

- The so-called cultural revolution in Red China these days may be the advent of the downfall of Mao Tse-tung and his communist regime. This article is part of a speech of Dr. Han Lih-Wuh, Ambassador of the Republic of China in Manila.

THE CRUCIAL YEAR IN CHINA

On the New Year's Day, the editorials of the People's Daily and Red Flag in Peiping declared 1967 as the year of decision for the "Cultural Revolution." They called for an all-out offensive against the "anti-Mao power group." They also announced that "the great proletarian cultural revolution must go from the the offices, schools and cultural circles to mines and the rural areas so that all positions are captured by Mao Tse-tung's thought."

What is the cultural revolution? The scope and nature of this type of revolution can exactly be gleaned from the above. It is a power struggle based on ideological split, started by Mao Tse-tung and his associates against the dominating group at the time with ramifications that penetrate into the various levels of authority reaching the workers and farmers, spreading into a dou-

ble-barrelled attack on both anti-Maoism and anti-Communism.

The leader of the group in power is Liu Shao-chi. Liu, a master of organization and intrigue, is being tricked into probable impotency. However while Liu is down, he is by no means out. The anti-Maoist struggle is being carried on not by one leader but by a number of leaders and sub-leaders. While the campaign against Liu may presently reach a crescendo, the ax might yet be prevented from falling on him because of the innate strength of the opposition.

This is indeed an ugly mess. Both the contestants in the struggle are in a quandary. The year of decision may well turn out to be a year of crippling difficulties for the Chinese Communist regime. It might even be

fatal. However things may turn, the developments of the present year on the mainland China will have far-reaching effects both internally and internationally. A crucial year is in the unfolding. Let us take stock of its background and view its prospects.

In Peiping, as in Moscow, there have been purges, and purges in monolithic structures can be compared to the reshuffles in democratic societies. Previous to the present upheaval, two notable purges have taken place in Peiping, the purge of Northeast leaders Kao Kang and Rao Sou-shih in 1955, and that of Defense Chief Peng Te-huai and Chief of Staff Huang Ke-cheng in 1959. In the latter purge, Liu was a collaborator of Mao and was subsequently awarded the chairmanship of the regime, replacing Mao himself. In the same reorganization, Lin Piao took over the defense post, Lou Jui Ching.

In the posters put out by Red Guards in Peiping last autumn, it was related that the 1959 replacement of Mao

by Liu was the result of force majeure rather than voluntary transition, thus sowing the seed for the present power struggle. Is this a real revelation or a hind thought and make-up accusation of Liu? We have no documentary evidence for either case. Anyway, it would probably be fairer to say that the failure of Mao's commune system and the impotence of his hard line international policy were among the more important reasons for the change. In the meantime, Mao's poor health as well as advancing years may have encouraged Liu to bolder planning for the phasing out of Mao. This in turn might have caused Mao's resentment. But these are just conjectures.

As distinct from ordinary purges, the present power struggle is dignified with the name "cultural revolution." Compared to previous purges in Peiping and the numerous purges in Moscow, the "cultural revolution" is unprecedented in the scope of its involvement in that not only leaders are affected but also the masses and the military.

The "cultural revolution" was openly launched a year ago today. On April 18, 1966, the Liberation Army Daily, an official organ of Lin Piao in Peiping, published an editorial with this airy title: "Let Us Blow the Trumpet of the Great Cultural Revolution."

While the "cultural revolution" was thus announced twelve months ago, its stage was set in 1965. At a meeting of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in September 1965, Mao had declared that "we must criticize and repudiate the reactionary thought of the bourgeoisie." But the Party was only under his nominal control; his voice was left in the void. In November, he retreated to Shanghai where he started his moves against the power group in opposition to his thought. On November 10, under the name of Comrade Yao Wen-yuan — a name that might have been assumed by Mao himself — a special article" on the New Historical Drama 'Hai Jui's Dismissal'" appeared in Wen Hwei Pao in Shanghai.

This precipitated the attack on intellectuals and writers and sounded the call for revolution against anti-Party and anti-Mao elements. The drama piece "Hai Jui's Dismissal" was written by Wu Han, Vice Mayor of Peiping. Wu and Teng To, Secretary of the Peiping Municipal Chinese Communist Party Committee, together with Liao Mo Sha, member of the Committee, pen name of Wu Nan Hsing. After much hesitation and even resistance, the Peking Daily was finally forced to therefore anti-Party thought. The three musketeers of the so-called Three-Household Village Black Inn were urged. The Red Flag took a step further and asked: Who was the man behind the gang? The "hot pursuit" resulted in the dismissal of the first secretary of the Peiping Municipal Party Committee, Peng Chen, on June 3, 1966. He was also relieved subsequently as Mayor. But this is only the first big assault on the opposition. As the editorial of the People's Daily on June 10, entitled "Long Live the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," sug-

gested; all monsters must be swept away.

The months of June and July 1966 witnessed feverish maneuverings on both sides to the struggle. Liu Shao-chi was busy preparing a plenary session of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (C.C.P.) to defeat Mao. On the other hand, Mao adroitly executed a military deployment around Peiping through Lin Piao. Teng Hsiao Ping, who had cooperated with Liu, got cold feet at the last moment perhaps because of the military pressure.

The Central Committee of the C.C.P., which has not met for four years and which should meet every six months, lasting from August 1 to 12, 1966. After protracted debates and hard tussles, Liu was demoted from number two to number eight and Lin Piao shot up to number two. Lo Jui Ching was replaced to remove the military away from the reach of Liu. Tao Chu, who was in control of the south, was given later.

Suspicious of Teng Hsiao Ping and not sure yet of both the Party and the military,

Mao resorted to the employment of youths by organizing them into the Red Guards whose first rally was held on August 18. The openly proclaimed aim was to "protect Chairman Mao, destroy bourgeoisie thoughts, and establish new proletarian culture." But after having given vent to childish fantasy and eccentricities, including toying with street names and destroying artifacts, the Red Guards were soon directed to attack the opposition, headed by Liu and Teng.

The rampages of millions of youth from Peiping to Canton for the better part of a year is a pitiful and heart-rending story. There were Red Guards and counter Red Guards. Everywhere they created havoc and confusion. What have they achieved for their original instigators? They have strengthened the hand of Mao and Lin and advanced the status of Mao's wife, Chiang Chin. They have humiliated but not crushed Liu. On the other hand, they have made a mockery of the Communist regime and nearly plunged

the whole countryside into anarchism.

To bring the Red Guards under control and to secure the intervention of the military for a more effective showdown with the opposition, the Mao-Lin faction called nearly this year for a triple alliance: the party cadre, the army, and the revolutionary rebels, meaning the masses. The alliance is for the naked purpose of seizing power. In this alliance, the role of the Red Guards becomes minor. In fact, elementary and secondary schools, closed since last July, have been ordered to open in February and March, respectively, and Red Guards were ordered back to schools. For wresting power from the anti-Mao and anti-Party opposition, the triple alliance is to effect a grand alliance

with all possible elements amenable to the revolution. After having wrested control in a city or province, it shall organize into something like the Paris Commune or revolutionary council. Around the middle of March, the Central Committee of the C.C.P. ordered a temporary halt to the power struggle at the working levels in the countryside. The order stated, "Do not struggle to seize power in production brigades and production teams during the busy period of spring cultivation." This, however, spanned only a few weeks. The general campaign seems to be in a stalemate but the specific drive against Liu and Teng appears to be in crescendo. This brings the so-called cultural revolution to its present status. —*From The Manila Times, May 9, 1967.*