

# Perspectives on Development in Mainland China

*Edited by*  
**King-yuh Chang**



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## About the Book and Editor

The contributors to this book explore a variety of issues concerned with mainland China's political processes, military structure, and economic development, among them changes in both the ideological superstructure and the organizational base of Chinese politics; the problem of succession; military strategies and civil-military relations; the use of international law in treaty negotiations and implementation; agricultural development policy; foreign exchange supply and planning; and the government's new price system. The book includes analyses of the country's political, economic, and foreign policies as compared to those of other Communist states and an examination of China's role in U.S. security policy.

Dr. King-yuh Chang, formerly professor of international relations and director of the Institute of International Relations, Taipei, is director-general of the Government Information Office, Taiwan.



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King-yuh Chang

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Contents

Preface . . . . . ix

1 The Postrevolutionary Phase in China and the Soviet Union, *Richard Lowenthal* . . . . . 1

PART 1  
MAINLAND CHINA'S POLITICAL PROCESS

2 The Succession Question in Mainland China, *Chen-pang Chang* . . . . . 19

3 Ideology and Organization in Post-Mao China, *Lowell Dittmer* . . . . . 36

4 Competing Models of the Chinese Policy Process: Toward a Sorting and Evaluation, *Harry Harding* . . . . . 61

PART 2  
MAINLAND CHINA'S MILITARY PROBLEMS AND POTENTIAL

5 Civil-Military Relations in the People's Republic of China, *June Teufel Dreyer* . . . . . 87

6 The People's Republic of China as a Western Security Asset, *A. James Gregor* . . . . 105

7 Military Strategies and Problems of Mainland China, *Tun-hwa Ko* . . . . . 123

8 Military Modernization and Strategic Defense in the PRC in the 1980s, *Leo Yueh-yun Liu* . . . . . 137

PART 3  
MAINLAND CHINA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

9 The Responsibility System in Mainland China: An Analysis, *Yuen Chen* . . . . . 153

10 Prices, Markets, and the Chinese Peasant, *Nicholas R. Lardy* . . . . . 171

11	Can Mainland China's New Price System Work? <i>Ramon H. Myers</i> . . . . .	190
12	Foreign Exchange Supply and Planning Under Uncertainty, <i>Yuan-li Wu</i> . . . . .	206

PART 4

MAINLAND CHINA AND THE BLOC: COMPARATIVE  
POLITICAL SYSTEMS

13	State and Society Under Communism: A Theoretical Analysis, <i>Teh-hou Jen</i> . . . . .	219
14	The Asiatic Mode of Politics; or, Is China a Marxist-Leninist State? <i>Thomas W. Robinson</i> . . . . .	235

PART 5

MAINLAND CHINA AND THE BLOC: COMPARATIVE  
ECONOMIC SYSTEMS

15	Economic Reform in Mainland China in Comparison to Yugoslavia and Hungary, <i>Chu-yuan Cheng</i> . . . . .	253
16	Plan and Market: The Bird in the Cage-- A Comparative Study of Mainland China and Other State Socialist Economies, <i>Jan S. Prybyla</i> . . . . .	281

PART 6

MAINLAND CHINA AND THE POWERS

17	How Did They Decide to Go to War? Calculations and Miscalculations in the PRC's War on Vietnam and the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, <i>John Fuh-sheng Hsieh</i> . . . . .	335
18	The Strategic Triangle Revisited: Who's Playing Whose Card? <i>Richard B. Foster and William M. Carpenter</i> . . . . .	351
19	The Moscow-Beijing Détente, <i>Donald S. Zagoria</i> . . . . .	368
20	Mainland China and the Power Configuration in the Asia-Pacific Region, <i>David C. L. Auw.</i> . . . .	389
21	International Law in Chinese Treaty Negotiation and Implementation: Four Case Studies with the United States, <i>Hungdah Chiu</i> . . . . .	407
22	China's Role in U.S. Security Policy, <i>Robert G. Sutter and Larry A. Niksch</i> . . . . .	429
	About the Contributors . . . . .	445

## Preface

Mainland China has been a fascinating subject for study for a number of reasons: its huge size in terms of both population and space; its ancient civilization (or what's left of it) and its backwardness in the contemporary period; its tight organization under a highly disciplined, omnipresent Communist Party; and its violent swings of policies, programs, and personalities. Armed with nuclear weapons and hostile to either or both of the superpowers at one time or another, mainland China and its future orientation are also of great importance to world peace and regional security.

For more than a decade, scholars of the Republic of China and the United States have undertaken annual reviews of Chinese mainland affairs. On each occasion from seventy-five to one hundred scholars combined their efforts to examine the Chinese Communist Party and its politics, economy, education, culture and society, and military and foreign affairs. Although it is inevitable--and perhaps this should also be welcome--that differences of opinion have appeared from time to time because of divergences in their backgrounds, training, access to information, and perspectives, all the participants have seriously tried to discover the truth, which sometimes is very elusive indeed. As a result of this long, collaborative endeavor, considerable light has been shed on mainland China.

Over the years, the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford University; the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University; the Institute for Sino-Soviet Studies, George Washington University; the Institute of International Studies, University of South Carolina; and the Institute of East Asian Studies and the Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkeley, have hosted conferences in the United States. Whenever conferences in this series were held in Taiwan, the Republic of China, the Institute of International Relations, National Chengchi University, played host.

In the last few years, the present leadership in mainland China has attempted to make ideological, political, economic, and social adjustments in order to cope with very serious domestic challenges. Mainland China's foreign policies are also evolving in order to meet the requirements of modernization. What are the realities, problems, and prospects for these new policies? In what ways are these new policies comparable with those of other Communist systems? To examine these and other related issues, the Twelfth Sino-American Conference on Mainland China was held from June 9-12, 1983, at Airlie House, Warrenton, Virginia. This volume contains the papers delivered during that conference. Professor William R. Johnson, acting director of the Institute for Sino-Soviet Studies, George Washington University; Professor Harold C. Hinton, Conference Coordinator; and their colleagues deserve all the credit for organizing the conference and attracting many distinguished scholars in the field to take part in its discussions. To them, to all the participants, and to colleagues at the Institute of International Relations, the editor would like to express his special gratitude. Last but not least, the editor would like to thank Mr. Frederick A. Praeger and his associates at Westview Press for efficiently bringing out this publication for a much wider readership.

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# 1. The Postrevolutionary Phase in China and the Soviet Union

*Richard Lowenthal*

The death of Mao Zedong in 1976 was, as everybody felt at once, the end of an epoch in the evolution of the People's Republic of China--and that in more senses than one. It was the death of the leader of the long, drawn-out revolutionary struggle that had established Communist rule in China and of the man who, by breaking up the alliance with the Soviet Union he had concluded from a less than equal position, had destroyed the last of the unequal treaties in China's modern history. It also marked the end of the same man's failed attempt, in the last decade of his life, to establish despotic personal rule over the Communist Party's institutions and opened the way to the potential restoration of institutional Party rule. But it could not at once be foreseen with certainty that this restoration of Party institutions would also coincide with the end of the effort to continue the "institutionalized revolution" of which Mao had been the unbending exponent.

It is the thesis of this chapter that both the tendency to institutionalize revolution as a recurrent phenomenon due to the utopian impulses of Communist ideology, and the necessity for the revolutionary process finally to exhaust itself due to the requirements of economic modernization, are inherent in Communist Party regimes--at least if they are created by the victory of a revolutionary mass movement and not imposed by a great power from outside. The tendency for a personal despotism to paralyze or replace institutional Party control in the course of this long drawn-out revolutionary process, but for "normal" Party control eventually to be restored after the death of the despot or would-be despot, is not equally general for Communist regimes, but is typical enough to have manifested itself in the two leading Communist powers--the Soviet Union and China. It is my intention to discuss the general phenomenon of the exhaustion of the revolutionary process from the angle of its interaction with the postdespotic normalization in these two countries.



## I

Permit me first to explain briefly what I mean by the process of institutionalized revolution and by the need for its eventual exhaustion. As I pointed out when I first dealt with that subject in a systematic way more than a decade ago,<sup>1</sup> Communist revolutionary movements are motivated by visions of a society of perfect equality excluding all social conflict, which are utopian in the strict sense of being impossible to achieve among human beings. In the real world, all their power cannot prevent that every step forward in the planned revolutionary destruction of formerly or potentially "ruling classes" is followed by unplanned, spontaneous processes of new social differentiation--as in the rise of a class of prosperous peasants after the expropriation of the landowners in Russia, or in the rise of a new privileged bureaucracy in Soviet industry with its growth under Stalin's five-year plans. Hence new "revolutions from above" were undertaken, first against the "kulaks" in the form of Stalin's forced collectivization, and later against important parts of the bureaucratic, industrial, and military elites in the form of his notorious blood purge. They were still being projected by him in the final year of his life in the form of replacing the right of the collective farms to sell their produce to the state by some kind of centrally controlled barter. We can easily draw the parallel first to Chinese agricultural collectivization, then to the tightening of Party control over the industrial managers in the course of the Great Leap Forward and to the creation of the People's Communes by Mao, finally to his desperate struggle against differentiated material incentives as a form of capitalism and his attempt to uproot, by the Cultural Revolution, the underlying mentality of the masses and the inclination of the Party and state bureaucracy to make concessions to it.

Yet Communist revolutions have taken place only in underdeveloped countries under the pressure of their economic problems. Hence all Communist regimes have faced the need to combine the struggle for equality with the struggle for economic modernization, which necessarily entails social differentiation and material incentives. Thus they strive to reconcile the irreconcilable. Accordingly, a tendency to restrict, stop, or finally reverse the extreme egalitarian measures has arisen both from the more productive part of the working classes and from the administrative elites responsible for economic success, and it has found at different times and in different places more or less hearing among the leadership. Stalin, for instance, while destroying the more prosperous peasants by his mass deportation of kulaks, with disastrous economic consequences, and severely holding down the general wage level under his

first five-year plan, early took a stand in favor of differentiated incentive wages, and in his Great Purge he favored the well-trained industrial managers and technicians without a revolutionary past over the "Red Directors" with a Party tradition but poor technical knowledge--and after the purge of the "Reds" opened the party ranks wide to the "experts." In the case of Mao Zedong, on the other hand, the more he freed himself from the Soviet model after Khrushchev's de-stalinization, the more he became critical of differentiated material incentives as spoiling the people's chances of developing a true socialist consciousness, and although he originally coined the slogan that managers and technicians should be both "red and expert," in practice he became increasingly determined to favor nonexpert reds over not-so-red experts. This determination held during the Great Leap and was central to the Cultural Revolution.

However, the more a country has already begun to overcome primitive economic conditions, to develop industrial technology and train technicians, the higher becomes the cost of insisting, in the name of the ideological imperative of egalitarianism, on continuing the institutionalized revolution at the expense of the economic imperative of modernization. Over time, then, the tendency is bound to grow for the dynamics of the revolutionary process to run down and the dynamics of the pressure for modernization to gather momentum. We have long known that it is impossible to invent a perpetuum mobile in the physical world; the Communists, first in the Soviet Union and later in China, have had to learn that there exists no perpetuum mobile in the world of political revolution either.

## II

Let me now try to recall in somewhat more detail how the running down of the institutionalized revolution occurred first in the Soviet Union and then in China. It has often been said that Stalin turned essentially conservative in the course of World War II, if not already in his Great Purge. Those people, above all, who are convinced that a revolution must be something humane and beautiful naturally consider the Great Purge a counterrevolution rather than a revolution. But the Great Purge was no attempt to restore a previous state of affairs: Apart from inaugurating Stalin's personal despotism over the Party institutions, it largely destroyed the traditional revolutionary elite, and replaced it by a new one by no means averse to further revolutionary upheavals. The bureaucrats, technicians, and army officers trained since the end of the civil war eagerly entered the gates of the Party now

opened wide for them by Stalin; and the Party, though now subject to the despot's every whim, had not abandoned its program of social transformation: There had been no "Thermidor," as Trotsky believed.

It is true that during the war Stalin made important concessions both to the material demands of the peasants and to the ideological traditions of Great Russian nationalism and orthodoxy--but from necessity, not from conviction. The concessions to the peasants and to non-Communist ideologies and literature were revoked as soon as the war was over. By 1950, planned social transformation had started again with the merging of the collective farms to form greater units; this step reduced their number to little more than one-third within two years, thus making sure at last that there should be a Party unit in most collective farms. A year later, Nikita Khrushchev, then responsible for agriculture in Stalin's Politburo, suggested the next step: The peasants should be uprooted from their villages and rehoused in one central "agrotown" for each of the new, merged farms, losing access to their former private plots and getting much smaller gardens in the process. But this course met opposition within the leadership, both because of the risk of a disincentive effect on the peasants' work and of the lack of the needed masses of building materials. Stalin did not back Khrushchev, and the project was canceled.

Yet in 1952 Stalin himself came forward with a far more revolutionary project. In a series of essays published as a pamphlet on the eve of the Nineteenth Party Congress--the first since the war and the last in his lifetime--he proposed a plan for replacing all trade between the cities and the countryside by centrally organized barter! The idea was that as long as the peasants owned their produce, even collectively, there was the danger of a return to capitalism. The new plan was aimed to cut out market and money altogether from the relations between town and country--and Stalin's final essay on the subject urged that first steps toward this gigantic revolutionary change should be taken at once. But strangely, the plan was not discussed, let alone approved, at the Party Congress; for the first time in years, there seems to have been resistance in the Politburo to the despot's idea, which would have made any comparison of the collective farms' income and expenditure, difficult as it already was, completely impossible. At any rate, at the end of the Congress Stalin replaced the Politburo by a much larger Presidium, and Khrushchev later told us that Stalin had planned a purge of some of its members and that the "doctor's plot" affair, announced in January 1953 but planned at the time of the Congress, was his preparation for that. But by March 5, 1953, the despot was dead.

Clearly, although institutionalized revolution had not been abandoned by Stalin, its continuation had become increasingly difficult in his later years. During the struggle for his succession, which ended with the restoration of Party primacy under Khrushchev, the rival leaders were indeed interested more in initiating popular reforms than in unpopular revolutionary upheavals. But by 1959, the victorious Khrushchev had unveiled at the Twenty-first Party Congress his plan for another turn of the revolutionary screw, though this time a non-violent one: He resumed his campaign for the resettlement of the peasants in "agrotowns," now combined with a drive for the "voluntary" sale of the peasants' private cattle to the collective farms. Yet early successes of the campaign announced in the press soon turned out either to have been faked by the local officials or to have been achieved with so much pressure that the peasants slaughtered most of their cattle rather than sell them--and within less than two years the campaign had been abandoned. It was the Soviet Communist Party's last attempt to continue the institutionalized revolution: The new Party program presented by Khrushchev to the Twenty-second Congress in October 1961 treated further changes in the direction of "the higher stage of Communism" no longer as a task for the revolutionary transformation of the social structure but as an expected by-product of the party's concentration on the increase in productivity and the improvement of the general standard of living. Modernization had finally won over utopianism, and the postrevolutionary period had definitely begun in the Soviet Union.

However, it turned out that Khrushchev, with his dynamic urge for innovating changes, was not the right kind of leader for a postrevolutionary Communist Party regime. The Party's bureaucratic oligarchy, consolidated in their physical security by Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin's purges, now wanted the security of regular procedures of decision within their circle, without a dynamic leader inclined to appeal over their heads to "public opinion." It was their discontent with Khrushchev's uncontrollable improvisations that finally led to his overthrow by a central committee formed under his primacy and led by men of his choice--drawing the final conclusion of this transition to the postrevolutionary phase that he had failed to draw himself.<sup>2</sup> As the eighteen years of the Brezhnev era have shown, that conclusion was oligarchic rule bringing to the Soviet Union stable procedures of decision for the first time in its history--with the advantages of unprecedented stability and the setbacks of unprecedented stagnation.

In China, the struggle for or against continuing the institutionalized revolution started at the time of the Great Leap Forward and the inauguration of the

People's Communes. It formed the core of what Mao Zedong and his followers came to call "the struggle between two lines." Its beginning coincided with the beginning of Mao's political estrangement from the post-Stalin Soviet Union, which sharpened as the Chinese leader came to attribute the--in his view--insufficiently militant character of Soviet foreign policy to an abandonment of revolutionary principles inside the Soviet Union itself; he saw this symbolized by the statement in the Soviet party program of 1961 that, owing to the disappearance of hostile classes in the Soviet Union, it could no longer be described as a "dictatorship of the proletariat." Mao correctly perceived that this formula was an expression of the Soviet Union's entrance into a postrevolutionary period.

Readers will recall that the policies of the Great Leap and the People's Communes were explicitly justified by the doctrine of "uninterrupted revolution" and that this doctrine was not abandoned by Mao when the early illusions that the communes would make possible a quick transition to Communism faded by the end of 1958 and when a number of adjustments to harsh economic realities had to be made in the policies based on the doctrine, particularly between 1960 and 1962. In 1964, parallel to his twin campaigns for "socialist education" and for "learning from the army," Mao further developed the doctrine in his famous reply to "Khrushchev's Phony Communism," laying down that the danger of a capitalist restoration, such as had allegedly taken place in the Soviet Union, would persist in China throughout the period preceding the achievement of full Communism, which he now expected to last for "five to ten generations or one or several centuries," and to require new revolutionary struggles throughout this period. It was in the context of this vision that he came to prepare the "Cultural Revolution" as a struggle not only against nonrevolutionary thought, but also against "people in authority walking the capitalist road"--in other words, against all members of the Party leadership who opposed his priority for institutionalized revolution in the name of a priority for economic modernization--and it was in that context that he launched it, probably without the support of a majority of the Central Committee, in 1966.

I do not need to retell here the phases of the Cultural Revolution nor the lasting damage it did both to the Party regime and to the Chinese economy. What matters in the context of this chapter is that even after Mao decided in 1968 to end the chaos caused by the Red Guards and restore the paralyzed Party with the help of the same armed forces on which he had previously relied to back the Red Guards against the institutions of Party rule, he still expected the army under the

leadership of Lin Biao, since 1969 his deputy and designated successor, to pursue a course of continuing revolution, if by different means. After Lin Biao's death following an alleged plot, the "struggle between the two lines" continued within a divided leadership. Mao's authority was visibly fading, and Zhou Enlai, who had in the past both supported Mao against his opponents and tried to moderate his policies, now assumed the leadership in the struggle for a turn toward modernization (and rehabilitation of surviving victims of the Cultural Revolution) but was attacked by the Maoist diehards in an abstruse campaign allegedly directed "against Lin Biao and Confucius." As Zhou succumbed to an illness a few months before the death of Mao, those diehards got a final opportunity to resume their struggle for uninterrupted revolution.

The death of Mao in September 1976 thus was the precondition for China's entry into a postrevolutionary period, but that entry did not take place immediately. Hua Guofeng, who now assumed power, was able to arrest Mao's widow and his most extremist followers and was unwilling to continue "revolutionary" measures, but he was equally unwilling to break openly with the late-Maoist doctrine and continued to mouth the formulas of continuing revolution and class struggle used by the "infallible" leader. It was two years before a decision of the Central Committee in late 1978 actually opened the postrevolutionary period by disavowing those formulas as absurd in the absence of hostile classes and giving priority to a policy of modernization. It was a further two and a half years before another Central Committee meeting in mid-1981 demonstrated the finality of the turn by passing a resolution on the history of the People's Republic of China that recognized the lasting merits of the early Mao on the road to Communist power and in the building of the new society but clearly condemned the doctrinal and political errors of the late Mao and admitted the damage they had done both to the nation and to its Communist regime. The same meeting also replaced Hua Guofeng as leader of the party. The new leader, not in title but in fact, had been for some time already Deng Xiaoping, once ousted as general secretary of the Party and banished during the Cultural Revolution, then rehabilitated by Zhou Enlai but banished once more by the Maoist extremists after Zhou's death, and finally rehabilitated a second time as the party moved toward a postrevolutionary priority for modernization.

### III

So far, this rapid survey has shown that both in Soviet and in Chinese Communism, the conflict between

the tendency to institutionalized, recurrent revolution and the tendency to give priority to modernization has in some way been intertwined with another drama--the rise of a despotic or would-be despotic leader paralyzing or even temporarily destroying the institutions of Party rule for a period, and the restoration of the normal functioning of Party institutions after the death of the despot or would-be despot. I shall now attempt to suggest some reasons for the appearance of this type of drama in some major Communist Party regimes and to ask just how it has affected the struggle between revolutionary and postrevolutionary forces.

I should like to start with a difference between Communist Party regimes and fascist regimes, with which the rule of Stalin and that of Mao have been frequently compared.<sup>3</sup> The fascist regimes of Mussolini and Hitler were based from the start on the *Führerprinzip*, the principle of one-man leadership. Legitimacy in those regimes was attached primarily to the person of the leader rather than to the institution of the party. Hence a conflict of authority in those regimes could arise only in case of a crisis of succession--and neither regime lasted long enough for this to happen.

Communist regimes, being run by highly centralized parties organized from the top downward, also depend for their functioning on a single leader; but their ideology does not proclaim that. Legitimacy is not attached primarily to the person of the leader but to the institution of the Party, which is supposed to be governed by a principle called "democratic centralism." Under this principle, the leadership is elected by a Party congress, but the leadership also "proposes" the candidates for leading the Party's regional and local units, who in turn "propose" the delegates of those units to the Party congress; hence a united leadership can always be sure both to perpetuate itself with minor changes and to get its policies approved "democratically." The system works as smoothly as the fascist one--on condition of unity in the leadership. But this unity can be assured, amid the crucial policy issues that have to be decided in the course of a revolutionary process, only if there happens to be a leader who enjoys virtually uncontested authority. That was the case with Lenin, who had led the Bolsheviks to power; and it also applied to Mao, who had led the Chinese Communists to victory, for many years. But it was not the case with any of the candidates for Lenin's succession, and it no longer applied to the aging Mao from 1958 onward.

Yet if the leadership of a ruling Communist Party is not united, it turns out that there is also no generally accepted procedure for the decision making. There is, originally, no duty for a Communist that he or she must follow the leader, as there is for a Fascist.

But neither is there a clear duty to follow the majority in all conditions. For Lenin, in building his party and leading it to power, taught that the majority can err and that the true revolutionary must not submit on vital issues to an erring majority, but rather split or refound the party, as he did repeatedly himself before he was in power. But the same Lenin, when later leading a party that ruled a dictatorial state and that therefore could not tolerate a split, taught that "factional" opposition to decisions once passed by the highest party organs was a danger to the party's monopolistic rule--hence potentially counter-revolutionary. Thus well-trained Communists grow up with two contradictory lessons going back to Lenin--that it is better to fight an erring majority than to submit to it and that it is better to submit to the ruling majority than to endanger the unity of a ruling party.

As I noted before, those problems do not become acute while the Party leadership is united behind a generally respected leader. But if there is no longer such a leader, and if policy disputes arise about the "correct" solution, on which the fate of the revolution may depend, minorities may feel authorized by the "early" Lenin to oppose majority decisions on vital issues and found factions, and majorities will feel authorized by the "later" Lenin to suppress them. It is from such factional struggles on vital issues of the revolutionary road to take that an internal power struggle in the ruling party may arise--and may end in personal despotism.

The rise of personal despotism, or of attempts at personal despotism, is thus an inherent possibility, though not, as far as we can observe, an inherent necessity in Communist regimes. An all-powerful leader is not demanded by their ideology. But the fact that ideology neither forces all Communists to submit to the leader whatever he does nor forces them to submit to a majority whatever it decides means that Communist ideology offers no clear system of rules for the procedures of decision within the Party; and this lack of procedural clarity may lead to inner-Party conflicts sharpening to a point at which a despot seeks to achieve general submission no longer based on ideologically motivated discipline, but on force. Clearly, such conflicts are most likely to arise over the need for another phase of the institutionalized revolution.

Lenin had been unable to designate a successor enjoying his unique authority, and none was available at his death. In the factional quarrels that then arose within the "collective leadership," Stalin enjoyed the double advantage that as general secretary he had the decisive influence on appointments and that he saw more



clearly than his rivals that as the share of members who had joined the Party after the seizure of power increased with the passage of time, the late-Leninist stress on the need for Party unity was bound to seem more convincing to the rank and file than the early-Leninist argument for the right to defy an erring majority. Accordingly, he used in each conflict the tactics of presenting his policies from the start as those of "the Party," and his critics as a "factional" opposition. It worked successively, first against Trotsky, then against the "left opposition" of Zinoviev and Kemenev, and finally, after some initial difficulty, also against Bukharin and his supporters, once Stalin had maneuvered them into the role of a "right opposition."

By 1929, when Stalin had defeated all inner-Party opposition and initiated a new "revolution from above" by the "dekulakization" and forced collectivization of Soviet agriculture and the first five-year plan for forced industrialization, he had become the effective single leader of the Party, but still by the use and abuse of his statutory powers--not yet by the use of despotic force inside the Party. The massive use of force against the peasants and the resulting widespread misery and discontent, by seeming to endanger the survival of the regime, even increased the feeling in the Party that Stalin's strong arm was indispensable for saving it. Yet as late as 1932 the Politburo, by rejecting Stalin's demand that Tyutin, a Communist who had secretly circulated a pamphlet calling for Stalin's replacement by the Party, should be tried and executed for allegedly calling for Stalin's assassination, showed that he was not yet a despot above Party institutions. When the crisis was over, the Seventeenth Party Congress of 1934, as part of an effort to restore a more normal atmosphere, apparently made an attempt to reduce his powers: It renamed him "First Secretary" instead of "General Secretary," sought to strengthen the collective character of the Party secretariat by electing the popular Leningrad secretary, Kirov, to become his colleague, and in a secret ballot is said to have given Stalin the lowest vote of all Central Committee members.<sup>4</sup>

It was this apparent threat to Stalin's institutional power that evidently decided him to move toward establishing despotic power above the party institutions. He put men beholden to him into key positions in the secret police, the prosecutor's office, and the judiciary; he at the very least did nothing to make the secret police prevent a second and successful attempt on Kirov's life in December 1935 after a first attempt by the same man had failed; and he used Kirov's assassination to start the Great Purge, which began with measures against former oppositionists, culminating in the notorious show trials, and extended quickly to his own

former supporters who had shown doubts about his new method. The victims finally included the majority of members both of the 1934 Party Congress and of the Central Committee elected there, as well as the most outstanding army leaders and a large part of the industrial leadership. With that purge, Stalin had assumed the full powers of a despot; the Party remained the bearer of legitimacy in name, but henceforth was no more than one of the instruments of the Vozhd--less important than the secret police and no more important than the government bureaucracy and the army during the war.

From the Eighteenth Congress in March 1939, which announced the end of the mass purge, to the Nineteenth Congress in the fall of 1952, the Central Committee met only rarely and the Politburo mostly in ad hoc groups selected at Stalin's whim; during the war, the highest collective organ under Stalin, who had become head of government as well, was not a Party organ at all, but the "State Defense Committee." Smaller purges in the post-war period affected particularly the Party organizations of Leningrad and the Caucasus as well as prominent Jewish Communists. But the Party was never dissolved, and after Stalin's death in 1953, Khrushchev's struggle for the succession was at the same time a struggle for the restoration of the primacy of the Party over the other machines of power--the principal stages of which were the overthrow of Beria and the subordination of the secret police, the replacement of Malenkov as head of government, the "de-Stalinization" started by the disclosure of Stalin's crimes at the Twentieth Party Congress, the partial decentralization of the economic bureaucracy and the defeat of the "anti-Party group," i.e., the Politburo majority which tried to oppose it, and finally the demotion of Marshal Zhukov for excessive independence as head of the Soviet armed forces. By late 1957, Khrushchev in his capacity as first secretary of the Party was the unmistakable political leader of the Soviet Union, without attempting or indeed needing to become a despot; and as we have seen, it was under him that the decision to end the process of institutionalized revolution was taken in 1960-1961..

When Khrushchev's method of leadership, although far from despotic, proved too irregular and incalculable for a postrevolutionary period, he was overthrown in 1964--without serious resistance and without another succession crisis. In the postrevolutionary phase, disagreements within the leadership, although no more absent than in Western governments, were now fought out without the revolutionary fervor that could have justified a refusal to submit to the majority, in a new type of Communist "cabinet discipline"--and the postrevolutionary phase in the Soviet Union, as I noted before, became a period of generally accepted, clear procedures of decision making and of oligarchic normality and stability.

China went through the early stages of institutionalized revolution without major leadership conflicts, thanks largely to the unique authority of Mao Zedong as the leader of the original struggle for power. But that authority, somewhat diminished by the failed experiment of the "Hundred Flowers" campaign in 1957, was seriously shaken by the results of the Great Leap Forward in 1958 and after. Despite Mao's willingness to retire from day-to-day decisions to the "second line," his stubbornness in defending and extending the principle of the "uninterrupted revolution" led to a sharpening "struggle between two lines." It was the increasing difficulties Mao encountered in trying to win this struggle by normal inner-Party methods that caused him to launch the Cultural Revolution by seeking once more to make inner-Party power grow out of the barrel of the gun, as he had done in Tsunyi in 1935. The Cultural Revolution, carried out by mobilizing the Red Guards of university and high school students with the help of the army and intimidating and paralyzing the regular party organs with their help, was Mao's attempt to establish a form of personal despotism.<sup>5</sup>

This attempt differed from Stalin's in its aims, its means, and the degree of its success. It was motivated by a determination to continue the institutionalized revolution regardless of the damage this might do to economic modernization, whereas Stalin had long tried to combine new revolutionary transformations in particular fields with such concessions to economic needs as differentiated material incentives and authority for technical and managerial experts. It was based on temporarily mobilizing, not the secret police, but the armed forces and an ideologically inspired youth movement against the Party bureaucracy. And although succeeding temporarily in breaking the Party's resistance and dissolving the Communist youth organization as well as the trade unions, it failed to create a stable despotism. Stalin, although for a time he relied primarily on the secret police, had been able repeatedly to depose and execute its heads. Mao became dependent on the army for taming the anarchic youth movement he had mobilized with its help and for reorganizing the near-dissolved Party with the cooperation of a mixture of old cadres and young rebels selected as supposedly reliable. Even after the fall of Lin Biao, Mao remained to his death dependent on an uneasy and unstable balance of military leaders, surviving party "moderates" around Zhou and Deng, and unrepentant revolutionary ultras around his wife--not only not a despot, but no longer even an effective leader with a clear line of policy.

The death of Mao was followed with remarkable speed by the restoration of the primacy of the weakened Party--mainly because of a lack of serious rivals, as the army had few proud memories of its intervention in

the domestic power struggle. But within the Party, the struggle for or against continuing the institutionalized revolution went on for at least two more years, and only its end with a clear victory of the modernizers around Deng created the conditions for the kind of oligarchic stability with regular procedures of decision making suitable to a postrevolutionary phase.

#### IV

It is time for an attempt to draw some conclusions from the facts of the conflict, inherent in Communist systems, between the needs of institutionalized revolution and the requirements of modernization, and of the less inherent but not untypical conflict between a tendency to establish a personal despotism above the Party institutions and the counter-tendency to restore the primacy of those institutions after the death of the despot. Can we say anything general about the causal connection of interaction of the two processes? I think we can.

First of all, it seems clear that the major obstacle to disciplined acceptance of majority decisions in Communist political systems is the ideological passion connected with the struggle for new stages of the institutionalized revolution. It follows that despotism, or an attempt at despotism, is likely to arise in Communist systems only as long as the belief in an institutionalized revolution has not been finally abandoned. To put it more bluntly, the rise of despotism remains likely only while utopianism is still alive.

Second, and to some extent conversely, the abandonment of the institutionalized revolution occurred both in the Soviet Union and China only after the death of the despot or would-be despot. In both cases, the liberation from his terror has made it easier for the desire for a more normal life to come to the surface, particularly among the party oligarchy; and the security of an oligarchy is best ensured by the renunciation of further revolutionary change.

Third, and turning now to the present and to future consequences, we are now dealing in the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China with two Communist Party regimes that are both in their postrevolutionary and postdespotic phase. That means that both are governed by bureaucratic oligarchies with more or less generally accepted procedural rules of decision making, whose domestic policies are no longer marked by ideological conflicts, but rather by the conflict between the goal of economic modernization and the tendency toward bureaucratic stagnation. Both oligarchies stick to their Party monopoly, and both are firmly opposed to political

liberalization; but neither intends to return to the experiments in mass annihilation of the revolutionary period.

Fourth, a vital difference between the two countries concerns the stage of development at which the revolutionary process was stopped. When Khrushchev announced his 1961 program, the Soviet Union, for all its structural weaknesses, had become one of the major industrial countries of the world. China at present is still far from that stage, and its difficulties in reaching it are still tremendous--for reasons of lack of capital compared to the pressure of the population, of lack of scientific and technical cadres proportionate to the size of the problems, and perhaps also of the repercussions of the absurdities of the period of the Cultural Revolution on working morale and general confidence.

Finally, the fact that China, almost two decades after the Soviet Union has entered its postrevolutionary phase, has one major international consequence: The power conflict between those two neighbors has lost its ideological component. The Chinese Communists can no longer accuse the Soviets of having abandoned their revolutionary principles, and the Soviets can no longer blame the Chinese for utopianism and adventurism in domestic affairs. The fact that both sides are aware of that postrevolutionary change has made it easier for both to discuss a possible normalization of their relations. But that does not and cannot mean that those relations will at some future date be characterized, instead of by ideological conflict, by an apparent ideological community, as they were a long time ago; they will be determined, like relations between other great powers, by their interests--and that means important conflicting interests, but potentially some common interests as well.<sup>6</sup>

#### NOTES

1. In my essay "Development vs. Utopia in Communist Policy," in Chalmers Johnson, ed., Change in Communist Systems (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1970).

2. I first gave this interpretation of Khrushchev's overthrow in my paper "The Revolution Withers Away," Problems of Communism, 14, no. 1 (January-February 1965). It has recently been strikingly confirmed by the account in Roy Medvedev, Khrushchev (Oxford, 1982), pp. 337-344, in which Suslov's attack on Khrushchev's record in the decisive meeting of the Central Committee is summed up in fifteen points, apparently on the basis of the official minutes.

3. Confer above all the description of Stalin's

and Mao's rule as a system of "Führerism" essentially similar to that of Hitler and Mussolini, and sharply distinct from the "Bolshevism" of Lenin, in Leonard Schapiro and John W. Lewis, "The Role of the Monolithic Party Under the Totalitarian Leader," in John Wilson Lewis, ed., Party Leadership and Revolutionary Power in China (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1970). The same argument is also used for a definition of totalitarianism by this type of leadership in Leonard Schapiro, Totalitarianism (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972).

4. The last point was first reported in Roy Medvedev, Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), pp. 155-156, quoting information received from the deputy chairman of the election commission at that congress, V. M. Verkhovich. However, in his recent book on Stalin, Anton Antonov-Ovseenko quoted a report made by the same Verkhovykh to a commission of the Politburo in 1957. According to this report, no less than 292 votes--out of a total of 1,225 delegates entitled to vote-- were cast against Stalin. After the secret count was communicated to Kaganovich, he ordered that 289 of the "no" votes should be destroyed, with the result that only a total of 936 votes was mentioned in the final congress summary. See A. Antonov-Ovseenko, Portret Tirana (New York, 1980).

5. I first offered this interpretation of the Cultural Revolution in my article "Mao's Revolution," Encounter, 28/4 (April 1967).

6. I have dealt in more detail with the declining relevance of ideology for Sino-Soviet relations in "The Degeneration of an Ideological Dispute," in China, the Soviet Union, and the West: Strategic and Political Dimensions for the 1980s, edited by Douglas T. Stuart and William T. Tow (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1981).



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## Part 1

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# Mainland China's Political Process





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## 2. The Succession Question in Mainland China

*Chen-pang Chang*

Shifts of power in democracies follow established procedures; whenever a shift of power is necessary, it is usually achieved peacefully and stably. But the same problem often causes a grave political crisis in Communist countries because Communists are not at all democratic. The power-holders in Communist countries, especially those who have been in power for a long period, are often dictators who prefer to designate their own successors before their death. Even if they are not dictators, the problem of who is to succeed them becomes a serious one as they grow older and older. In both cases, an acute struggle for the succession will take place either before or after their death. Proof of this are the struggles for succession that took place before and after the deaths of Lenin, Stalin, and Mao Tse-tung. Around the time of the deaths of both Tito and Brezhnev, there was speculation about who was to succeed them. Now there is also speculation about whether Hu Yao-pang will succeed Teng Hsiao-p'ing and whether Kim Jong Il will succeed Kim Il Sung. All these examples indicate that power struggles are expected to solve the problem of succession in Communist countries. In this chapter, the writer discusses how Mao raised the question of succession, his attempts to answer it, and whether Teng Hsiao-p'ing has found a good method of preventing a repetition of Mao's tragedy.

### I

It is well known that Mao Tse-tung was a dictator. Like dictatorial emperors in ancient times, he had to designate someone to succeed him before his death. However, he acted differently from other dictators. He not only selected his own successors but also formulated a theory about the selection process. On June 16, 1964, in a speech on the implementation of military work and the cultivation of revolutionary successors, he discussed

for the first time the selection of successors. He explained that U.S. imperialism pinned its hopes on the decline of mainland China's younger generation and counted on the next two generations of mainland youth to bring about a so-called peaceful evolution back to capitalism. He emphasized that the hope of the imperialists might well be realized. A revisionist, Khrushchev, had emerged from the third generation after the revolution in the Soviet Union, and such revisionists might also appear in mainland China. He asserted that to prevent revisionism, the cultivation of revolutionary successors was necessary.<sup>1</sup> He laid down five requirements for revolutionary successors as follows: (1) They should understand and practice Marxism-Leninism; (2) they should serve the vast majority of the people; (3) they should be capable of uniting with the overwhelming majority; (4) they should be democratic; and (5) they should be bold in making self-criticisms. On March 20, 1966, Mao in another of his speeches added other conditions: "For successors, we want resolute persons who are young, have little education, a firm stand and who are politically experienced."<sup>2</sup>

Mao formed his theory about the cultivation of successors gradually. As early as 1960, the Chinese Communists held that the United States was advancing, through Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, a policy to bring about a peaceful evolution of socialist countries to capitalism by means of domestic changes within the socialist camp and that modern revisionists such as the Tito clique in Yugoslavia had formulated their own domestic and foreign policies in accordance with the needs of the United States.<sup>3</sup> Later, the Communists asserted that it was because Stalin had not let his designated successor, Malenkov, hold real power and get sufficient training before his death<sup>4</sup> that the leadership was finally usurped by Khrushchev. Mao therefore raised the question of the cultivation of successors to oppose and forestall revisionism. In other words, he intended to guarantee that there would be successors to the Marxist-Leninist cause, that the leadership of the Party and the state would always remain in the hands of proletarian revolutionaries, that the coming generations would continue to advance on the correct road of Marxism-Leninism, and that the Party and the state would never change color.<sup>5</sup>

Mao introduced the question of cultivating revolutionary successors as a theoretical problem in the polemics between the Chinese Communist Party and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on the general line of the international Communist movement. However, even before that time, he had begun specific arrangements for the cultivation of successors. He divided leadership posts into first line and second line, and he himself retreated from the first line to the second line.

In February 1958, Mao stated that he would resign from the state chairmanship and hold the chairmanship of the CCP only.<sup>6</sup> Later, he promoted Liu Shao-ch'i to the post of state chairman to take charge of the routine work of the State Council, indicating his intention to cultivate Liu as his own successor. However, soon after Liu's promotion, Mao could no longer bear to have someone share his absolute dictatorship, so he got rid of Liu on the pretext that the latter was following a revisionist line.

## II

The fact that Mao allowed Liu Shao-ch'i to replace him as state chairman is clear proof that Liu was Mao's first chosen successor. Before Mao arrived in Yen-an with the remnants of the Red Army in 1935, Liu had mainly worked in the "white areas" (the areas under the control of the Nationalist government) and had had no close association with Mao, who had been engaged in military activities in Kiangsi. They developed a close relationship after Liu supported Mao in the Yen-an rectification movement, which resulted in the purge of the Internationalists, headed by Ch'en Shao-yü. Mao then praised Liu's example as a worker in the white areas. At the Seventh CCP National Congress in 1945, Liu delivered a report on the revision of the Party constitution, in which he officially declared that "Mao Tse-tung thought" was the guiding thought of the revolution in China. During the Congress, Mao was elected chairman of the CCP and Liu the only vice-chairman. Liu was thus raised to be second-in-command of the CCP. After that, Liu worked closely with Mao and was eventually allowed to replace Mao as state chairman in January 1959. In 1961, when asked by British Field Marshal Montgomery, who was on a visit to mainland China, about who was to be his successor, Mao confirmed that that person would be Liu.<sup>7</sup>

This statement proves that in 1960 Mao and Liu were still on good terms. It is reasonable to deduce that changes in their friendship took place in 1961 or 1962. But why did Mao and Liu, who had cooperated so closely, turn against each other? The answer to this question lies in the failure of Mao's Three Red Banners, i.e., the Great Leap Forward, the General Line for Socialist Construction, and the People's Communes, in the late 1950s. The failure of the Three Red Banners resulted in extremely serious famine in the three years from 1959 to 1961, bringing the economy to the brink of collapse. At that time, Mao had already retreated to the second line, and Liu, as state chairman, took responsibility for putting things in order again. Liu initiated a retreat with a series of measures that finally enabled the country to weather this grave

economic crisis. Thus success enhanced Liu's prestige within the CCP but impaired that of Mao, which Mao found difficult to tolerate. At the Tenth Plenary Session of the Eighth CCP Central Committee in September 1962, Mao prepared to take action against Liu by issuing the call "Never forget class, class contradiction, and class struggle." It is possible that at that time, Liu did not realize what Mao's intentions were. He not only sent his wife Wang Kuang-mei to conduct experiments at the Taoyuan Production Brigade (Luwangchuang People's Commune, Funing County, Hopei) but also tried to popularize throughout the mainland what his wife summed up as the "Taoyuan experience." This was tantamount to opposition to Mao's policy of "learning from Tachai in agriculture."

However, Mao understood that it would be difficult to get rid of Liu legally because, judging from Liu's power in the CCP, Mao could not obtain the support of a majority of the CCP Central Committee. Under such circumstances, Mao resorted to illegal means. He initiated the Cultural Revolution to purge Liu's henchmen on the CCP Peking Municipal Committee and the CCP Central Committee, such as P'eng Chen, Yang Shang-k'un, and Lu Ting-i. Liu was then blamed for following a revisionist line and was referred to as "China's Khrushchev and the representative of capitalist-roaders in power within the Party." Mao thus managed to purge Liu with strong support from the Red Guards and the People's Liberation Army (PLA), led by Lin Piao. However, it was difficult to make CCP cadres and Party members accept that Liu was a revisionist. So Mao went further, with the help of K'ang Sheng, and labeled Liu a "renegade, traitor and scab." In October 1968, according to a resolution of the Twelfth Plenary Session of the Eighth CCP Central Committee, Liu was expelled from the Party once and for all and was dismissed from all his posts both inside and outside the Party. He was then separated from his family and persecuted to death in jail in Kaifeng. Later, Mao admitted that his own retreat to the second line had been wrong because this had transferred his power into the hands of others. He declared that the Cultural Revolution was a power struggle to regain part of the power usurped by the capitalist-roaders. This was Mao's first failure in designating his successor.

### III

The Red Guards and the PLA were the two weapons used by Mao to get rid of Liu Shao-ch'i. In the wake of the disorders at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, Mao relied mainly on the PLA under the command of Lin Piao to regain control over the situation. Since

Mao had to reward Lin for his contribution and since he felt the pressure of the rapidly growing influence of the PLA, he designated Lin as his successor and even wrote this into the CCP Constitution adopted by the Ninth CCP National Congress. However, this action contradicted his own principles that the Party should command the military and that the military must never be allowed to command the Party.<sup>8</sup> Soon afterward, Mao discovered that Lin was a greater threat to his power and position than Liu had been just because Lin had control of the army.

It is well known that Mao attached great importance to the army. After the Tsunyi Conference in January 1935 and until his death in September 1976, he was chairman of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCPCC) Military Commission. However, as he did not command the PLA directly, he had to train one or two high-ranking military leaders to be his agents in the PLA. Lin was one of those, chosen because he was a relatively young cadre under Mao's direct command. When Mao founded the Resist-Japan Military and Political University after his arrival in Yen-an, he made Lin its president. During the War of Resistance Against Japan, Mao agreed to incorporate Communist troops into Nationalist forces. The Red Army was reorganized into the 18th Army Group, consisting of three divisions. Lin Piao was appointed commander of the 115th Division, one of these three divisions (commanders of the other two divisions were Ho Lung and Liu Po-ch'eng). In the wake of the victory over Japan, Lin was sent by Mao to lead 100,000 unarmed Communist soldiers into Northeast China to take over from the Soviet forces a large quantity of weapons surrendered by the Japanese Kwantung Army. The forces under Lin's command became the strongest group among the Communist forces. After the Communist takeover of the mainland in 1949, Lin's rise was steady. At the Second Plenary Session of the Eighth CCP National Congress in May 1958, Mao promoted Lin to be one of the five vice-chairmen of the CCP. At that time, Chu Te was the only high-ranking military cadre who had had more authority than Lin in the CCP. After P'eng Te-huai was purged in August 1959 for his opposition to Mao's Three Red Banners, Lin as a matter of course replaced him as first vice-chairman of the CCPCC Military Commission, with the concurrent post of minister of national defense. Soon afterward, he launched a large-scale campaign in the PLA to study Mao Tse-tung thought to show that he was unswervingly loyal to Mao. In fact, Mao dared to launch the Cultural Revolution mainly because he had control of the PLA.

In August 1966, after the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution, the Eleventh Plenary Session of the Eighth CCP Central Committee adopted a "Decision Concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" and reorganized

the CCP's leadership by reducing the number of the vice-chairmen from five to one. In naming Lin the only vice-chairman of the CCP, Mao unofficially made Lin his successor. After that, Lin became Mao's "closest comrade-in-arms." Considering Mao's thought as the incarnation of truth, Lin used the "little red book" of *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung* to launch a large-scale but ridiculous campaign to advance the cult of Mao throughout the mainland. In January 1967, the PLA intervened in the Cultural Revolution by carrying out the task of "three supports and two militaries," i.e., supporting the revolutionary left, agriculture, and industry; exercising military control; and giving military training. Under such circumstances, the influence of military cadres grew very rapidly; they even managed to control local governments. Lin's subordinates had played a very important part in all this; hence, Lin was officially designated as Mao's successor at the Ninth CCP National Congress in April 1969. However, Lin's achievements gradually became a threat to Mao. The cooperation between them thus declined and eventually changed to conflict. During the discussion at the Second Plenary Session of the Ninth CCP Central Committee in August 1970, Mao and Lin differed on the question of whether to reestablish the position of state chairman. Lin contended that there should be a state chairman but Mao disliked the idea. Later, Mao purged Ch'en Po-ta, who had supported Lin at that plenary session. He also ordered some of Lin's faithful followers, such as Huang Yung-sheng, Wu Fa-hsien, Li Tso-p'eng, Yeh Ch'ün, and Ch'iu Hui-tso, to make self-criticisms. Mao then stepped up arrangements for the purge of Lin, which led to Lin's alleged death in a plane crash in Outer Mongolia in September 1971.

According to Chou En-Lai's report to the Tenth CCP National Congress in August 1973, Lin's clique began to plan a "counterrevolutionary coup" after the Second Plenary Session of the Ninth CCP Central Committee in August 1970, and they drew up in March 1971 the plan for an armed coup entitled "Outline of Project 571." When Mao was away on an inspection tour outside Peking in August and September 1971, Lin and his followers launched the coup by an attempt to assassinate Mao and set up a rival Party Central Committee. On September 13, after his plot against Mao had failed, Lin and his wife Yeh Ch'ün and his son Lin Li-kuo are said to have boarded a plane to escape to the Soviet Union but died in a crash at Undur Khan in Outer Mongolia. However, whether all this is true is unknown to outsiders.

The leadership kept the Lin Piao incident a secret until the Tenth CCP National Congress. However, Chou En-lai gave only a very brief description of what Lin had done and what had happened to him. Chou did not explain specifically such key questions as why Lin had

opposed Mao and why Mao had chosen such a person as his successor. Nor did Chou give sufficient evidence of Lin's collusion with the Soviets. After the Tenth CCP National Congress, Lin was labeled a "bourgeois careerist, conspirator, double-dealer, renegade and traitor" and was severely criticized in a nationwide movement, namely, the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius. This was Mao's second failure in designating his successor.

#### IV

Mao launched the Cultural Revolution in 1966 with the intention of cultivating a political force directly under his command with his wife, Chiang Ch'ing, at its center. This force was composed of members of the CCPCC Cultural Revolution Group, led by Ch'en Po-ta and his deputy, Chiang Ch'ing, whom we may call the Cultural Revolutionists. At the high tide of the Cultural Revolution, as Mao and Lin Piao were cooperating harmoniously, Lin Piao and Chiang Ch'ing worked in close coordination under Mao's leadership. Mao often said: "Revolution depends on the barrel of the gun and of the pen." At that time, Mao considered the CCPCC Military Commission dominated by Lin Piao as the barrel of the gun and the CCPCC Cultural Revolution Group under the control of Chiang Ch'ing as the pen. However, in Mao's eyes, Chiang Ch'ing was of course more dependable than Lin Piao. Following the downfall of Liu Shao-ch'i, Mao began to regard the preponderance of the military in the political arena as a threat to his authority. To counterbalance the military, Mao made moves to further strengthen the hand of the Cultural Revolutionists. As a result, political cooperation between Lin Piao and Chiang Ch'ing declined and eventually ended in open confrontation. For instance, in March 1968, Yang Ch'eng-wu (acting chief of general staff of the PLA), Yü Li-chin (commander of the air force), and Fu Ch'ung-pi (commander of the Peking Garrison Command) sent armed guards to break into the office of the CCPCC Cultural Revolution Group to arrest some of Chiang Ch'ing's aides. To trim the power of the military and to maintain the authority and prestige of the CCPCC Cultural Revolution Group, Mao removed the trio from all their posts. Nevertheless, all seemed harmonious between Mao and Lin Piao and between Lin Piao and Chiang Ch'ing before the Ninth CCP National Congress in April 1969. During the Congress, Lin Piao and Chiang Ch'ing worked closely together to curtail the power of veteran Party and government cadres headed by Chou En-lai by initiating a criticism campaign against the so-called February Adverse Current. A compromise was achieved between the military and the Cultural Revolutionists, and each



faction was given six places in the twenty-one member Politburo. But after that, Lin Piao and Chiang Ch'ing parted company.

After Lin Piao's death, Mao decided to make Chiang Ch'ing his successor, because at that time he could trust no one but his own wife. Chiang Ch'ing was very ambitious. Since 1974, she had made every effort to prepare herself to be Mao's successor, including the organization of the Gang of Four as her power base. Some people probably thought that Chiang Ch'ing had overreached herself, but Chiang Ch'ing herself thought otherwise. First, she had successfully engineered the Cultural Revolution. Second, she was Mao's best disciple for she had followed him for several decades. Third, there had been women premiers and presidents in other countries in this century, and she believed she could emulate their accomplishments as stateswomen. As for Mao, he of course knew that Chiang Ch'ing was not an appropriate candidate for the succession because she had many enemies and because she had not made any very important contributions to the Party. However, out of favoritism and overconfidence, Mao thought that he could put Chiang Ch'ing on the throne in spite of strong resistance. To promote his succession plan clandestinely, at the Tenth CCP National Congress Mao elevated Wang Hung-wen to be a Party vice-chairman, ranking second only to Chou En-lai and Mao himself, which created the impression that he would designate Wang Hung-wen, not Chiang Ch'ing, as his successor. But his trick failed to deceive the clear-headed.

To carry out his succession plan, Mao enabled the Cultural Revolutionists to gain control of the Party by achieving numerical superiority in the Tenth CCP Central Committee and its Politburo; he then helped them gradually to gain access to political and military power. He hoped to simultaneously groom and designate a successor. However, Mao met an almost insuperable obstacle in his attempt to seize political power for the Cultural Revolutionists. This obstacle was Chou En-lai. Therefore, Mao launched the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius after the Tenth CCP National Congress. Ostensibly, Lin Piao was the target of the movement; but the spearhead was actually directed at Chou En-lai because to take political power, the Cultural Revolutionists had to get hold of the premiership, which had been held by Chou En-lai since the establishment of the Communist regime in 1949. Considering Chou's prestige and position, no one was qualified to replace him unless he died or became seriously ill. As early as 1972, Chou En-lai had suffered from cancer. Knowing Mao's intention, Chou made a concession in order to gain advantages: He went into the hospital in April 1974 but continued to receive important foreign guests and made decisions on important affairs of the State Council.

Meanwhile, judging that Chou would not survive, Chiang Ch'ing made strenuous efforts to pave the way for a takeover of the State Council and the Party apparatus.

Beginning in May 1974, Chiang Ch'ing, in the capacity of a "state leader," began to receive foreign dignitaries visiting Peking. Every time she appeared on such occasions, she was accompanied either by Teng Hsiao-p'ing or Li Hsien-nien, both vice-premiers of the State Council. Available information reveals that between Chiang Ch'ing's reception of Archbishop Makarios, president of Cyprus, on May 18, and that of Poul Hartling, prime minister of Denmark, on October 19 of the same year, she had received four other leaders of foreign countries, including General Gnassingbe Eyadema, president of Togo, General Yakubu Gowon, head of the federal military government of Nigeria, President Moktar Ould Daddah of Mauritania, and President Omar Bongo of Gabon. No other Chinese Communist leaders except Mao and Chou En-lai had previously had the privilege of receiving foreign heads of state. Did Chiang Ch'ing's performance signify that she had become the third-ranking leader in the Chinese Communist hierarchy? As a tenth-ranking member of the CCPCC Politburo without any official state titles, Chiang Ch'ing was by no means in a position to give receptions for foreign heads of state. Therefore, Mao must have deliberately arranged these receptions to elevate Chiang Ch'ing's prestige in the top leadership and to test the response of Party cadres to Chou En-lai's possible replacement by Chiang Ch'ing and her possible designation as Mao's successor. By November 1974, Chiang Ch'ing had ceased meeting foreign dignitaries, indication of a strong reaction to Mao's decision. Under mounting pressure, Mao was forced temporarily to shelve his plan to directly hand over power to Chiang Ch'ing and the Cultural Revolutionists. Meanwhile, Mao could no longer postpone the convocation of the Fourth National People's Congress, and when it was convened in January 1975, Chou En-lai was again appointed premier, Teng Hsiao-p'ing was promoted to be first vice-premier, and Chang Ch'un-ch'iao second vice-premier. This was a serious frustration to Mao and Chiang Ch'ing.

With Chou En-lai's illness worsening in August 1975, Mao launched a criticism campaign against *Water Margin* (a classical novel widely read in China) and its hero Sung Chiang to prepare the populace ideologically for the forthcoming power struggle. On September 4, the *People's Daily* published an editorial entitled "Launch Criticism of *Water Margin*." which included Mao's two comments on this novel:

The merit of the book *Water Margin* lies precisely in its portrayal of capitulation. It serves as teaching material by negative example to help all the people recognize capitulationists.

The novel *Water Margin* is against corrupt officials only, but not against the emperor. It excluded Chao Kai [founder of the novel's Liangshan insurgent force] from the 108 leading members. Sung Chiang [the chief of the Liangshan force] practiced capitulationism and revisionism. He changed the Chü Yi Hall [chü yi meaning to unite and rise in revolt] into the Chung Yi Hall [chung yi meaning loyal to the emperor] and accepted the offer of amnesty and enlistment in the army granted by the emperor. His struggle against Kao Ch'iu [a favorite minister at the court] is a struggle waged by one faction against another within the landlord class. After his surrender [to the emperor], he willingly served as the vanguard in the campaign to suppress Fang La [another peasant insurgent force].

The criticism of *Water Margin* was another important struggle in the sphere of political ideology. In the course of this criticism campaign, the Cultural Revolutionists likened Liu Shao-ch'i and Lin Piao to Sung Chiang and denounced them for practicing class capitulationism internally and national capitulationism externally. They repeatedly warned that after the leaders of a revolution had died, leadership should absolutely not be placed in the hands of revisionists and capitulationists like Sung Chiang. By that time, Chou En-lai had stopped receiving foreign dignitaries, indicating that he was near to death. Without waiting for the end of the movement to criticize *Water Margin*, in October Mao initiated a struggle at Tsinghua University to "repulse the Right deviationist wind to reverse previous verdicts" under the pretext of educational reform. In retrospect, we can see very clearly that this struggle was aimed at preventing Teng Hsiao-p'ing from succeeding as premier after the death of Chou En-lai. Chou En-lai's death was officially announced in Peking on January 8, 1976. After Teng Hsiao-p'ing delivered a eulogy at the memorial service for Chou En-lai on January 17, he disappeared from public view.

On February 7, Peking's news media astonished China watchers by announcing that Hua Kuo-feng, in the capacity of acting premier, had given an official reception for the newly appointed Venezuelan ambassador. After that, the Communist propaganda media stepped up attacks on the "unrepentant capitalist-roaders within the Party leadership" without mentioning Teng's name. Strenuous efforts were made to criticize the slogan of "taking the three directives as the key link," which had been proposed by Teng while he was standing in as premier on behalf of Chou. (The three directives refer to Mao's call to study the theory of the dictatorship

of the proletariat to oppose and prevent revisionism, to maintain stability and unity, and to improve the national economy.) Teng was accused of placing the two other directives on a par with the directive on studying the theory of proletarian dictatorship, thus repudiating Mao's consistent view of taking class struggle as the key link, and of peddling eclecticism and revisionism. Mao had to purge Teng for the second time because Teng had become the spiritual leader of all veteran cadres after Chou's death and because Teng consistently opposed the Gang of Four. Should Teng have succeeded Chou as premier, Mao's plan to let the Cultural Revolutionists take over the leadership could not possibly have succeeded and Mao would have had serious trouble. As soon as the Tienanmen Incident erupted on April 5, Mao took advantage of the tense situation to convene a meeting of the CCPCC Politburo on April 7, during which he persuaded the Politburo to adopt two resolutions: one appointing Hua Kuo-feng as first vice-chairman of the Party and premier of the State Council, the other dismissing Teng from all posts both inside and outside the Party but allowing him to retain his Party membership. Teng thus fell into disgrace again.

As mentioned above, the core of the Cultural Revolutionists consisted of the Gang of Four. It would have been reasonable for Mao, having barred Teng from the premiership, to appoint a member of the Gang as premier--for instance, Chang Ch'un-ch'iao, who ranked second only to Teng on the list of vice-premiers. Why, then, did Mao appoint Hua, originally the sixth-ranking vice-premier, to be acting premier? In my opinion, since most veteran cadres disagreed with Teng's dismissal and with the close association between Chang Ch'un-ch'iao and Chiang Ch'ing, they would not have been easily persuaded to accept Chang's appointment as premier, for this would have clearly indicated Mao's intention to cultivate Chiang Ch'ing as his successor. Mao's selection of Hua as acting premier was therefore an expedient. Following the Tienanmen Incident, Mao further promoted Hua to the premiership. We do not know whether Mao had already revised his succession plan and picked Hua to replace Chiang Ch'ing as his successor or whether he wished to cultivate two successors simultaneously and make his final decision according to subsequent changes in the situation. However, it is certain that Hua's promotion caused an acute contradiction between Hua and the Gang of Four, which led to the outbreak of the Gang of Four Incident in October 1976.

Hua was born in 1921 in Chiao-ch'eng County, Shansi Province. During the War of Resistance Against Japan, he worked for local CCP committees in Shansi. In 1949 he moved southward, together with the Communist forces, to Mao's native Hsiangt'an, Hunan Province. His service as secretary of the CCP's prefectural and county

committees in Hsiangt'an won for him Mao's appreciation. When Mao returned to Hunan in 1959, he appointed Hua a secretary of the CCP Hunan Provincial Committee. Hua was further promoted to be first secretary of the CCP Hunan Provincial Committee during the Cultural Revolution. In April 1969 he was elected to the Ninth CCP Central Committee. In 1971, before Lin Piao's death, he was transferred to work for the State Council but still retained his posts in Hunan. In August 1973 he was elected a member of the CCPCC Politburo by the Tenth CCP National Congress. In January 1975 the First Session of the Fourth National People's Congress appointed him vice-premier of the State Council and concurrently minister of public security. Judging by his ascendancy in the Communist hierarchy, he should have been considered a Cultural Revolutionist. However, the chief reason for his rise lay in Mao's appreciation of his services. He had no close association with Chiang Ch'ing and did not belong to the camp of the Gang of Four. After his promotion to be premier of the State Council and the first vice-chairman of the CCP, he became the person most qualified to be Mao's successor if Mao did not officially designate anybody else. For this reason, direct conflict between him and the Gang of Four after Mao's death was inevitable.

Following Mao's death in September 1976, Chiang Ch'ing proclaimed Mao's last words as "act according to principles laid down," i.e., let Chiang Ch'ing take over Mao's power. Hua was thus forced into a showdown with the Gang of Four. At that time, the Gang of Four had already established their power bases in organizations from central to local levels. Hua was in a completely inferior position. But he wisely made use of popular antipathy to the Gang of Four among veteran cadres and the military. He joined hands with Yeh Chien-ying, then representative of veteran cadres and the military, and in a single stroke, arrested the Gang of Four on October 6, 1976, under the pretext that the Gang had attempted to "usurp Party and state power." According to a resolution of the CCPCC Politburo, Hua officially became Mao's successor and was appointed chairman of the CCP and chairman of the CCPCC Military Commission. At that time, Peking claimed that before his death Mao had given Hua a handwritten note saying, "With you in charge, I am at ease." This note was regarded as proof that Mao had chosen Hua as his successor. This interpretation is of course quite ridiculous. In my opinion, in the last few months of his life, Mao was so ill that he would not have been able to make any decision to ensure the realization of his succession plan. He did not leave behind him an official will and it is doubtful whether he said any last words. The succession question was finally settled by a coup that he had not expected at all. This was his third failure in designating his

successor.

In the history of China, as well as other countries, the question of succession has often resulted in power struggles and disorder. However, there has never been and probably never will be a case to parallel Mao's initiation of such a large-scale struggle as the Cultural Revolution just for the sake of selecting a successor. It was a tragedy for China and for Mao himself.

## V

After the arrest of the Gang of Four in October 1976 and Teng Hsiao-p'ing's rehabilitation in July 1977, a fierce power struggle developed between the Teng and Hua factions. Although this power struggle ended in a shift of power to Teng, who triumphed completely over Hua, it had nothing to do with the succession question. Therefore, let us now discuss the measures that Teng has adopted since the end of this struggle to prevent the recurrence of the disasters caused by Mao's attempts to solve the succession problem.

The main issue in the struggle between the Hua and Teng factions was whether Mao's mistakes should be thoroughly investigated. Mao's mistakes resulted mainly from his practice of individual dictatorship, and he committed his biggest errors in his attempt to solve the succession problem. Hence, Teng must endeavor to prevent the reemergence of individual dictatorship within the CCP and avoid the undesirable results that might be caused by having an individual successor. Under the aegis of Teng, the CCP has adopted some measures toward these ends since the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh CCP Central Committee in December 1978.

To forestall any future personality cult and individual dictatorship, the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh CCP Central Committee decided on the following: (1) According to Mao's instruction before his death, people in the Party should call each other "comrade" and not address each other by their official titles. (2) No personal view of a Party member in a position of responsibility, including leading comrades of the Central Committee, is to be called an "instruction." Only the decisions of Party organizations can be called "instructions."

For the same reasons, the Fourth Plenary Session of the 11th CCP Central Committee in September 1979 also summed up the following experiences and lessons, which Yeh Chien-ying mentioned in his speech at the meeting in celebration of the anniversary of the founding of the Peking regime: (1) All CCP members must have a correct understanding of the relationship among the masses, classes, political parties, and leaders.

According to Lenin, the leadership of a proletarian party or of a socialist state usually consists not of a single person, but of a collective composed of people recognized as leaders. Leaders are not gods, they are not infallible and therefore should not be deified.

(2) CCP members must give full play to democracy in the life of the Party and the state, adhere to democratic centralism in organizations at all levels, and exercise collective leadership. They must not allow a few people to have the final say, allow any individual to lay down the law, or allow any individual to place himself above the organization and the masses.

In accordance with these principles, the Fifth Plenary Session of the Eleventh CCP Central Committee in February 1980 adopted the "Guiding Principles for Inner-Party Political Life." The second principle, under the title of "Uphold collective leadership, oppose the making of arbitrary decisions by individuals," expounded the following points:

(1) Collective leadership is one of the highest principles of Party leadership. Party committees, from the Central Committee down to the grassroots, must follow a system of combining collective leadership with the division of labor and individual responsibility in accordance with this principle. All major issues touching on the Party's line, principles, and policies; on the planning of important tasks; on major appointments, removals, transfers of cadres, and other questions on the handling of cadres; on important questions involving the people's interests, and on matters that leading organs at higher levels assign to lower Party committees for collective decision--all these issues, on the merits of each case, should be submitted to the Party committees concerned, to their standing committees or secretariats, or to the leading Party groups for collective discussion and decision, and no individual is allowed to make arbitrary decisions. Under no circumstances is it permissible to replace the leadership of Party committees and their standing committees by any other form of organization. Organizations set up by Party committees to study or handle specific issues must work under the leadership of the Party committees concerned. They should never replace or place themselves above the Party committees.

(2) Within the Party committees, the principle that the minority is subordinate to the majority must be strictly observed in deciding issues. The relationship between the secretary and the members of the Party committee is not one between superior and inferior; the secretary is a member on an equal footing with other members of the Party committee. The secretary or the first secretary should be good at concentrating the committee members' opinions and is not allowed to make

a practice of "what I say goes" or behave in a patriarchal manner.

(3) It is necessary to understand and handle the relations among leaders, Party, class, and masses correctly according to Marxist principles. Publicity in relation to leading members should be realistic, and no unprincipled glorification of them is allowed. It is impermissible to praise leading members of the proletariat in the sycophantic terms used by the exploiting classes, nor is it permissible to distort history or cook up facts in publicizing the contributions of leading members. There should be no celebration of the birthdays of leading members, nor should they be sent gifts or congratulatory messages. No memorial hall should be built for any living person, and not too many such halls should be built for late leaders. No street, place, enterprise, or school should be named after a leading member of the Party. Except for diplomatic occasions, when a leader is out on official business, it is forbidden to organize welcomes and send-offs, put up slogans, beat drums and gongs, and hold banquets in his honor.

These are the regulations that the Communists have formulated to prevent individual dictatorship. Meanwhile, there were two things that Teng wanted to do but could not. To begin with, the draft of the revised CCP Constitution submitted to the Fifth Plenary Session of the Eleventh CCP Central Committee proposed that the average age of members of the CCP Central Committee should be from 55 to 65 and that they could not be re-elected more than twice.<sup>9</sup> However, this proposal was annulled in the draft CCP Constitution submitted to the Twelfth CCP National Congress. Second, after the Fifth Plenary Session of the Eleventh CCP Central Committee, the Communists proposed the so-called *Keng Shen* [1980] Reform Program, which stated that the National Congress should elect three parallel committees to check and supervise one another, i.e., the Central Committee, the Central Advisory Commission, and the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection.<sup>10</sup> Now these three committees or commissions were elected by the Twelfth CCP National Congress in September 1982. However, the new Party Constitution adopted by the Congress stipulates that the Central Advisory Commission and the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection function under the leadership of the Central Committee. Thus, these two commissions cannot possibly serve as checks to the Central Committee.

The stipulations that the Communists have adopted will of course play a definite role in preventing the reemergence of individual dictatorship. However, they cannot guarantee that individual dictatorship will never reappear. After Khrushchev's campaign against



the personality cult of Stalin, the Chinese Communists said that they had learned a good lesson, but later Mao promoted a personality cult on an even larger scale than that of Stalin. The Eighth CCP National Congress, held in September 1956, stressed the necessity of thoroughly implementing collective leadership, but Mao did exactly the contrary. Therefore, I judge that so far the Chinese Communists have not yet established an effective means of preventing the reemergence of individual dictatorship.

Teng has adopted two other measures to solve the succession problem. First, he has reestablished the CCPCC Secretariat according to a resolution of the Fifth Plenary Session of the Eleventh CCP Central Committee. He regards the eleven secretaries, headed by Hu Yao-pang (elected during the plenary session) and Chao Tzu-yang (promoted to the CCPCC Politburo during the same session), as a group of successors to the Party leadership. Succession by a collective leadership is a new concept aimed at preventing the bad effects that might result from "an individual succeeding another individual." The *People's Daily* explained: "In speaking of succession, we mean a healthy and steady process of natural transition by which a gradually-formed new collective leadership will gradually replace the original collective leadership, rather than the isolated and abrupt process of one individual replacing another."<sup>11</sup>

However, a collective leadership always has a core. The core of the current Communist leadership, for instance, is Teng Hsiao-p'ing, who must be replaced after his death. Should there be splits within this collective leadership, or should there be a strong opposition to it from outside, it would be very difficult to avoid a political crisis caused by a power struggle to establish a new leadership core. Under such circumstances, Teng's next measure was to resign as Party general secretary and to promote Hu Yao-pang to that post, thus completing the succession process in form. By so doing, Teng intends to create conditions favorable to Hu's succession as the core of the Communist leadership in the future. In comparison with Mao's treatment of Liu Shao-ch'i and Lin Piao, Teng's method is of course better. However, it still cannot guarantee that Hu will become the core of the new leadership after Teng's death. Many people still doubt whether Hu will be able to succeed Teng.

The power struggles after the deaths of Lenin and Stalin and the succession struggle before and after Mao's death have revealed a serious shortcoming of the Communist system. Probably because of such bitter historical lessons, the Communists have begun to handle the succession question with greater care. The problems of successors to Tito and Brezhnev, which have been solved more smoothly than expected, are two conspicuous examples. However, it is absolutely wrong to conclude

that the ruling Communist parties have found fundamental solutions to their succession problems.

#### NOTES

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