CHAPTER-III

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE GREAT PROLETARIAN CULTURAL REVOLUTION AND TWO LINES OF THOUGHT

THE DEFINITION OF CULTURAL REVOLUTION

'Cultural Revolution' came into existence during the first few years following the October Revolution through the differentiation of the concept of revolution into political and economic revolution. Political revolution implies the suppression of the ruling bourgeoisie by the working class, while economic revolution means the elimination of private ownership of the means of production and hence the exploitation of one man by another. Both the concepts were supplemented by the concept of 'Cultural Revolution.'

From the outset the definition of 'Cultural Revolution' was a problem. In the first place neither Marx nor Engels had left to posterity anything more than mere allusions to this subject, so that varied theories could be developed without incurring the charge of heresy, especially as the party leaders were for the time being saddled with the problems of political and economic revolution. Secondly, 'Cultural Revolution' is bound to take a longer period to complete than the solving upheavals in the state and economy. Thus its course was scarcely predictable from the beginning and consequently its salient features and aims were prone to change.

Various theories on 'Cultural Revolution' were developed before Lenin's concept came into existence. It was only in 1960s when most of the tasks that Lenin had set for a 'Cultural Revolution' had been fulfilled that the question of determining its further development under the conditions of transition from socialism to communism that the subject again came under discussion in the erstwhile Soviet Union. On the other hand, the peoples’ democracies had adopted the concept of 'Cultural Revolution' in its Soviet connotation and after 1965 it acquired a new meaning in China denoting a sweeping political campaign initiated by Mao Tse-tung.
I. V.I. LENIN: According to Lenin's view the foundations for the 'Cultural Revolution' are already laid before the seizure of power by the proletariat, but its aims can only be achieved over a long period of time after the completion of political and economic revolution.\(^1\) It forms part of the transition from capitalism to socialism. In contrast to political and economic revolutions, the 'Cultural Revolution' is aimed at bringing about a fundamental alteration in man himself. In fact its chief concern is to develop a 'new man.'

The above objective is achieved by gradually raising the level of culture so that finally the quality of a new broadly based popular culture—socialist culture emerges in one leap.\(^2\) To make it more specific the 'Cultural Revolution' is to make education accessible to the broad masses, to raise the educational standard of the hitherto neglected groups i.e., peasants, women and national minorities to that of the other sections of the population. It is also to bring in a new socialist intelligentsia, and finally to create a new socialist culture.

Lenin regarded the elimination of illiteracy as the most urgent problem and a necessary condition for politics\(^3\) and for the building of socialism in Russia. Before 1917 over 70 per cent of the Russian population were illiterate, among rural population it was around 80 per cent, and for women it was around 93 percent and even higher for the non-Russian nationalities.\(^4\) Lenin himself devoted much of his time and energy to this task for he needed trained staff committed to Soviet cause.

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\(^1\) Maxim Kim, 'Cultural Revolution', *Soviet Life* (Federiskburg, Va), vol. 7, no. 154, July 1969, pp. 31, 35 and 36.

\(^2\) V.T. Ermakov, *The Historical Experience of the Cultural Revolution in the USSR* (Moscow, 1963), p. 34.


\(^4\) *Ibid.*, pp. 891-92; and also see Ermakov, n.2, p. 40.
for the administration and control of his new state. To accomplish this task the first recourse was to have the specialist of the old regime. Lenin wrote, “most of them do not sympathise with the Soviet power, yet without them we cannot build communism.”

But in order to neutralise the influence of these bourgeois experts, who still thought in terms of old categories, the right cadres had to be recruited from the vast reserves of population who were neglected and were in need of education. With respect to ‘Cultural Revolution’ the question arose as to how the past achievements in all the fields of science, literature, art etc. were to be praised. But Lenin recommended that everything which was of great value from the cultural heritage of the past has to be accepted for the new society. Lenin, asserting his conviction with the two cultures, the culture of the exploiters which is directed against the people and the democratic culture which is an expression of thoughts and feelings of the popular masses, said these were to be found in every society.

Following Lenin’s conviction, the People’s Commissariats for education adopted the same view and printed classics, erected monuments in honour of the classical Russian poets and opened many museums. However, Lenin did not give any precise information as to what form of culture was to be accepted. In his view, genuine works of art must be distinguished by ideological content and party mindedness and must be comprehensible to the broad masses. Lenin did not want to seek in the avant garde trends in art and literature of his age as elements for the

5 V.I. Lenin, Collected Works (Moscow, 1965), vol. 30, p. 147.


revolutionary culture; on the contrary he declared "for a start, we should be satisfied with real bourgeois culture."\(^8\)

The above mentioned views of Lenin were subordinated to his principal aim to educate man in the spirit of socialism and hence finally to bring forth the new man. Such a project was not possible without eliminating illiteracy, staffing all cultural fields with specialists trained in the new doctrine and appropriating rapidly the technical and scientific legacy of the old world. Lenin had brought about a revolution in a country in which his opponents rightly said that Soviet Russia was not sufficiently civilised or industrialised for the building of socialism. It therefore was his intention, to achieve development as quickly as possible in order to fulfil the pre-conditions after the actual event.\(^9\) The scope and extent of the problems to be solved and their significance did not enable Lenin to experiment during the 'Cultural Revolution' and hence instructed all his collaborators to act accordingly.

II. THE PROLETKUL'T: Lenin's conception of 'Cultural Revolution' met with opposition under the leadership of A.A. Bogdanov\(^10\) who formed an organisation before the 'October Revolution.' This organisation regarded itself as chiefly responsible for the problems of the 'Cultural Revolution' and called itself Proletkul't (abbreviation for proletariat\(a\) kul'tura--proletarian culture). It maintained a large number of studios and clubs where the working class was to create its own culture, and also attempted to propagate Bogdanov's ideas.

The Proletkul't aimed at creating initiative and cultural autonomy for the proletariat. In its studios the workers learned to write poetry, play instruments, 

\(^8\) V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works* (Moscow, 1966), vol. 33, p. 487.

\(^9\) *Ibid.*, pp. 476-79; and also see Gorbunov, n.6, p. 55.

\(^10\) A. A. Bogdanov is the Pseudonym (a fictitious name by an author to conceal his identity) for Malinovsky.
dramatics, etc. for which the Proletkul’t central organ provided guidance. Bogdanov and his associates visualised their ‘Cultural Revolution’ as quite different from that of Lenin’s. Their starting point was the concept of ‘class culture’ developed by Georgii Valentinovich Plekhanov, an outstanding orthodox Marxist. Their main problem was the form of culture the new proletarian culture should take, as opposed to the preceding bourgeois one. The Proletkul’t did not deny the importance of education to the people but in contrast to Lenin it considered the creation of new proletarian culture.

The advocates of Proletkul’t had pretty clear ideas about their culture and these were, to some extent, realised in practice in the studios. As the bearers of proletarian culture, the working class were to establish a cultural dictatorship. The essential features of this proletarian culture was ‘collectivism,’ ‘glorification of labour,’ ‘industrial technology,’ and ‘romantic utopian zeal.’ The theatre occupied a prominent position for the integration of all arts. Bogdanov’s doctrine of organisation was proclaimed as the integrating science of new culture, the principles of which were to be applied to all the individual disciplines. This doctrine was held to constitute a further development of Marxism and to be the scientific foundation of the post-revolutionary labour movement.

The difference between Lenin’s and Bogdanov’s conceptions of a future culture becomes obvious in the matter of ideological orientation. But there were other issues on which Bogdanov’s followers disagreed with Lenin. For example, they held that intellectual influences to be determined on principle, although they admitted that initial collaboration with the intellectuals who had joined the

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13 Carr. n.11, pp. 62-5.
14 Service, n. 12, p. 149.
15 Carr. n.11, pp. 68-70.
proletarian camp was necessary. They even regarded the influence of peasantry as undesirable. The members of the Proletkul't expressed conflicting opinions on certain ticklish question like how to treat the cultural heritage of the past. A majority of them called for a critical examination and acceptance of the finest achievements.

On the other hand, they also said that the past culture should be jettisoned as ballast, so that the proletarian culture could be established free of every pernicious influence from the ideological attitudes and concepts of value which had prevailed in former social systems. Lenin's criticism was centred on this radical standpoint, and later, as a result of his order, the Proletkul't lost its organisational independence in 1920. 16 As a result, Bogdanov was deprived of propagating his doctrine and after the introduction of New Economic Policy the Proletkul't's strength sank into insignificance and finally its studios were closed by 1932.

If the ideas of Proletkul't are analysed, at all events, it was instrumental in determining the outward aspects of the 'Cultural Revolution' in the initial post-revolutionary period. It transferred the concepts of the class struggle to the cultural sphere and opposed Lenin's socialist literature and art to a proletarian culture, to his demand for a socialist intelligentsia that of a proletarian intelligentsia, and to his goal of a socialist science that of a proletarian one.

To the followers of Proletkul't, 'Cultural Revolution' did not signify the education and training of the masses but their self-liberation through creative spontaneity. It is only the workers who, inspired by the rhythm of their machines and animated by the force of their collectiveness, write a poem which is comprehensible to themselves and their comrades, because it reflects their own world. There was however one point on which Lenin and the exponents of the Proletkul't agreed--both rejected all modernist movements and objected to the latter describing their art as proletarian.

III. A.V. LUNACHARSKY: Lunacharsky, who acted as the People's Commissar for Education, was responsible until 1929 for the implementation of the official version of the 'Cultural Revolution.' He has adopted a different attitude towards modern art. His conceptions of 'Cultural Revolution' deviated from Lenin's and in view of his position this was not without influence on its general development. But he being influenced by Lenin, nevertheless, constantly tried to carry out faithfully Lenin's instructions on cultural policy. He fully agreed with Lenin about the importance of educating the people, the correct attitude towards the cultural heritage of the past and the question of making use of the bourgeois intelligentsia.

Lunacharsky, the literary scholar and aesthete, won over the civil servants of the old regime to their new employers and inspired confidence in them by speaking in their language and understood their problems. He affirmed the positive role of the intelligentsia in building up the new culture, but only in so far as a profound spiritual affinity existed between such an intellectual and the masses.

Despite his fundamental agreement with Lenin, Lunacharsky was of a different opinion on various points. Firstly, like Bogdanov he believed that every class (i.e., proletariat) must create its own culture and he therefore welcomed any sign of a new development in this direction. Secondly, for a long time he upheld the ideas of the Proletkul't and in 1921 even risked losing Lenin's confidence when he intervened on behalf of that organisation in order to secure its continued independent existence. Thirdly, he placed the 'Cultural Revolution' before the economic revolution in order of precedence. Fourthly, he made a distinction between class culture and a socialist culture of the future, which he conceived as a universally human culture above and beyond the classes. He predicted that the proletariat would be in a position to build its own palaces and cities, to cover the vast expanses of wall

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with frescoes, to populate them with statues, to let them resound with new music, to perform massive plays in the squares of their cities in which spectators and actors will mingle in one celebration.

Lenin, who was more pragmatic than Bogdanov and Lunacharsky, wished to bring ‘Cultural Revolution’ primarily to consolidate Soviet powers and socialism in Russia, while Lunacharsky, the more Utopian wished to transform the entire world and mankind by means of the ‘Cultural Revolution.’

IV. LEON TROTSKY: The third conception of the ‘Cultural Revolution’ elaborated by Trotsky in the early 1920s exerted a theoretical influence rather than a practical one. Like Lenin and Lunacharsky, he stressed the importance of elementary education, the necessity of employing the old intelligentsia¹⁹ and the value of past achievements. But he criticised the doctrine of class culture. According to Trotsky the dictatorship of the proletariat was merely transitional, which would come to an end with the absorption of the proletariat and remaining classes into socialist society.

It is due to this transitional nature of dictatorship of the proletariat, Trotsky felt, that proletarian culture cannot be created, for it would be succeeded by the future culture of mankind.²⁰ Instead, during this period of transition, all forces should be concentrated on politics and Trotsky clearly distinguished between the ‘revolutionary art’ prevailing in this period,²¹ and the ‘socialist art’ of the later epoch, to which quite a different laws would apply.²² The art of the revolution was characterised by the class struggle and by the spirit of social hatred,²³ and although

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²⁰Ibid., pp. 291-93.

²¹For details see Ibid., pp. 447-53.


²³Ibid., p. 230.
there was a proletarian culture as such, the working class was nevertheless making its mark on culture.

Like Lenin, Trotsky rejected in this phase all experiments purporting to be manifestations of proletarian culture. Regarding the role of the party he said, "[t]he domain of art is not one in which the party is called upon to command. It can and must protect and help it, but it can only lead it indirectly."\(^{24}\) Until the classes are abolished the way to a socialist culture would not open, which would convert the growing quantity of culture into a new quality. Only then the 'Cultural Revolution' proper would take place. Sentiments such as "disinterested friendship, love for one's neighbour, sympathy, will be the mighty ringing chords of socialist poetry,"\(^ {25}\) and the class struggle will be replaced by a rivalry of ideas between various artistic trends and tastes. On the top of this, according to Trotsky, the separation of art and industry will vanish. Man will shape his environment artistically and will devote himself to 'working out the ideal form of a thing, as a thing', and not to the 'embellishment of the thing.'\(^ {26}\) And at the same time, the separation of art and nature will also disappear in favour of a synthesis at a higher level. Man will subject nature to his art (i.e., to technology) to an unknown extent and Trotsky envisaged "people's palaces on the peaks of Mount Blanc and at the bottom of the Atlantic."\(^ {27}\) Finally, man will modify the natural laws governing him "[t]he human species, the coagulated Homo Sapiens, will once more enter into a state of radical transformation and, in his own hands, will become an object of the most complicated methods of artificial election and psycho-physical training."\(^ {28}\)

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\(^{24}\) Ibid., p. 218.

\(^{25}\) Ibid., p. 230.

\(^{26}\) Ibid., p. 250.

\(^{27}\) Ibid., p. 254.

\(^{28}\) Ibid.
Trotsky's vision of the future culture appears in this respect to be rooted in the same tradition as Lunacharsky's, and like the latter he deviates on this point from Lenin's version of the 'Cultural Revolution.' Trotsky, while defining the primary objective of the 'Cultural Revolution,' also mentions about the future in the context of 'October Revolution' which merely ushered in a transitional phase. His expectations were also based for a much longer and more pronounced degree on the self-evident nature of the coming world revolution than were Lenin's.

**THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION IN THE PERIOD OF TRANSITION FROM SOCIALISM TO COMMUNISM**

For a considerable length of time there was no disagreement about the phases of development of the 'Cultural Revolution' in the Soviet Union. In the first few years after the October Revolution it succeeded in integrating the intellectuals of the old regime into the new system and in laying the foundations for the education of a new elite. The advent of New Economic Policy impeded its further development for the time being, while a large number of cultural associations of all hues continued to flourish. It was only from 1928 onwards the party again paid more attention to cultural affairs when a purge of all capitalist elements was undertaken. But more aspects of Lenin's 'Cultural Revolution' came to be realised in the 1930's.

Until 1960 it was held that the 'Cultural Revolution' had been completed at the end of 1930's. But then the thesis of a second 'Cultural Revolution' gained ground amongst Soviet historians and philosophers. It was viewed either as a direct continuation of the first 'Cultural Revolution' or as its counterpart in the stage of fully developed socialism. At all events it was to furnish the preconditions for the final triumph of communism in the cultural sphere. The new 'Cultural Revolution' was imbibed with the functions to achieve a surplus of all intellectual products for the entire Soviet people; to form a highly cultivated man with an all round and

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29 Vernadsky, n.18, pp. 418-19.

30 Ermakov, n.2, p. 115.
culturally harmonious education; to nurture in all members of society a socialist consciousness and socialist morality; to overcome the difference in the level of culture between town and country and finally to pave the way for the fundamental elimination of the distinction between physical and mental work. This concluding stage of 'Cultural Revolution' was destined to be completed by 1980.

The majority of Soviet authors have, in the meantime, adopted this new periodisation with the aid of Lenin's concept, which was related largely to the problems of his day, and to render it applicable to the present. There was, however, a group led by V.T. Ermakov which abided by the original conception and raised objections, amongst others, to a new idea that the tasks set forth for the second 'Cultural Revolution' are either still part of the functions of the first or belonged to the general context of building communism. The outcome of this has gone into a rough weather due to the break-up of Soviet Union.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE GREAT PROLETARIAN CULTURAL REVOLUTION

MAO TSE-TUNG'S THEORETICAL PREMISES OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

Before we go into the theoretical foundations of the Great Proletarian 'Cultural Revolution' (GPCR), it is all the more important for us to have a brief idea about the ideological premises of Mao Tse-tung. In his treatise "On New Democracy" Mao described in detail what he understood by 'culture,' on the one hand and 'Cultural Revolution,' on the other. He said "a given culture is the ideological reflection of the politics and economics of a given society."31 As per this classification the mechanism of interplay between the base and superstructure also operates in culture.

In 1940, Mao regarded, in the context of China, that the revolutionary cultural forces had to fight against the old culture that has two elements, namely the relics of feudal culture and the adopted traditions of imperialist culture. According to him the suppression of old era by a new and more progressive one is accompanied by a 'Cultural Revolution.' With respect to the expansion of industrial capitalist economic forms and ways of life at the global level, he speaks of a capitalist 'Cultural Revolution' of the world bourgeoisie.\(^32\) Depending upon this interconnection of new economic forms and way of life with new forms of culture in this sense, Mao argues that alongside its socialist economy and politics the socialist society will also have a socialist culture.

Mao says during the revolutionary transitional phase the 'Cultural Revolution' takes place, and as a result a socialist culture is born. A 'Cultural Revolution' is the ideological reflection of the political and economic revolution and is in their service.\(^33\) Thus, the 'Cultural Revolution' is assigned great socio-political significance. Mao asserted that the old and the new culture are "looked in a life and death struggle."\(^34\) He views no revolution whatsoever is complete unless it entails a 'Cultural Revolution.' Thus, for Mao the history of revolution and the history of the 'Cultural Revolution' are indissolubly tied up with each other. Mao divides the period since the Opium Wars into two phases of 'Cultural Revolution,' the first one which he describes as the phase of old democracy lasted till the 'May 4th movement of 1919,' and the second phase, which he classifies as that of new democracy, having four principle divisions, started from 1919 onwards.\(^35\)

To execute the 'Cultural Revolution' three factors must be given special emphasis, namely the best traditions of one's own national culture should be

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32 Ibid., p. 372.
33 Ibid., p. 373.
34 Ibid., p. 369.
35 Ibid., pp. 373-78.
nurtured; the examples of other nations should be learned; cultural changes should not be brought with any haste by means of directives, instead they should rest on the masses. Now, in order to take account of these three factors in line with Marxism-Leninism, one must be aware of the objectives of 'Cultural Revolution.' It consists in building a new socialist culture. But "imperialist culture and semi-feudal culture are devoted brothers and have formed a reactionary cultural alliance against China’s new culture. This kind of reactionary culture serves the imperialists and the feudal classes and, therefore, must be swept away, to build a new culture of any kind."36

Thus, the sweeping away of reactionary culture is a radical venture in that it effects the ideology of feudalism and imperialism. "To study the development of this old culture, to reject its feudal dross and assimilate its democratic essence is a necessary condition for developing our new national culture and increasing our national self-confidence; but we should never swallow anything and everything uncritically," Mao wrote.37 If this sovereignty of discrimination is taken for granted, then, Mao was prepared to concede that a magnificent culture was created in feudal China. By using the same distinction he can as well say that "to nourish her own culture China needs to assimilate a good deal of foreign progressive culture...for example...the culture of the various capitalist countries in the Age of Enlightenment."38

The above proposition was nevertheless coupled with a displeased attitude towards those who glorified and upheld the 'wholesale westernization' of China.39 But Mao expressed his strict opposition to this slogan of Chinese intellectuals by declaring "we should assimilate whatever is useful to us today..., [However], we should not gulp any of this foreign material down uncritically, but must treat it as we

36 Ibid., p. 369.
37 Ibid., p. 381.
38 Ibid., p. 380.
39 Ibid.
do our food—first chewing it, then submitting it to the working of the stomach and intestines with their juices and secretions, and separating it into nutriment to be absorbed and waste matter to be discarded before it can nourish us.\textsuperscript{40}

Mao, while warming about the harmful effects of mechanical absorption of foreign culture on China, with recourse to the above definition of ‘culture,’ adds a crucial and unprecedented injunction saying that the same applied to the adoption of Marxism in China. But if we analyse, the application of Marxism to Russian conditions has given way for certain analogies with respect to the export of ideologies. The adoption of Marxism in China nevertheless meant that the European culture rooted in antiquity and religion like Christianity has transcended for the first time. Besides, due to the qualification made from the start, Marxism is also forgotten, the term ‘Cultural Revolution,’ as it was used by Mao acquires a special significance which it has never had in Soviet usage. His rejection of the slogan of ‘wholesale westernization’\textsuperscript{41} is to condemn extreme left wing party intellectuals who felt that the correct tactical course for the Chinese communists lay in initiating the methods of European revolutionaries.

Mao, arguing on the concept of wholesale westernization, said, “[t]o advocate westernization is wrong, China has suffered a great deal from the mechanical absorption of foreign material. Similarly, in applying Marxism to China, Chinese communists must fully and properly integrate the universal truth of Marxism with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution. In no circumstances can it be applied subjectively as a mere formula.”\textsuperscript{42} He further added, “Marxist who make a fetish of formulas are simply playing the fool with Marxism and the Chinese revolution and there is no room for them in the ranks of the Chinese revolution.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
Chinese culture should have its own form, its own national form. National in form and new democratic in content, such is our new culture today.\[^{43}\]

Mao has seen in Chinese tradition a condition necessitating the adoption of Marxism with which he sought to comply. And this was not an ordinary thing because he had proved to be the only leader in the CCP who has succeeded in evolving a Chinese alternative to the European revolutionary tactics, which he considered to be turning out wrongly for China. In fact, Mao upheld the necessity of taking into account the Chinese conditions with reference to revolutionary methods and industrialisation. For Mao, it is important to "use our heads and learn those things which suit conditions in our country"\[^{44}\] than to depend for aid and initiate Soviet models. Next to Mao's treatise 'On New of Democracy,' the 'Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People,' is considered to be the most important of his writings on the theoretical ground work for the 'Cultural Revolution.'

In his treatise of "The Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People," Mao deals with contradictions arising from a completely new kind of tradition from the communist tradition developing over the years in China. It was apparent, as Mao says, that a number of people regarded the achievements of communists as absolute values. This means that as a leadership communism was losing its flexibility. Party leadership who leaned towards bureaucratic rigidity were quoting decisions from the past as arguments for or against decisions in the present situation which was quite different. He said "some people do not understand that our present policy fits the present situation and our past policy fitted the past situation."\[^{45}\] Hence ideological education was needed in order to arrive at a uniform conception on the part of the party leadership and in party rank and file.

\[^{43}\] Ibid.

\[^{44}\] Mao Tse-tung "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People", Selected Works (Beijing, 1961), vol.V, p. 27.

\[^{45}\] Ibid., p. 11.
At the same time, Mao gave no room for coercion because compulsion and dictatorship are geared up against the enemy. Contradictions among the people can be resolved by means of persuasion according to the motto "unity criticism unity," which proved its worth in various historical situations. And the same slogan was applicable today at a time when erroneous ideas had spread amongst certain party leaders, intellectuals, peasants and workers. He argued "will it do to ban such ideas and give them no opportunity to express themselves? Certainly not. It is not only futile but very harmful to use crude and summary methods to deal with ideological questions among the people. With questions relating to the spiritual life of man, you may ban the expression of wrong ideas, but the ideas will still be there."

Mao further says, as these ideas already rest in part on a Marxist substructure because they are fostered by reference to earlier party work and experience, ideological education must also include criticism of all those in the past that was inconsistent in Marxist terms. To quote him, in this context he said "people may ask since Marxism is accepted by the majority of the people in our country as the guiding ideology, can it be criticised? Certainly it can. As a scientific truth, Marxism fears no criticism. If it did, and could be defeated in argument, it would be worthless."  

Mao, while giving his reasoning in this vein, visualised that a campaign of criticism would also lead to a considerable unrest. But, as it would be a small groups which would cause unrest, it can be unable to have its course. Mao says, "when disturbances do occur they force us to learn lesson from them, to overcome bureaucracy and educate the cadres and the people." His rigidity of ideology and

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46 Ibid., p. 6.
47 Ibid., p. 20
48 Ibid.
49 Ibid., p. 24.
practice were attributed to bureaucracy, and at the same time he felt that the leading forces must be tackled in order to overcome them, for it effects both the cadres and the people.

Mao further felt, the course of campaign of criticism would lead to disturbances which was a bad trend for, they are started by small groups. The entire nation would be effected, which would be a case of revolutionary activity. In the final analyses, he feels that this would be a good development, for it would be directed against the class enemy. The elimination of contradictions among the people was not a dispute with the enemy. But this conflict had to be settled in a peaceful manner even if unrest prevails. Thus, in this sense, bad things can be turned into good things. Disturbances, thus, have a dual character. All kinds of disturbances can be looked at in this way.\(^5^0\)

It is worthy of note that Mao interpreted unrest not only with respect to the dissatisfaction amongst the intellectuals but also to all kinds of unrest like the question of troubling the West and the Soviet Union of the possibility of a third world war i.e., the chief subject of the Sino-Soviet dispute.\(^5^1\) Mao’s subject of ‘Cultural Revolution,’ which he expounded in 1940, can be applied for hypothesis of unrest to the subsequent campaigns like that of “Great Leap Forward,” and the “People’s Communes Movement.” Though both the campaigns were not successful ventures, they fulfilled the conditions in theory of permanent revolution.\(^5^2\)

The failure of the above campaigns exposed an interesting situation where Mao’s critics within the party believed that the substance and aims of the campaigns had been misconceived. But Mao, on the other hand, insisted that the fact was to the

\(^{50}\) Ibid.

\(^{51}\) Ibid.

The aims had been good and clear but the campaigns had been wrongly implemented bureaucratically, devoid of ideas, and with a lack of interest on the part of the cadres, and hence irresponsibility. In Mao's opinion, the bureaucrats of the party have to be purged for they were responsible thrice in re-educating the urban population. Now the only alternative on which he could depend was the army. Thus, he made Lin Piao the head of the army, who organised the training of cadres for the process of re-education which was to bring about the integration of the urban population. The theoretical framework for the 'Cultural Revolution' was derived from the above mentioned analysis. It was to these issues that the propaganda articles of the GPCR were referred during mid-1966.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE GREAT PROLETARIAN CULTURAL REVOLUTION AND TWO LINES OF THOUGHT

The GPCR can be viewed as a form of rectification campaign carried out in China after the second world war. But the GPCR was different from the previous rectification campaigns. The difference was in its content, its scope and its aims. The content of the GPCR, as it was already mentioned, was culture. But the movement attained social, political and economic dimensions which were in consistence with Maoist organic view of society.

In a broader sense, culture is an expression of a particular class. With the emergence of bourgeois class, to eliminate it, one has to eliminate its culture. Class struggle is at the root of cultural struggle. The scope of the GPCR was determined by the scope of the lurking enemy which was bourgeois super-structure; it took different forms at different levels. At the societal level, it was the 'Four Olds,' i.e; old ideas, old culture, old customs and old habits. At the governmental level, it was the 'bureaucratic elite,' at the party level it was the 'capitalist roaders.' As their

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functions overlapped at the governmental and party level, the attack on an individual in the party had repercussions at both the levels.

Mao had realised that the Chinese people were going astray. Traditional customs had bound Chinese masses despite inculcating revolutionary proletarian culture for two decades. Hence Mao felt that the Chinese society needed a through shake up for which the party was the only weapon to deliver the desired goods. But the members of the party in the top echelons became revisionist and Mao set the task to correct them. Speaking at the Tenth Plenum of the Eight Central Committee in 1962, he said “Anyone willing to overthrow a political regime must create public opinion and do some preparatory ideological work.”

The political temperature in the party was not that good with Mao since 1956, which was not new to the CCP. Mao was not totally baffled by criticism of the party by the intellectuals during the ‘Hundred Flowers Campaign.’ In fact, Mao said: “the intellectuals often tend to be subjective and individualistic, impractical in their thinking and irresolute in action until they have thrown themselves heart and soul into mass revolutionary struggles or made up their minds to serve the interests of the masses and become one with them. Though the revolutionary intellectuals in China can play a vanguard role not all of them will remain revolutionaries to the end. Some will drop out of the revolutionary ranks at critical moments and become passive, while a few may even become enemies of the revolution. The intellectuals can overcome their short comings only in mass struggles over a long period.” And Mao was also unmoved by the criticism of Peng Te-huai, or for the rupture in Sino-Soviet relations nor for the failure of Great Leap Forward.

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The above said factors in fact had sobered down the pace of Mao's leap towards socialism. In fact he once happened to have said that "the Chinese communist views conceal their political views, the future programme is to carry China to socialism and communism. Both the party and Marxist world outlook unequivocally point to this supreme ideal of the future, a future of incomparable brightness and splendour." 56 The existing disagreements among the party members were revealed by Mao in the Tenth Plenum of the Central Committee in September 1962. This speech of Mao explicitly stated many of the themes which were to culminate in the GPCR. On this occasion Mao summed up the conclusions which had been reached in the course of his informal discussions among the top leadership at 'Peitaiho,' and later at Peking, which he wished to be embodied in the decisions of the Plenary session which was about to begin.

At ‘Peitaiho’ Mao raised three problems: ‘those of class, the situation, and contradictions.’ He discussed all the three problems in the international as well as the Chinese context. The agreement or disagreement on these three issues was of course the ultimate thing that decided the fate of the revolution or the dissenter. Though it is difficult to restrict the ideological issues of the GPCR, they can be classified as:

(1) The concept of contradiction in a Socialist Society;
(2) The concept of Base and Super-Structure;
(3) The concept of Democratic Centralism;
(4) The inter-relationship between the Party, Army and the Masses.

These four major ideological issues of the GPCR. shall be dwelt in detail with their corresponding perspective of Mao Tse tung's thought.

(1) THE CONCEPT OF CONTRADICTIONS IN A SOCIALIST SOCIETY

"Contradiction and struggle are universal and absolute, but the methods of resolving contradictions, that is, the forms of struggle, differ according to the differences in the nature of the contradictions. Some contradictions are characterised

by open antagonism, other are not. In accordance with the concrete development of things, some contradictions which were originally non-antagonistic develop into antagonistic ones, while others which were originally antagonistic develop into non-antagonistic ones. In fact, Mao, as early as April 1956, declared that “contradictions are everywhere in the world; without contradictions there would be no world. Later, at ‘Changsha,’ he further upheld that “[i]f there were no contradiction and no struggle, there would be no world, no progress, no life, there would be nothing at all.”

By looking at the very concept itself it may appear heretical to speak of contradictions in a socialist society. But Mao did this with a supreme grasp of Marxism and Leninism. For an exposition of this concept we may rely on two major pronouncements of Mao. Firstly, “On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat” and secondly, “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People.” Though Mao delivered his views on two different occasions with two different objectives, he finally conveyed the same theme.

The concept “On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat” was a response of the Chinese Communist Party to the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of Soviet Union, in which ‘Khrushchev’ inaugurated the de-Stalinisation campaign. This essay, providing a doctrinal orientation to the revelations of ‘Khrushchev,’ was meant to explain theoretically the emergence of leaders like Stalin. The theory of contradictions which was its doctrinal underpinning was to explain the genesis of Stalin’s mistakes.

57 Stuart R. Schram, Authority Participation and Cultural Change in China (Cambridge, 1973), p. 72
59 Ibid., p.108
The following major doctrinal theme was enunciated in this essay and it bore the imprint of Mao: it is naive to assume that contradictions no longer exist in a socialist society. To deny the existence of contradictions is to deny dialectics. The contradictions in various societies differ in character as do the form of their solution. But society at all times develops amidst continual contradictions between productive forces and the relations of production. 60

The above formulation being Maoist there was to be a dissenting note on this theme in the Eighth National Congress of CCP held in September 1956. In the same year, Liu Shao-ch’i, in his political report, had conspicuously played down this line, and diametrically opposed Mao, which the latter opposed. 61 Liu Shao-ch’i declared “[a] decisive victory has already been won in this socialist transformation. This means that contradictions between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in our country [have] been basically resolved, that the history of the system of class exploitation, which lasted for several thousand years in our country, has on the whole been brought to an end, and that the social system of socialism has in the main, been established in China... 62

Liu further added that “the major contradiction in our country is already that between the people’s demand for the building of an advanced industrial country and the realities of a backward agricultural country, between the people’s need for rapid economic and cultural development and the inability of our present economy and culture to meet that need. 63 Liu felt that as the socialist system has already been established in China, this contradiction, in essence, is between the advanced socialist

60 "On the Historical Experience of Dictatorship of the Proletariat", *Peoples China* (Peking), no. 8, 16 April 1956, p. 8.


system and the backward productive forces of society. Hence Liu said "the chief task now facing the party and the people is to concentrate all efforts on resolving this contradiction and transforming China as quickly as possible from a backward agricultural country into a advanced industrial one." 64

Mao, not knowing that the concept of "On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" has been driven home, repeated the same theme in his speech on the same concept, a few months after Liu Shao-ch' i's speech at the Eighth Congress of the CCP. In his speech on 27 February 1957 Mao said, "The basic contradiction[s] in socialist society are still those between the relations of production and the productive forces, and between the super structure and the economic base...Socialist relations of production have been established and are in harmony with the growth of the productive forces, but they are still far from perfect, and their imperfection stands in contradiction to the development of the productive forces ..." 65

Mao further added that "survival of bourgeoisie ideology, bureaucratic ideology, bureaucratic ways of doing things in our state organs and flaws in certain links of our state institutions stand in contrast to the economic base of socialism." 66

Thus, Mao and Liu Shao-ch' i had underlined different 'contradictions' as basics. For Liu it was the advanced socialist system versus 'the backward forces of production.' But for Mao it was the 'relations of production,' versus the 'productive forces.' Secondly, Liu Shao-ch' i regarded the base or the said productive forces as backward. But Mao regarded the superstructure or the relations of production as backward and not the base. The base had become socialist but the super-structure remained bourgeois.

64 Ibid.,pp.116-17
66 Ibid.
At the Tenth Plenum in 1962, Mao raised the same theme asking, "Do classes exist in socialist countries? Does class struggle exist? and answered positively. We can now affirm that classes do exist in socialist countries and that class struggle undoubtedly exists."\(^{67}\) To quote Mao, he said, "Classes struggle, some classes triumph, others are eliminated. Such is history, such is the history of civilisation for thousands of years. To interpret history from this view point is historical materialism; standing in opposition to this view point is historical idealism.\(^ {68}\)"

While delivering the same speech, Mao said that Liu's formulation was an error and it had to be rectified. He said, "To tackle the problem of revisionism within the country and within the party and the problem of bourgeoisie we should adhere to former policies without changing them."\(^ {69}\) He further asserted that by leaving aside the errors committed by a comrade we should follow the line of the rectification campaign of 1942-45.\(^ {70}\) Thus, the pace of events and the number of critics overtook Mao. In the days to come the task at hand was to transform this mild rectification campaign into 'Cultural Revolution' of 1966-1976.

(2) BASE AND SUPERSTRUCTURE

The relationship between the base and the super-structure is one of the crucial relationships to any Marxian analyst and successful policies can not be expected unless and until a proper and accurate perception of this relationship is made. "The base is a system's economic foundation. The base of capitalism is personal property in the means of production, which yields rentier income and gives

\(^{67}\) Schram. n. 54, p. 189.


\(^{69}\) Schram. n. 54, p. 192.

\(^{70}\) Ibid., p. 193.
private enterprises control over economic development.”71 In the same language “the base of socialism is state ownership and control of industry.”72

Coming to the Super-structure, “it is a pattern of institutions, organisations, chains of authority, traditions and habits of thought which grow up in society. In equality in consumption, the love of rank, status and power, untrammelled individualism and a social hierarchy based on wealth belong to the bourgeois super-structure of capitalism, the super-structure of proletarian socialism requires acquisitiveness to be replaced by a spirit of service.”73 Now to examine the Maoist relationship between the base and super-structure, we have to examine the relationship between economic development, the development of political consciousness, the transformation of social institutions and cultural change, for Mao's economic strategies cannot be separated from the social and political values which almost complement to each other. This organic schemata can be presented as follows:

(i) Any successful increase of wealth will either serve the interests of the majority, or serve to increase minority privileges until a class system is reasserted;
(ii) Each of these two trends will express itself in the form of appropriate laws and institutions;
(iii) Each will also express itself in a characteristic allocation of resources tending to confirm the prevailing trend;
(iv) Each will also have its intellectual expression in characteristic art, literature and education.74

72 Ibid.
73 Ibid., p. 12.
This above schemata is of utmost value in describing the ‘Great Leap Forward’ developments leading to GPCR. Following the inaccurate perception of the political life of the state by Liu Shao-ch’i, after he became the Chairman in 1959, he went ahead with his own model of economic development. But it is to be noted that his model of development was in contrast to the original Great Leap Forward model and also to the themes enunciated in the correct handling of contradictions among the people which provided the text for the Great Leap model. Mao had perceived the relations of production and the productive forces in a contradictory manner, and hence he had insisted that it was the relations of production which needed transformation. He declared that it is the revisionist ideology which was hindering the development of the base. As the super-structure was obstructing the development of the economic base, Mao felt that the policy of liberalisation of Liu Shao-ch’i had not only reduced political education of experts and intellectuals but also created an atmosphere where the intellectuals started criticising Mao’s policies through satirical plays.

Contrary to Mao’s stress on class struggle during the Tenth Plenary Session of the Central Committee, a movement was initiated to promote traditional culture and revisionism under the leadership of Chou Yang Hsia Yen and Teng To.’ All of them held powerful posts in the propaganda and cultural ministries. The objective was to unify the people through the appeal of common historical sentiments and nationalist pride, thereby mitigating class conflicts and enhancing internal peace. The three ministers proposed to reaffirm the traditional ‘moral heritage’ as a support for the social order. Added to this, they intended to use traditional culture as a unifying influence to nullify class struggle in the same general period as the new theme of unity in philosophy against the Marxian concept of class contradiction, in an intellectual attempt to negate the basic justification for class struggle.

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76 Ibid., p. 521.
For Mao, the view to promote traditional culture has the effect of diluting the revolutionary spirit and crowding out revolutionary content from literature and art. Instead, he wanted a revolutionary culture which was a powerful revolutionary weapon for the broad masses of people. It prepares the ground ideologically before the onset of the revolution and is an important, indeed essential, fighting front in general revolutionary front during the revolution.\textsuperscript{77} In Mao's view the corruption at the super-structure level was complete and bourgeoisie culture was elbowing out proletarian culture. To be true to the revolutionary line, culture must have only a single purpose, the reflection of the struggle of workers, peasants and soldiers for the socialist revolution and socialist construction.\textsuperscript{78}

Thus, Mao, while commenting on Art and Literature, said, "The social and economic base has already changed, but the arts as part of the superstructure which serve this base, still remain a great problem today. Hence we should proceed with investigation and study and attend to this matter in earnest.\textsuperscript{79} While criticising other communists on this issue he said "it is absurd that many communists are enthusiastic about promoting feudal and capitalist art but not socialist art."\textsuperscript{80} Expressing views on literature and art at Yenan Forum in 1942, Mao said, "Our purpose was to ensure that literature and art fit well into the whole revolutionary machine as a component part, that they operate as powerful weapons for uniting and educating the people and for attacking and destroying the enemy, and that they help the people fight the enemy with one heart and one mind."\textsuperscript{81}

\textsuperscript{77} Mao Tse-tung, n.31, p.382.
\textsuperscript{78} Yang, n.75, p.521.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., p. 24.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{81} Mao Tse-tung "Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art," Selected Works (Beijing, 1961), vol. III, p. 70.
Thus, with his ideas on super-structure he proceeded to investigate the corrupt elements in super-structure and finally discovered the same in the highest echelons of his own party. Hence with a view to rectify, he ventured to attack at the super-structure itself by establishing revolutionary ideology to counter the revisionist ideology in the party.

(3) **DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM**

For Lenin, ‘Democratic Centralism’ meant freedom of discussion, but once the decisions were made after consultation with the rank and file, it had to be accepted absolutely. In fact, it is an absolute obedience of lower organs to higher organs to the decisions which are made after free discussion. About higher organs, Lenin felt so because the revolutionary movement was stratified. And the top leaders should be men of good talent as if they are born by the dozens, and not by the hundreds.82 These leaders would guide the intellectuals, who in turn would inculcate the proletarian consciousness among the workers and set up the party.

The workers of the party whom Lenin prefers to call as non-commissioned officers would transmit leaders’ ideas and orders to rural population and society as a whole. This particular opinion of Lenin was not new. It was Marx who spoke of ‘rural idiocy’.83 Later, he spoke of the ‘town working men’ as the ‘natural trustees’ of the ‘rural producers’.84 If Lenin’s view is analysed it is not far from truth, he wanted the leaders to secure the support of the masses for ‘their policies’. Besides, this, the element of democracy in the decision making was solely restricted to the party. Thus this nature and limits of such a give and take between the upper and


83 Schram, n. 57, p. 28.

lower levels of the party were summed up in the concept of ‘democratic centralism.’

This Leninist device of ‘democratic centralism’ has become a crucial principle of leadership to the CCP. This principle has also led to the creative innovations in the hands of Mao. The Leninist explanation of the term meant that within the party the decision making process is democratic, where the minority is subordinate to the majority, the lower levels to the higher levels, the party to the entire membership of the central committee. Basic to an understanding of ‘democratic centralism’ is Mao’s concept of ‘mass line.’ For Mao, this ‘mass line’ is “the people, and the people above, are the motive force in the making of world history.” In one of Mao’s directives, in 1943, on ‘mass line’ he declared that “all correct leadership is necessarily from the masses to the masses.” Here he mean to take the ideas of the masses which are scattered and systematic and to concentrate on them by studying and to turn them into concrete and systematic ideas. Later, he argued that the leadership should “go to the masses and propagate and explain the said ideas until the masses embrace as their own, hold fast to them and translate them into action and test the correctness of these ideas in such action.”

Mao further said that 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.” Thus, it is explicitly clear that Mao’s formulation of the problem of leadership in organisational terms in the concept of democratic centralism was placed in the perspective by the concept of the

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85 Schram, n. 57, p. 28.
86 Mao Tse-tung, n. 56, p. 257.
88 Ibid.
The term 'democratic centralism' is made to cover both the fundamental dilemma of leadership as such, namely that of combining effective 'centralised unification' with active support and initiative from below, and the problems of the upward and downward flow of ideas evoked by the slogan of the 'mass line.'

Added to this, though the priority is given in principle to centralism, it is the democratic aspect which really comes alive.

The Maoist assertive view on 'democratic centralism' came in his speech 'On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People' when he extended what was basically an intra-party principle to the relations between the leaders and the led and to the society as a whole. Later, in his speech to an Enlarged Central Work Conference of 7,000 cadres in 1962, Mao drew the two strands together in a broader definition of the concept of 'democratic centralism' itself. Mao said, "Both inside and outside the party there must be a full democratic life, which means conscientiously putting democratic centralism into effect." Later, Mao further added, "We must bring about a political climate which has both centralism and democracy, discipline and freedom, unity of purpose and ease of mind for the individual and which is lively and vigorous, we should have this political climate both within the party and outside. Without this political climate the enthusiasm of the masses cannot be mobilised. We cannot overcome difficulties without democracy of course, it is even more impossible to do so without centralism, but if there is no democracy there won't be any centralism."
It is to be noted that the concept 'democratic centralism' is made to cover both the fundamental dilemma of leadership, namely that of combining effective 'centralised unification' with active support and initiative from below, and the problems of the upward and downward flow of ideas evoked by the concept of 'mass line'. In the aforesaid theme, centralism is made conditional to the existence of democracy to choose between the two.

If Liu Shao-ch'i's interpretation of 'democratic centralism' is compared with that of Mao's, there is not much of difference. Liu stressed on the organisational and disciplinary self-cultivation, the centralist component, like Mao. Growing logically out of this difference in basic approach is a greater emphasis on Liu's part on the need for organisation and centralised guidelines. But for Mao these contradictions are to be held in a creative tension and any view which is contrary to this basic truth is not dialectical and hence erroneous. Any policies based on such an undialectical view are bound to be a failure.

Another aspect on which Liu Shao-ch'i and Mao differ in emphasis was in their 7,000-cadre speech in January 1962. In the post-Great Leap Forward campaign, Liu pointed out that the economic difficulties encountered during the Great Leap Forward were 30 per cent the fault of the nature and 70 per cent the fault of men. Liu further added that general line is to be incomplete and should be spelled out by adding the words "stimulate the subjective capacities of the masses" in full measure, under the centralised and united leadership of the CCP. The Great

96 Schram, n. 57, p. 31.
98 Schram, n. 57, p. 36.
99 For further details see Collective Works of Liu Shao-ch'i:1958-67, n. 61, pp.18-19, and also see Schram, n. 54, p. 70.
Leap was carried out too speedily and the equilibrium was destroyed, so that after three years of leaping, it will take eight to ten years from the present to put things in order.  

For Mao, discipline was necessary. At the same time, he emphasised the importance of democracy as a means to achieve the end of 'centralised unification.' He said, "Within the ranks of the people, democracy is co-relative with centralism and freedom with discipline. They are the two opposites of a single entity, contradictory as well as united, and we should not one-sidedly emphasise one to the denial of the other. Within the ranks of the people, we cannot do without freedom, nor can we do without discipline; we can not do without democracy, nor can we do without centralism."  

Mao further added that "this unity of democracy and centralism, of freedom and discipline, constitutes our democratic centralism. Under this system, the people enjoy extensive democracy and freedom, but at the same time they have to keep within the bounds of socialist discipline." Mao's general theoretical views on 'democratic centralism' were followed by denouncing in very concrete terms by those party leaders who followed the views of the masses and confused party leadership with their own views. Mao put it by saying, "Those of you...who do not allow people to speak, who think you are tigers, and that nobody will dare touch you... whoever has this attitude, ten out of ten of you will fail..."  

However, the disagreement between Mao and Liu Shao-ch'i on 'democratic centralism' cropped up during the 'Socialist Education Movement,' (1962-1966),

100 Ibid.
102 Ibid.
103 Schram, n. 54, p. 167.
also known as the ‘Four Cleans Campaign.’ It can be said that this single cause led to the final break down of their healthy relationship. Here the conflict in views was on the question of directives of the education of the masses and the role of the cadres, issued in the form of two directives. The first was on the Early Ten Points, in May 1963, by Mao, and the second on Later Ten Points, issued in September 1964, issued by Liu Shao-ch’i. In fact the significance of the CCP’s perception of—and selection of methods for dealing with—the cadre question during both the Socialist Education Movement and the ‘Cultural Revolution’ extends well beyond the complex vissitudes of the power struggle.104

The initial step in this campaign was to set the masses in motion and the ‘Early Ten Points’ directive provided for the setting up of ‘poor and lower middle peasant associations’ for assisting and overseeing the work of the communes and brigade administrative committees. This effort was clearly reflected in the first major policy directive of the movement in May 1963—‘Draft Resolution of the Central Committee on Some Problems in Current Rural Work’—the so called First Ten Points.105 In this movement the importance of cadre participation in labour was once again upheld.106 Mao wanted that one-thirds of all rural party cadres could participate in collective productive labour on a regularised basis. The demand was aimed at preventing the cadres from becoming “bureaucrats” and “overlords” by bringing them into closer contact with the actual conditions of production and with the problems encountered by the peasants in their daily lives.107

The “First Ten Points” also introduced the “Four Cleans”, which referred to the task of checking up and clearing account books, granaries, state properties and


106 Baum and Leiwees, n. 104, p. 326.

107 Ibid.
work points.\textsuperscript{108} Besides, it was held that cadre corruption was leading to peasant dissatisfaction with the basic level leadership in the countryside. Such corruption however was adjudged to be an internal i.e., non-antagonistic contradiction and was to be handled primarily through methods of persuasive education.\textsuperscript{109} It was made clear that poor and lower middle peasants’ associations shall not be allowed to take over the day-to-day affairs of the communes.

Thus, following the promulgation of the ‘First Ten Points’, in May 1963, a period of experimentation in socialist education work ensued. In September of the same year, the party issued the second major socialist education directive, ‘Some Concrete Policy Formulation of the Central Committee of the CCP in the Rural Socialist Education Movement,” known in current Peking terminology as the ‘Later Ten Points.’\textsuperscript{110} If both the directives of May 1963 and September 1964 are analysed, the ‘Later Ten Points,’ was put forward ostensibly as a complement rather than replacement of Mao’s own directive of May 1963. But it departed considerably from the spirit of the earlier directive.\textsuperscript{111}

The revised ‘Later Ten Points’ upheld the need to mobilise the masses and to recognise the Socialist Education Movement as a large scale mass-movement, even more complicated than the land reforms, which would result in a sharp struggle. This directive also called for organisations at higher levels of the party work-team, which would be sent to guide the movement at the grass-root level. “The philosophy which informed the whole directive was summed up in the remark to consolidate over 95 per cent of the cadres is a pre-requisite to the consolidation of over 95 per cent of the masses.”\textsuperscript{112}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{112} Schram. n. 54. p. 76 and also see Richard Baum and Frederick C.Leiwes, n.105, pp.329-333.
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In a latter revision to these, Liu Shao-ch'i discussed that "the whole movement should be led by the work team."\textsuperscript{113} This line was diametrically opposed to that of Mao's, and was precisely this approach which Mao and his supporters characterised as 'hitting at the many in order to protect the few.' This hitting hard at many refers to the practice of excessively criticising, punishing and dismissing basic level cadres for such relatively minor non-antagonistic deviations as petty corruption, bureaucratism and bourgeois living styles. In simple terms, it is to blame everything on the lower level cadres in order to distract attention from the worse bureaucratic vices of those at the top.

As far as Liu Shao-ch'i intentions, whether he was primarily concerned about protecting the handful of persons at the top or whether he was seeking a compromise between Mao's insistence of class struggle and maintenance of what he regarded as an acceptable degree of centralised control is difficult to answer. It seems that for Liu, both the two goals were inseparable. The uncertainty as to whether the Socialist Education Movement was on the correct path began to appear in late 1964. It was clearly manifest in mid-January 1965, when a work conference of the party politburo, acting under the guidance of Mao, promulgated the celebrated 'Twenty Three Point' directive, namely, "Some Problems Currently Arising in the Course of the Rural Socialist Education Movement."\textsuperscript{114} This directive, later called the 'Double Ten Points', repudiated a number of views advanced by Liu Shao-ch'i and spearheaded the movement against 'those people in authority within the party who were taking the capitalist road.'\textsuperscript{115}

Thus, the concepts, like the contradictions in a socialist society, base and super-structure and 'democratic centralism', are analysed which had a bearing on the

\textsuperscript{113} Baum and Leiwes. n.105. pp 329-30.

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid. p.120.

\textsuperscript{115} Schurmann, n. 93, p. 354.
genesis of the GPCR. Comparing Mao’s broader philosophical scheme with that of Liu Shao-ch’i’s theoretical formulations was a necessity, for the latter was Mao’s ‘close comrade in arms’\textsuperscript{116} and also because his views were different from Mao’s.

At this juncture it is only appropriate and in the fitness of things that attention is now turned to the issues of party and army. To examine the nature and functions of army and party and their relationship to the masses, Mao’s ideology regarding these organisations is dwelt along with their background.

**INTER-RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PARTY, ARMY AND THE MASSES**

In his opening address to the First Session of the First National Peoples Congress of the People’s Republic of China, on September 15, 1954, Mao said, “The force at the core leading our cause forward is the [CCP], and the theoretical basis guiding our thinking is Marxism-Leninism.”\textsuperscript{117} According to Mao, the party, as he once stated, “is well disciplined and armed with the theory of Marxism-Leninism using the method of self-criticism and linked with the masses of the people; an army under the leadership of such a party; a united front of all revolutionary classes and all revolutionary groups under the leadership of such a party-these are the three main weapons with which we have defeated the enemy.”\textsuperscript{118}

Regarding the army, Mao said that without the peoples army the people had nothing.\textsuperscript{119} He further said, “The Red Army is powerful because all its members have a conscious discipline, they have come together and they fight not for the private interests of a few individuals or a narrow clique, but for the interests of the broad


\textsuperscript{118} Baum and Leiwes, n. 104, p. 323.

\textsuperscript{119} Mao Tse-tung, n. 56, pp. 296-97.
masses and of the whole nation. The sole purpose of this army is to stand firmly with the Chinese people and to serve them wholeheartedly. According to the general perspective of Mao's ideology, the party and army are temporary organisations reflecting the transitory nature of the society at that particular point of time.

Talking on 'Ten Great Relationship,' Mao once said that parties were the products of history. Firstly, there were none which are not the products of history. Secondly, everything which was produced by history will also be destroyed by history. The Communist Party was produced by history, and for that reason the day will inevitably come when it would be destroyed. Thus, the party, at a particular period of time, existed as the spokesman of a class, and along with the disappearance of classes the party would also disappear. It was this hedonistic grasp of any organisation that helped Mao to personalise the organisation and mould it as he wished. Nothing was super-ordained or sacred; everything was mundane and utilitarian.

Every organisational structure was a product of history and understanding its history is to understand the organisation. Mao's view was simple and concrete in this context. In keeping with this parameter of Mao, his grasp of the historical background of the party, and army, it was no surprise that the biography of the party and the army in China were a part of Mao's own biography, as Mao explained the origin and nature of these organisations in his inner party journal 'The Communist,' in October 1939. He said that apart from armed struggle, apart from guerrilla warfare, it was impossible to understand our political line and consequently, to understand our party building. We know that in China there would be no place for the proletariat, no place for the people, no place for the communist party, and no victory for the revolution without armed struggle.  

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120 Ibid., p. 264.
121 Schram. n. 87, p. 375.
122 Ibid.
Mao further added that "for eighteen years the development, consolidation and Bolshevisation of our party have been undertaken in the midst of revolutionary wars and have been inseparable from guerrilla warfare. Without armed struggle, without guerrilla warfare, there would not have been such a communist party as exist today comrades throughout the party must never forget this experience gained at the cost of blood."123

If party is the product of armed struggle, and, if in turn, it is the party that carried on the armed struggle, indeed, the difference between army and party was apparently semantical, at least till 1949 it seemed to be so. Nevertheless, the army was an independent organisation, a homogeneous body with traditions and mystique of its own which could draw upon a considerable reserve of popular goodwill and support. However, with the communist party victory in 1949, it entered upon a new phase and a new role in which it had little or no experience.

The party, by exchanging its revolutionary role for one of national defence, served the most important bond of unity with the communist party and with the people a sense of common identity and struggle which had permeated the communist areas and linked army, party and people together in the revolutionary period.124 Added to this, it is not a question of how the army would adapt to its new role as guardian of China’s national defence, it was also a question of how the party leadership itself would view the army’s status and position in the People’s Republic.125

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123 Ibid.


125 Ibid.
It is to be noted that till 1949 a majority of leading PLA officers had served as political cadres and as military commanders at one point of time or the other. The nature of the war fought by the army and the tactics it employed were semi-political. Thus, the dividing line between the military and political functions was in any case often blurred, while we view the Army Party relations.

The venture to bipolarise in the army officers corps between 'professional' or 'modernising' element and the 'political' or 'guerrilla' type element, has brought about the differences in between the army and party. Yet firstly, there was never at any time a 'split' between the two groups of the kind which 'Pekinologists,' and 'Kremlinologists,' are prone to infer to readily, when examining a closed system like that of China.” Secondly, “at no stage did the party lose control of the army nor was there any overt challenge to party leadership.” Thirdly, it is very difficult to identify individuals as belonging to one or other group and that many individual officers themselves probably subscribed to both ‘modernising’ and ‘political’ arguments.

So far there are only two instances since 1949 which are worthy of taking note in this context. Firstly, it was the Kao-Jao conspiracy in 1953. Kao Kang, Chairman of the north-east people’s government and commander of the North-east military region, together with Jao Shu-shih, political commissar of the East China Military Region, organised an ‘anti party alliance’ against the leadership in Peking. But this incident does not merit to be consider as a case of military dissension. Though Kao Kang was accused of having attempted to get the support of the army, there is no evidence that he was successful.

When Kao-Jao conspiracy is analysed, the given evidence suggests that three issues were involved in this conspiracy. They are, an attempt by Kao to defend regional authority in the North-east against the centralising policies of the

\[126\] Ibid., p. 214.

\[127\] Ibid., p. 215.
government in Peking, a basic conflict over the economic policy and fundamental dispute over economic policy and lastly, personal rivalry between Kao and Liu Shao-ch'i, as none of this issues were directly connected to the army.

A second incident occurred in 1959, when the then Defence Minister Peng Te-huai was dismissed along with five of his colleagues. When Peng's case is analysed it becomes clear that Peng was not opposed to the party. Rather, Peng and five of his colleagues were loyal party members. They objected to certain trends in the Great Leap Forward which dwelt with the expansion of the 'Peoples Militia' and the campaign for PLA's participation in production, which they felt were at variance with their other responsibilities. Added to this, Ping had been responsible for the abortive negotiations with the Soviet Union in 1958-59 over the possibility of Soviet nuclear aid to China. His dismissal may well have been partly designed to make him the scapegoat for the failure of these negotiations. Other than these two cases there were no other purges, splits or conflicts in the army.

Leaving aside these differences, the contradictions seemed to have been resolved. It becomes abundantly clear in Mao's famous statement, "the party commands the gun and the gun must never be allowed to command the party." This is because Mao believed in the party as a leading core of the revolution and also as

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131 For details of Peng Te-huai's case see The Case of P'eng Teh-Huai (Peng De huai) 1956-68, (Union Research Institute, Hong Kong, 1968), pp. 7-13.

132 Gittings, n. 124, p. 216

the custodian of the correct ideological orientation. Mao identified party leadership with obedience to the correct line which was a 'mass line.' To quote Mao, in 1948, while talking to the editorial staff of *Shansi-Suiyuan*, he said, "For twenty years our party has carried on mass work every day and for the past dozen years it has talked about the mass line every day. We have always maintained that the revolution must rely on the masses of the people on everybody's taking a hand opposed relying merely on a few persons issuing orders. The mass line however, is still not being thoroughly carried out in the work of some comrades; they still rely solely on a handful of people working in solitude."  

Mao further added, "One reason is that whatever they do they lead and that they do not understand why or how to give play to the initiative and creative energy of those they lead. Subjectively, they too want everyone to take a hand in the work, but they do not let other people know what is to be done or how to do it. That being the case, how can every one be expected to get moving and how can anything be done well? To solve this problem the basic thing is, of course, to carry out ideological education on the mass line, but at the same time we must teach the comrades many concrete methods of work."  

Mao has emphasised the concept of mass line in his 1943 directive and stressed the importance of linking the activity of the 'leading group' with that of the broad masses. He further said, "However the leading group may be, its activity will amount to fruitless effort by a handful of people unless combined with the activity of the masses. On the other hand if the masses alone are active without a strong leading group to organise their activity properly, such activity cannot be sustained for long, or carried forward in the right direction, or raised to a high level."  

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135 Ibid., p. 242.

Everything was harmonious theoretically until its revelation of Mao during the ‘Cultural Revolution,’ when he disowned his own party’s leading comrades and accused them of revisionism. But one should not forget that Mao launched his attack against a particular nucleus within the party and not against the party itself. Added to this, Mao had retained the fictional unity of the party and asserted it on its own leading nucleus. He did this with the help of ‘mass line’ concept. Masses, according to Mao, were composed of three parts, “the relatively active, the intermediate and the relatively backward.”

As far as the rebellion against leaders was concerned, Mao justified it initially, but later circumscribed by saying that it was justified to rebel against reactionaries within the party. Precisely because Mao had retained the central legitimising role of the party, he was in a position even to invite the army to support the Red Guards’ role against the party. A critical time arrived for the army in January 1967 when they were called upon to help and interfere on behalf of the revolutionary rebels during the ‘Cultural Revolution’ and to accept the control of the ‘Marxists ‘Cultural Revolution’ Group’ in hounding out deviationists within its own ranks.

** COURSE OF THE GREAT PROLETARIAN CULTURAL REVOLUTION**

The ‘Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution’ (*wuchanjieji wenhuadageming*) (GPCR) was a phenomenon without precedent or an equivalent in the history of Chinese communism, or for that matter in any other communist movement in the world. The GPCR was officially pronounced on August 8, 1966, when the Central

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137 Ibid.

138 Gittings, n. 124, p. 221.

Committee of the CCP adopted the famous ‘16 points decision,’ providing the basic guidelines for the revolution. It reached its peak during 1966-69. There is yet no official termination, though it is commonly considered that the meeting of the Ninth CCP Congress, in April 1969, marked the termination of violent struggle and the beginning of moderation and consolidation of gains.

Now what is ‘Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution’? To understand this, we should first understand the words ‘Great,’ ‘Proletarian,’ and ‘Revolution.’ The first word ‘Great’ signifies the enormity and all-embrassiveness of the revolution, the second word ‘Proletarian’ denotes the working class, which is employed in any communist-led or inspired movement, and the third, ‘Revolution’ has the connotation of a violent crusade against the established order or pattern. Now we are left with the all important term ‘Cultural,’ it is self-explanatory. It is the remoulding of China’s culture into a new, dynamic and Maoist one. It is the making of a new Chinese and a new race. It is the creation of a human being, whether he be a party cadre, a peasant, a worker or an intellectual, who is devoid of selfishness and ambition, but is absolutely devoted to the achievement of the Maoist ideal of socialism.

The GPCR has had more than one name. It was first called “The Great Socialist Cultural Revolution” and later the nomenclature was changed to “The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.” On November 10, 1965, when the historical drama ‘Hai Jui Dismissed from Office’ was published in a Shanghai newspaper Wen Hui Pao, in which there was no mention of the ‘Great Cultural Revolution,’

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141 For details see the Documents of Ninth National Congress of the CCP (Peking. 1969), pp. 63-55.

though the revolution was already unveiled. Later, on April 14th, at the Thirtieth
Enlarged session of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress, Shih
Khsi-min, Vice minister of Culture, gave a report on holding high the great red
banner of Mao’s thought to carryout the Great Socialist ‘Cultural Revolution’
through to the end.\textsuperscript{143}

The above session gave birth to the term “Great Socialist Cultural
Revolution.”\textsuperscript{144} In April 1966, the Liberation Army daily published an editorial
entitled, “Hold High the Great Red Banner of Mao Tse-tung’s thought and actively
participate in the Great Socialist Cultural Revolution.” Thus, the revolution was
formally christened; later on 6 June, the same daily published the ‘fundamentals of
propaganda and education for the Great ‘Cultural Revolution,’ in an article “Hold
High the Great Red Banner of Mao’s Thought to carry the Great Proletarian
‘Cultural Revolution’ through to the end.”\textsuperscript{145} This marked the shift in the
nomenclature of “Great Socialist Cultural Revolution,” to the “Great Proletarian
Cultural Revolution.”\textsuperscript{146} The same term was finalised when the Eleventh Plenary
session of the Eighth Central Committee of CCP adopted the “Resolution of the
Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution” on August 8, 1966.

The GPCR, when viewed from this background, is a continuous development
of the “Literary and Art Rectification Campaign,” the “Socialist Educational
Movement,” “Peng Te-huai incident.”\textsuperscript{147} Mao pointed out during the course of
‘Cultural Revolution’ that it was “a continuation of the prolonged struggle between

\textsuperscript{143} Richard H. Solomon, n. 133, p. 484; and also see Wang Hsueh-wen, \textit{Ibid}, p. 11.

\textsuperscript{144} Wang Hsueh-wen, \textit{Ibid}, p. 11.

\textsuperscript{145} \textit{Survey of China Mainland Press}, (here after \textit{SCMP}), (Hong Kong), no. 3688, 2 May, 1960, pp. 2-3.

\textsuperscript{146} Wang Hsueh-wen, n. 142, pp. 11-12.

\textsuperscript{147} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 11; and also see David A Charles, “The Dismissal of P’eng Teh-huai”, \textit{The China Quarterly}, no. 8, October-December 1961, pp. 63-76.
the CCP and the Kuomintang.\footnote{148} This complex background makes the GPCR itself diverse in essence.

In fact, there is no unanimity among political theorists regarding the nature and goals of the ‘Cultural Revolution.’ There are as many political theorists about GPCR as the number of Sinologists. It is a “political power struggle”\footnote{149} (between Mao and Liu Shao-ch‘i within the party), a “revolutionary immortality,”\footnote{150} “doctrinal illness,” and the creation of “revolutionary successors,”\footnote{151} or the birth of a new political system in the form of “revolutionary organisation.”\footnote{152} And finally, the ‘Cultural Revolution’ was a reaction on the part of China to her international position at that particular time. China was threatened by the United States’ military involvement in Vietnam and expansionist designs on the one hand, and on the other, China was virtually abandoned by her one time communist neighbour the Soviet Union.\footnote{153}

Be that as it may, a thorough reading of the manifesto of the ‘Cultural Revolution,’ ‘The Decision on the GPCR on August 8, 1966,’ makes it amply clear that the GPCR had in the main domestic goals.\footnote{154} Now while attempting to

\footnote{148} Wang Hsueh-wen, n. 142, p. 11.


\footnote{154} For details of the text see, CCP Documents of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, 1966-67, n. 140, pp. 42-54.
comprehend this 'Cultural Revolution,' one must proceed from the political situation in China in the mid-1966 and from the ideological premises set up by Mao.

POLITICAL AND THEORETICAL PREMISES OF THE GREAT PROLETARIAN CULTURAL REVOLUTION

Towards the evening of 1958 it became increasingly apparent that the policy of the Great Leap Forward initiated by Mao had failed. The following April, he handed over the office of the President of the People's Republic of China to Liu Shao-ch'i. Later the Mao's peoples communes were also reorganised and his opponents were critical of his economic policy. And still later the Sino-Soviet dispute further added fuel to the flames in the course of 1960's. For Mao's anti-Soviet policy, which for the time being culminated in March 1965 in the refusal to undertake a joint venture directed against imperialism in Vietnam, was rejected by the opposition. This controversy continued within the party until the Wu Han episode. Wu Han was a deputy mayor of Peking under P'eng Chen's who was a powerful member of politbureau and mayor of Peking.

Wu Han wrote a play in 1961 entitled, "Hai Jui Dismissed From Office" and a number of other articles about Hai Jui. Wu Han described the suffering of 'Soochow', peasants exploited by rapacious Ming dynasty officials of sixteenth century who had confiscated peasants' land.155 Hai Jui was an enlightened and straightforward imperial governor. He intervened against the officials on behalf of the peasants, by appealing to the emperor for their land. For this act of Hai, the emperor removed him from office. This is clearly analogous to the replacement of the former Minister of Defence and opponent of Mao, P'eng Te-huai,156 by Lin Piao. Later Mao launched 'Cultural Revolution' with an attack on Wu Han.

The 'Cultural Revolution' rested ideologically on Mao’s thesis of the continuation of the class struggle in socialist society. He put forward the theory of permanent revolution in January 1958. He said, "Our revolutions follow one after the other. Starting from the seizure of power in the whole country in 1949, these followed in quick succession, on the anti-feudal land reforms. As soon as land reform was completed, agricultural co-operatives begun. This also followed socialist transformation...followed by the socialist revolution on the political and ideological fronts."\(^{157}\) He further said, "Our revolutions are like battles. After a victory we must at once put forward a new task. In this way, cadres and the masses will forever be filled with revolutionary fervour."\(^{158}\)

Thus, according to Mao’s thesis, the proletarian masses of workers, peasants and soldiers continue, for a long time even after the revolution, to wage fierce struggle against bourgeoisie. In this connection Mao has outlined the correct methods to be applied in his slogan “follow the mass line” and “give prominence to proletarian politics.”\(^{159}\) The concept of class struggle, truly speaking, originates with Lenin. As far as Marx is concerned “he explored the question of class relations during the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat in a most cursory manner.”\(^{160}\) Lenin believed that there was the need for vigorous suppression of the former ruling classes. To quote him, “There is a need for a violent stage of proletarian dictatorship, a period of unusually violent class struggle in their sharpest possible forms...”\(^{161}\) Lenin recommended that the possibility of class struggle might become


\(^{158}\) Ibid.

\(^{159}\) The Great Proletarian Socialist Cultural Revolution in China (Peking, 1966), vol. I, pp. 13 and 27.


more intense after the revolution. He wrote, “the transformation from capitalism to communism takes an entire historical epoch; until this epoch is over, the exploiters cherish the hope of restoration and this hope turns into attempts at restoration.”

Even the Chinese realised that the class enemies would inevitably resort to disguise, masquerading as genuine revolutionaries, to infiltrate into the party. Thus, an intensified class struggle between revolutionaries and their enemies would inevitably be reflected within the party itself. Hence a constant effort had to be made to keep up the revolutionary fervour of the CCP. This could only be done through criticism, self criticism and rectification campaign like the “Cultural Revolution.” A peculiar nature of the situation in 1965 in China lay in the fact that in Mao’s view, the revisionists who opposed had occupied leading positions in the party and government. Hence it was necessary to decide whether the class struggle should also be extended to the ranks of the CCP. The question was whether to conduct a debate openly or only within the party. As Mao was in favour of the former, he eventually brought the struggle into open.

Mao now decided on a tactic which could have been very dangerous both to the party and for himself personally. But soon it became apparent that he had safeguarded himself in two ways. Firstly, through the army which had been schooled systematically by Lin Piao since 1959, for its task during the ‘Cultural Revolution’ and whose organ at Peking also published the directives in 1966 and secondly, through the acknowledged authoritative force of his writings which since August 1966 had become widely disseminated. As a result of the free distribution of collections of quotations, which were originally intended for the army and later became well known as The Little Red Book. This book was always referred to as a guideline during the events of ‘Cultural Revolution.’

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THE COURSE OF CULTURAL REVOLUTION
THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION UPTO THE ELEVENTH PLENUM OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

In September 1965, at the Politburo meeting, Mao called for a 'Cultural Revolution' in order to give a broader basis to the criticism of revisionism. With the result, a "Cultural Revolution Group" was formed under P'eng Chen and it functioned as a propaganda department of the politburo. The local level functionaries received directions to do away with the remnants of the past culture and to redouble their criticism of Soviet criticism.

The 'Wu Han,' episode which was intended to demonstrate the internal political aspect of 'Cultural Revolution,' was launched in November by Yao Wen-yuan, who was a close comrade of Mao. The P'eng Chen Group despite initial success at preserving the academic nature of the dispute, soon came under fire from the Maoists. P'eng relinquished his office in June 1966. The same was the case with Chou Yang, who was branded as a reactionary, despite his efforts at literary propaganda, and also was regarded as the supporter of Mao. Thus, now it was evident that this class struggle would not even draw the line at the top echelons of the party and from May 1966 efforts were made to criticise those at the top, with an initial effort starting from Peking.

The "Big Character Wall Posters" (ta-zu-pao) were applied as instruments of agitation and independent of the party's means of publication. By July 1966 Mao brought about changes of personnel with army's assistance and on 20 June a new "Cultural Revolution Group" took over, to which T'ao Chu, Ch'en Po-ta and

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K'ang Sheng belonged. This group operated in close collaboration with Mao's wife, Chiang Ch'ing, who had devoted herself especially to the cultural work in the army. On August 8, 1966, the Eleventh Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee proclaimed its decision on the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution." This document is regarded as the key to understand the phenomenon in which the conception and line of attack of the policy were drawn up in 16 points. The central theme of the text are that, the bourgeoisie has indeed been overthrown but still attempts are made "to use the old ideas, culture, customs and habits of the exploiting classes to corrupt the masses, capture their minds and endeavour to stage a comeback." The proletariat reacts by creating its own culture; but, for the present, it is fighting against those within the party who are in authority and are taking the capitalist road. The above views allude to all Mao's opponents in the central committee and politburo, especially Liu Shao-ch'i and Deng Xiaoping.

It also addresses the revolutionary masses thus: "the weapons are the wall posters and great debates, which are to be settled by argument and not by force and the end result of the 'Cultural Revolution' depends on whether or not the party leadership dares boldly arouse the masses." The text further says that during the 'Cultural Revolution' the masses must liberate themselves and it is wrong to act on their behalf. The new organisations are the groups, committees and congresses of the "Cultural Revolution," whose members are to be selected by the electoral system of the Paris Commune and who may be criticised at all times. Mao described this as Chinese Paris Commune of 1960s of the Twentieth Century. As far as the

167 Thornton, n. 164, p. 280.


169 Ibid., p. 42.


171 Thornton, n. 164, p. 203.

172 Mao Tse-tung, Talks in Central Committee Leaders 21 July 1966, "Long live the Thought of Mao Tse-tung", Current Background, nos. 891, and 892, October 1969, p. 36.
youth were concerned, the timings of schools and higher education must be reduced, so that along with their studies students can work in industry and agriculture, study military affairs and participate in the ‘Cultural Revolution.’ Finally, the ‘Cultural Revolution’ should not hamper production and thoughts of Mao are binding for all kinds of action during the “Cultural Revolution.”

THE CONFLICT OVER THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE

By June 1966, the members of the communist youth league were divided into two groups, namely the bourgeois children and the children of workers, peasants and soldiers. All educational institutions were closed and the proletarian group was trained for the propagation of the ‘Cultural Revolution’ ideals and objectives. In August, school children and students formed themselves into Red Guards and proceeded to attack all that was old and bourgeois-- plaits of women were cut off, street names were changed, bourgeois homes were broken and several museums and religious were wrecked.173 The Red Guards began to travel freely for the purpose of exchanging the revolutionary experience and started promoting ‘Cultural Revolution’ in all the provinces.174 But this travelling of Red Guards has brought about the transport system to a stand still.

The above juncture made the local party committees to confront with tricky organisational problems which could only be solved with the help of the army. The bourgeois elements and party functionaries were criticised and exposed on wall posters or in private journals and leaflets. But the Red Guards were not dominated by the Maoists. In fact, all party groups were at logger heads with one another175 and were not even at one amongst themselves. Wherever they were in a majority, the


174 Ibid.

rebels who were loyal to Mao have set up their headquarters. Frequently, several headquarters existed side by side.

In the provinces Mao’s opponents, worried of low support, instructed local party secretaries to send the workers in order to exchange revolutionary experience and provided necessary funds from the government revenue. At the same time, Maoist supporters referred to the injunction that production was not to suffer because of the ‘Cultural Revolution’ and encountered their opponents’ tactics with the charge of economism. For, they felt that inducing the workers into syndicalism would lead the economy to chaos.

It was during this offensive against economism, the “Cultural Revolution Group” was reorganised and Wang Li, a historian, replaced T’ao Chu as chairman and Chiang Ch’ing was made an official member. On the other hand, the power struggle in the provinces continued and the revolutionary committees gradually came to replace the party committees as the new organs of power. This revolutionary committees composed of three groups namely; the elected old party cadres who had declared themselves in favour of the new system, the elected spokesmen of the newly formed rebel organisations and representatives of the respective political department of the army who were expected to act as mediators as well in the new body. This reorganisation of the executive permitted more participation of the bases in the powers of decision making and was based on the model of Shanghai, where in January 1967, the rebels had established a commune headed by a ‘revolutionary committee’ on the lines of the Paris Commune.

During the same time Mao called for even greater participation in the ‘Cultural Revolution’ on the part of the army. It was expected to side with the rebel

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groups who were loyal to Mao. With the result, the army took over direct control in some areas. At the same time the rebels were recalled and were directed to return to their schools and universities and to take part in the local organisations. Now the command of ‘Cultural Revolution’ passed from the youth to pro and anti-Maoist revolutionary committees sprang up in every firm.

In April 1967, a press campaign was initiated against Liu Shao-ch’i and Deng Xiaoping. They were accused as taking the ‘capitalist road.’ In other words they were criticised for not laying trust in the judgement of the masses, but on the contrary, demanding the masses to subordinate themselves to the party leadership. On the other hand Liu Shao-ch’i urged the people to learn from the classics instead of from the masses and had propagated the ideals of ‘self perfection.’ With this charges on the capitalist readers, the ‘Cultural Revolution’ reached its zenith, some of the charges were public against highly placed party and government officials.

In the provinces the party secretaries now refused to collaborate in the revolutionary committees and there were even violent clashes. Some of the rebels had armed themselves from the arsenals of the ‘Peoples Militia’ and justified the use of weapons with the slogan proclaimed by Chang Ch’ing at Anhwie delegation in August 1966: “Attack with words defend with arms.” Simultaneously the Red Guards raised the demand that the ‘Cultural Revolution’ should also be extended to the army, which had hitherto been spared. At this juncture the line of attack of the ‘Cultural Revolution’ shifted to the extreme left.

THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE LEFT

By autumn of 1967 two ultra-left rebel organisations had been formed due to their dissatisfaction with the way the ‘Cultural Revolution’ had developed during the
same year. Looking at the cases of Paris and Shanghai Communes, they protested saying, in setting up the revolutionary committees the army supported the old “pro-capitalist” cadres and for this they blamed the bureaucracy headed by premier Chou En-lai. They said that the revolutionary committees did not bring any changes in the old power structure and only served to mark the class struggle between the bureaucrats and the revolutionary masses. Thus the committee should be opposed and a new party should be founded.

Though the above argument was in consistence with that of Mao’s vision of revisionist threat and with the tasks of ‘Cultural Revolution’ as formulated by him, it yet appeared too risky for Mao and even to the left-wing members of the “Cultural Revolutionary Group”, comprising Chiang Ch’ing, K’ang Sheng and Yao Wen-Yuan. Hence it was rejected and out of the two groups, the May 16th organisation was disbanded. Later, a review of the rebel groups was initiated with a view to consolidate the past achievements, to restore unity, and to establish a new authority.

With the result, the slogan “we must combat selfishness and criticise and repudiate revisionism” proclaimed by the Defence Minister Lin Piao on October 1, 1967, demonstrates the shift of priority to the internal problems of the revolutionary organisations. Starting from this juncture the ‘Cultural Revolution’ receded and the measures against the extreme left continued till 1968. Many school children and students were to stop their education, and work in the countryside for an indefinite period. The press attacked the petty ‘bourgeoisie anarchism’ and by summer, workers and propaganda teams appeared in schools and universities to rectify the intellectuals who have disobeyed Mao’s instructions and subverted to acts which were decreed by him like setting up of revolutionary three-in-one combinations.


180 Schram, n. 87, p. 370.
Added to the above, the methods employed by the guards in the initial phase of adolescent ‘Cultural Revolution’ against the bourgeois, capitalist and revisionist forces in factories and offices, were now adopted by the workers. The role of workers was given more emphasis in order to eliminate extreme left wing elements from amongst the adolescents. It remains an open debate as to what extent Mao had allowed for the grievances expressed by the left in his conception of “Cultural Revolution.” Throughout the events in Mao’s reply to the question of further employment of old cadres, he said in 1967 that most of the functionaries were well suited for work in the new revolutionary organisations. The composition of the revolutionary committees established in the provinces up to September 1968 proves that the army and the old cadres’ representation is more when compared to that of revolutionary mass organisations. From their ranks not a single chairman was elected. In another respect, the results of ‘Cultural Revolution’ were not open to question. In 1968 Liu Shao-ch'i was forced to resign and Mao thus got rid of his opponent. The Ninth Party Congress of April 1969 has confirmed the complete victory of the Maoists over the party opposition.

CONCLUSION

An assessment of GPCR in China is debateable on the grounds whether it merely was a struggle for power within the CCP or a genuine reorganisation of culture and education, which enabled all the remaining bourgeois influences to be eliminated and, thus, helped consolidate the proletarian character of the society. It is definitely true that, in the first place, both the factors played their role. But, at the same time, it is also true that the second factor receded into the background as the time rolled by. On the other hand, the Soviet communists voiced that the purpose of ‘Cultural Revolution’ in China was to weaken the CCP and replace it by a Maoist party of an anti-communist nature, to supplant the legitimate organs of state of the people’s democracy by the military dictatorship of one man, to install the reactionary

181 For details see the Documents of Ninth National Congress of the C.C.P. n.141, pp. 63-65.
Red Guards in the place of Communist Youth League, to ruin education, culture, intelligentsia and finally to wipe out the cultural heritage of the past. Consequently, Chen Shao-yu, in his work, *China: Cultural Revolution or Counter Revolutionary Coup?*, says that the GPCR was neither a proletarian nor a "Cultural Revolution." Thus, it is difficult to compare the Chinese and Soviet 'Cultural Revolution's. Nevertheless, there are certain points worthy of comparison.

Firstly, like the advocates of Proletkul't, Mao's followers, wanted to undermine bourgeois culture and its influence by creating a proletarian culture and they were critical of the traditional cultural heritage of China. Secondly, in one instance, at least both the parties in Chinese GPCR referred to the statements made by Lenin in connection with the Soviet 'Cultural Revolution.' And, in January 1966, when Wu Han had to defend himself against the charges of having applied bourgeois moral concepts of the past to the present, he cited Lenin's criticism in October 1920 of the Proletkul't. Lenin said, "The proletarian culture must be the logical development of the store of knowledge mankind has accumulated under the yoke of capitalist, land owner and bureaucratic society." His opponents retaliated by pointing to Lenin's theory of two cultures, which clearly stated which traditions were worth preserving. This complete episode illustrates Maoists tendency to make use of quotations which permitted a more radical interpretation. The same method employed by Bogdanov's supporters too.

Thirdly, Mao used the 'Cultural Revolution' to demonstrate that his opponents were collaborating with the class enemy, and it was through 'Cultural Revolution', with the help of the army and the Red Guards, that he wanted to get rid of them, and to spread his ideas to every nook and corner of the land. In the case of Soviet Union, Bogdanov pursued a similar objective in disseminating his organisational doctrine by means of Proletkul't studios and in criticising Lenin's party for co-operating with the peasants and bourgeois intellectuals. Thus, even in Russia, a struggle for power might have been waged indirectly through 'Cultural
Revolution,’ although it took place behind the scenes and was complete before it could reach such a proportion as in China.

The above points of similarity show that a possible justification for the Chinese ‘Cultural Revolution’ should be sought among Lenin’s left wing critics, rather than on Lenin himself. It is acceptable that it was for the reason same that the left wing protest movements in the West hardly paid any attention to the Soviet ‘Cultural Revolution,’ as implemented by Lenin. On the other hand, they have been quick to adopt the political vocabulary of the ‘Chinese Cultural Revolution.’ The New Left turned to the ‘Cultural Revolution’ due to the impossibility of changing the production relations in their own countries. Mao has provided even with the practical guidelines in the following the thesis which has been confirmed by the success of GPCR, “to overthrow a political power it is always necessary first of all to create public opinion, to do work in the ideological sphere” (CCP’s Central Committee Decision on Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution). Thereby, the seeds were sown for a differentiation of the Marxist-Leninist theory of revolution which allowed an initial attack to be made on the super-structure i.e., on culture, in order to advance from there step by step, to the basis, the production sector. In this sense, the concept of ‘Cultural Revolution’ acquires a certain degree of significance for non-socialist countries for the first time.

The theoretical assumptions underlying the GPCR have their ideological antecedents in orthodox communist theory and Mao was only actualising them in reality; Marx and Lenin had, in fact, earlier hinted the same. There is a logical continuity in the events that led to the launching of “Cultural Revolution.” ‘Cultural Revolution’ itself was an impelling necessity brought about by the preceding events themselves. Thus, GPCR was the culmination of theoretical a imperative, as well as a historical necessity in the development of communism in China.

The birth of Peoples Democratic Dictatorship is the point of creative construction of China and a departure for Mao’s creative development of Marxism-
Leninism. Mao’s emphasis on ‘people’ is different from the Leninist concept of the ‘Dictatorship Of The Proletariat,’ for Mao’s rise to power has brought along with it the problem of a coalition government with non-communist parties and non-proletarian classes. This single factor was to shape most of the events in China and some of the important statements of Mao.

In 1955 Mao decided to test the solidarity of the masses behind him by launching the ‘Great Socialist Upsurge,’ and it was a success. Later, as its result, he issued two liberal policy statements namely ‘Mutual supervision and peaceful co-existence with democratic parties,’ and ‘Let Hundred Flowers Bloom and Let Hundred Schools of Thought Contend.’ But, these two policies were shelved when a large section of the intelligentsia began to attack the very fundamentals of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist China.

Later, unmoved by the above criticism, Mao ventured to achieve communism overnight which resulted in the launching of the ‘Great Leap Forward’—in the economic sphere—and the ‘Rural Communes’—in the social sphere, which were given up due to their failure. According to a typical Maoist assessment of the situation, it was the superstructure that was not yet ripe for socialism. Later, Mao declared that though the Base was socialist, the Super-structures was capitalist, and hence the necessity for class struggle to remove these contradictions in a socialist society.

Now, to understand the background of ‘Cultural Revolution,’ the position of Mao in the early 1960s can not be negated. There must have been an element of truth in Mao’s complaint that in the post-Eighth Party Congress he was treated as a dead ancestor. It was in this Congress the basic premises of Mao’s thought were dropped from the party’s constitution and Liu Shao-ch’i was made the Chairman of the Republic. It was under Liu’s leadership that a period of liberalisation was inaugurated in China. In the economic sphere this led to granting of material incentives, private plots leading towards the so-called capitalist road. On the other
hand, at the Super-structure level, it led to severe criticism of the policies of Great Leap Forward and an attack on Mao and support for Peng Te-huai. During this period, in the sphere of literature, arts and history were not used to serve the present state of affairs. Instead, they were used to attack it and this was a clear indication of 'revisionism.' Thus, for Mao, it was not merely his personal crusade, but a socio-political class struggle which can be eliminated only by 'Cultural Revolution.'

With respect to the theoretical issues between Mao and Liu Shao-ch'i, the former held the Base to be in contradiction with the Super-structure but the later was not of the same view. Further Mao’s emphasis was more on democracy at the 'grass roots', or the 'mass line' approach. But, Liu relied on 'work team methods.' Besides justifying Mao’s actions in launching 'Cultural Revolution,' an attempt was made in the preceding pages to expose a few points of creative departure in Mao which were, indeed, inevitable, because Mao was applying and executing what Marx and Lenin have theorised; hence, the richness of Mao’s theory had the empirical support of practice. Thus the ‘Cultural Revolution’ was a product of revolutionary praxis, a product of Marxism-Leninism as applied by Mao to the then realities of Chinese communism.

In the propagandist writings on the execution of GPCR in China, four of Mao’s works were given prominence as containing the decisive instructions. They are: “On New Democracy”; the “Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art”; the pamphlet “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People”; and the speech at the “National Conference of the Chinese Communist Party Propaganda Work.” The so-called ‘Cultural Revolution’ is dealt comprehensively in the earliest of these writings. Hence it could be interpreted as something preconceived in theory. In that case, attention have to be paid more to the theory of ‘Cultural Revolution’ and less to the practical implementation of the ‘Cultural Revolution.’ But the fact remains that the circumstances of the ‘Cultural Revolution’ have created an impression that it was no more than a ‘power struggle.’ Nevertheless, one should not forget that this kind of power struggle is common in a one-party systems of the
communist type. This also throws up the question as to whether this struggle might not have been conducted under a different banner.

Now, following up this line of reasoning, the 'Cultural Revolution' can also be analysed as a specific expression of a struggle for power. In this case, the primary object of study would not be theories, but the actions of the individual groups, the clashes of forces and the emergence of victors and vanquished. These are the two extreme possibilities of analyses. The very title 'Cultural Revolution' definitely does not cover every aspect of the overt conflict. For instance, Lin Piao, and the army, played a major role in the preparations for the 'Cultural Revolution' by training cadres--both the minority and majority ethnic groups--and in securing its power basis. This took place after the culmination of those military leaders, who as a result of their experiences in the Korean War, had recommended that the army should be modernised and better equipped technically. This entailed a certain degree of deviation from Mao's doctrine of Guerrilla Warfare. Besides, the Sino-Soviet dispute also had its effect on 'Cultural Revolution.'

It should not be forgotten that till the mid-sixties three large scale campaigns supported by Mao, though not actually planned by him, were launched to establish a socialist social system in China after the final seizure of power had failed. The primary aim of all these three campaigns was to integrate the urban population into the system in the same manner as the rural population. This was aimed so, because during the entire preceding period of war and civil war the peasants had been persuaded to co-operate with the communist troops through the redistribution of land, and had thus been won over to the revolutionary cause. Millions of town-dwellers were never fully exposed to the persistent influence of the communist forces under conditions of conflict.

Since socialisation of industry was not enough to produce a socialist mentality in the urban population, Mao first ventured to induce the urban intellectuals to come to terms with Marxism and to accept its categories by means of
a movement entitled, "Let a hundred flowers bloom! Let a hundred schools of thought contend!" This movement was however a disaster, for the Chinese intellectuals' critical attitude towards the system had evidently been underestimated. Turning attention to the other two interrelated campaigns, the Great Leap Forward and the movement to establish peoples communes ended in economic failure, and, finally, led to a state of socio-political confusion. Thus, it was no surprise that there three campaigns stirred up opposition to Mao Tse-tung.

With the advent of a well planned 'Cultural Revolution,' very skilfully staged and well controlled in its implementation, apart from a number of admittedly critical incidents, Mao appeared to have succeeded. He not only quelled the opposition forces but also paved the way for the integration of the urban population into the system. This can be considered as his fourth venture to integrate the urban population into the system.

While analysing the 'Cultural Revolution,' the extreme possibilities of interpretation elaborated in the preceding paragraphs should be taken into consideration. However, it should not be emphasised unilaterally. In view of the theoretical foundation which Mao laid down for a 'Cultural Revolution' in 1940, it can hardly be supposed that the hardships which reared an ugly head could have been overcome by any other strategy. Mao and his followers might have certainly learned their lesson from the errors of the preceding campaigns. The possibility considered by western observers that the 'Cultural Revolution' might bring China to the brink of civil war was out of question, for the Chinese leadership, from the beginning, heedfully planned and implemented it and had clearly defined aims.

In China Marxism has no foundation of traditional values on which it could build. These traditional values laid emphasis on collectivity, in the same way as in Europe; this was one of the problems that confronted the Chinese leadership in their attempt to integrate the urban population into the system. In Europe the standard language of classical Marxism and socialism, terms such as community, helpfulness,
fraternity, solidarity and unity, in their value content, permeated with concepts rooted in Christianity. For example, Charity, compassion, sympathy, loyalty justice etc. Whereas, in China Marxism has no such religious historical background on which it could build.

Moreover, despite having experienced a semi-colonial existence, the Chinese failed to foster collective values, especially amongst the urban population. At that time, the upper class and the bourgeoisie adapted themselves to the changing interests of the foreign powers and concepts like self interest, opportunity and competition gained importance. The urban population was suddenly confronted with the Marxist concept of collectivism, without intellectual preparation. In fact, it even lacked the practical experience of prolonged war-conditions, when the importance of collectivism is experienced in action, since the civil war was carried out largely in the rural areas in the form of guerrilla warfare. Accordingly, communism gained an initial foothold in these areas.

The CCP, in the course of its attempt to integrate the urban population into the communist system, not only failed in three campaigns but the leading cadres were even impressed and inculcated with the corrupt individualistic ideas of the town-dwellers. Mao regarded the failure of the People's Communes project as the failure of the party's activities. After these setbacks there were two possible means of achieving any progress; the urban population should be brought to think in terms of collectivism by means of 'Cultural Revolution' and the army should take charge of its implementation for it was the only body firmly rooted in Marxism. Both these means were in fact employed. But from the beginning Mao decided not to use force as a means of re-education. Hence, direct action on the part of army was not considered.

Therefore, a form of indirect action was a necessity. It was presented in the form of Red Guards. The Red Guards who existed in the 1930s were the breeding pool for the future Red Army recruits established for the purpose of pre-military
training. These Red Guards were subjected to through cadre training directed towards the implementation of the 'Cultural Revolution.' The Red Guards who were trained by the party cadres of the army were put into action in 1966, to cause disturbances, which according to Mao’s theory were necessary to purge and reorganise the party and to induce the urban masses to identify themselves with his style of leadership by the indirect means of conflict with the Red Guards.

In the course of 'Cultural Revolution' workers and soldiers joined the forces to check the Red Guards when the latter created violence. It was in this way that the workers came to identify themselves with the army with the help of the pre-military organisation, trained by the army head, Lin Piao, and succeeded where the party had failed. The Red Guards served their purpose by making this process of identification possible and acted as a driving force behind Mao and Lin Piao’s victory over the party opposition, and were finally removed from the political scene. The Red Guards were the only means to an end and served according to Mao and Lin Piao’s strategy to reach the position of unrest. This was, in fact, obvious from the reorganisation within the party after the completion of the 'Cultural Revolution' at the Ninth Party Congress of the CCP in April 1969.

The real force behind the ‘Cultural Revolution,’ with its objective of mass movement and re-education, the army, also took over most important positions of leadership in the party. The vital role of the leading military cadres entered into the political process under Lin Piao’s leadership. The army started dominating the new party leadership. In both the Central Committee and the Politburo that the army held absolute majority is a clear testimony to this fact. As the organs responsible for mass movement and re-education, the leading cadres of the army have replaced the corrupt party functionaries. Coming to the Red Guards, not even a single representative of the Red Guards became a member of the new Central Committee. It was only amongst the 109 non-voting candidates of the Central Committee that there were a few who were known to have been active in Red Guards. This clearly indicates that the Red Guards were used merely as pawns to initiate the process of
re-education. In other words, they were used as the agents of unrest which was bad in itself but no doubt beneficial in its effect.

Thus, the complete process of 'Cultural Revolution' as a whole is open to a logically consistent interpretation if it is considered as an endeavour to thoroughly indoctrinate the urban masses. Need less to say, the party functionaries have already failed several times in this task. But, instead of the party functionaries calling their leader to account for misconceived directives, Mao called them to account for unsuccessful efforts. Thus Mao once again demonstrated the superiority of his strategic and tactical skills over his rivals.