

China, cont'd

Lecture No. 0034 (April 10, 1974)

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Preliminary remarks

[*Inaudible*] ... nothing against your machine or you, it's just that there are just too many electronic things trailing us around [*laughter*], and the fewer the better. Let's turn the apparatus in for about ten good books.

We don't have a great deal of time, because this is a weird time of year and the spring is always very pressing, but there seems to be literally a barrage of requests from the Graduate School. And I am on an examination this afternoon, a doctoral examination which began at 2:30, and I said I would get there as close to 3:00 as I possibly could, you know... [*laughter*]. But because I've read the dissertation, I'd rather be here [*laughter*] — with all due respect to the candidate.

It's really quite a lot, too, by way of concluding remarks about the very long presentation that I have tried to make to you about the evolution and the development of the Chinese Revolution, and basically to say a few random things about the great Chinese Cultural Revolution — at least to enable you to sharpen some of your perspectives when you come to read that very excellent essay prepared by [French anthropologist] Jean Esmein on the Cultural Revolution, which we have required you to prepare for your own studies.

Lecture

And so we are talking about something really quite monumental in the period between 1966 and '69. And something that, in a sense, is really continuing if you have been following the press for the past four months, and following, after all, what the recrudescence of that Cultural Revolution has been in China at a very contemporary moment. We're talking about something rather astonishing from the point of view that its beginning, its incipience, really seemed so very small and so very minor. We're talking about very minor tremors in 1966, that really are very small shock waves within the structure of the Party apparatus, and especially the Party apparatus in the city of Peking. But what is so astonishing is that from those very small tremors, suddenly there is this vast explosion, and that what you get in China is a great earthquake. You get an earthquake, after all, in which the bureaucratic structure of the society really is threatened, in which the cultural superstructure is challenged, in which the very politics of China really are under threat as a result of that Cultural Revolution. You are talking about an expansion of the battleground on

which that revolution took place. Because, if it started inside the Party and inside the Party apparatus, the battleground begins to expand and moves out into the universities and into the schools, and then moves into the factories and into the farms. And it's a revolution in which not only the battleground expands, but in which the issues become very much larger in the course of that revolution.

Those issues begin with very precisely and peculiarly cultural issues. In other words, they begin over controversies about what revolutionary art is, about what the drama should be in China, for example, and begins to expand out into what you would call something very political: namely, what is a revolution? And what is a revolution supposed to do? And a revolution that begins to expand out, in a final fundamental way: that the issues which were, at the beginning, very diffuse — the issues which were very scattered at the start of that Cultural Revolution begin to narrow in on something very large: namely, what are called the *tsou-tzŭ-p'ai*, or those "capitalist backroaders," or "backtrackers." In other words, the aim finally is to extirpate what is called revisionism, to extirpate a certain faction within the whole Communist apparatus in China: a faction centered around Liu Shao-ch'i which becomes responsible, in Mao's terminology, for a certain kind of status, or a certain kind of congealing of the revolution at a given point. All of that makes it extraordinary.

So let's take an arbitrary date. And let's take the date the 10th of November of 1965. Because on the 10th of November of 1965, there appeared in a Shanghai newspaper a very hostile critical attack upon a play. The play was called *The Dismissal of Hai Jui*. *The Dismissal of Hai Jui*, and it was a play that had been written some four years before and put on by the Peking Opera in February of 1961. And the author was a man named Wu Han, and Wu Han was a prominent historian in Peking, and also deputy mayor of that city. And here you have, four years later, a very hostile attack upon the play called *The Dismissal of Hai Jui* by this Wu Han. Now, what is the play about? Essentially, it is set in the Ming Dynasty in the sixteenth century, and it is about a Ming official, namely Hai Jui, who was considered to be a very good and moral man. And so, as a high bureaucrat, he had arranged for the distribution of some land to the very poor peasantry. And then the landlords had grabbed back that land, and he had made a protest to the Ming Emperor asking him to intervene. Instead, the Ming Emperor dismissed him and banished him from the court. And the whole play says that a very just and a very good man, consequently, was done in by arbitrary authority. That's what the play is about. And four years later, there is this attack.

Now, that seems very trivial. What is this *tzimmes* about this play [*laughter*] in November of 1965? Well, there are three things that really are important. One is that, when the play was written and put on by the Peking Opera in 1961, it was a very thinly-veiled attack upon Mao Tse-tung. It was an attack by the Peking organization on Mao, blaming him for a lot of the things that

had gone wrong in the period of the Great Leap Forward. Specifically what it was, was an attack on him for dismissing the Minister of Defense in 1959, two years earlier. That Minister of Defense, a general named Marshal P'eng [Teh-huai], P-E-N-G. And Marshal P'eng, a tough old soldier who was rather pro-Soviet, very close to Khrushchev, and, as a matter of fact, thought he would get from the Russians all of the secrets about how China could build an atomic bomb. And so he didn't like Mao's attack upon Khrushchev and the Russians, and especially he didn't like that Great Leap Forward, which he thought disrupted the normal progress of the revolution. He took a very classic view, that there had to be an elitist control over the revolution, that the experts in the army and the bureaucracy had to be in charge. And so you get Marshal P'eng here in 1959, attacking the Great Leap Forward in these terms: "Bewitched by the achievements of the Great Leap Forward and the passion of the mass movement, some leftist tendencies have emerged in China. Since we have always wanted to enter communism in a single step, in the view of some comrades, putting politics in command could be a substitute for everything. But putting politics in command is no substitute for the economic principle, much less for concrete economic measures."

In other words, it is Marshal P'eng saying that Mao doesn't really know what he is doing: that he is launching all of these masses into an economic program without any proper preparation, or without any proper kind of economic blueprinting. To which Mao responded, saying that a great number of things have gone wrong in the Great Leap Forward, but don't you understand what the value of mobilizing these millions happens to be? And so Mao answers Marshal P'eng, saying, "Have we failed? No. Our failure has only been partial. We have paid too high a price, to be sure. But a dust of Communist wind has been whipped up, and the country has learned a great lesson." In other words, that the revolution moves by one Cultural Revolution after another, that it moves by its mistakes; that it can afford mistakes because the mistakes of history are millennial. And consequently, with that view, in 1959 Mao goes to the Central Committee in August, and consequently has Marshal P'eng dismissed, because he seems to be, in the army and in the ministry, a leader of the "anti-mass line" that Mao has been projecting. And now this play, then, that was written by Wu Han, with this thinly-veiled story about a very good bureaucrat dismissed by an emperor, after all, was not lost upon its particular public. That's point one.

Point two is that Wu Han, after all, is the deputy mayor of Peking, which means he is responsible to the mayor, and the mayor is the Party chief in Peking. And the mayor is a man named P'eng Chen. And P'eng Chen is a high-ranking Communist who really has that Party machine in Peking in his hands. Now, P'eng Chen is very close to Liu Shao-ch'i, is very close to that faction in the Central Committee and in the Communist hierarchy that was very suspicious of these leftist tendencies in Mao, that is very hostile to anything that departs from a classic Soviet model of how you build socialism. And so it was P'eng Chen, for example, who said to the wife of Mao Tse-tung, the actress Chiang Ch'ing, that he did not see any reason to purge the repertory of the

Peking Lyric Opera because that was classic, and he saw no relationship between that classic drama and what was the formation of the ideology of the particular society. And consequently, if there is an attack on Wu Han, it is also an attack on P'eng Chen who is his protector.

The third point is that the writer of that article in the Shanghai newspaper was a protégé of the actress-wife of Mao Tse-tung. And consequently, Mao was perfectly in on the attack. It was the beginning of a long strategy, and what he wanted was the ground to be laid for an attack. And the issue that was chosen was the nearest one at hand, and in a sense the easiest one: namely, the content of culture, which is culture in the formal sense. Should you permit a play, like this play of Wu Han, which shows antiquity? And that's the point of the attack: it shows antiquity, the Ming Dynasty, as having good people in it, as having a certain sense of justice as well as injustice. Or should you teach the people, after all, that the entire previous era was one of injustice because that was the structure of the society? And to show, rather, the mass line in history — what people did in order to protest their conditions, or why they didn't do it, and were so shackled that they didn't even have an opportunity to move.

And consequently, Mao chose that particular ground on which to mount his attack. But the target of his attack immediately was very clear. And if you were P'eng Chen, you knew damned well in the beginning of 1966 that you had better answer this attack on Wu Han. And so in February of '66, the mayor of Peking, the head of that Party machine in the capital city, does respond. And he does it (in Mao's terms) just like a slippery intellectual, because he doesn't confront the issue of saying that that drama is reactionary. He leaves out the substantive question. What he does is to say that Wu Han has a right to the freedom of speech; in other words, that he raises only the abstract question and not the class question, in Mao's terms.

And, consequently, Mao counterattacks. And finally, on the 16th of May of 1966, before the Central Committee gets through a circular or a resolution which deposes the chief of the Peking Party, which deposes the mayor of Peking, P'eng Chen, and which goes on in that circular to say that the problem of China is really to rout out the revisionists and the anti-revolutionary tendencies in the bureaucracy and in the party. In other words, to make for a permanent or continuing revolution, and goes on to call upon the people to intervene — goes on to say that in their schools and universities, in their factories and fields, that the mass must intervene. The mass line means what? It means that out of the creativity of the mass, you will get a political line that no bureaucrat ever can really even conceive of.

All of that is what Mao had been saying in a series of articles for a number of years. Between 1957 and '66, there is a whole spate of articles by Mao within the framework of his great attack upon Khrushchev and the Soviet Union, all of which talks about the contradictions in a socialist society. But Mao is very careful to define two different kinds of contradictions, to say that they

are both there, but they require different treatment. He talks about contradictions in the people. And those are what he calls "non-antagonistic contradictions": in other words, they are contradictions inside a socialist society that are carried forth by those people — officials, for example, Party people — who have given up their enthusiasm for the revolution, who simply need to be retained, who need to be reeducated, who need to be reanimated. And so the dialogue with them is always peaceful. It is never violent, it is never forceful, it is to get the backsliders into the whole operation of really building a new society.

But then there are the other contradictions between the people and their enemies, and those are antagonistic contradictions, and what are called the *tsou-tzŭ-p'ai*, or the "capitalist roaders," those who really want to go the capitalist route — not necessarily giving back the means of production to private hands, but having a society based on capitalist values, based on capitalist social relationships. Those people, the *tsou-tzŭ-p'ai*, they constitute the real enemy, and those contradictions really do have to be routed out by force. Now, Mao is careful to say that they don't constitute more than about 5% of the Chinese population. But they are in high places, and he already is thinking of Liu Shao-ch'i and of certain people in the Party whom he feels are really this kind of enemy, or at least potentially this kind of enemy.

Well, the call went out. And the call fell first on fertile terrain in the colleges and universities and high schools, into the educational system. Now, it seems to me that that is not unusual. That first of all, in the university, you have the very best example of how little progress has been made in a new value system in the society. Because in the university, you do have the very sharp bifurcation between manual and intellectual labor. Beyond that, you have all of that meritocracy — you have all of those honors, all of that merit given to the experts — that China is a backward society, must advance, and consequently those with the technical and scientific knowledge are given prior place in the society. So the university is full of contradiction: not only the contradiction between theory and practice, which is fundamental, but the contradiction between equality and personal honor, the contradiction between a certain kind of emulation, that kind of copying of authority, and that sort of sense of freedom that really is at the base of a socialist society. Now Bill Hinton, when he interviewed all of those people at Tsinghua University, interviewed a professor in what was called the Automation Department. Tsinghua in Peking, the great polytechnic institute, and this professor really tells what was wrong with his whole approach to his position in the university: "Liu Shao-ch'i advocated learning everything" — this is the professor of automation talking:

"Liu Shao-ch'i advocated learning everything from the Soviet Union, so at the start, there was no attack on my methods, having been trained in the Soviet Union, and no struggle against me. Whatever I had learned from my teachers, I taught. 'So-and-so discovered this, What's-his-name discovered that. Study hard, my students, and become inventors.'

When I described a process I used a lot of formulas to show how smart I was. When students came to me for advice I said, 'Better pack knowledge into your head. As my grandfather used to say, a profession is worth 10,000 acres of land. So study! Learn the material by heart! Wherever you go you'll be right!' In teaching work, I favored the smart students, and I pulled a very long face at the slower ones...

"In 1962 Liu Shao-ch'i came to Tsinghua and called us professors the stable element; he called us the 108 generals of Tsinghua. He asked us to write the textbooks that would be used all over China. So I became the editor-in-chief of the electronics material, and right up until the Cultural Revolution the teaching material I edited had a great influence all over the country. I saw nothing wrong with it, nothing wrong at all. I thought that natural science has no class character, and that I was simply conveying objective knowledge... But in fact I never considered whether what I wrote was useful for the education of workers, peasants, and soldiers. I wrote not to serve the people but to display and demonstrate my learning. I used all of those formulas and those foreign quotes to inspire admiration, to show how able I was. Simple problems that could be explained with a few well-chosen sentences, I made infinitely complex. An able learner who had made a number of inventions lost confidence in himself after he heard me explain Ohm's Law. He felt he could never understand electricity even though he had worked with it.

"After my book came out, my students were intrigued by my theoretical approach and wanted to do advanced work under my direction. One wrote: 'After reading your book I am determined to put all the knowledge of electricity into one formula.' Obviously my influence on the young people was leading them to elevate theory to the skies and to make it mysterious."

And consequently, it was that circumstance that fell upon the ears of students in the university when Mao made his call and his appeal to a Cultural Revolution in the universities as well as factories and the field. There is one other factor about the universities, too, and that is that the poorer students — I'm talking about the ones that came from very humble origins, who come from working-class and peasant origins — really were discriminated against. They felt just as out of it as token black students have felt, for example, in trying to integrate into university situations in America. That the sons and the daughters of the bourgeois, former landowners, of intellectuals — they, after all, had the language, the vocabulary, with which they communicated with their faculties. And so you had a very ready core of students willing to make this kind of protest.

And so the protest exploded on the 25th of May of 1966. And it exploded in the famous poster, with a first-rate character poster on the campus of Peking University, by a young woman. A young woman who becomes, really, the touchstone and the spark of this revolution as these

campuses: a twenty-five-year-old assistant in the philosophy department at Peking University, a young girl named Nieh [Yüan-tzu]. [*Goldberg is mistaken here; Nieh was forty-five years old at the start of the Cultural Revolution and served as the philosophy department's Party Committee Secretary*]. And she makes this poster which comes to Mao's attention. And the poster is an attack upon the president of Peking University, Lu Ping, who very much is in the tradition of building a great university — getting the best professors, having all of the prestige — and so she says in this great character poster, that begins to be a cliché on the walls, that begins to be posted on the walls of the buildings: "You shout about strengthening the leadership and standing fast to sabotage the Cultural Revolution. We warn you that a mantis cannot stop the wheels of a cart, and mayflies cannot topple a giant tree" — it's just magnificent the way these Chinese thought [*laughter*]; it's really something, because we never call our administrators mantises, but it's a very good idea [*laughter*] — "We warn you that a mantis cannot stop the wheels of a cart, and mayflies cannot topple a giant tree. Now is the time for all revolutionary intellectuals to go into battle. Let us unite and hold high the great red banner, to wipe out all the counter-revolutionary revisionists of the Khrushchev type who are in our universities."

Well, when Mao saw that poster and knew what it said, he was absolutely ecstatic. And consequently, on the 30th of May, he called it a great Marxist-Leninist poster. He urged all students to know what its content was. And he made that most interesting remark that comes up again and again — because it really is a kind of *arrière-pensée*, something that trickles around in the head of Mao — and he says, "You see, we can here, on a very vast scale, reproduce the Paris Commune." He said that, in relationship to this poster of Nieh, it is the idea that the Paris Commune represented the intervention of the mass, it represented their creativity in making new kinds of political institutions. And consequently, he's already talking about universalizing the Paris Commune on the level, really, of the scope of China.

Well, what happened was that a great meeting was then held in Peking University on the 1st of June. Everybody was there. The poster was read out, and that just was opening a Pandora's box. Because over the next ten or twelve days, it was just terrific. And you get these tribunes, you see, established all over the campus, all kinds of soapboxes — it was like all kinds of Hyde Parks suddenly concentrated in this campus. And students were really getting out their grievances against professors, administration, fellow students, and so forth. And then the poster campaign began. And when I tell you that over a six-week period in Peking University there were 100,000 posters that were placed on the walls, you know that these were very busy students in those particular days. And finally, you see, the Central Committee in Peking, of the Party said, "Alright, this is really gone to quite an extent. It's being spread to other universities. And so what we will do is to suspend all courses. We suspend the university, but that doesn't mean we send the teachers and the students home. We want them to come every single day to their campuses to discuss what they have never discussed: namely, what is education? Namely, what is its method?"

What is its content?"

And, you see, it is so bold because you're dealing with, presumably, an underdeveloped society that needs every minute of its schooling. And here is the Chinese leadership saying, "Alright, close all the damned schools. We've had this system running for thousands of years: let's take stock and see what it is that we want the schools to do." And I tell you that, if you want simply a one-point program for the solution of the educational crisis in America, is to close to all of the schools, quite obviously. Because then you will get people together — perhaps, perhaps [laughter] — you will get people together discussing something about what those institutions really are supposed to be doing.

Now, all of that takes you to a second level. Because the question is whether that can last. And the question is: Who will feel threatened? And so, you see, the Cultural Revolution, by the time you get into June of 1966, already is absorbed by the Communist leadership. Now, note that well: that is to say, everybody in the leadership role calls himself a Maoist. And that's what makes the whole thing so confusing. Those that are fighting Mao and those that are supporting him all call themselves Maoists. You don't obviously go out in the public square and say, "I dislike Mao." And consequently, everybody is Maoist, and so everybody is for the Cultural Revolution. But use your heads. You know that, in the leadership levels, among the apparatchiks, there are plenty who really are scared stiff of this kind of Cultural Revolution, who feel that it's going to attain them, and consequently knock them off their pedestals. And consequently, the question is: How does the Party take over the Cultural Revolution? In other words, how does it make it seem as though it's leading it while diverting it, diverting the attack from the big fish to the very little fish in the Party — diverting the attack from Party people to non-Party people, diverting the attack from enemies, from antagonistic contradictions to non-antagonistic contradictions — in other words, to very small-fry bureaucrats?

That was the problem that Liu Shao-ch'i posed. And consequently, you get the development of the so-called Party Work Team. Now, the Party Work Teams were devised in June of 1966. And the Party began to send to all the centers where the Cultural Revolution had taken root, began to send party cadres— in other words, Party members, who were loyal Party members — they went in delegations as large as 500. And presumably, they went in order to plot the strategy of the Cultural Revolution. But not really. And as a matter of fact, Liu Shao-ch'i, when he makes his particular confession, or he makes his self-criticism, really tells about what it was that he was concerned about: "Under my guidance, the Work Teams adopted various methods to suppress the masses, such as prohibiting parades and demonstrations in the street and banning certain wall posters." You see, the Work Teams got there and what they did was to say, "Yes, there are certain of your teachers that have been oppressive and they must go," whereas the administrations were saved. Or they simply diverted attention from the apparatchiks themselves,

in other words, from the Party bureaucrats. Or what they did that was most pernicious was to divide the students against each other: in other words, to say that really rebellious students, those that were following the Mao revolutionary line, that they were the children of bourgeois who really didn't believe in communism and wanted to rip down the Communist Party.

And consequently, you get a crisis, really, that's very clearly revealed at Tsinghua University. Now, it's about Tsinghua that Hinton has written this really remarkable little book about one episode in the Chinese Cultural Revolution. And see, Tsinghua is something very special as a university, not only from the point of view of the prestige that it has as a technical university in Peking, but also because it's got this great American connection. You see, it was founded in 1911 with a lot of American money, presumably to train people to go off to America and do graduate work, and it always had that kind of Western orientation. So you don't expect anything of Tsinghua; you expect it to be pretty conservative in comparison to the radicalism in Peking University. Well, what happened was that from the 1st of June to about the 10th, there was a lot of ferment in Tsinghua University. And the Cultural Revolution dug very deeply against the kind of administration that really was stressing expertise and authority, and the students didn't like it. And then what Liu Shao-ch'i did was to send a very strong Work Team, headed by his own wife, a very high-ranking woman, to Tsinghua University, really, to repress what had become a very radical movement. Because there was — I don't know, I'd call him, really, a kind of Chinese Rudy Ruettiger — but there was a guy on the campus of Tsinghua University who was absolutely fantastic, named K'uai Ta-fu. And he was up there all the time exposing these Work Teams. You see, they came in at the beginning, and they were Communists, they were cadres, and consequently the assumption was that they were doing Mao's work. And so you get these rebellious students, these very revolutionary ones finally being able to unmask them.

And so Bill Hinton cites one of the speeches that goes onto one of the wall posters that K'uai Ta-fu makes, and he says, "Now we are facing an extremely severe test. I firmly believe that up to now most of you have been staunch revolutionaries. But under Comrade Yeh Lin's high pressure policy" — he's a member of the Work Team — "some of you have wavered and some of you have even surrendered. Some are presently confessing their 'crimes.' Though your lips move and your hands write, actually I believe that the vast majority of you, really, deeply in your hearts, don't admit to the people that you have committed any crime. Because in fact you have not. The revolutionary spirit before cannot be wiped out by anyone." And then he goes on to denounce the White Terror, those fifty days between the 10th of June and toward the end of July which was under the reign of terror of this Work Team — coming in, really, to suppress what was the revolutionary facet of this kind of cultural movement on the campus of Tsinghua. K'uai Ta-fu himself was in prison and went on a hunger strike and was on that hunger strike for thirteen days, as a matter of fact, until finally the bottleneck was broken.

The question was, you see, by the time you come to July of 1966: Is it going to get out of the campuses? Is it going to continue? Or will the party mute it? Will Liu Shao-ch'i mute it? Now, you see, the whole question is that Mao Tse-tung was not in Peking. He hadn't been in Peking for eight months; he was sitting in Shanghai. Now, there is something curious about Mao sitting in Shanghai during that period. And my own interpretation — I have no evidence for this, but on the basis of a great deal of the kinds of patterns that you find in Mao's life, there's this whole thing about, you know, giving people enough rope so that they hang themselves — and it seems to me that Mao's sitting there in Shanghai, saying, "Alright, these people up in Peking claiming that they are running the Cultural Revolution are going to show how abysmally hostile they are, and ultimately their errors will have to be corrected." And so finally, when Work Teams come to the point where they really are suppressing the cultural movement on the campuses, Mao decides to go back to Peking.

And he gets back to Peking on the 18th of July, 1966. He makes a kind of circuitous tour, if remember that episode, because on the way from Shanghai to Peking, he stops off in Wuhan, which is the capital of Hupeh province and is on the Yangtze River. And that's when Mao, who was then 74 years old, made his famous dive into the Yangtze River, and according to what is part of the Cultural Revolution legendary, then proceeded to swim 15 kilometers at a pace that broke the Olympic record in 65 minutes [*laughter*]. You don't have to exaggerate. But it suffices to say, at any rate, the idea of the story was that by the time Mao came back at 74, having swum his 15 kilometers in the Yangtze — what he was telling to the students up in Peking, to the students at Tsinghua, to the students everywhere — what he was telling them was, "Listen, if I can fight those waves in the Yangtze River and do this in 65 minutes, you can do anything." And consequently, there was a kind of a symbol.

Well, Mao came back and suppressed the Work Teams. And by the end of July, the Work Teams were withdrawn. And Chou En-lai, who did a tremendous amount during this whole period of '66 and '67 — in one very significant way, that Chou En-lai, more than anybody else, was obviously the Communist leader who was the liaison between the most radical aspects of this Cultural Revolution and the necessity of maintaining the Party structure; he really is the diplomat, really is the intermediary — at this particular time, Chou En-lai goes before a meeting at Tsinghua University on the 4th of August, speaks to a huge crowd of 10,000, and says there, "The Work Teams have made serious mistakes on this and every other campus. They have called revolutionaries counter-revolutionaries, and they have curtailed the mass movement instead of uniting the broad masses of students and staff to expose the capitalist roaders in power. They turned the campaign inward against the students themselves, and they protected the few by attacking the many." And consequently, he spoke Mao's line. That's what the gambit had been at that point.

At that juncture, Mao called together, for the first time in many years, the Central Committee in full plenary session. And he called the Central Committee for its 11th Plenary Session between the 1st and the 11th of August of 1966, an immensely important meeting. And out of that meeting came the so-called 16-Point Decision. And the 16-Point Decision was not only to keep the Cultural Revolution going, but to make it much wider. And if you read part of that 16-Point Decision carefully, you see really what is embedded in it. What it starts out by saying is, "Our aim must be nothing less than a great revolution that touches people to the depth of their souls: that eradicates old ideas, old culture, and old habits of the exploiting classes, that replaces them with new ideas, new culture, new customs, and new habits to transform the spiritual aspect of the whole society." But this is what is fascinating, because Hinton cites the entire document of the 16-Point Decision — and listen to this and you see, really, what the whole tactical gambit is going to be — now, listen: "Large numbers of revolutionary young people, previously unknown, have become courageous and daring pathbreakers. They are vigorous in action and intelligence. Through the media of big character posters and great debate they argue things out, expose and criticize thoroughly, and launch resolute attacks on the open and hidden representatives of the bourgeoisie. In such a great revolutionary movement, it is hardly avoidable that they should show shortcomings of one kind or another. However, their general revolutionary orientation has been correct from the beginning."

You understand what that means: what Mao is calling for are the Red Guard. Mao is calling for the Red Guard. He is calling for the young people, in the universities and in the high schools, to become, really, the cadre of this revolution within a revolution. That, yes, they will commit excesses, there is no question about it, but it surely is worth the risk. And it's within the framework of that 11th Plenary Session in August of 1966 that the Red Guard really appear. And you know what they are. They are absolutely fantastic. They are generally between the ages of 12 and 30, but most of them are between 12 and 18; most of them are actually high school youths. And you see them, by literally the millions, with their khaki uniforms and their red armbands, and inevitably the *Little Red Book* with the quotations of Chairman Mao. And you can just imagine how that was, on that central square of Peking on the 18th of August of 1966, when you get a million of these kids out in that central square — the central square of Peking which is translated as the square of the "Gate to the Kingdom of Peaceful Heaven" — and here you get this million of these young Red Guards citing their quotations from Chairman Mao. Well, they've been brought in and lodged and housed by the army, and they were to be an immense psychological force.

Once you gather the Red Guard together, you cannot contain this Cultural Revolution. It will spread out and fan out, because there is a combination of the political and the psychological in the effort of these young Red Guards. Just remember that these students, after all, are the only ones who, in a most revolutionary way, can show a new style of life — that they are not in the

productive system, that they have not been rooted into some kind of bureaucratic routine — and consequently, they can by their behavior, by their very movement, they are a tremendous attack upon all of that Confucian lethargy which still remains in the society. Also, they have no respect for the past. This is the Thomas Paine position to Edmund Burke: that it's all a dead weight, and it hangs one of you like a rock. And consequently, they go into the houses of those who had been former landlords or former capitalists, and they take their [*inaudible*] down and they smash them, or they change the name of streets if those streets are imperial streets, and consequently change them to popular names. And they do that, and then they go on their thousands and thousands of short and long marches. And they're everywhere. And they move out of Peking, and that million that had been in that square had been brought in from all four corners. And there were Tibetans, and there were Mongolians, and there were Turkastanis, and so forth that go out. And then they go out from Peking on all of these long marches of a thousand kilometers in which they stop at commune after commune, at factory after factory, do work with the workers, read the quotations of Chairman Mao. They implant the idea of the Cultural Revolution.

But, you see, it has its limits. It has its limits, because if you pose the political objective then the students cannot achieve it. Now, it is *manœuvré* that you pose the political objective, and you must have the workers and the peasants. And the political objective is posed in October of 1966. And it is posed in a famous editorial in *Red Flag* on the 3rd of October of 1966, which is the editorial that says, "In our leadership of the revolution there have been two lines. And one is a revolutionary line and the other is conservative." And if anybody doubted what that meant, it was clear at the end of October of '66, when the posters in Peking carried the words that Liu Shao-ch'i had made his confession, and that he was the leader of the conservative line. And it is that faction, from top to bottom, that must be extracted. You see what is now at stake in the Cultural Revolution: what you must do is go into the Party organization at the provincial and the municipal level, everywhere, and you must get the intervention of the mass. You must get those bureaucrats who represent that conservative line out — that becomes the function of the Cultural Revolution. And, if you are to do that, you have to get off the campuses.

And consequently, in the late days of '66 and through those first six months of 1967, the whole focus of the Cultural Revolution changes. And it moves from the universities and the schools into the factories and the fields. And it moves from Peking as its center to Shanghai as its center. Because Shanghai, in January of 1967, does what Mao felt was crucial in this Cultural Revolution: the workers intervene.

Now, you must understand that there is fighting and infighting, and point and counterpoint. And just as when the Cultural Revolution exploded on the campuses, there were upper bureaucrats that were worried. And leaders that were worried, the apparatchiks. So they got worried at the end of 1966, and there is a whole episode which I give you an interpretation of — and it is my interpretation, granted, because, quite obviously, we don't really know — but, you see, there was

an episode at the end of '66 and the beginning of '67 in China, which Mao and his supporters called the effort to "use economism," in order to divert and in order to mystify the workers. Now, quite obviously, for those who were the threatened — who were the leaders, let us say, of the provincial and the municipal organizations — it was important to split the workers from the Red Guard; it was important to deflect the workers into economic ends rather than political ends; it was important, if you please, simply to slow down this particular process.

Now, what happens is that in late '66, in December of that year, there is a lot of labor agitation. Now, that there's labor agitation should not be a great surprise. Workers get low wages, and then they don't like the fact that there are differentials in wages; they don't like the fact that there are authorities in the factories over their heads. All of that is true. But what is interesting to us is that in certain industrial cities, in certain provinces, they are the party leaders who begin to encourage strikes. Strikes, for the first time, really appear in Communist China in December of 1966, and then who raid the city banks, for example, in order to give bonuses, in order to give wage increases, and then send workers on trips to Peking to make their protest. And when in Peking, these workers begin with their extra bonuses to buy up all kinds of goods in the Peking department stores.

The accusation of Mao which to me really rings very true, was that there was an effort to deflect the workers at that point, to buy them off with certain kinds of material incentives. At least what we know is that the rebellious, revolutionary workers of Shanghai — who formed an organization called the Workers' Revolutionary Rebellion Headquarters, in Shanghai — those rebellious workers, on the 5th of January of 1967, issues a kind of ultimatum to city Committee (in other words, the Communist leadership of the city of Shanghai) in which they say, "You're trying to buy off the workers. We will not stand it. We begin our manifestations in the streets." And within ten days, the thing happened that Mao thought was crucial. And that was that the Party leadership in the city of Shanghai was overthrown. And it was overthrown not as in Peking, by Mao's action against P'eng Chen in 1966, but it was overthrown from below by the insertion of the mass into this particular process. And so you get an insurrectionary Communist government from below being formed in the city of Shanghai. And that begins to spread, and it spreads to Shantung province, and it spreads to Kweichow, and it spreads all the way into Shansi.

And then, you see, comes the problem. And this is at the heart of the dilemma of the Cultural Revolution. The problem is, once you have unleashed this, how far will it go? And the excesses begin — the excesses of the Red Guard, the excesses of these new insurrectionary committees. And they begin to displace not only top leaders: they begin to displace all lower bureaucrats, they begin to create anarchy, or chaos; in other words, they dislodge the workings of the system. Chou En-lai works day and night, literally not sleeping in January and February of '67, to...

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... prevent these excesses. Mao insists that the Party itself cannot be overthrown, that that's not the point of the Cultural Revolution. It's going very far, and it begins, you see, to invite a reaction.

It begins in February of '67 to invite a reaction from the right. And it's at that point that Mao intervenes again. And he intervenes on the 23rd of January of 1967, and he calls in the army. Now, to call in the army in China is something different than it is in most countries. The army is popular and it's full of Communists. It's a revolutionary army. It's called the People's Liberation Army, and it believes in the Cultural Revolution. And Mao called the army in to support the rebels and to restore a certain calm. And so the army came in with the strategy of making what it called "triple alliances": that everywhere that the old Party committees were replaced, they would be replaced by a triple alliance, by representatives in equal number of the Red Guard and the insurgent workers of the old cadre — in other words, of the functionaries who had to remain — and of the army. And that would create stability. But it didn't, and we know that it didn't. And we know that the army itself finally tipped over in the direction of order, and began to make its own distinctions, and began to repress the Red Guard. And we know the chaos that ensued.

The point is a very serious one. The whole point of the Cultural Revolution raises the question of who makes a revolution: Is it made by the party, or is it made by the mass? The answer, quite obviously, that the theoreticians give — that Lenin gave — is that it is made by the mass, led by its *avant-garde*, namely, the Party. But that doesn't tell us anything. What happens when the revolution becomes accelerated? And it is Lenin's view that, if you have blind faith in the mass, you fall into *ultra-gauchisme*, you fall into adventurism. And that also was Mao's view. That there was, after all, a danger: that if you wanted to democratize centralism, you would end centralism altogether. If you wanted to put power into the hands of the mass, you would also remove the agency that, presumably, could plan and direct the revolution. That issue was posed in the Cultural Revolution and not solved.

Now, what comes out of the Cultural Revolution is clear. What comes out, first of all, is a raising of the question of permanent revolution: that a revolution cannot remain stable, but it must move toward its contradictions and their resolution. That in the second place, there must be some kind of constant interaction, constant dialectic, between spontaneity and planning, between centralism and democracy. And in the third place, that unless people practice, they never know. No matter what else the Chinese Cultural Revolution did — and Mao got a lot of flak for it in the Western press — but no matter what else it did, it launched millions and millions of people into practice. And it didn't wreck China; it made her different.

By 1970, agriculture was up 25% over what it had been in 1957. China was producing more cotton cloth than any country in the world. She was producing all of the chemical fertilizer she needed. By 1972, she would produce all of the petroleum she needed. And so it wasn't a question of disrupting the economy, as Western writers about this Cultural Revolution said; it was a question of resting at that point, and then resuming. So did it surprise you, last January of this year, when suddenly you saw in the papers that it was starting up again, and that for these four months were into another Cultural Revolution in China, and this time it is an attack on what is called the Confucius-Lin Piao line. And it's all the same thing: it's the workers of Shanghai saying, as they were quoted in the Peking press as saying, saying that, after all, they no longer wanted material incentives — that wasn't communism. It's those who were saying that the bureaucrats have again settled into their privileged position; it's students saying that they don't like the examination system. It starts up again.

And we have this marvelous quotation from Mao Tse-tung — from Mao, now very aged — writing in the *People's Daily* on the 26th of February of this year: "What does it matter to me if wind blows hard when I walk on, if the waves are ferocious when I swim? All of that is better than to walk feebly in an enclosed courtyard." And so the idea is that there are these monumental and immense costs. But just think of it — just think of it and come back with a pregnant thought about it — that the Chinese are the only people that are seriously giving any attention to a question that everyone else assumes is either settled or insoluble: the relationship between the governors and the governed.

Now, maybe that sounds a little Maoist to you. So, I'm not really a Maoist, but let's put it this way: it's a lot better to like a lot of the things of Mao than to like the things of Reagan or of Nixon, who couldn't possibly swim 15 kilometers... [*laughter, applause*]