

NATIONALISM, COMMUNISM, AND DEMOCRACY: THE CASE IN CHINA

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The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) seized China's political power in 1949. Since then the CCP has established a rigid political structure in the government and has monopolized political operation at various levels of the society. The Communist rule is characterized by its anti-western propaganda and recurrent political repression.

The purpose of this paper is to explain how the Chinese Communists utilized nationalism and developed it into "anti-U.S. imperialism". It also discusses how "Anti-U.S. imperialism" became a repressive force in domestic politics. In 1950s, the Chinese Communists emphasized the threat from the "U.S. imperialism." Nationalism was reflected in the movement opposing the "U.S. imperialism". Both the ideology of anti-imperialism and Peking's perception of the U.S. contributed to its isolation from the West, and to incessant purges of the "rightists". Incessant political purges and power struggle led to the rise of radical leftism. Leftism became a powerful weapon in political repression which resulted in the destruction of Chinese political system and militate against democratic development.

Nationalism and Anti-imperialism: The Historical Background

From its formation, the CCP championed struggles for working class liberation and for the proletarian revolution, and vowed to eliminate

foreign privileges in China imposed by unequal treaties. In the manifesto of the Second National Congress of July 1922, the CCP declared that the policy of a united front was not equivalent to surrender to the capitalists. It pursued immediate aims to quell internal disorders by overthrowing the military cliques, to remove oppression by international imperialism, and to achieve the complete independence of the Chinese nation.¹⁾ The CCP put forth such slogans of “Down with the warlords” and “Down with international imperialism.” The CCP criticized Sun Yat-sen’s Kuomintang for often falling into erroneous notions: it relied on foreign powers for help in the Chinese national revolution. The CCP asserted that such requests for help from the enemy not only cost the Kuomintang the loss of leadership of the national revolution but also made the people dependent on a foreign power, thus destroying their confidence and spirit of national independence.²⁾

In the 1928 Political Resolution of the Sixth National Congress of the CCP, the Party urged the overthrow of the rule of imperialism and the warlord-KMT regime.³⁾ The Party urged inducing the working class masses and the petty-bourgeois to participate in these struggles against the imperialists, the warlords, and the KMT government.⁴⁾ Under the Li Li-san leadership, the CCP continued to utilize the propaganda of the anti-imperialist struggle in urban areas. It set August 1 as Anti-imperialist-war Day in 1929.⁵⁾ It urged that the anti-imperialist struggle should be strengthened through co-ordination with the anti-worldwar movement and the “support-the-Soviet Union” movement, and that the anti-imperialist movement must be closely co-ordinated with the workers’

1) Conrad Brandt, Benjamin Schwartz, and John K. Fairbank, *A Documentary History of Chinese Communism* (hereafter cited as *A Documentary History*), New York: Atheneum, 1966, p.64.

2) *Ibid.*, p.71.

3) *Ibid.*, p.143. For the nature of this congress, see Benjamin Schwartz, *Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966, pp.115~116.

4) *A Documentary History*, p.152.

5) *Ibid.*, p.167.

movement, the anti-KMT movement, and the anti-militarist struggle.⁶⁾

In Mao's Report to the Second All-China Soviet Congress (1934), he advocated that the Soviets must strengthen their leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle throughout the whole country as well as the revolutionary struggle of the workers and peasants in KMT territory. He asserted that by utilizing the concrete facts of the KMT's surrender to imperialism, the Soviets might arouse the national consciousness and class consciousness of the masses in the KMT regions to a sharp struggle against imperialism and its lackey, the KMT. Thus, he called for the masses to organize and arm themselves, to fight for the independence of China, and to drive imperialists out of China in the regions under Japanese occupation.⁷⁾ This was an early example of applying nationalism to hatred against imperialism and masses mobilization.

In the Yen-an period, evidence of applying nationalism to opposition against imperialism was even clearer. In the name of fighting Japanese imperialism a new united front was adopted by the CCP after the Xian incident of December 1936. From then on, the CCP saw itself as the major force in the war of resistance. Emphasis was placed on overthrow of Japanese imperialism.⁸⁾ In following the policy of the united front, the CCP publicly declared that it had abandoned all of its policies of overthrowing the Kuomintang by force. The CCP officially became one of the important political forces in the war of resistance. Massive propaganda and nation-wide movements were conducted in order to awaken the masses and to mobilize all possible forces in the war effort. Opposition to Japanese imperialism became an important political force

6) *A Documentary History*, p. 171. The communists in this period were divided in their attitude toward revolutionary strategy and the role of imperialism in Chinese revolution. See Arif Dirlik, "National Development and Social Revolution in Early Chinese Marxist Thought," *The China Quarterly*, no. 58, April-June 1974, pp. 286~307.

7) *A Documentary History*, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

8) See Chalmers A. Johnson, *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, Reprint 1967), pp. 31~70.

during this period.

Mao's Theory of Revolution and Imperialism

Mao's early view of imperialism is seen in his "The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party (1939)." Mao saw that the imperialist powers used and continued to use military, political, economic and cultural means of oppression, and that China had become a semicolony or colony. In "The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party," Mao said:

Through wars and unequal treaties the imperialist powers had controlled all the important trading ports, had acquired extraterritoriality, had operated industries, and had monopolized China's banking and finance. The imperialist powers had supplied the warlords with large quantities of munitions and a host of military advisers to keep them fighting among themselves. Through missionary work and the establishment of hospitals, schools, and the publication of newspapers, the imperialists had conducted a policy of cultural aggression.⁹⁾

Departing from this basic understanding of imperialism, Mao analyzed imperialism from the point of view of class struggle. The imperialist powers, according to Mao, had established a network of comprador and merchant-usurer exploitation rights across China and had created a comprador and merchant-usurer class in their service, so as to facilitate their exploitation of the masses of the Chinese peasantry and other sections of the people. Following the Comintern's line, Mao pointed out the imperialism first allies itself with the ruling strata of the previous social structure, with feudal lords and the trading and moneylending bourgeoisie, against the majority of the people. He adopted Stalin's idea

9) Mao Zedong, "Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party," *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1967.), pp. 305~331.

that imperialism is the force that supports and preserves the feudal remnants and their entire bureaucratic-militarist superstructure. In Mao's analysis, the imperialist powers, on the one hand, hastened the disintegration of feudal society and the growth of elements of capitalism, thereby transforming a feudal society into a semifeudal one while, on the other hand, they imposed their ruthless rule on China, reducing an independent country to a semicolonial or colonial country. Mao maintained that the large-scale invasion by Japanese imperialism in 1931 had turned a large chunk of semicolonial China into a Japanese colony and that the purpose of the imperialist powers invading China was not to transform a feudal China into a capitalist China. On the contrary, their purpose was to transform China into their own semicolony or colony.¹⁰⁾

In the same article, Mao said: "Under the twofold oppression of imperialism and feudalism, and especially as a result of the large-scale invasion of Japanese imperialism, the Chinese people, and particularly the peasants, had become more and more impoverished, living in hunger and cold and without any political rights." Therefore he concluded that the contradiction between imperialism and the Chinese nation and the contradiction between feudalism and the great masses of the people were the basic contradictions in modern Chinese society. But he advocated that the contradiction between imperialism and the Chinese nation was the principal one. According to Mao, these contradictions and their intensification must inevitably result in the incessant growth of revolutionary movements. He said: "The great revolutions in modern and contemporary China had emerged and grown on this basis of their basic contradictions." Thus, Mao develops his theory of revolution based on his analysis of imperialism and feudalism.

In Mao's doctrine of revolution, the chief targets or enemies at the first stage of the Chinese revolution were imperialism and feudalism, i.e., the bourgeoisie of the imperialist countries and the landlord class

10) *Ibid.*

in China.¹¹⁾ He says that imperialism and feudalism are the chief oppressors and the chief obstacles to the progress of Chinese society. "And imperialism is the foremost and most ferocious enemy of the Chinese people, because national oppression by imperialism is the more onerous." Mao unambiguously pointed out that since Japan's invasion of China, the principal enemy of the revolution had been Japanese imperialism together with all Chinese traitors and reactionaries in league with it. As he saw it, the upper stratum of the Chinese bourgeoisie represented by the reactionary clique within the Kuomintang had collaborated with imperialism and betrayed the Communist Party, the proletariat, the peasantry, and the Chinese revolution.¹²⁾

Mao advocated two tasks for the revolution. A national revolution to overthrow foreign imperialist oppression and a democratic revolution to overthrow feudal landlord oppression were required by the revolution. The foremost task was the national revolution to overthrow imperialism. He said: "There two tasks are interrelated. Unless imperialist rule is overthrown, the rule of the feudal landlord class cannot be terminated, because imperialism is its main support... Conversely, unless the feudal landlord class is overthrown, it is impossible to overthrow the imperialist rule, because the feudal class is the main social base of imperialist rule in China." Thus, Mao urged carrying on these two tasks together.

In short, the concept of imperialism has been one of the most important elements in Mao's theory of revolution. Mao not only developed a theory of imperialism based on class struggle but also linked imperialism with Chinese revolution. This provided an ideological foundation for Peking's anti-imperialism movements in the post-1949 period.

11) *Ibid.*

12) *Ibid.*

Anti-Imperialism As An Ideology

Anti-imperialism has been an important part of Chinese communist ideology. Ideology is a systematic set of ideas with consequences for action. Generally, Chinese communist ideology may be divided into pure ideology which is a set of ideas designed to give the individual a unified and conscious world view and practical ideology which is a set of ideas designed to give the individual rational instruments for action. Marxism is regarded as the major part of pure ideology, while Leninism and the thought of Mao Zedong are regarded as the principal components of practical ideology. In fact, practical ideology includes revolutionary experience gained in the process of the Chinese revolution. The Chinese communists adopted the concept of imperialism from Lenin. The practical applications of anti-imperialism, however, are based on revolutionary experience and the needs of the Party. Thus, anti-imperialism is practical ideology. Like other parts of practical ideology, the concept of anti-imperialism developed in accordance with political development.

Lenin's theory of imperialism was an attempt to explain the fact that revolution had not yet taken place in the most highly developed capitalist countries. His explanation was that capitalism had found a way out of the contradictions which Marx had described in the Communist Manifesto. The way out was expansion over the whole world in search of cheap raw materials, ready markets for commodities, excess capital, and most important, cheap labor which could be exploited in unprecedented measure. Lenin maintained that imperialism is not a policy that can be adopted or abandoned at will, but an inevitability of rotting and moribund capitalism.¹³⁾ Imperialism was seen as the only way by which the proletarian movement in the developed countries could be

13) Alfred G. Meyer, *Leninism*, (New York: Praeger University Series, 1956,) p. 241, footnote.

neutralized or robbed of its most dangerous weapon. The bourgeoisie could succeed in averting an increase in the misery of the masses by distributing the profits which the capitalist system had obtained through exploitation of its colonies. Lenin, like Marx, however, asserted that capitalism cannot function without leading to crises and revolutionary situations.

These Leninist ideas are rarely seen in Chinese media. On the contrary, millions of copies of works propagandize Mao's denunciation of imperialism. For mobilization purposes, these become much more important than Lenin's theory of imperialism. Through a powerful propaganda machine, the Chinese masses were indoctrinated with Mao's theory of revolution and imperialism. To oppose imperialism became an act of faith by the mass.

Peking's denunciation of imperialism has two important characteristics. First, despite the fact that Peking openly accepts Marxism and Leninism as its guiding thought and foundation of ideology, Peking's sentiments opposing imperialism was based more on historical experience and nationalistic sentiments than on Marxism-Leninism. Lenin's theory of imperialism only serves as a theoretical justification for China to oppose imperialistic aggression. In December 1956, Mao said: "Imperialism is those countries, i.e., Britain, the United States, France, Holland, which took part in the Allied Armies of the Eight Nations, those which burned our Yuanmin Garden, seized Hong Kong and Taiwan..."¹⁴⁾ In this definition, Mao used the historical record as a criterion. It is quite clear that Mao's concept of imperialism was based on historical interpretation. In mentioning the Allies Armies of the Eight Nations, he was thinking of the atrocities perpetrated by those powerful foreign countries.

14) *Mao Zedong Si Xiang Wan Sui* (Long Live Mao Zedong's Thought: hereafter cited as *Wan Sui*), p. 63. In fact, Mao made a mistake here, the eight countries involved were Britain, the U.S., Italy, Germany, France, Japan, Austria, and Russia, not Holland.

Second, anti-imperialism has served important functions in internal politics. From Peking's point of view, imperialism has threatened China since the Opium War of the 1840s. As Mao said in "Chinese Revolution and Chinese Communist Party": "After the Opium War, China, step by step, fell into the state of semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. Since the 1931 Japanese invasion, China has become a colonial, semi-colonial, and semi-feudal society."¹⁵⁾ Mao believed that the changes in Chinese society were caused by imperialism by means military, political, economic and cultural suppression. Thus, Mao believed that China's internal politics were not independent of foreign relations. Mao maintained that when imperialism launches a war of aggression against a country, all the various classes of such a country, except for a few traitors, can temporarily unite in a national war against imperialism. At this point, the principle contradiction is between the imperialist and the country concerned, while all the contradictions among the various classes within the country are temporarily relegated to a secondary and subordinate position. He uses examples in Chinese history such as the Opium War of 1840, the Sino-Japanese War of 1894, the Boxer Rebellion of 1900, and the Sino-Japanese War of 1937-45 to support his theory.¹⁶⁾

Peking's Perception of Threats from the "U.S. Imperialism"

In 1949 when the Chinese Communists swept into power, Peking followed the so-called "leaning to one side" policy and aligned itself with the Soviet Union. Peking perceived the U.S. as the principal enemy. It repeatedly protested the U.S. "armed invasion" in Taiwan. The United States was considered the most important threat to China. Domestically, Peking still faced a period of consolidation of power. Its

15) "Chinese Revolution and Chinese Communist Party," *op. cit.*

16) "On Contradiction" (1937), *Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Zedong (Selected Readings)*. (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1971.), p. 110.

national defense forces were in the early stage of construction. Under such circumstances, Peking naturally sought any possible ally to deter a possible U.S. invasion. Deterrence of a possible invasion by "U.S. imperialism" had the highest priority in Peking's policy.¹⁷⁾ Peking's hostility toward Washington further intensified during the period of the Korean War. Under the Treaty of Mutual Alliance of 1950, the Soviet Union provided military security and economic assistance to the Chinese Communists. During these early years Peking regarded the Sino-Soviet Alliance as the main opposing force to the 'imperialist camp headed by the United States.'

With the stationing of the U.S. Seventh Fleet in the Taiwan Strait in 1950 and the resumption of U.S. military shipments to Taiwan in 1951, Peking feared a U.S. invasion. The campaign of "Resist-America, Aid-Korea" was a nation-wide movement to resist possible U.S. invasion. Millions of people participated in demonstrations in support of this campaign. The perception that the U.S. was the arch enemy did not change markedly during the next few years. For example in 1955, an editorial in the *Renmin Ribao* said that "in the current international situation, in order to strengthen our national defense, liberate Taiwan, strike down the aggression of imperialism, and maintain the independence of sovereignty and territorial integrity, we ought to develop industry."¹⁸⁾ The pressure of the U.S. military force clearly served as an ideological motivation for Peking to mobilize its people. The editorial continued: "The imperialist power still surrounds us, we must prepare to cope with any sudden incident... This requires every Communist member to give up individual interests and rely upon the knowledge and strength of the masses and the knowledge and the strength of the Party to overcome any difficulty, and struggle for the great victory

17) See Michael Schaller, *The United States and China in the Twentieth Century*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp.95~103.

18) *Renmin Ribao*, April 5, 1955.

of socialist undertaking."¹⁹⁾

The importance of the policy of deterrence may be understood in terms of Peking's domestic political mobilization. In 1955, Peking used anti-imperialism to mobilize its people in various kinds of movements. In his article entitled "Raise Alertness, Oppose Numbness," Luo Ruijing, then Minister of Public Security, said:

As long as classes and class struggle still exist in the world, our enemy will not forget us at any moment. Thus they will not lessen their sabotage on us at any moment. Evidence proves that whenever we make one progressive step in the revolution, it inevitably leads to ruthless antagonism and senseless sabotage from the enemies, both internal and external. They will create any possible plot and use poisonous means to stop our socialist revolution.²⁰⁾

Anti-imperialism and Anti-western Sentiment

One of the most important consequences of Peking's ideology of "anti-U.S. imperialism" was its foreign policy of "leaning to one side." Peking aligned itself with the Soviet Union politically and militarily. In 1950, Mao Zedong signed with Stalin the Treaty of Mutual Alliance. This alliance with the Soviet Union provided the Peking government with military security and economic assistance. Undisputably, Soviet aid was both indispensable and invaluable at a moment when Peking badly needed financial assistance and technical know-how for its industrial development. By the end of 1957, the Soviet Union supplied China with complete sets of equipment and technical aid for 211 major industrial enterprises. Moscow also sent a total of 10,800 specialists to China to assist in industrial development and the training of Chinese workers and technicians.²¹⁾ Soviet aid also led to significant changes in the

19) *Ibid.*

20) *Renmin Ribao*, June 30, 1955.

21) "Sino-Soviet Cooperation", *Beijing Review*, No. 29, (April 29, 1958), p. 20..

Chinese educational system and cultural policies which brought China closer to the Soviet Union but isolated China from the West for twenty-five years. In its early period, Peking adopted an irreconcilably hostile attitude towards the West.

In the first decade after the establishment of the Peking government, the Chinese communists virtually learned from the Soviet in every respect. Culturally, the government accepted Soviet practice in the distinction of proletarian arts and literature from that of the capitalists, and they shared a similar contemptuous attitude toward Western culture. This attitude resulted in Peking's policies of prohibiting the importation and circulation of American and Western European books and publications in China. Consequently, little knowledge of Western development could be obtained by the people of China. They were instead introduced to Soviet writings and publications which the government considered the best. Similarly, the CCP accepted most Soviet industrial equipment and set up plants on the Russian model. Because they read only Soviet books and publications, the Chinese engineers and intellectuals learned only about Soviet development.²²⁾

Furthermore, in most of educational institutions the authorities introduced Russian language as the second language in place of English. The change made it very difficult for the younger generation to learn anything from the West, and further isolated the Chinese people from Westerners.²³⁾ A decade of isolation from the West clearly was an obstacle to development of science and technology. This isolation undoubtedly strengthened Peking's anti-foreignism and anti-democratic repression.

22) *Wo Men Kan Xixiang Gai Zao Yu Gao Deng jiao yu Gong Zuo* (Our Observation of Thought Reform and High Education Work), in *Wenhui Bao*, Shanghai, May 20, 1959.

23) "Jiao Yu Jie De Jiao Tiao Zhu Yi" (Dogmatism in Educational Society), *Jiao Shio Bao*, Peking, May 28, 1957.

Anti-foreignism and Anti-democratic Political Repression in 1950s

A serious consequence of Peking's ideology of "anti-U.S. imperialism" was recurrent political purges. As illustrated above, in the post-1949 period, imperialism remained a target of mass denunciation. Like capitalism, imperialism-Leninist style is the ideological enemy of the Party and the People. The Chinese, however, always denounce imperialism from the perspective of class struggle. The CCP launched a series of political movements to repress rightists and capitalists in China in order to consolidate its power. Since capitalism was the enemy of the socialist revolution and since imperialism was politically reactionary because it attempted to overthrow the socialist revolution, both capitalists and imperialists were considered enemies of the Chinese socialist revolution. In the class struggle, capitalists in China were the target of political rectification. Those who were linked with imperialism or foreign capitalist were believed to be the supporters of internal capitalists. Thus, in each movement of class struggle, internal capitalists and reactionaries, together with imperialism, became the target of purges and repressed.

In the first decade, large-scale campaigns such as the "Resist America and Aid Korea" campaign clearly were mass activities against U.S. imperialism. The "Resist America and Aid Korea" campaign was carried on until 1953. During this period, most of the important domestic campaigns such as the "Three Antis and Five Antis," the "Suppression of Counter-revolutionaries," and the "Anti-Rightist" movements were launched to liquidate people who had relations with foreigners and who had foreign capitalist ideas, particularly those persons "opposing Party policies." In fact, these campaigns were strengthened by anti-foreign sentiment or "anti-imperialism."

In the 1951 First Campaign of Suppression of Counter-Revolutionary Elements, churches were closed down and foreign missionaries were expelled from China. A great number of people who were related to

foreigners in one way or another were treated as foreign spies. During the 1952 "Three-Antis and Five Antis" campaign, industrialists and businessmen were requested to submit a detailed report on their past background and their thoughts were reviewed. Those who were related to foreigners were either investigated or arrested. The "Suppression of Counter-Revolutionary Elements" in 1955 was the most bitter ideological struggle, in which a great number of intellectuals who were educated in the West were purged and many who were sympathetic to Western ideas were also arrested. A strict categorization of class affiliation was undertaken. It dealt a serious blow to the intellectuals. (See Table 1)

In 1956, a Campaign to Suppress Counter-Revolutionaries and a Rectification Campaign were launched in which a great number of accused counter-revolutionaries were purged. A great deal of propaganda was put to the public. The campaign lasted about two months and was suspended when some party members feared things might get out of hand as they had Hungary and Poland. The year of 1957 was a difficult year for those who worked in art and literature. As the result of the "Let a hundreded followers blossom, a hundreded schools of thought contend" movement, an "anti-rightist" campaign was initiated to purge those who did not support party policies in the arts. China's cultural development suffered a severe loss by the merciless repression of many well-known artists and intellectuals.²⁴⁾

At the Fourth Session of the First National People's Congress in July, 1957, Lu Dingyi said:

Our socialist revolution has been basically completed but not completely achieved, the victory of our socialist revolution has been basically consolidated, but not completely consolidated. Domestically, Taiwan remains to be liberated, there are some anti-revolutionaries and some remnants of the landlord, bureaucrat, and capitalist classes. Externally, there is a group

24) Jhao Cong (Chao Ts'ung), "Art and Literature in Communist China," *Communist China 1949~1959*, Vol. III, Communist China Problem Research Series, (Hong Kong: Union Research Institute, 1961), pp. 158~159.

of aggressors led by U.S. imperialism. They plot to overthrow the people's government every minute and every second.... A small group of rightists oppose socialism. They will not give up their exploitation. They dream of taking the capitalist road and will resort to a last struggle. These rightists... have close connections with internal and external reactionaries and have ample experience in political struggle and armed struggle. Thus, we still have a long period of class struggle. Furthermore, this struggle will sometimes be very sharp and intense. This is certain.²⁵⁾

Liu Shaoqi, then Chief of State, in the second session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, 1958, stated that the rightist clique of the capitalist class was the agent of imperialists, remnants of feudalists, and Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang. This clearly linked the internal enemy with external enemies.²⁶⁾ This also clearly reflected the opinion of Chinese leaders that the threat by the internal opposition and external enemy were linked with each other. And the struggle against internal enemies must be accompanied by opposing imperialism.

Following the "Great Leap Forward" in 1958, an Anti-Rightist Campaign was enforced again in the literary and art circles, the "anti-rightist thinking" and "anti-revisionism" struggles lasted more than two years. Any criticism of Party policy was branded as "rightist." Fu Feng, the most famous living Chinese author, was purged because of his "capitalist thinking." After the failure of the "Great Leap Forward," China was soon engulfed in a serious power struggle among the top echelon of leaders. In the early 1960s, a strong force of "Leftism" led by Mao Zedong was rising.²⁷⁾ This stream of "Leftism" reached its climax in the 1966-69 Cultural Revolution.

25) *Renmin Ribao*, July 12.

26) See "Political Report of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party to the Eighth National People's Congress," *Xin Hua Ban Yve Kan*, Peking, no. 11, May 5, 1958.

27) See "On Questions of Party History", *Beijing Review*, no. 27, July 6, 1981; also see Frederick C. Teiwes, *Politics and Purges in China*, (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1979), pp. 493~527.

Power Struggle, Leftism, and Anti-foreignism in 1960s

Chinese political developments in the 1950s showed that when power struggles increased, leftism and anti-foreignism rose as well. Radical leftism was to extend class struggle to all kind of activities and to exaggerate the threat of imperialism and internal enemies to the Party and the country. As a result of continuous purges against "rightists" and "pro-rightist elements," as well as "counter-revolutionaries," leftism became a popular norm in the Chinese society. The term of "rightist" became a political weapon in the battle against internal opponents. This was clearly reflected in the power struggle between Mao Zedong and his opponents in 1959-62.

For example, signs of opposition to Mao Zedong's leadership surfaced in the criticism and comments of upper-level Party leaders in 1959. Dissatisfied with the results of the Great Leap Forward (GLP) and the People's communes, some party leaders voiced their personal opposition to Mao's support of the communes. These leaders blamed the Great Leap Forward for the fact many areas were suffering an unprecedented shortage of food. In addition to natural disasters, they pointed to human factors as responsible for the economic decline. These debates over the Great Leap Forward and people's communes culminated in the 8th Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CCP in Lushan in September, 1959. During this meeting Peng Dehuai, Minister of National Defense, and Huang Kezheng, Chief of Staff of National Defense, heatedly attacked Mao's assertion of the great success of the Great Leap and People's communes. Mao denounced Peng, Huang and Zhang Wentian in the meeting as 'right opportunists' of an anti-Party clique.²⁸⁾ As a result, they were condemned in an article entitled "The

28) "Resolution of the 8th Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of C.P.C. concerning the Anti-Party Clique headed by Peng Teh-huai," *Beijing Review*, no. 34 (August 1967), pp. 19~20.

Great Call" published by *Hongqi* on September 1, 1959:

If we allow such right opportunist ideas to spread among us, they will seriously endanger our undertakings; after this point was clearly pointed out at the 8th Plenary Session of the 8th CCP Central Committee, there is no doubt that the entire Party and the people throughout the country will, under the leadership of the CCP Central Committee headed by Comrade Mao Zedong, resolutely struggle against such right opportunist ideas.²⁹⁾

The Lushan meeting was a clear example how Mao defeated his opponents by denouncing them as the "rightists".

Political struggle continued in 1960 and 1961. A group of Mao's opponents emerged during this period. These leaders included Liu Shaoqi, then the Chief of State, then vice-premiers including Deng Xiaoping, Chen Yun, Tan Chen-lin, and Bo Yibo, and then mayor of Peking, Peng Zhen. Serious divergences between Mao's group and his opponents developed in 1961. These differences, unlike those of 1959, extended beyond agricultural policy to include political, industrial, cultural, and educational matters. Liu and Deng developed a group which formed a more pragmatic and ideologically moderate faction within the Party. A confrontation took place at the Enlarged Central Working Conference in January, 1962.

Mao's leftism, which was characterized by high-handed political repression, was greatly intensified as a result of the increasing challenge by the Liu-Deng group. Mao presided at a Work Conference of the Central Committee held at Beitaiho at the end of August and early September to fight back.³⁰⁾ In this conference, Mao strongly emphasized his leftist faith in class struggle, he pointed out: "The elimination of the system of ownership by the exploiting class through socialist tran-

29) *Ibid.*, p.12.

30) "How To Be a Good Communist, Is a Revisionist Program Opposed to the Thought of Mao Zedong," *Guangming Ribao*, (April 9, 1967), trans. in *Current Background*, no. 827, pp. 1~50.

sformation is not equal to the disappearance to struggle in the political and ideological spheres.... The capitalist ideology has been in existence for decades and hundreds of years. The bourgeoisie can be born again, and we must be on the alert against this."³¹⁾ Several top economic officials, Chen Yun, Li Fuchun, Li Xiannian, Bo Yibo and Deng Zihui, were criticized by Mao. Serious disputes developed among CCP leaders over the future course of economic development. Mao finally called a halt to further retreat from the Party line.³²⁾ It is clear that in this conference Mao launched a counterattack against the Liu-Deng group. He criticized Liu and others for promoting rightist line of capitalism and indulging in criminal activities antagonistic to the proletarian headquarters.³³⁾ Mao openly reiterated his leftism and used hostile and harsh criticism against his opponents.

Signs are clear that Mao became more repressive as a result of political struggle. In late September 1962, Mao convened and presided over the 10th Plenum of the 8th Central Committee. The atmosphere at this meeting was still as tense as it had been at the August-September Working Conference. Mao issued a call: "Never forget the class struggle!" He emphatically pointed out that "the utilization of novels to carry out anti-Party activities is a great invention to overthrow political power, it is always necessary first of all to create public opinion, to do work in the ideological sphere. This is true for the revolutionary class as well as for the counter-revolutionary class." Explicitly, he attacked dissenters as capitalist roaders who attempted to overthrow socialist China by using novels to influence public opinion. The Communique of the 10th Plenum of the 8th CCP Central Committee called on "the people of the whole country to hold higher the illustrious banners of the General Line

31) *Ibid.*

32) *Beijing Gongshe*, no. 19, (April 27, 1967).

33) "Long Live the Invincible Thought of Mao Zedong!" *Jiefang Ribao*, (Shanghai, undated), translated in *Current Background*, no. 884. (July 18, 1969), p. 23.

of building socialism, the Great Leap Forward, the People's communes, and the leadership of the Chairman, and fight to win new victories for China's socialist cause.³⁴⁾ Apparently this was no longer a policy debate, but rather a power struggle between Mao and the dissenters.

In sum, from 1960 to 1962, the Chinese leadership developed a serious split between Mao's leftist faction and his opponents. What had begun as a dispute over economic policy rapidly developed into political conflict and power struggle. Strong leftist campaigns, such as the 'Four Cleans'; to learn from the PLA, and the Socialist Education Movement, led by Mao, were used to struggle against his opponents. These political conflicts continued in the period of 1963-66, finally culminating in the Cultural Revolution of 1967-69.

As in the development of Mao-Liu political struggle, an increasing number of Mao's supporters were forced to be strong "leftists" and to blame their opponents as "rightist". In order to attack their opponents the attackers always tried to be more leftist than those attacked and to demonstrate themselves to be more revolutionary than their enemies. Thus, most of people "would rather be leftist than rightist." The more frequently political struggles took place, the more leftist the people were. The popular belief was that too much leftism was only a matter of method, but rightism was a matter of different political line. Therefore, many people tried to be more leftist than others. In the history of Chinese communism, all political movements had been anti-rightist movements; never had there been an anti-leftist movement; Therefore, being a leftist was a way to survive in the political arena. And "rightists" were those who lost in the political struggle. In the early 1960s politics clearly incessantly tended to move in a "leftist" direction. It was a spiral process; the more political struggle, the more leftist people became. There was no mechanism to adjust this spiral back to its original position. This was also the case in policies of cultural

34) *Beijing Review*, no. 39, (September 28, 1962), pp. 5~7.

development, education, and economy. More and more, culture, education, and economy were forced to develop in a "leftist" direction due to this "leftist" spiral process in power struggle.

To be leftist was a powerful weapon in political struggle, and anti-imperialism was a manifestation of leftism. To be a leftist means to be a revolutionary. To be a revolutionary means to oppose imperialism and revisionism or to be determined in opposing enemies. Thus, a common phenomenon was that the sentiment of nationalism heightened when people tried to be more leftist. The more leftist they became, the stronger their antiforeignism was. Therefore, as a result of continuous political struggle, increasing numbers of people became more antiforeign than they had been previously. Signs were clear between 1959-62, that a political struggle at the highest level of leadership resulted in an increasingly leftist ideology and policy. From that time a strong leftist group led by Mao himself was prepared to struggle with the accused "capitalists" or "capitalist roaders" in the Party. Therefore, the trend of continuous developed toward leftist and anti-foreign views did not fade away even after the first decade. It became an irresistible trend which could not be stopped without drastic changes in leadership, political norms, the society, and the external environment. This continuous development finally erupted into the outburst of the "radical left" and "fanatic antiforeignism" between 1967 and 1969.

Summary

Peking's ideology of anti-imperialism was rooted in its nationalism. After the establishment of the government in 1949, Mao's theory of revolution and imperialism was developed into an important part of ideology. This ideology was later strengthened by Peking's perception of threat from the United States and emerged into "anti-U.S. imperialism." Mao synthesized both the ideology and perception of threat from the United States into the theory of paper tiger. As a result, China was forced to follow a pro-Soviet policy, isolating itself from the West.

Moreover, incessant political purges caused by antiforeignism eliminated a great number of intellectuals and militated against the modernization of China.

After 1949, the development of anti-imperialism was closely related to internal politics. On one hand, it became a ready excuse to tighten internal control; on the other, it became an important political weapon in power struggles. As a result of continuous political campaigns and power struggles in the 1950s, antiforeignism reached a higher level than ever before. A spiral process developed in the first decade of Peking's government, which was an irreversible trend toward leftism. Leftism evoked stronger and stronger antiforeignism, which, in turn, fueled leftism. This spiral process could not be stopped until the death of Mao Zedong and other new developments.

Since the death of Mao Zedong, China has undergone drastic changes. Peking has lowered their attack against imperialism. Nevertheless, no evidence indicating that China is moving toward democracy. Democratic development is restricted by the Four Principles, i.e. socialism, Marxism-Leninism and thought of Mao Zedong, Party leadership, and the proletarian Dictatorship. Thus it is clear that as long as the Chinese communist are in power, it is unlikely to have democracy in China.