviet model presumed that further socialist transformation of society to true communism would follow the economic modernization of the state, and that artificially created social upheavals to promote social change were counterproductive. If there were to be changes, they would be initiated from above by the party leadership. The Soviets believed in the unchallenged power of the party, stable state structures, centralized planning, bureaucratic controls, elitist technocrats as key elements in running industries and other enterprises, authority vested in the managerial class, hierarchy of ranks, monetary incentives, and accepted differentials in salaries and other benefits. The Soviet model was city-oriented and correlated modernization with urbanization and industrialization.

The CPC, in the absence of any other relevant model, had accepted the Soviet system with certain initial additions, such as the use of mass campaigns as a technique of control. The result was that the party began to lose its pre-1949 revolutionary ardor, and its ideological authority came to be replaced by state policies. The party was fast becoming a bureaucratic organization, and the once-revolutionary party cadres were now civil servants, who evaluated their success not in terms of their capacity to lead and educate the masses but by how fast they could move up the bureaucratic ladder. By 1955 the PLA, too,

had been Sovietized and the old ideas of a people's army and guerrilla warfare were being replaced by a greater emphasis on professionalism and hierarchical military structures, with a corresponding de-emphasis on political training.

The Soviet model was attractive to all those leaders who saw the need for the modernization of the country through an orderly and methodical process of economic development. These leaders were not against further socialization of society, but they considered increased industrial and agricultural production as a key to future changes in social relations.

On the other hand, Mao, who was by no means against economic modernization, felt that the "economics first" approach spelled the end of the revolution. In contrast, his "politics in command" approach espoused modernization through mass mobilization, which would heighten political consciousness and ensure the continuation of the revolution. As early as 1937 Mao had enunciated his version of the theory of dialectical materialism in an essay entitled "On Contradiction" in which he had said,

... while we recognize that in the general development of history the material determines the mental and social being determines social consciousness, we also—indeed must—recognize the reaction of mental on material things, of social consciousness on social being and of the superstructure on the economic base.¹⁶

Mao, the populist, the believer in voluntarism, therefore advocated the utilization of the mass line to bring to flower the "boundless creative power" of the masses and raise their social consciousness. Instead of greater centralization of authority, he wanted decentralization of leadership in the area of production, the expansion of the worker and peasant participation in management and decision making, and the replacement of monetary incentives with ideological ones. He also emphasized self-reliance. In keeping with these ideas, Mao in the winter of 1955–1956 proposed a 12-year program for

agriculture, which bypassed the party's 5-year-plan approach and called for some rapid socioeconomic changes that would bring "greater, faster, better and more economical results." The party leaders could not dare to reject Mao's proposal, but they managed to shelve it for the next 18 months.

The year 1956 was of historic importance because during it Mao gave the first indication that he was not satisfied with the political line that was evolving at the party center. It was also a year of some confusion because an internal lack of consensus on future national goals and policies was made more complicated by external events.

After the death of Stalin in 1953, the struggle for power in Moscow led the Soviet leaders to adopt a softer line toward China. The unequal aspects of the earlier Sino-Soviet treaties were done away with and there was even some increase in Soviet aid. In the new, more relaxed political environment of the Eastern bloc, China adopted a flexible approach to the Third World. Sponsored by India to attend the Bandung Conference of Afro-Asian States in 1955, China, represented by Zhou En-lai, emerged from the conference with its reputation vastly enhanced. Indeed, immediately after the conference many developing countries began to view China as a leader and a model to be emulated. China could now look forward to playing a more important part in the East-West confrontation, within and without the Eastern bloc.

But China's troubles with the Soviet Union started soon thereafter with Khrushchev's de-Stalinization speech at the Soviet Twentieth Party Congress in February 1956. Khrushchev's criticism of Stalin for having put himself above the party and developing a "cult of personality" not only made it difficult for the Chinese leaders to explain their earlier glorification of Stalin but also reflected adversely on Mao's leadership style. Moreover, Khrushchev's views on peaceful coexistence with the capitalist nations and détente with the United States implied that China would have to follow suit in the manner of Moscow's East European client states,

amending its policies that were built around the idea of the socialist and the imperialist blocs confronting one another in a life-and-death struggle. Alternatively, if China rejected Moscow's stand, it was left with no option except to break away from the bloc. Mao's sense of independence could never have allowed him to accept the former path.

Mao's reaction to the internal and external situation led him to express his views in three pronouncements (one article and two speeches), all reiterating his basic, independent position on the nature of the Chinese revolution.

First Pronouncement. China did not publish Khrushchev's speech, but there was considerable intraparty debate on the issue. Finally, in April the *People's Daily* printed a critique of Khrushchev's speech in an editorial entitled "On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat." There is every reason to believe that the editorial was written by Mao himself or at least that he had a major hand in writing it. The document praised Stalin as a "great Marxist-Leninist revolutionary" who had made important contributions to the development of socialism and whose merits were greater than his faults. The article accepted the criticism that Stalin made "some serious mistakes" in his later life, but it put them down to his having divorced himself from the masses. Regardless of how wrong it was of Stalin to misuse "class warfare" to purge his opponents, the article pointed out that "society at all times develops through continual contradictions" and "to deny contradictions is to deny dialectics." The "cult of the individual" was also assailed but it was emphasized that such a development could take place only when the "mass line" was ignored. The implication was that Mao could never make such a mistake. More importantly, the article emphasized that "it is utterly wrong to deny the role of the individual, the role of forerunners and leaders."¹⁷

Second Pronouncement. In that same month Mao took up the theme of "contradictions" in a major secret speech, "On the Ten Great

Relationships,"¹⁸ which was officially made public only 20 years later. The immediate reason for its secrecy was that Mao had defined a self-reliant Chinese path to modernization, which was critical of the Soviet model.

In this second pronouncement, Mao divided China's problems of modernization and change into ten major contradictions: between industry and agriculture, heavy and light industry, coastal and inland industries, economic and defense constructions, state and productive units and individual producers, the center and the regions, Han and other nationalities, party and others, revolution and counterrevolution, and China and other countries. To handle these contradictions properly, Mao proposed a radical change of policy, which would have meant a virtual rejection of the Russian development strategy.

Khrushchev's attack on Stalin had made it possible for the Soviet Communist party to break with its Stalinist past and provide a new legitimacy to the Khrushchev-led party. By the same token the de-Stalinization speech made it possible for Mao to reconsider the "blind faith" with which the CPC had followed the Soviet lead. Mao's speech was thus critical not only of the Soviet model but also of the Soviet socialist system. Directly, it was critical of the CPC leaders who had "blindly" accepted the Soviet path and thereby rejected the Chinese (i.e., the Maoist) approach to socialism and change.

Third Pronouncement. Mao's third pronouncement can be best understood in the context of his view of how contradictions helped the cause of revolution. In a speech delivered to the Supreme State Conference on May 2, 1956, he announced a new policy of "let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thought contend."¹⁹

The policy promised political and social liberalization. At one level it appeared to be similar to the current post-Stalin liberalization moves in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe to enlist the intelligentsia in the economic development programs. In fact, the Chinese had contemplated winning over the

intellectuals even before Khrushchev's speech, as indicated in Zhou En-lai's January speech. But Mao Ze-dong's motive for encouraging "independent thinking and free discussion" among the intelligentsia was to revive the revolutionary spirit of the party rather than merely to channel their energies into achieving the economic goals of the Second FYP.

Mao accepted Zhou's belief that the majority of the intellectuals had been won over and declared that since the natural sciences had no "class character," the time had come to give freedom to scientists, who belonged to various schools of thought, to extend and enrich the scientific field. Similarly, artists and writers should be free to express themselves in differing ways to create a variety of literature and arts, like flowers of different hues. However, since art, literature, philosophy, and history had a "class character," the intellectuals' freedom in these fields was to be contained within the realm of what was acceptable to the "people," and their works had to "serve the people."

But what was even more important than this "liberalization" was that the new policy encouraged the intellectuals to criticize the party for the mistakes it had made in dealing with the problems of the intellectuals. Here Mao differed from both Zhou and the European Communists. Mao felt that acceptance of criticism from the outside would mobilize support for the government, help rectify the party's growing elitism and bureaucratism, and thus revive its earlier revolutionary work style. This action of Mao was unprecedented. The intelligentsia, condemned until yesterday for its tainted class background, was being invited to criticize and attack the party!

However, Mao Ze-dong's endeavors failed to move the party to promptly change its current attitude or the twice-bitten intellectuals to respond to his call with much eagerness. Although the Hundred Flowers policy was reluctantly endorsed at the Eighth Party Congress in September 1956, many of the top leaders were not enthusiastic at the idea of opening the party to public criticism. These CPC leaders became even more suspi-

cious of the Hundred Flowers campaign when the liberalization that had followed the de-Stalinization speech of Khrushchev in East Europe resulted in a revolt of the intellectuals in Hungary in November. Whatever little blossoming had taken place in China in the fall of 1956 withered away by the early months of 1957.

In the field of economic development there was a similar dragging of feet by the party center to Mao's ideas. Mao had heated up collectivization without waiting for industrial development to reach a stage at which it could help socialist agriculture to mechanize. Rapid collectivization had brought a large number of problems in its wake. Agricultural production had not increased significantly, and there were not enough trained cadres to run the new collective organizations and maintain complicated accounts of work points earned daily by individual peasants performing widely differing tasks. The peasants, who had been induced to join the cooperatives under false promises of quick gains, had become disillusioned, and there was widespread slaughter of draft animals and hoarding of grain. Half a million peasants migrated to the cities, hoping to escape the hardship in the countryside, but they only added to the strain on urban housing and food supplies. The party cadres, who were responsible for urging the masses to "leap forward" in the winter and spring of 1955-1956, were now attacked for "commandism," "dogmatism," and "blind optimism." This attack naturally resulted in demoralizing the cadres and making them apathetic and cynical.

The standard of living was also a problem in the cities, where an excessive rate of capital construction and indiscriminate growth in the money supply had produced inflationary trends. The Eighth Party Congress not only ignored Mao's unorthodox economic plan advocated in his Ten Great Relationships but also failed to mention in its new constitution that the party was guided by the Thought of Mao Ze-dong, a clause that had been introduced in the 1945 party constitution. Mao may have agreed to this change as a concession to the anti-Stalinist develop-

ments in the Soviet Union, but it could not have pleased him. Mao's hold over the organization was further weakened by the reestablishment of the post of party secretary (abolished in 1937); the post was assigned to Deng Xiao-ping. Mao agreed to this change, too, but regretted it later. Liu Shao-qi and Deng Xiao-ping, who gave the principal reports at the congress, stressed that "the question of who will win in the struggle between socialism and capitalism in our country has now been decided,"²⁰ implying that since socialism had won, it was no longer necessary to carry on a disruptive, Maoist-style class struggle and that national affairs should be controlled from the top through the party.

The targets of the Second FYP (1958-1962) were also announced at the congress. Although some modifications were made to suit the Chinese requirements (the "one-man management system" in industrial units was done away with and replaced with a factory general manager under party leadership, greater investment allocation was made to light industry, and increased autonomy was given to provinces and industrial enterprises), the plan still followed the Soviet model in emphasizing heavy industry, urban industrialization, and urbanization and in putting the leadership in the hands of planners and technocrats.

Despite all his efforts, it appeared that by the end of 1956 Mao was not making much headway in getting the party to accept his ideas and policies. Mao had all along linked social "contradictions" with "class struggle," but now that the transition to socialism had been made and the exploiting classes eliminated, Mao's views on class conflict and class struggle no longer seemed valid. However, the party was mistaken if it thought that Mao had been silenced.

On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People

During 1956, the year when Mao's notion of class struggle appeared to have been stilled by the Party, Mao had worked out a new thesis that projected class conflict into a socialist society. On February 27, 1957, he chose a

nonparty forum, the enlarged Supreme State Conference to which many third-party leaders had been invited, to deliver a speech, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People," which became the most important part of the Maoist doctrine, influencing one way or another all Chinese politics from 1957 until the death of Mao in 1976. The text of the speech remained secret until June 19, 1957, when it was published with several revisions. It is rumored that many of the CPC members left the hall when Mao made the speech.

By not debating the issues within the Politburo, a majority of whose members may not have supported him, Mao presented the party with a fait accompli.

In his speech²¹ Mao asserted that contradictions will continue to emerge even under socialism, although there was a distinction between the contradictions in the presocialist and postsocialist eras. Those before the transition to socialism were primarily "antagonistic contradictions," between "the people" and their "enemies," which could only be resolved through violence and the physical elimination of the enemy. The contradictions in the socialist period were primarily "nonantagonistic contradictions," among "the people" themselves and these were resolvable through the airing of differing views, discussion, debate, and mutual criticism followed by self-education.

Nonantagonistic contradictions existed everywhere and would continue to do so throughout the socialist period and into the period of communism. They could only be resolved by what Mao was later to call "permanent revolution" because they were a permanent fact of life: "The ceaseless emergence and the ceaseless resolution of contradictions is the dialectical law of the development of things."

Mao pointed out that in the situation facing them currently there were contradictions between "the government and the masses . . . between those in positions of leadership and the led." He advised the party and the leaders not to be afraid of criticism because "for a party as much as for an individ-

ual there is a great need to hear opinions different from its own." Mao's reasoning justified the need to launch the Hundred Flowers campaign, and Mao went so far as to suggest that the party should follow a policy of "mutual supervision" by inviting the "democratic (i.e., non-Communist) parties" and intellectuals to "exercise supervision over the Communist Party."

In working out this thesis, Mao obviously had placed himself above the party. He had not followed the principle of democratic centralism whereby his ideas would have been democratically debated within the party before being accepted as central policy. As Maurice Meisner surmises, Mao's argument freed him "from the Leninist discipline of the Party and enable[d] him to criticize the party from without in his unique role as the representative of the people."²²

Furthermore, although agreeing that class exploitation had ended, Mao argued that "It will take a considerable time to decide the issue in the ideological struggle between socialism and capitalism in our country," and therefore there was a compelling necessity to wage a continual "ideological struggle." The implications of this new form of class struggle were rather grave. First, anybody holding incorrect ideas could be condemned as an "enemy of the people," posing an "antagonistic contradiction" and therefore worthy of being treated as an element demanding violent elimination. Second, since the party members (party leaders, for that matter) could also be prone to incorrect ideas, the "enemy" may be found to reside within the party itself—which is exactly what happened during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of 1966–1969.

The Hundred Flowers Campaign and Mao's Return to Power

Mao's speech was circulated among party and nonparty leaders, and the intelligentsia was encouraged to join the "rectification campaign" that aimed at correcting the three evils of bureaucratism, sectarianism, and subjectivism that marred the party's work style. The intellectuals were still hesitant to "bloom

and contend" because they feared that the campaign was a trap. Within a month or two, however, the party managed to overcome their fears, and by mid-May 1957 the movement began to unfold in earnest.

Mao could not have imagined the depth of resentment and frustration among the intellectuals that now came pouring out in the form of speeches; letters to the press; and thousands of *da-zi-bao* (posters written in large Chinese characters) posted on the walls of schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, and other public buildings, denouncing the party for usurping state power, for turning itself into a privileged class (ruling by "standing on the back of the masses"), for being undemocratic and violating civil rights written into the constitution, for using the united front as a meaningless facade because third parties were given no political role, for running a one-party government and not allowing free elections, and for committing all kinds of other excesses.

Beijing University students formed the vanguard of the movement. They established a union, held public debates and discussion meetings, and asked many pertinent questions: Why were older faculty members denied the right to teach? Why were academics forced to follow the instructions of ignorant (but arrogant) party cadres? Why were Soviet studies being pushed at the expense of Western science and literature? Why was political reliability more important than ability and talent? Why was Khrushchev's speech not published in China? Why were the people denied knowledge of what was going on in the world? Why was Hu Feng not tried?

The *People's Daily* published a letter allegedly written by a lecturer in Beijing University, which said, "China belongs to the six hundred million people. . . . It does not belong to the Communist party alone. . . . If you carry on satisfactorily, well and good. If not, the masses may knock you down, kill the Communists, overthrow you. This cannot be called unpatriotic as the Communists no longer serve the people."²³

Similar student and faculty demands were raised in other universities, and there

were widespread demonstrations by intellectuals and professionals in many cities.

The party leaders and Mao himself were shocked at the volume and bitterness of the attacks on the party. Within a month of the start of the campaign it was decided to clamp down on the critics. Ironically, the posters put up by the party pledging immunity to those who spoke out boldly had still not been brought down.

Mao's contradictions speech of February was published on June 18 in a revised form. Among the revisions was a list of criteria that were to be used to distinguish "fragrant flowers" from "poisonous weeds": Words and action should unite, not divide, the people; they should be beneficial, not harmful, to socialist construction; they should consolidate the people's democratic dictatorship and democratic centralism, not undermine them; and they should strengthen the leadership of the Communist party. Free speech that went beyond the parameters of these criteria produced stinking weeds and poisonous fruits, which had to be destroyed quickly before they could harm the people. On June 22 *People's Daily* published an editorial indicating that the party leadership had set a trap for the "bourgeois rightists" to reveal themselves. By dubbing the critics "bourgeois rightists," the party had turned them into "enemies of the people;" the rectification campaign was now swung around to attack these rightists who, according to the editorial,

[I]ntended to hit the socialist system and overthrow the leadership of the proletariat and the Communist Party. . . . Some ask: Why does the Party which invites others to rectify its working style, now rectify others? True the Party will continue to ask the broad masses of the people to help its rectification campaign. . . . But can it be said that the reactionary words and deeds of anti-socialist bourgeois rightists should be given protection and must not be criticized? If the revolutionary leaders of all circles do not know how to beware, detect and hit anti-socialist speeches and deeds (whatever sacred name they borrow), such revolutionaries simply have no sense of responsibility towards the people's cause."²⁴

By creating an arbitrary distinction between the people and the bourgeois rightists (who did not necessarily have a bourgeois class background) and by dubbing them the "enemy of the people," class struggle had been turned into a supra-class struggle.

Many non-Communist officeholders in the government were made to confess their "crimes" and then dismissed, many other prominent third-party figures were compelled to "repent" publicly, and some "troublemakers" were executed. Entire faculties were closed down so that students and teachers could be struggled against; some of them committed suicide rather than suffer the humiliating punishments imposed on them. The antirightist campaign, which was carried on vigorously for the next two years, was also extended to the party, and thousands of party members were purged and punished. Altogether, several million people were sent to the countryside to "reform their thought through labor."

The surprising result of the 180-degree reversal of the Maoist Hundred Flowers campaign was not, as one would have expected, a weakening of Mao's position but a strengthening of it. Mao skillfully used the antirightist campaign to get rid of his opposition within the party.

THE GREAT LEAP FORWARD: MAO'S INDEPENDENT PATH TO MODERNIZATION

By the end of 1957, Mao was back in full command of the national scene. Some additions to the membership of the Standing Committee of the Politburo had given him the necessary edge over his opposition, but far more important, Mao had regained his authority by advocating his theory of everlasting contradictions and the resulting need for ceaseless rectification of incorrect ideology. The party had been forced to accept Mao's approach to modernization, which linked mass mobilization and mass socialization with economic growth. In October 1957 the Central Committee of the CPC formally approved Mao's

radical 12-Year Plan for Agricultural Development, thus settling the debate over economic policy.

During the winter of 1957-1958, millions of peasants were organized to help in construction work, building railroads, canals, river embankments, and dams. Since right enthusiasm and human power were now more important than machinery and technicians, Mao even reversed the policies on family planning, declaring that China was short of people! Mao's advice on devolution of authority was also followed, and greater financial autonomy was given to provinces and municipalities, who were also encouraged to practice self-reliance in expanding local light industries.

In January 1958 Mao at a meeting of the Supreme State Conference could announce with arrogant self-confidence, "I stand for the theory of permanent revolution. . . . One revolution must follow another, the revolution must continually advance." It was in the same speech that Mao also announced new economic targets that would be achieved by the whole nation mobilized to take a giant step forward. He said that the national spirit had risen to a level surpassing that of the previous 8 years and that China could now catch up with Britain in about 15 years. "Our nation is like an atom. . . . When this atom's nucleus is smashed the thermal energy released [through the Great Leap Forward] will have really tremendous power. We shall be able to do things which we could not do before."²⁵

By March Mao felt strong enough to attack Stalin, for having declared the Chinese revolution a fake, and to reject the Soviet model. Among the weaknesses of the Soviet model was that "The Soviet Union stresses unity, and doesn't talk about contradictions, especially the contradiction between the leaders and the led." Mao confirmed that China would henceforth follow its own path.

Mao was critical of party leaders who, when the CPC assumed power, felt diffident to tackle the new tasks of economic, cultural, and educational development on the national scale and so, wholeheartedly and uncritically, accepted the Soviet model:

In short, the Soviet Union was [considered] tops. . . . The Chinese people had got so used to being slaves. . . . In April 1956 I put forward the "Ten Great Relationships," which made a start in proposing our own line in construction."²⁶

In another speech Mao clarified that "it is very necessary to win Soviet aid, but the most important thing is self-reliance."²⁷

Like the Soviet Union, the intellectuals could also now be discarded. China could depend on the innate wisdom of the masses and their inherent revolutionary capacity. Mao said that after the shift to the cities, the party had been "terrified" of academics and "felt that we were good for nothing." It was intolerable for a Marxist, who is not afraid of imperialists, to be afraid of bourgeois intellectuals:

In history it is always those with little learning who overthrow those with much learning. . . . I don't propose to close all the schools. What I mean is that it is not absolutely necessary to attend school."²⁸

The second session of the Eighth Party Congress, held in Beijing in May 1958, officially endorsed the Great Leap Forward (GLF), which was based on the Maoist principles that had evolved during the Yan'an period and on the economic policies enunciated by Mao in the Ten Great Relationships. The GLF was to be a monumental national mass campaign that aimed at achieving spectacular economic results in industrial and agricultural development. It was to be self-reliant, seeking support neither from the Soviets nor the intelligentsia but depending solely on the enthusiasm, wisdom, and will of the masses. In the process of realizing its socioeconomic targets, the GLF would bridge the gap between the city and the countryside by industrializing the countryside and the interior, and the gap between the elite and the masses, by sending the elite to factories and villages to work alongside the masses. The people would be made multifunctional by having the peasants set up "backyard furnaces" for making steel and the factory workers plant crops in available land near the fac-

ories—the peasants would thus acquire working-class mentality and the workers would help in food production.

Collective effort was to be emphasized, and moral and ideological incentives would replace monetary ones. The advancement of socialism would come through the establishment of communes in the countryside. Mao had once again turned to the peasantry to lead the revolution. Whereas Marxism-Leninism demanded a high degree of industrialization before a society could reach the stage of establishing communism, Mao celebrated China's backwardness even as a means to achieving this end. China, he said, was "poor" and "blank." "That may seem like a bad thing, but it is really a good thing. Poor people want change . . . want revolution. A clean sheet of paper has no blotches, and so the newest and most beautiful words can be written on it."²⁹

Mao was in a hurry to cover the blank sheet of paper with everything that was needed for a transfiguration of China, to convert it into an advanced socialist state, with modern industry, modern agriculture, and socialist (modern?) science and culture. The Great Leap Forward immediately and simultaneously was to develop the industrial and agricultural sectors (thereby "walking on two legs"), making steel the "key link," bringing technology to the countryside, and producing a class of "Red" (ideologically pure) and "Expert" (technologically advanced) intellectuals and a new selfless, socially dedicated "socialist man."

As the movement unfolded, a spirit of frenzy gripped the nation. The antirightist campaign was still being carried on to ensure that those who lagged behind would see the light and find their enthusiasm. Popular fervor for the Great Leap Forward was represented by the voluntary raising of production targets by each locality and collective. Statistics, however, became meaningless and often reflected utopian idealism rather than the real situation.

In April word came that 27 cooperatives in Henan comprising 9,300 households (43,000 persons), presumably as a voluntary

act, had formed an enlarged cooperative, liquidating all private plots and private ownership of property. The new organization was big enough to take over control of local farming, industry, commerce, health, and education. Other provinces were encouraged to follow suit. These organizations were soon given the name People's Communes. The communes, with their larger population could use peasant labor more effectively. Men and women were organized in a military fashion into platoons and brigades assigned to special tasks. They marched to work at the call of bugles and labored unbelievably long hours, in the manner of shock troops fighting a battle. Communal kitchens, mess halls, old-people's homes, and nurseries "liberated" the women, who were often forced to live in separate dormitories from the men. In some communes wages were entirely done away with, following the Communist principle that the commune would satisfy the needs of each member; in most others wages were introduced on the socialist principle "to each according to his work." The peasant was now a wage earner, a "worker."

In August the Mao-led party, declaring that the movement represented a popular demand, adopted a resolution making the establishment of communes official national policy. By November 99 percent of the peasantry had been organized into 26,578 communes with an average size of 4,600 households. There was even an attempt to establish urban communes with an emphasis on "street industries" run by women who had been liberated from household work. The urban communes were abandoned a year or so later because they served no useful purpose and because of the complexity of the problems posed by the cities; the rural communes lasted a little longer.

In September a new slogan, "everyone a soldier," was introduced, which added another dimension to the communes, turning them into defense units, ready to fight a people's war if the occasion ever arose. It was rumored that a U.S.-backed Nationalist invasion was imminent. In reality, most of the young men and women commune members

who joined the People's Militia and received elementary military drill (often with outmoded rifles) contributed to collective discipline rather than to national security.

The local cadres, under pressure to produce results, claimed record outputs far in excess of earlier estimates. The party Central Committee was becoming a victim of its own propaganda. Thus, to take some basic commodities, it was announced that because of the Great Leap Forward, the steel output had more than doubled, from 5.35 million tons in 1957 to over 10.70 million tons (the target set by Mao) in 1958; the production of cereals (including soybeans) had risen from 196 million tons in 1957 to 375 million tons. There was therefore no reason not to speed up the process of communization even further.

On the other hand, there were administrators in the government and the party who knew that these figures were exaggerated and who were cognizant of unreported failures. The haste with which communes were being established was leading to chaos in some places. Soon the whole country was to learn what it had cost the nation to indulge in this wild Maoist experiment. Although the revised estimates of the Great Leap Forward results are in themselves respectable, they bear little relationship to the rigors the country had gone through. Instead of the 70 percent increase in total value of agriculture and industry claimed in 1958, the revised results, issued later, were 39.3 percent for industry and 16.7 percent for agriculture.

The cost was physical and emotional exhaustion everywhere. Resources had been wasted (nearly 3 million tons of the backyard "steel," produced with so much extra toil by 10 million peasants, was unusable); machinery had been overworked and, with no time for maintenance, had begun to break down; there was no synchronization between production and demand and manufactured items often lay stored in the open (there was not enough warehouse space), deteriorating in wind and rain; standards had been lost sight of, and numerous overproduced items could not be used at all; communications had broken down, resulting in acute shortages

and surpluses; "deep plowing" (encouraged by the party) had, in some areas, led to soil exhaustion and erosion; many GLF dams burst during the rainy season because nobody had cared to calculate how much water pressure the dam walls could tolerate. All these damaging details were not known immediately and came to be revealed in the years that followed the Great Leap Forward.

The Results of the Great Leap Forward

The Great Leap Forward was a party-run campaign. The party cadres, operating on the mass line principle, had played a key role in activating the masses. In the resulting over-decentralized atmosphere, the government agencies and planning organizations lost their authority to coordinate national economic development. The *xia fang* (down to the countryside) campaigns, which became a part of the new policies, forced many hundreds of thousands of bureaucrats to the villages and weakened bureaucratic economic control organs—this was, of course, apart from the *xia fang* of millions of city youths and urbanites.

At the meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC in December 1958, the party conservatives (sometimes referred to as "pragmatists") got an opportunity to air some of their anxieties and appeal for a period of consolidation. There was no attempt to attack Mao, whose Great Leap Forward policies had been accepted by all the major leaders, but there was a hint of disillusionment in his ultraradical approach. Even Peng De-huai, the defense minister, who expressed his impressions of a visit to a commune in the following verse, did not take up the issue with the party until mid-1959:

Millet is scattered all over the ground,
The leaves of the sweet potatoes are withered.
The young and the strong have gone to smelt iron,
To harvest the grain there are children and old women.
How shall we get through next year?
I shall agitate and speak out on behalf of the people.³⁰

The resolution on "Some Questions Concerning the People's Communes," adopted by the Central Committee in December 1958, set down certain guidelines that reflect the major problems faced by the communes: "It should be publicized among the masses that the means of livelihood owned by members—including housing, clothing, bedding and furniture—and their deposits in banks and credit cooperatives will remain their own property . . . and will always belong to them. . . . Members can retain individual trees around their houses, small farm tools, small instruments, small animals and poultry . . . and [be allowed to] engage in small domestic side-occupations"; work days should be shortened—at least "8 hours for sleep and 4 hours for meals and recreation," must be guaranteed; rest must be ensured to women before and after birth and during menstruation; certain commune members may cook at home (this soon became the general rule); parents may withdraw their children from communal nurseries; wages should be paid in cash for the most part; the production brigade (the equivalent of the old socialist cooperatives) should be made the basic accounting and labor units; the party cadres "dizzy with success" had been guilty of commandism and exaggeration—they should adopt a more "comradely" style of work; the "military work style" should be discarded because it interfered with normal agricultural methods and unified work plans; and the local party branches must ensure orderly operations in the communes by April 1959. In sum, overeager comrades were advised to recognize that "the transition to Communism is a fairly long and complicated process of development," but the communes were still to "go in for industry in a big way."³¹

Mao had agreed to this resolution, seeing in it a temporary phase of consolidation, but he also called for the continuation of the policy of the Three Red Banners: the Maoist General Line for Building Socialism, the Great Leap Forward, and establishment of the people's communes.

Just at this juncture, in December 1958, Mao announced that he would step down

from the post of chair of the People's Republic when his term expired in April 1959. He was succeeded to this post by Liu Shao-qi, who had stood by Mao throughout 1958. There has been considerable debate regarding Mao's retirement. Some scholars feel that he was forced to withdraw under pressure from his critics. There is little evidence to substantiate this view. On the contrary, there is every reason to believe that Mao wanted to be free of the onerous ceremonial duties imposed on him as the formal head of state (e.g., receiving ambassadors) so that he could devote himself to questions dealing with "direction, policy and line of the party and state." What possibly happened was that after the event, many who disagreed with Mao began to take advantage of his retirement and ignore him. Years later, Mao did complain that persons like Deng Xiao-ping stopped consulting him and that others treated him like a "dead ancestor."

Regardless of all the setbacks, 1958 had been a relatively good year as far as grain production was concerned. Although the production figure of 250 million tons was far less than the optimistic claims of 375 million tons, it was sufficient to keep the countryside pacified. Indeed, in many communes, because of a heightened sense of autonomy and communism, there had been excessive sharing out of grain at the expense of the state, which was finding it difficult to reach its procurement targets.

As an overview, 1958 can be considered a year of great success for Mao Ze-dong, who had emerged as the all-powerful reshaper of China's destiny. He had been able to impose his uniquely simplistic and faulty economic vision on an entire nation without anyone daring to openly challenge or criticize him. The Chinese technocrats and state bureaucracy were paralyzed, as were the Soviet advisers, whose model was being dismantled before their eyes. Mao had liberated China from the Guomindang in 1949; he freed it from the Soviet system in 1958. The year ended without any hint of the opposition Mao was to face during the next few years.

The politics that had given Mao such a free hand to experiment with a nation of 600 million was rooted to an important degree in the Chinese traditional elitist system. Mao had succeeded in establishing himself as a morally superior ruler in the manner of the dynastic emperors and in establishing a consensus based on ideology (even though the ideology was modern and antitraditional). In keeping with traditional political behavior, the people, who did not expect to be told (nor were they) of the secret debates and factional struggles that went on behind the publicly announced consensus, were expected to work (and they did) to uphold the consensus, docilely and with a display of enthusiasm. The state structures, lacking constitutional authority, could not intervene between the leader and the people; indeed, government organizations were expendable. So like the Qin emperor, who in the third century BCE could order millions of peasants to build the Great Wall, Mao could get 10 million peasants to indulge in the absurd campaign of making steel in backyard furnaces. However, after 1958, as we will witness, Mao's status, unlike that of the traditional emperors, was neither sacrosanct nor above being damaged by intraparty factional struggles.

CHINA'S FOREIGN RELATIONS

Having reexerted China's independence in its internal affairs by replacing the Soviet model for social change and economic modernization, Mao by 1958 also began to guide China's foreign policy toward a more independent stand.

From the late nineteenth century to the establishment of the PRC, most Chinese revolutionaries and leaders had a passionate desire to see China become truly independent and regain the world stature it had traditionally possessed. When at American insistence China was honored as one of the Big Four during World War II, many Chinese felt that China was gaining no more than its due. However, the action of the Allies was only par-

tially satisfying because Nationalist China did not have the capacity to play the role of a world power.

The possibility that the Communist government of China could play such a role was nullified even before the PRC was officially inaugurated when China's economic problems and the international situation led Mao to declare (June 1949) that China would "lean to one side," the side of the Soviet Union. The debate on American recognition of Beijing was over by the time the Korean War broke out. In the early 1950s only about 20 countries recognized the PRC. The rest of the world not only did not recognize the Beijing government but also continued to maintain that the Nationalist government in Taiwan was the legal government of "China"; the Nationalists continued to retain the membership of the United Nations and occupy a seat in the U.N. Security Council.

Mao was acutely aware of the fact that China could not be truly independent in foreign relations until it had achieved economic self-reliance. He had to depend on the Soviet Union, but he chafed under the conditions imposed by Stalin. This attitude is reflected in an article published by Wu Xiu-quan (a veteran diplomat who had participated in the Sino-Soviet talks between Mao and Stalin preceding the signing of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance in February 1950) in November 1983:

Now that the new Chinese government had been established, the Soviet Union ought to hand over unreservedly the right [to run the Manchurian Railway] to China. But [by not doing so] the Soviet Union, in fact, had gained more advantages. . . . The agreement also stipulated that the Soviet Union should hand over without compensation to China a number of factories, mines and machinery they had acquired from Japan in northeast China. However, they took home with them all the machinery and materials that could be dismantled and removed. In the Anshan [industrial complex] only some empty buildings had been handed over

"without compensation." Even the pianos and fine furniture . . . had been taken to the Soviet Union.³²

After Mao had left Moscow, Wu stayed on to help in negotiating various economic agreements; "It was no smooth sailing when our talks involved the economic interests of the two countries. Differences and disputes soon arose, the comparatively striking one being how to decide on the ratio between the specific value of the Chinese [currency] and the Soviet ruble. . . . The ratio was fixed, in truth, under relatively unequal conditions . . . [Later other] disagreements arose from time to time."³³

After China had intervened in the Korean War, the Soviet Union conveniently overlooked the provisions of the Sino-Soviet treaty and, fearing that any escalation of the war might force the Soviet Union to face the Americans, kept its military aid to China limited. The Chinese, to their further surprise, had to pay for the weapons supplied. The Soviets then, without prior consultation with Beijing, made a cease-fire proposal in the United Nations in June 1951. The cease-fire negotiations dragged on until 1953, the same year that a negotiated settlement was about to be reached over Vietnam. Whatever the costs of the war, the PRC's participation in the 1954 Geneva Conference on Korea and Indochina put China at the same negotiating table as the United States, Britain, France, and the Soviet Union. America had been forced to recognize China as an enemy of stature, and the post-Stalin Soviet leaders could no longer treat China as a minor ally. The unequal aspects of Sino-Soviet treaties were abrogated by Moscow by November, and economic aid was increased. Zhou En-lai's success as a negotiator and his suave, diplomatic behavior won China much respect in the world press.

But the success did not come as an unmixed blessing. The Americans drew up plans to establish a military alliance in the West Pacific—the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO)—which, linked with

the Central Treaty Organization and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), would establish a cordon of military bases around the entire socialist bloc and help "contain" communism. It was, of course, China that was to be contained in the East. Mao, hoping to get the Russians to respond to the challenge, began a bombardment of the offshore Nationalist-held islands of Quemoy (Jinmen) and Matsu (Mazu) in the Taiwan Straits (September 1954), ostensibly as a first step to the liberation of Taiwan. The Soviets, however, were not at all interested in creating disequilibrium in the straits, which might draw America to the aid of Chiang Kai-shek and force Moscow to intervene. In December the United States signed a mutual defense treaty with Taiwan.

The Soviet Union's response to the crises was to move a resolution in the Security Council of the United Nations (January 1955) calling on the United States to withdraw its forces from Taiwan and urging that all parties in the Taiwan Straits area avoid hostilities. This statement reflected the Soviet Union's national security interest but not that of China. The Chinese looked on hostilities between them and the Nationalists as a legitimate continuation of the Chinese civil war (Taiwan had to be liberated), thus a totally internal matter not open to debate in any international forum. If the Americans insisted on starting a war, even an atomic war, China could handle the situation alone. Two days before the Soviet resolution, Mao had said,

The Chinese people are not to be cowed by U.S. blackmail. . . . We have an expression, millet plus rifles. In the case of the United States it is planes plus the A-bomb. However, if the U.S. . . . is to launch a war of aggression against China, then China with its millet plus rifles is sure to emerge the victor.³⁴

Mao's brave words were lost on the Russians and the Americans. In the absence of any solid support from the Soviet Union for China's military action in the Taiwan Straits, Beijing was forced to stop the bombardment,

but it cleverly defused the issue by declaring that China's show of will had checked an American threat in the area.

At the Bandung Conference of Afro-Asian states, held in 1955, China could put on a face of moderation and accept the idea of peaceful coexistence between Third World countries and the socialist states. The newly independent Afro-Asian states and those still fighting for independence were, by the nature of their circumstances, anti-imperialist. But when Khrushchev, in 1956, announced his formula of peaceful coexistence and détente with the United States, ostensibly to save the world from nuclear war, China could not accept the Soviet view of coexistence because it was qualitatively different.

In 1956 Mao, who was then establishing his credentials to enforce his policies for China's internal development, also indicated the need to develop the potential for an independent foreign policy. There is a significant passage in his April 1956 speech on "The Ten Great Relationships" that touches on this issue. "In the future," said Mao, "we will not only have more planes and artillery but we will also have atom bombs. If we are not to be bullied in the present day world, we cannot do without the bomb (emphasis added)."³⁵ It is equally significant that China did manage to manufacture its first atom bomb by 1964, even though the Soviet Union had rescinded its offer to provide China with the scientific know-how.

At the end of 1957, when Mao had recouped his power within the CPC and was about to launch the Great Leap Forward, he felt self-confident enough to advise the Soviet Union on how to lead the socialist bloc and deal with the imperialist enemy. Mao went to Moscow in November to attend the fortieth-anniversary celebrations of the October Revolution, the accompanying meeting of Communist parties in power, and the international conference of Communist parties. He made much of the first earth satellite, the Soviet *Sputnik*, which according to him, proved that the socialist camp was ahead of the imperialist camp and that "the East wind

prevailed over the West wind." This was, therefore, the time to increase confrontation with the imperialists and push forward the cause of socialism.

Mao gave his Communist comrades a talk on his favorite subject of contradictions and dialectics, saying that the concepts must be moved "from the small circle of philosophers to the broad masses of the people"; he added that in China even the party branch secretaries "understand dialectics."³⁶ He also gave a speech (directed primarily to his hosts) on the nature of imperialism. He reiterated what he had said earlier in 1946, that the United States and the atom bomb were "paper tigers." Elsewhere he suggested that even a nuclear war was not to be feared because the worst it could do was to destroy half of humankind; but imperialism would also be liquidated, and there would still be half of humankind left over to make the whole world socialist.³⁷ Mao hinted that this was no time for the Soviet Union, as the head of the socialist camp, to lose the initiative and compromise with the United States.

Although Mao managed to get Khrushchev's thesis amended somewhat, he could not get the Soviets to abandon their policy of peaceful coexistence with the United States. This policy implied that Moscow was tacitly willing to accept the American containment line and therefore the continued existence of two Koreas, two Vietnams, and two Chinas (or one China and one Taiwan). If this implication was correct, it threatened China's goals of liberating Taiwan.

Mao returned home with agreements for large-scale Soviet technical aid, including nuclear know-how, but convinced that China's future policies would have to be more independent of Moscow. After January 1958, when the United States introduced tactical nuclear weapons into South Korea, China asked Russia for equivalent weapons. Moscow agreed but on the condition that such hardware be put under joint command. This peeved Beijing and China rejected the proposition. In July Khrushchev was rebuffed again when he suggested the creation of a

joint naval command in west Pacific. Mao could not tolerate the idea of any diminution of Chinese independence and sovereignty.

And in any case this was the wrong time for Moscow to make such proposals because China was in the euphoric throes of its Great Leap Forward. In August Mao, full of confidence in China's capacity to go it alone, ordered the bombing of the offshore islands of Jinmen (Quemoy) and Matsu (Matsu), ostensibly as a first step to the liberation of Taiwan. Yet was it rather a feeler to prove that the Nationalist reactionaries and the U.S. imperialists were paper tigers? Or was it a test to find out whether the Soviet Union would stand by a fraternal power? Whatever the reasons, Mao failed on all three counts. In contrast, Moscow's policy of détente had worked: The lack of superpower support to their client states stopped the war from escalating. This success encouraged Khrushchev to improve relations with the United States even further, whereas he was alarmed enough by the Chinese adventurous behavior to abrogate, in 1959, the nuclear-sharing agreement made earlier between Moscow and Beijing.

For good or bad, Mao, by the end of 1958, had guided China to a stage of internal and external independence it had not had since 1800.

NOTES

1. *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Vol. IV (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1961), pp. 411-23. [Hereafter cited as *SWM*.]
2. *Selected Works of Liu Shaoqi* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1984), p. 419.
3. *SWM*, Vol. V (1977), pp. 16-17.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Harold C. Hinton, ed., *The People's Republic of China, 1949-1979: A Documentary Survey*, Vol. 1 (1949-1957) (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1980), p. 51.
7. See *Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tse-tung* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1967), pp. 234-39.
8. Mark Seldon, et al., ed., *The People's Republic of China: A Documentary History of Revolutionary Change* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979), p. 215.
9. *SWM*, Vol. I (1967), p. 29.

10. Hinton, *Peoples Republic*, pp. 74–75.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 231.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 233.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 224.
15. *Chinese Communist World Outlook*, Department of State Publication 7379, Far Eastern Series 112 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962), pp. 60–61.
16. *SWM*, Vol. I, p. 336.
17. Hinton, *People's Republic*, p. 334.
18. For the full text, see *ibid.*, pp. 325–31.
19. For the full text, see *Let a Hundred Flowers Blossom, a Hundred Schools of Thought Contend* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1958).
20. Liu Shao-chi, *The Political Report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China to the Eighth National Congress of the Party* (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1956), p. 27.
21. For the full text, see *SWM*, Vol. V, pp. 384–421.
22. Maurice Meisner, *Mao's China* (New York: Free Press, 1977), p. 184.
23. Cited in Edward E. Rice, *Mao's Way* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 146.
24. Hinton, *People's Republic*, pp. 552–53.
25. See Stuart Schram, ed., *Chairman Mao Talks to the People* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), pp. 92–93.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 98–101.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 126.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 118–20.
29. "Introducing a Cooperative," *Peking Review* (June 10, 1958), p. 6.
30. Cited in Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution, Vol. 2: The Great Leap Forward 1958–1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p. 200.
31. For the document, see Hinton, *People's Republic*, Vol. II, pp. 720–30.
32. Wu Xiu-quan, "Sino-Soviet Relations in the Early 1950s," *Beijing Review*, November 21, 1983, p. 19.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 20–21.
34. *SWM*, Vol. V, pp. 152–53.
35. Mao Tse-tung, "On the Ten Major Relationships," *Peking Review*, No. 1 (January 1, 1977), 13.
36. *SWM*, Vol. V, p. 516.
37. See John Gittings, *The World and China, 1922–1972* (New York: Harper & Collins, 1975), p. 218; and Harrison Salisbury, *War between Russia and China* (New York: Norton, 1969), p. 118. Khrushchev, in *Khrushchev Remembers* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974), pp. 254–55, quotes Mao as saying, "We shouldn't be afraid of atomic bombs or missiles. No matter what kind of war breaks out . . . we'll win. As for China . . . we may lose more than three hundred million people. So what? . . . The years will pass and we'll get to work producing more babies than ever before."

FROM CONSENSUS TO FACTIONAL CONFLICT: 1959–1966

During the seven years following the 1958 Great Leap Forward, Chinese politics underwent a radical change. Mao's path to independence had a drastic impact on China's economic modernization program and led to a serious ideological division within the party, with the majority of the party leadership turning against him. Externally, China broke with the Soviet Union and soon found itself isolated from the world community.

Mao lost his grip over the party apparatus, and his economic policies were reversed, but he could not be compelled to retire. Apart from retaining his charismatic national popularity, he managed to maintain control of the armed forces and to continue to direct foreign policy. Using the avenues available to him, he finally fought his way back to power in 1966.

RETREAT FROM MAOISM: 1959–1961

In the early months of 1959, there was little indication of the troubles that lay ahead. At this time Mao was still insistent that the Great Leap had brought significant successes in 1958 and that it should be continued. Mao accepted the assessment made by some that the "Communist wind" had destabilized the countryside and dislocated supplies to the urban sector, and he agreed that the leftist

excesses of the GLF needed to be dealt with. This stand appeared to put him on the side of those who, in the interest of economic stability, were advocating a retreat from the commune system.

The immediate problem facing the country was food shortages in the cities. Many, including Zhou En-lai, still believed that the food production had doubled during 1958. Why then the shortages? One reason was that the peasants in the newly formed communes had distributed the grain among themselves and hidden what they could not consume, thus making it exceedingly difficult for the state procurement agencies to make adequate collections. But there were other reasons, too. As Peng De-huai had indicated in his poem quoted in the last chapter, the excessive use of human power in making steel had left few able hands to harvest the grain. In some cases the crops had not been harvested at all and were allowed to rot in the fields. Beyond the waste was of course the fact that the statistics had been incorrect. There had no doubt been a bumper harvest in 1958, but the 1957 output certainly had not been doubled. The droughts and famines in the summer of 1959 exacerbated the situation.

However, Mao was optimistic that with a few adjustments the Three Red Banners could still be kept flying in all their glory. He admitted that he had made a mistake in con-