

# 'Fanshen' Re-examined

in the light of the

## CULTURAL REVOLUTION

**William Hinton**

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## CULTURAL REVOLUTION REVELATIONS

# HINTON RE-EXAMINES "FANSHEN"

William Hinton is a Pennsylvanian who spent many years in China before its liberation in 1949 and before World War II. As a technician for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration he was assigned to Long Bow Village, South Shansi Province, where he gathered the notes for his now-famous "Fanshen, A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village." Later, Hinton said, "I carried the notes on my back over much of North China, dove with them into slit trenches to escape bombing, and marched with them at night to avoid encirclement by Fu Tso-yi's cavalry..." In this article, the author takes a second look at his work.

**F**ANSHEN" was published as the Cultural Revolution in China reached its height. This great political upheaval has not only set the course of the Chinese revolution for decades to come, but has also cast a revealing light on decades past. In the showdown conflict that began in 1965 between the forces led by Mao Tse-tung's Cultural Revolution Group of the Central Committee and Liu Shao-chi's clique or faction of revisionists, those "people in authority taking the capitalist road," hundreds of millions of citizens have mobilized to examine the contrasting lines and policies put forward over the years by the two "headquarters" that have gradually crystallized inside the Chinese Communist Party. The views, speeches, private lives and public careers of numerous leading cadres have been investigated from every angle, not only by their colleagues and peers, but more significantly by groups of students, workers, peasants and soldiers determined to unravel the whole infrastructure of an organization and an ideology that increasingly oppressed them. What the "gate" did for Long Bow and similar, key villages in North China in 1948, the Cultural Revolution is now doing for the whole of China. All serious appraisals of the Chinese Revolution, "Fanshen"

included, must be re-examined in the light of the material thus exposed.

At the present time only a fraction of the revelations of the Cultural Revolution are available in the West. Nevertheless, enough has already been made public to add a new dimension to the history of the post-World War II civil war and land reform described in "Fanshen." Most important, the Cultural Revolution has revealed the depth and complexity of the successive policy debates that stirred and divided the ranks of the Revolution after the Japanese surrender.

The first of these great debates concerned what concessions the Chinese Communist Party should make to gain internal peace in 1945. In "Fanshen" this is treated primarily as a grass-roots issue. Peasants in the villages (and their local leaders) have to make up their minds whether to resist the Kuomintang offensive, stand aside, or join the counter-revolution. Cadres at district, county, sub-regional and regional levels, many of whom are landlords' sons and daughters standing on the revolutionary side primarily because this side really fought Japan, have to decide whether the popular forces under their leadership have the will and capacity to resist the many-million strong Kuomintang army backed by the industrial might of the United States and ultimately by the atomic bomb. Perhaps it would be wiser to try and salvage something by negotiation?

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"Fanshen"—A Monthly Review Book, \$12.50; and in paperback, a Vintage Giant, \$2.95. Both available at China Publications, 95 5th Ave., NY

They must also decide a related question: Should they opt for land reform, which alone can mobilize the mass of the peasantry, at a time when support for land reform means throwing down the gauntlet, initiating a life-and-death struggle with the Kuomintang for state power? They must decide if such a challenge is possible or even desirable in a land already torn by eight years of war.

The Cultural Revolution has revealed that this debate was not simply a grass-roots question. It split the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party itself, with Liu Shao-chi, among others, advocating crippling compromises to avoid war and Mao insisting on preserving basic strength and territory even if this meant war. The debate hinged on the question of the "gun," whether to surrender the "gun" (i.e., basic control of the Eighth Route Army) in return for a chance to enter some elections and win some posts in a coalition government, or to maintain a firm hold on the "gun" and face the consequences—a massive Kuomintang offensive.

In Europe, following the defeat of the fascist armies, communist parties in several countries gave up the "gun" and settled for ministries in bourgeois-dominated governments and seats in bourgeois parliaments, thereby ending, apparently permanently, any revolutionary challenge to the status quo from these forces. Stalin urged Mao to do the same; so did Liu Shao-chi, as did other leading people in the Chinese Communist Party. But Mao rejected this disastrous capitulation in favor of holding on to every rifle and, while surrendering certain peripheral areas, of fighting for every inch of land in the key North China bases built up during the war against Japan. In order to win this fight Mao mobilized the whole Party and the mass of the people for resistance and initiated a vast land reform movement that provided a solid political base for the protracted fight.

The struggle on this issue inside the Party and throughout the Liberated Areas was obviously more complex and difficult than "Fanshen" indicates. Resistance on the part of the Chinese Communist Party and its army was by no means a foregone conclusion at the end of World War II. One factor strengthening Mao's hand was the spontaneous action of many militant peasants themselves in challenging and settling accounts with their landlords. These actions, described in "Fanshen," set up an

accelerating process that the Communist Party would have found hard to reverse even if it had made up its mind to do so. In a sense the peasants of North China made the decision concerning war or peace on their own in the face of various efforts by the party and cliques within it to delay and limit the struggle. In so doing they justified Mao's faith in the masses



William Hinton, China, 1945

as the final arbiters of history. Once the die was cast for land reform no power on earth could stem the tide. Thenceforth the role played by the Communist Party was to organize and guide the peasants to victory in land reform and war.

All this should not be taken as a denial of the legitimate question of timing in relation to peace negotiations, defense versus offense in the civil war, and the final decision favoring all-out land reform. Timing had its place in Mao's strategy. What the new information reveals is that he did not have a unified Central Committee that could concentrate on implementing consensus policy. Mao and his supporters not only had to lead the people correctly, sometimes holding them back, sometimes urging them forward, but at the same time had to struggle with leaders at all levels, including the top, who were for co-existence without struggle, for bargaining away basic strength, afraid of land reform as such, and afraid of its consequences nationally and internationally. There was also opposition from the other side—people who opposed all negotiation,

urged land reform before the peasants were ready and a military offensive when only a defensive strategy made sense.

In the light of this knowledge the initial defense of the Liberated Areas, the cease-fire negotiations, the step-by-step escalation of land reform, and the final shift from defense to offense both militarily and politically when

the alienation of large numbers of middle peasants. In "Fanshen" this tendency is described as coming primarily from below, from the native equalitarianism of petty producers who, once they began to seize land, did not make any clear distinction between landlords, rich peasants and middle peasants, nor between the essentially capitalist (i.e., industrial and



Celebrating the liberation of Nanking, Sun Yat-Sen Square 1949

the time was ripe, are even more remarkable than they seemed at the time. Obviously much happened that no one could control. That the final result was victory for the revolution is due to the fact that Mao's strategy was fundamentally sound and that the mass of the people responded to it when and where it became clear. Within this overall context many misleaders held sway and many disastrous moves were made that confused the people, weakened the revolution and delayed victory in the war.

The second great debate of the post-World War II civil war period concerned the "Poor-and-Hired Peasants Line," extreme equalitarianism in the struggle for land, and

commercial) holdings of landlords on the one hand and their feudal (i.e., land and treasure trove) holdings on the other. Once the struggle began, the peasants went on to expropriate everyone better off than themselves and treated all property as legitimate "fruit."

Liu Shao-chi's self-criticism of 1966 makes clear that this error did not simply arise from below. The "Poor-and-Hired Peasant Line" ("the poor-and-hired should conquer the country, the poor-and-hired should rule the country") was accepted and promulgated by Central Committee members. Liu Shao-chi himself presided over the great land reform conference at Yehtao in the Taihang where

this line gained a semi-official status. It was subsequently pushed by the People's Daily. With such support from on high it spread far and wide and did a great deal of damage before it was corrected by Mao Tse-tung himself, in part through his talk to the cadres of the Shansi-Suiyuan Region.

The "Poor-and-Hired Peasant Line" was in essence utopian. It demanded not only the destruction of feudal landholding and the distribution of the holdings of the gentry to their poor tenants and hired laborers, but also middle peasant status for all—that is sufficient land, implements, stock, housing, capital to make every family a prosperous independent producer. Since no such wealth existed and three years of intense land reform failed to produce the desired utopian result, those in the lead blamed the rank-and-file village cadres and communists. The first act of many land reform teams in 1948 was to suspend all local leaders and demand from them searching self-criticism and mutual analysis of class origin. In so far as these cadres had made mistakes, abused their power, and unfairly favored themselves in the distribution of expropriated goods, the movement had a salutary effect, but insofar as it blamed these local cadres for something which was beyond their power to remedy—the continued poverty of scores of poor peasant families, it had a very demoralizing effect and, if not corrected, could have led to disintegration of the revolutionary ranks. In fact, as "Fanshen" makes clear, the "Left" line was corrected by Mao in good time and the whole movement got back on a sound footing by mid-summer 1948. What "Fanshen" fails to make clear is that the movement for correction had to be aimed not only at peasant activists in the villages but at various leaders at all levels in the Party including the very highest.

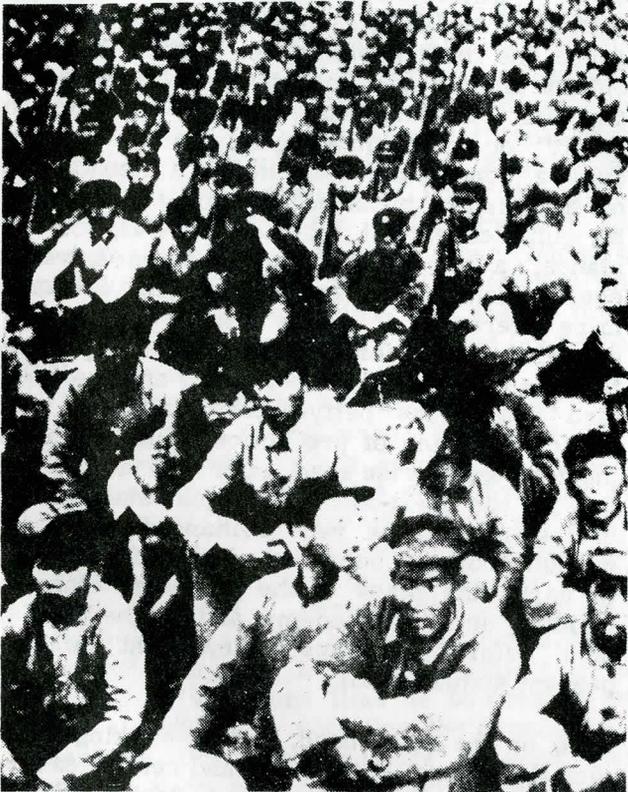
### **Individual vs. Collective Production**

The third great post-war debate illuminated by the Cultural Revolution concerned the question of individual versus collective production in agriculture following land reform. When Team Leader Tsai Chin declared "After this if you want land you will have to buy it," and "The only poor in the future will be those who do not want to work" and "We want everyone to work hard and to strive to become a new rich peasant," the struggle between two roads to the future began in Long Bow Village. In a foot-

note (see page 586) I pointed out that Tsai Chin was not correct in saying that there were no poor peasants anymore. I gave him the benefit of the doubt in terms of overall policy, however, by adding that at the time a production movement was the only solution to the peasants' problems. In the light of information exposed by the Cultural Revolution I now think much more was involved. With hindsight it seems clear that Tsai Chin's position, which was essentially "Now you have land, enrich yourselves!" reflected the thinking of Liu Shao-chi, Po-Yi-Po and others whose views on this question have since been exhaustively exposed. Their thesis: New Democracy with its mixed economy must be a protracted stage in the history of China. Land reform must set the stage for a rich peasant economy. With this in mind Liu advocated hands off private enterprises, both urban and rural, and put forth four freedoms—freedom to buy and sell land, freedom to hire labor, freedom to loan money at interest and freedom to establish private business for profit—as permanent features of the new society. Basing his analysis on a "theory of productive forces" reminiscent of Bukharin, he claimed that collectivization in China must await industrialization. Only when modern factories developed the capacity to provide tractors, pumps, fertilizer and other machinery and products could land pooling and joint tillage succeed. Since industry was fully twenty or even thirty years away from such accomplishments he urged the peasants to enrich themselves in the meantime. "When 70 percent of the peasants have become rich peasants it will be time to talk about collectivization," he said.

If Liu had had his way the Chinese people would have seen not the rapid development of a collectivization movement in the countryside but the rapid differentiation of the peasantry into hired, poor, middle and rich once more with the majority going down and the minority rising up on the backs of their fellows. If one peasant is able to buy land and hire labor, quite obviously another must sell land and hire out. The result could not possibly be, as Liu projected, a countryside made up 70 percent of rich peasants, but quite the reverse, a countryside where 70 percent of the peasants are once more hired laborers and tenants exploited by a small percentage of the prosperous with a scattering of independent middle peasants in between.

It seems clear today that what Tsai Chin in 1948 projected for the future was not simply his own judgment but the considered policy of Liu Shao-chi and his faction. If this was the case, why did Tsai Chin try to organize mutual-aid groups in Long Bow? The answer is, I think, two-fold. On the one hand, organizing mutual aid was Party policy. At the same time it was not in itself a decisive step toward collectiviza-



Chinese proletarian fighters, 1935

tion. It could be viewed by those favoring free enterprise as an expedient way for peasants to pool their resources and produce until they got on their feet. Once on their feet it could again be "each man for himself." For those dedicated to collectivization, of course, mutual aid was something quite different. It was an essential first step toward cooperative production to be followed by land pooling, increasing organization and division of labor until all the relations of production in the countryside were transformed.

In China's rural areas after land reform, advocates of laissez-faire and advocates of cooperation existed side by side at the grass roots and at every level right up to the top. The struggle over the shape of the future was thus

much more complex and difficult than I, for one, contemplated at the time. True, I did not think that a collective agriculture was a foregone conclusion just because land reform had succeeded and had been led by a communist party dedicated to socialism. I realized that a long struggle lay ahead to win the peasantry to land pooling and collective work, that the peasants themselves had to make a conscious choice. At the same time I did not realize that the Party also had to make a conscious choice, that a division existed among its top leaders concerning the correct road to follow, and so I saw this crucial struggle as I saw those that preceded it, primarily as a grass-roots contest for the hearts and minds of the rural producers, and failed to see it as a major conflict permeating the whole society and the whole Party. When I read Mao's introductory paragraphs to the book "Socialist Upsurge in China's Countryside," I thought his words were directed at village, district and regional cadres who lacked faith in the peasants' ability to organize and cooperate and in their own ability to lead such a movement. I did not realize that these words were also part of a polemic going on at the highest levels of leadership and that many leaders also had to be won for this policy.

The decisive factor in the struggle between these two groups that began with the completion of land reform was the continued existence of poor and lower-middle peasants in the countryside. These peasants, though they had "fan-shened," were in no position to go it alone and had no illusions as to their future should each-man-for-himself continue as the basic rule of society and state. The drive for collectivization was organized by Mao on a class basis. Just as the land reform was carried to success by relying on the poor-and-hired peasant masses, so the cooperative movement was carried to completion by relying on the former poor-and-hired whom the first stage of the revolution had freed from oppression but nevertheless failed to make wealthy, or even, by middle-peasants standards, prosperous. The key to the future was not simply, as Tsai Chin said in Long Bow, production, but production organized along socialist lines creating new relations among men that would greatly accelerate the whole development of production itself and lay the foundation for rapid mechanization without contradictions of scale when industry finally reached the point of providing the necessary machinery, chemicals and other products.

Class struggle was thus as fundamental to the future as it had been to the past, and politics—revolutionary politics—had to take command. A successful cooperative movement could only be built by the conscious will of millions of producers and the determined and persevering leadership of thousands of higher cadres. Not *laissez-faire*, but a new and vast mass movement was the order of the day. Men like Tsai Chin, the Long Bow Work Team leader, either revolutionized their thinking, or they subsequently acted as a brake on the future development of the revolution.

### Traditional Anti-Mao Line

The Cultural Revolution has revealed a common thread that runs through all three of these controversies—the identity of the opposition to Mao and the correct policies that eventually won the day. Many of the people who in 1945 attacked Mao's resistance and land reform policies from the Right, advocating crippling compromises with the Kuomintang and trying to dampen the mass struggle against the gentry, were the same people who, once land reform got underway, jumped in and carried it far to the "Left" with ultra-revolutionary slogans. Then, when land reform was completed, these same people came out for *laissez-faire* in the countryside opposing the cooperative movement at every stage. In each case the leader of these forces was Liu Shao-chi.

The Cultural Revolution has also made clear that this was by no means a unique swing for Liu and his followers. Historically the opposition to Mao's basic policies has always swung from Right to "Left" and back to Right again. In the early thirties Wang Ming opposed Mao's united front with the Kuomintang as a betrayal of the revolution, only to swing to the other extreme once resistance to Japan got underway and advocated everything through the Kuomintang to the point of surrendering the autonomy of the Communist Party and even its control over the Eighth Route Army. There is much evidence to show that Liu Shao-chi supported Wang Ming in both policies. After the cooperative movement of the fifties developed a nationwide momentum in spite of his efforts to slow things down, Liu intervened and helped carry the commune movement far to the left along the same extreme equalitarian road that the land reform had previously traversed. By 1962

he was attacking from the Right again, advocating the extension of the free market, expanded private plots, production quotas based on individual households and a free hand for private enterprises.

Such consistency in opposition can hardly be accidental. Nor can differences in personal style or differences over tempo and emphasis suffice to explain it. In order to make political sense one must postulate major differences in outlook and ultimate goals between Liu Shao-chi and Mao Tse-tung. Liu's swings from Right to "Left" do not contradict, but rather confirm such a conclusion. What appears inconsistent on the surface turns out on closer analysis to be quite consistent indeed. There is, for instance, a very direct link between extreme equalitarianism in land reform and *laissez-faire* afterward. If one is in fact working for a capitalist future for agriculture it is important that the majority of the peasantry emerge from land reform as petty-capitalists, each with sufficient means of production to place him on the free-enterprise road, each with the illusion that he can go-it-alone. An equal start for all in the competitive race demanded by a free market economy becomes a must if one wants to carry the mass of the peasantry along in building such an economy, and so the goal of land reform becomes independent middle-peasant status for all.

If, on the other hand, one is working for a socialist future, the goal of land reform can be something quite different—the destruction of feudal productive relations, the freeing of the peasantry from rent bondage and debt so that they can pool their labor and resources in collective production and together climb out of the abyss of poverty. Thus, what at first seems contradictory, "Left" policy that gives way to Right policy, turns out to be a consistent response to changing circumstances.

That "Left" and Right are but two aspects of the same thing—petit bourgeoisie or bourgeois distortions of revolutionary policy—has long been a fundamental tenant of Marxism-Leninism. The history of the Chinese Revolution through two basic stages, the bourgeoisie democratic (up to 1949) and socialist (from 1949 on) amply bears this out.

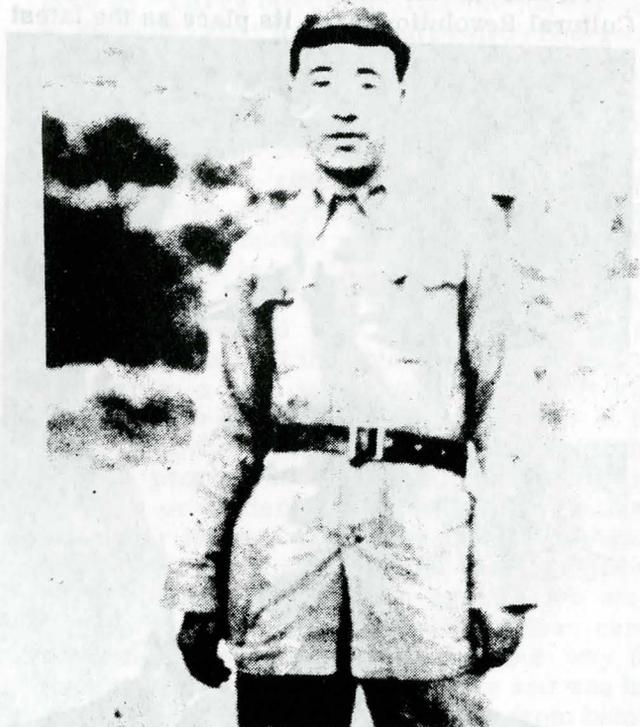
The major differences in outlook and goal between Mao Tse-tung and Liu Shao-chi come down, in the final analysis, to a basic difference in class allegiance, Mao consistently

representing and advancing the revolutionary interests of the working class and Liu just as consistently representing and advancing the sometimes revolutionary, sometimes counter-revolutionary interests of the bourgeoisie, primarily the national bourgeoisie. During the bourgeois-democratic stage of the Chinese Revolution, Liu's policies reflected the ambivalent attitude of the various bourgeois strata to the revolution, the vacillation felt by people with something to lose. These elements wanted revolution on the one hand, but feared lest it go too far on the other, leaped into struggle when the road seemed bright only to retreat when difficulties and dangers piled up. Knowing full well their own weaknesses bourgeois revolutionaries consistently underestimated the strength and determination of other classes to fight and to win. Or if they recognized this strength and determination, they feared it because it meant a revolution carried far beyond their control.

If before 1949 the key aspect of Liu's line was vacillation in the face of the enemy offensive, after 1949 its key aspect was stubborn opposition to the socialist revolution that the victory over the gentry and their imperialist allies unleashed. Liu strove hard to make the private enterprise facet of the New-Democratic mixed economy a permanent and expanding feature of Chinese life both urban and rural, and fostered bourgeois ideology in education and culture. At the same time he blocked or delayed all efforts to socialize the economy and transform the superstructure in conformity with it. Each time these efforts failed, Liu joined the majority that was building socialism and then went on to lead the movement astray with "Left" slogans. It may well be that these Right and "Left" swings were not consciously obstructive, they can be interpreted as natural and sincere response of such people and such social forces to the onward thrust of the revolution. The objective result was, however, as disruptive as any subjective intent could desire and by the middle sixties it seems clear that conscious counter-revolutionary intent also played a role.

That two lines and two "headquarters," one essentially bourgeois and the other proletarian, should compete for leadership in the Chinese revolution over several decades should surprise no one. The struggle between the working class and the bourgeoisie, the only new class elements in a centuries-old, predominantly

rural civilization, began as soon as these two classes were formed in the late 19th century. Imperialist intervention brought these classes into being and imperialism, in alliance with China's landed gentry strove to keep them down and use them to the advantage of the West. Suffering from the same oppressors, workers and capitalists often fought together for an independent, modern China, but since they formed the opposite poles of a fundamental class contradiction and since their ultimate



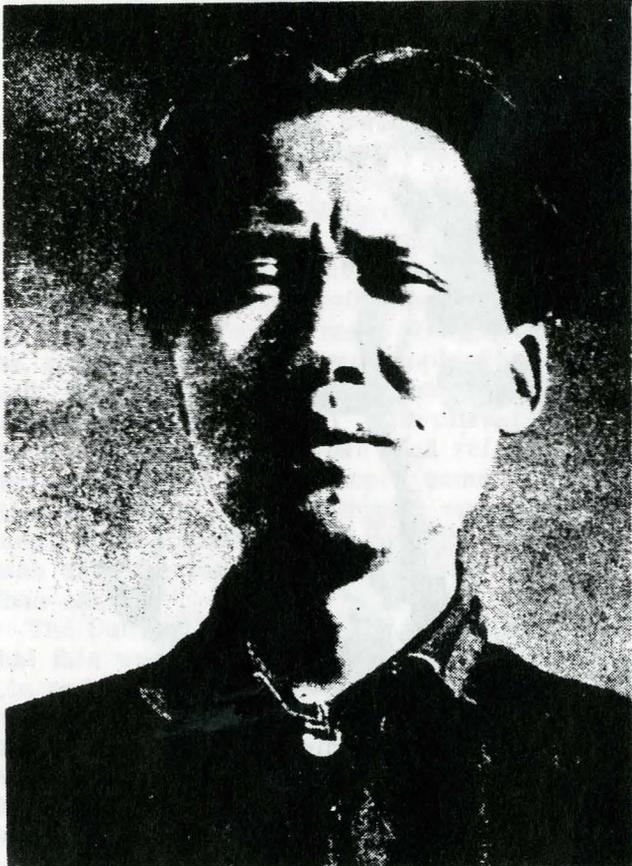
Lin Biao in 1936

class goals, socialism and capitalism, were mutually exclusive, they also struggled without letup for hegemony in the revolution. At every stage these two classes strove to so organize and lead as to advance their own basic interests and shape the future along lines consistent with their own ultimate aspirations.

That this struggle took shape not only as a political conflict between various parties and factions in society as a whole but also as a struggle between factions inside the Chinese Communist Party should also surprise no one. As the major revolutionary party in China after 1921, and as the recognized leader of both the rural and urban masses, the Communist Party

attracted all the best, most militant revolutionaries in the nation whether landlord, bourgeois, petty-bourgeois or proletarian in origin, and these individual communists, some consciously, many no doubt unconsciously, struggled to transform the Party and the world according to their own class position and outlook. Under Mao's leadership the Party strove to counteract this through education designed to transform all adherents into dedicated proletarian revolutionaries who could take the lead in building a socialist and ultimately a communist world.

Viewed in the context of this history the Cultural Revolution takes its place as the latest



Mao Tse-tung, Pao An 1936

and greatest of a series of clashes between these two class forces in the protracted struggle for leadership of the Chinese revolution that is not likely to subside until classes themselves disappear.

If the Cultural Revolution deepens understanding of the history of Long Bow Village during the period of the civil war and the early land reform movement, that history in turn

helps one to understand the Cultural Revolution.

As a fundamental struggle between rival classes for state power, as a real, not a sham revolution, and as a new stage in the Chinese revolution as a whole, the Cultural Revolution has gone through many of the same phases that marked previous stages of this vast upheaval. A student rebellion, limited at first to major institutions of higher learning, spread rapidly to colleges and high schools throughout the nation, then sparked the formation of rebel groups among workers, first in a few key cities and industries, eventually in every productive unit, large or small, in China. From schools and shops rebellion spread to the countryside and step-by-step, layer-by-layer the mass of rural producers mobilized to struggle against "people in authority taking the capitalist road" wherever they might be found.

"Fanshen" is like a preview of this process, illustrating how a few militants who dare to speak and dare to act, gradually win the support of more and more poor and oppressed people, organize them, educate them and lead them in overthrowing the old society and establishing a new one. Just as land reform did not occur anywhere in China until peasants at the grassroots united, confronted their local gentry, expropriated them, divided the fruits and set up new local governments, so the Cultural Revolution did not occur anywhere in China until local people—students, workers, peasants and revolutionary cadres—rebelled, formed alliances against indigenous capitalist roaders, overthrew them and set up new organs of power. It is this tremendous mobilization at the base of society that is crucial to any real revolution and distinguishes it from a coup, a parliamentary election, or other lesser form of political action.

"Fanshen" helps one to understand what a protracted, complex process a real revolution is, what a vast amount of detailed organizing, mobilizing and educating is necessary and how easy it is for leaders and masses alike to confuse targets, take friend for foe and foe for friend, and temporarily go astray.

In the Cultural Revolution this latter problem has been particularly severe because all factions and all groups have marched under red banners, "waving a red flag to oppose the red flag," as the Chinese press has called it. Revolution, socialism and Mao Tse-tung have such prestige in China that no one can hope to gain any following at all under a banner of any

other color. Opposition elements pose as revolutionaries too, better revolutionaries than those truly on Mao's side, and their policies and slogans tend to be more "Left" and "militant" than those of Mao's supporters. If this has temporarily confused some people in China it has permanently confused many foreign observers. Chinese official statements have labelled opposition programs "'Left' (revolutionary) in form, but Right (counter-revolutionary) in essence," but just what this means in real life is hard to grasp.

The Poor-and-Hired Peasant line of 1948 described in "Fanshen" provides an instructive example of just such a phenomenon. That this line was "Left" in form is illustrated by the slogans that summed it up: "Absolutely equally divide the land," "Throw down all bad cadres," "Food to eat, clothes to wear, land to till and houses to live in...", "Let no poor peasant remain poor...leave no landlord in possession of his property." What could be more revolutionary than this? The fundamentally Right content of this line has already been analyzed—its utopian demand that everyone be raised to middle-peasant status as a prerequisite for the development of capitalism in the countryside. Other aspects of Right essence are also evident. In an area where all land had already been divided and most, if not all of the local cadres were fundamentally good, slogans advocating equal division and throwing down bad cadres fostered a hostile attack on a sound Party and movement. To attack that which is sound is counter-revolutionary, not revolutionary. Such a line takes friend for foe, confuses basic issues, demoralizes the ranks, and, in the long run, serves the enemy.

### Liu's Line on Campus

The "Left" line advanced by Liu Shao-chi in the last phase of the Cultural Revolution paralleled this Poor-and-Hired Peasant line in many major aspects. The vigorous student movement that arose in June, 1966, directed its attack at university administrations and particularly at Lu Ping, the president of Peking University. Lu Ping, who had allied himself closely with the discredited leaders of the Peking Municipal Government, Peng Chen and Wu Han, presided over a university that, in spite of many reform movements, still closely resembled a capitalist institution of higher learning. The exam system, the course work,

the ideology and the teaching methods of the professors all aimed at preparing a select few to inherit power in the country and run its affairs. Sons and daughters of Shanghai and Tientsin bourgeoisie were favored and advanced. Less well-prepared worker and peasant students were discriminated against and dropped. When students organized to raise these questions, Lu Ping suppressed them. When, with Mao's support, the student movement developed into a mass protest, Liu Shao-chi sent work teams to organize and lead it, work teams like those sent to rural villages in Shansi in 1948. These teams arrived with very militant slogans such as "Carry the Cultural Revolution Through to the End" and "Root out and Destroy Bourgeois Ideology," but in fact they shifted the target of attack from the university administration to the faculty and student body as a whole. The work teams told the academic masses that there were bourgeois reactionaries in their midst who must be exposed. They organized groups for self and mutual criticism, and directed them to meet in prolonged sessions to examine themselves. The objective result of these directives was to take the pressure off the leadership and set the students to attacking one another in a vain search for an enemy that did not exist or was of minor importance. In the wide-open discussion and poster campaign that ensued, people who criticized Communist Party policies or leaders were labelled reactionary, put under house arrest and subjected to organized mass attack. It took time for the students to see through this, unite against the work teams, force their withdrawal and then carry through an investigation to find out why the teams had come in the first place and who had sent them. It was this investigation from below, by students, that first exposed Liu Shao-chi to public criticism. The August 1966 decision of the Central Committee helped put the whole movement back on the track by concentrating fire where it belonged, on "those in positions of authority taking the capitalist road."

In 1963, during the Socialist Education Movement in the countryside, Liu Shao-chi had previously tried to misdirect mass criticism of Rightist cadres in the same way. Mao's directives called for the vast majority of people and cadres to expose the "handful of people in authority taking the capitalist road" in the countryside. Liu turned the attack inward against the rank-and-file cadres, demanding that everyone make a critical self-examination

in regard to "being clean and being unclean in relation to the four questions (politics, ideology, organization and economy). He thus took the heat off the leading cadres and set the people against one another.

The parallel between these campaigns organized by Liu and the Poor-and-Hired Peasant Line phase of the land reform movement of 1948 is extraordinary. In all three cases work



teams with a warped appraisal of the overall situation led the masses against the wrong target, placed the blame for an unsatisfactory state of affairs on rank-and-file cadres, and directed them to expose alleged agents and reactionaries in their ranks. The demoralizing effect of such a policy is clearly delineated in "Fanshen." One can imagine what the result would have been had it not been corrected promptly.

There is no evidence that the misdirection of the land reform movement of 1948 was designed to divert attention from a clique of opposition leaders as the later movements were obviously designed to do, but since Liu Shao-chi had a hand in all three there is room for doubt. At the very least it may be conjectured that Liu learned from the experiences of 1948 how to manipulate a mass movement and turn it back upon itself. Certainly during the

months when the Poor-and-Hired Peasant Line held sway in Long Bow all the worst, most reactionary elements of society "mounted the horse" and tried to slip into power. In 1963 and 1966 similar elements who already held power consolidated their grip wherever Liu's work teams prevailed.

If "Fanshen" demonstrates how damaging such a wrong line can be, it also demonstrates how reliance on the masses, Mao's mass line, operates to correct such mistakes.

In 1948 the Communist Party called on the people at the grassroots for criticisms and supervision. The Party put the fate of the cadres and the revolution in the hands of the Poor-and-Hired Peasants League and its successor, the Peasants Union. At the "gate," made up sometimes of delegates elected by the rank and file, sometimes of mass meetings of the people, the careers of all the cadres in power and the policies they had followed were reviewed. Gradually the truth about both sifted out. In regard to the cadres the people concluded that most of them were good, that is revolutionary. Though they had faults, some of them serious, these could be corrected. In regard to policy, they did not clearly see what was wrong with it, but they did reject it in practice by failing to come to meetings and by disappearing to plow, hoe and thin millet when they were called to discuss. They recognized very early what the work team cadres only came to understand only later, that there was no "oil," that there would be nothing of value to distribute, that land reform was, to all intents and purposes, finished. Over and over again Mao had told the Party "the eyes of the masses are clear." Given a chance to control their own destiny, people would do so with discrimination and reason. Events in Long Bow bore out this thesis.

### **"Bombard the Headquarters!"**

In the course of the Cultural Revolution Mao followed a similar but even bolder strategy. At a moment of real crisis, with two "headquarters" inside the Communist Party advocating two different lines, two different roads, Mao threw the issue to the people of the whole nation. "Bombard the Headquarters," he urged in one of the briefest big-character posters ever written. Mao's call helped arouse a tremendous political storm—demonstration and counter-demonstration, strike and counter-

strike, sit-in and counter-sit-in, organization and counter-organization, poster and counter-poster. Virtual chaos ensued in some places, just as it had in the early days of the land-reform movement, but temporary chaos was considered a small price to pay for the political leap which occurred as hundreds of millions entered the arena of political action. I think it safe to say that the world has never witnessed anything to approach, not to mention equal, this mass mobilization. As it progressed, as rebel organizations merged and consolidated in schools, factories, communes and municipalities, they subjected every leader and every policy to minute examination, knocked down "capitalist roaders," reformed middle-of-the-roaders, and chose socialist roaders as new leaders and then chose again. Without this mass movement no such results could ever have been accomplished. The problem was not simply victory over a faction but the rooting out of old habits, old customs, old ideology that inevitably generated abuses, and replacing them with new habits, new customs and new ideology.

Soviet-oriented "communists" the world over have joined the capitalist press in accusations that Mao, by taking the issue to the people, has destroyed the Chinese Communist Party and replaced it with Red Guard storm troopers and army troops. This unprecedented concern for the fate of a communist party on the part of capitalists should have been enough by itself to expose the hollowness of the charges. If not, a study of the history of the Chinese Revolution should suffice to show that the Chinese Communist Party has won support and grown strong precisely to the extent that it has not set itself above the people, or held itself immune from criticism or supervision, but on the contrary has maintained an outlook of unconditional service to the working class and its allies, the great mass of laboring people. "The people, and the people alone, are the motive force in the making of world history. . . . The masses are the real heroes, while we ourselves are often childish and ignorant, and without this understanding it is impossible to acquire even the most rudimentary knowledge," Mao wrote many years ago. If the people cannot be trusted to correct and control the Party, who can?

In earlier years supervision over the Chinese Communist Party by the people was, in a sense, built into the situation by the nature of the armed struggle. Isolated and surrounded as it

was by vastly superior forces, if the Communist Party had not served the people, it would have been deserted by them and crushed. Later, when the Party held power over vast areas it became necessary to supplement this built-in regulator by organized movements such as the "gate" of 1948, where peasants sat in judgment on cadres. The same basic method was used in the movement against graft, corruption and bureaucracy, the famous "San Fan" of 1952, in the Socialist Education Movement of 1963 and now, on a much wider scale, in the Cultural Revolution. Far from destroying the Communist Party, such movements have vastly strengthened it. They have exposed weaknesses, corrected mistaken cadres, raised the political consciousness of cadres and people alike, weeded out hopelessly corrupt individuals and, of course, counter-revolutionaries. Each of these move-



"Bombard the Headquarters!"

ments has simultaneously brought healthy new forces into the Party and developed large numbers of activists who serve as reserves. The new recruits have periodically rejuvenated the whole organization.

There are differences, of course, both quantitative and qualitative between these successive movements. In 1948 the people dealt directly only with the village cadres who lived among them. Higher cadres were criticized and reformed by their colleagues in inner-Party

meetings at higher levels such as the county conferences described in "Fanshen." During "San Fan," mass criticism was carried further with some provincial and national leaders facing mass accusation meetings. In the Cultural Revolution the whole situation has been transformed by a division inside the Party too deep to be bridged by ordinary forms of inner-Party struggle. The people have been mobilized by one side, Mao's Cultural Revolution Group of the Central Committee, on an absolute basis, encouraged to investigate and attack at any and all levels and to seize power from those taking the capitalist road. The opposition, on its part, has also tried to mobilize mass support. Such a movement is unprecedented in the world and in China. Nevertheless, it has its antecedents in the land reform movement, the "San Fan" movement and the Socialist Education Movement and could hardly have been launched but for the experience and political consciousness that these earlier movements imparted to the Communist Party and the people as a whole.

The Cultural Revolution can thus be interpreted as but the latest and greatest of the Party rectification movements, and it has, like the others, been led by the Party from the beginning. The Communist Party, its Central Committee, the Cultural Revolution Group of the Central Committee and Chairman Mao Tse-tung have been in command throughout. Their leadership has been exercised not through work teams sent out by leading committees (Liu Shao-chi tried this) but primarily through public directives, intervention by army cadres (themselves Party-led) and participation by revolutionary Party cadres at lower levels. The new committees that have taken over state power at all levels are products of a three-way alliance between representatives of mass organizations, delegates from the army and revolutionary cadres long active in the Party. The binding force everywhere is the Party. Far from breaking up, it is growing stronger.

When, in the course of the Cultural Revolution, leading cadres who have been subjected to sharp criticism and attack show up as members of the new three-way alliance, the western press immediately claims that the Cultural Revolution has failed, that the Communist Party has not been destroyed after all, that Mao and his supporters have been defeated and have had to make a deal with the opposition. The principle "cure the disease, save the patient,"

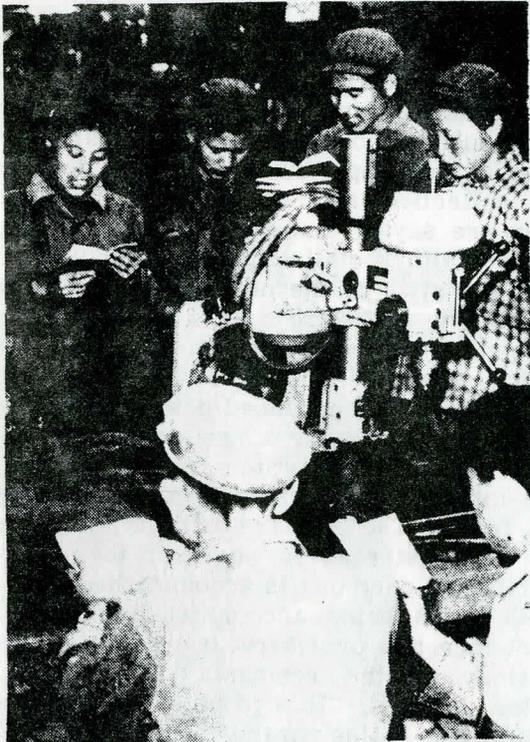
which was clearly set forth as the goal of the movement from the start is ignored and twisted. "Fanshen" shows how this principle works in practice. In Long Bow Village serious mistakes and even crimes were forgiven if the cadre in question resolved to reform and demonstrated this by concrete action. The same spirit prevails today and Mao has set as a goal uniting the vast majority of cadres and people to expose and replace a minority of opposition leaders who cannot be won over. "Rely on the working class, the poor and lower-middle peasants, the revolutionary cadres, the revolutionary intellectuals and other revolutionaries and pay attention to uniting more than 95 percent of the masses and more than 95 percent of the cadres, in order to wage tit-for-tat struggle against the capitalist and feudal forces which are wildly attacking us."

How defeated class forces can "wildly attack" after fundamental revolutionary transformation has been achieved is also illustrated by "Fanshen." What revolution creates at each stage are transitional forms of society fraught with contradictions and loaded with backward ideology and culture from the past. These generate old abuses under new conditions, prepare the way for reactionary restoration, and make repeated revolution from below necessary. Three years of power corrupted some of the young men and women revolutionaries in Long Bow seriously. All of them, including the best and most devoted, made mistakes. In less than forty months after the liberation of the village from Japanese and Kuomintang control serious rifts between leaders and led had developed, rifts that could be used by hostile class forces and even generated such forces. Certainly one should expect similar problems throughout China after 17 years of revolutionary power.

### **Socialism: Transitional Stage**

Many of the problems of the bourgeois-democratic period described in "Fanshen" arose from the primacy of private property after land reform. The system tended to generate individualism and an ideology of personal profit, especially among those who had received or still held enough means of production to think they could prosper on their own. It could be argued that after the collectivization of agriculture and the transformation of private industry in the mid-fifties, many of these contradictions and conflicts of interest among

people were resolved and with them many of the contradictions between leaders and led. Why then the continued growth of bureaucracy and privilege, the generation of new exploiters, new individualists against whom the people have been struggling in the Cultural Revolution? The answer, I think, lies in the fact that socialism, too, is a transitional stage; it is a process, not an accomplished fact. Socialism is unstable and it can either develop toward communism or degenerate backward toward capitalism, which in China's case means a re-



turn to semi-feudal, semi-colonial stagnation. Under socialism, classes have not yet been abolished and serious contradictions inherited from the past remain. Differences between mental and manual labor, city and country, peasant and worker, collective systems of production and individual systems of payment, etc., all generate class differences and with them individualism, privilege-seeking and bourgeois ideology. This happens spontaneously and within the framework of socialist society itself. A struggle between persons tainted with such an outlook and those devoted to the long-term equalitarian goals of the working class is endemic. If the revolutionaries do not consciously

organize and struggle against the capitalist roaders the latter are bound to win by default. This is a problem that socialists have never realistically faced in the past.

At an earlier stage and in a different context "Fanshen" makes the problem clear. Changing the relations of production—that is, expropriating the land of the landlords and distributing it among the peasants—important as that step was, could not by itself create a new society, even the transitional New Democratic society of politically and economically equal small holders. A conscious and protracted effort to transform ideology, culture, education and social custom had to accompany this major change in the relations of production before it could be consolidated. If this was true of New Democracy, where private property still predominated in the countryside, how much more so must it be true of socialism, a system which tries to break entirely away from private property, from oppressors and exploiters of all kinds, and pioneers a collective future? It took the bourgeoisie of Europe several centuries to break feudalism and consolidate bourgeois political power, ideology and culture. Restoration followed revolution and revolution restoration for decades. Remnants of feudalism and feudal right still remain to act as brakes on the free development of capitalism. It would be utopian to expect the working class to escape such difficulties in the consolidation of socialism.

This raises another aspect of revolutionary development today—the question of socialist man. Isaac Deutscher, for one, maintained that one should not expect socialist men to develop in societies still only on the threshold of abundance. In his view the selfless, cultured mental and physical laborer envisioned by Marx, could only appear on the world scene when socialism had produced materially rich, classless society where all the relations between men had been radically transformed. In essence, Deutscher said that men would only act unselfishly when there was no longer anything to be selfish about.

This is a form of mechanical materialism akin to Liu Shao-chi's "theory of the productive forces." It is a theory based on a one-to-one relationship between the means of production and the productive relations that form the base of any society and the institutions, politics, culture, education and ideology

that form its superstructure. It says that given a certain base, a certain superstructure will follow, that given a certain economic reform certain political and ideological reform will follow. In reality neither Marxism nor historical development are so simple. In the ceaseless change that human society undergoes sometimes the base is decisive, sometimes the superstructure. Society creates man and man creates society. Interaction between the two is complex and continuous. But one thing stands out as a lesson both from the Chinese Revolution as reported in "Fanshen" and from the Cultural Revolution of today—it takes advanced and selfless men and women to transform the world. It can be said that in the conditions of semi-feudal, semi-colonial China, only socialist men and women could carry through the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal revolution; only socialist men and women could transform this revolution into a socialist one; and only socialist men and women could carry this socialist stage to completion in the Cultural Revolution and beyond. By socialist men and women I mean men and women motivated by the working-class principle of "one for all and all for one." Men and women who put public interest above private interest.

The men and women who led the Chinese Revolution to success were individuals who had, to a great degree, burned the selfishness out of themselves. They demanded nothing for themselves but a chance to take part in the transformation of their country. They had to and did throw most of the "small calculations" of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie aside. They had to think and act as socialist men, advanced human beings of a new age, before they could even break the grip of feudalism and imperialism on China, not to mention building something new. Such men and women surprised and astounded their compatriots as Ch'un-hsi in Long Bow Village surprised his mother. He spent himself so recklessly on public work that his mother refused to cook for him, accusing him of neglecting his family and himself. But Ch'un-hsi was already living in the future. He already understood, or at least sensed, that the future lay with the collective and that his own interests could not be separated from the development of the Revolution. He didn't worry too much about where his next meal was coming from because he knew that as long as he served the people wholeheartedly he would live and live fully. Here, at least in energy, was

a true proletarian revolutionary, a socialist man in a mountain village.

Such men and women have appeared in great numbers at every stage of the Chinese revolution. As the revolution develops the rate of their appearance increases. This is one of the reasons why Mao and his supporters are challenging the whole material incentive system which has, up to now, been crucial to all societies since slavery. They are saying that a socialist society can't be built by pandering to the most selfish habits in men, by treating men and women as if their primary motive was individual greed. They are saying that to consolidate a socialist revolution one must rely, in the main, on moral incentives, on political consciousness, on an awareness shared by the mass of the people that their future depends on the collective and on collective production. They are saying that men and women already imbued with socialist morality should set the tone and style of the new society and draw the others, the backward ones, along in their wake instead of allowing the backward ones, the selfish to set the tone and style of life and drag the selfless and advanced down to their level.

This struggle for a new code of morality, the struggle to substitute public interest for self-interest, involves the whole population on two fronts. The primary battle is to overthrow the capitalist roaders wherever they hold authority, but once this is accomplished, and even while it is being accomplished each person must face and overthrow bourgeois and feudal ideology or the remnants of such ideology within himself. This double goal has been summed up in the phrase "Repudiate revisionism, oppose self-interest." Each individual is at once a subject and an object of the Cultural Revolution, hence the conviction that it "touches people to their very souls." That earlier stages of the revolution began this process is illustrated by "Fanshen." The Cultural Revolution, under conditions of socialism, has expanded it tremendously but it is not likely to be completed by this generation or the next. Mao Tse-tung has predicted a century or more of struggle to consolidate proletarian ideology and culture.

The broad attack on material incentives mounted by the Cultural Revolution has brought charges of utopianism from the Moscow-oriented "communist" movement the world over. Mao is accused of trying to leap stages, of trying to create a culture and a morality for

which no material base exists. China's answer has been that the old ideas, culture, customs and habits of the past, even those adopted from the Soviet Union, already stand in the way of productive forces generated by the socialist transformation of the Chinese economy carried out in the fifties, that there already exists a contradiction between base and superstructure that can only be resolved by creating a new superstructure. Only when "education, literature and art and all other parts of the superstructure not in correspondence with the socialist economic base" have been transformed can China's current potential be realized and her future potential assured.

Today's accusations resemble, in a new period and a new context, the old arguments against land reform in China advanced by



Hangchow City—Revolutionary Committee Seizes Power

American experts. China's problems in the forties were not social or political, I was told when I went to China as a relief technician, but technical. Her poverty was due to lack of fertilizer, lack of machinery, lack of insecticides, lack of medical care, etc. How could land reform solve any of these problems? Would there be any more land or any fewer people afterward than before? These experts did their best to obscure the fact that enormous latent

productive forces existed in China and that only revolution could unleash them. The labor power of hundreds of millions condemned to winter idleness by the landlord-tenant relation was but one segment of these forces. Land reform unleashed them all, as "Fanshen" shows, and within a few short years per-acre yields, the livelihood, the health and the outlook of the Chinese people took a great stride forward.

Each succeeding transformation of the relations of production—the cooperative movement in agriculture, the merging of craftsmen's shops, the buying-out of capitalist industry and the organization of rural communes released new potential. That this potential was obscured for a time by the setbacks of the early sixties does not alter the trend. The Cultural Revolution is sharply accelerating it. Already there are reports of remarkable gains in various plants and localities and such gains are spreading. One can predict with confidence that the experts who have been prophesying collapse will once again be confounded.

The key to the transformation of the superstructure in China today is mass study of Mao Tse-tung's writings. "Fanshen" shows the decisive role played by Mao at an earlier stage in the revolution and helps one to understand how he acquired the tremendous prestige that he enjoys today, a prestige that is not the end product of Madison Avenue-type image building, but of solid revolutionary accomplishment.

Mao's Shansi-Suiyuan report marked the turning point of the land reform movement in North China in 1948. All those who took part in the county conference at Luchang in June that year felt the tremendous impact of this speech. As work team members they had striven for months to solve the problems of the villages to which they had been assigned, but most of them felt that their work was stalemated for reasons that were still unclear. It seemed as if the main problem was popular apathy, a loss of interest by the peasants in the whole question of land reform, yet they were there to serve the peasants and had no other purpose in their work. Mao's speech cleared the air by revealing the heart of the problem—an unrealistic appraisal of the local situation and a wrong approach to the whole issue of land reform. When Mao pointed out that the destruction of feudalism was the overriding goal, not the immediate prosperity of every peasant family, the majority recognized almost at once that this was indeed the crux of the matter.

They felt a tremendous sense of relief and an equally tremendous sense of personal gratitude to Mao for having so clearly sliced the Gordian knot of their frustration and so clearly exposed the nature of the social reality of the time.

I know how the other cadres felt because, to the extent that I was involved in the work of the land reform team and desired its success, I felt the same emotion. It was as if Mao had struck a great rock from our backs. Suddenly we were able to stand up straight and scan the whole horizon, trace the winding road we had travelled and look up the straight highway we must now stride out on. Instead of rejecting us as incompetent bumbling, men incapable of effective work, Mao challenged us to undertake even greater work and to master the laws of social development as he had been able to do. It was a profoundly moving experience, which no one who lived through it could ever forget.

With this as background it is possible to appreciate how the rebel students of Peking University must have felt when, oppressed by Liu's work teams, confined to quarters and charged with counter-revolutionary double-dealing, they found that Mao stood with them, had himself put on the armband of a Red Guard fighter and urged them—the youth of China—“bombard the headquarters.” Clearly the students' great love and respect for Mao is based on his role as ally and liberator in such moments of critical and painful battle.

### Source of Mao Line

How is it that Mao Tse-tung has been able to grasp the essence of the problem at each moment of crisis while so many others have failed?

A clear-cut class stand, mastery of the dialectical method, a tremendous sense of that which is new and vital for the future, faith in people, courage—these are some of the elements that make Mao such an admired revolutionary leader. Individual genius is an important element in this, but it is not genius standing alone, but genius linked to a great mass movement that reaches into every street and hamlet of the most populous country in the world, extracting from the experience of millions of people in motion the lessons derived from their action. Mao's thought is the crystallization of the experience of the Chinese people through decades of revolution. It is also the application of Marxism-Leninism to the problems of China; that is, the application to China

of the extracted experience of all the revolutionary struggles of the working classes of the world as summed up in the writings of their leaders. The combination of these things provides a powerful tool for absorbing new experience and distilling its meaning. Mao has been able to develop and use this tool with mastery.

What land reform workers and with them millions of North China peasants felt and learned about Mao's leadership in 1948, what



millions of students felt and learned about Mao's leadership in 1966, hundreds of millions of workers, peasants, intellectuals and others have felt and learned about Mao's leadership through years of crisis and upheaval. Judging always from the long-range interests of the Chinese working class, which can never hope to liberate itself without liberating all other oppressed classes and strata in China, Mao has resolved one crisis after another and carried the revolution from stage to stage in a fantastic series of progressions where new contradictions continually replace the old only to be replaced in turn. This is the source of Mao's prestige and the reason why hundreds of millions respond to his words and directives in the Cultural Revolution with a fervor that is hard to appreciate or understand in the West.