A Hammer to Smash the Enemy Part 1[1]

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Part 1 The Shanghai Commune



To this day, the Shanghai Commune is the highest pinnacle yet reached in the world proletarian revolution. It's emergence was a historical event unlike any other, one that carried the example of the Paris Commune to new and greater heights, not only propelling the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) forward but also giving birth to new models. Any event of this magnitude will be surrounded by controversy and deeply saturated with contradictions.

The short story leading to it is: After over a year of intensifying mass political struggle developing the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the moment came where revolutionary forces were able to start to overthrow old party committees and seize power — i.e. the actual moment of revolution had arrived. And this process of seizure of power started with the January storm in Shanghai (January 1967) — and this seizure led to a wave of power seizures across China – it was the highpoint of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. This was a very important moment and important development. And one that the political center around Mao strongly supported. Several of his key

[1] https://struggle-sessions.com/2019/11/05/a-hammer-to-smash-the-enemy-on-the-shanghai-commune-sheng-wu-lien-and-the-maoist-conception-of-arming-the-masses/

supporters including Wang Hungwen and Zhang Chunqiao emerged as national leaders in the course of these complex struggles.

"The Paris Commune in Shanghai" (hereafter PCS), a dissertation by Hongsheng Jiang, deeply delves into the history of the two historical communes. He takes a decidedly leftist stance by dedicating his sizable work to "the Shanghai Communards in 1967, who dared to rebel against imperialists, revisionists, and reactionaries." [1]

The Beginning of the Shanghai Commune

We can open our discussion one year into the GPCR, with the workers at the factory level in a Shanghai glass factory. Having correctly identified that the management could not properly lead the factory because the prevailing division of labor kept them out of physical production, they formed what we can call People's Committees. This division between management and the shop-floor workers is part of what Marx refers to as bourgeois right, which by necessity exists in all socialist societies. Instead of being uncritically accepted, however, it must be consciously restricted. This is a cornerstone of Maoist political economy that distinguishes it from the various revisionist approaches, which place production in command.

"Restricting bourgeois right" was a matter of the workers and rebels of Shanghai going on the offensive against those forces that prevent the narrowing of differences in wealth and resources from socialism to communism. Under capitalism, most of the wealth gained from the production of commodities goes to the owners of capital, and only secondarily to maintaining and reproducing the workers who have produced that wealth. Socialist revolution begins re-directing the wealth to the producers themselves, so that now, for the first time, workers receive most of what they produced. This is referred to as "from each according to their ability, to each according to their labor," which is an advance over capitalism. But because the workers of the glass factory and other shops possessed greatly different capabilities both physically and technically, they have the right to receive payment at different rates according to the values of their labor, and therefore to accumulate wealth at unequal rates. This is referred to as bourgeois right because it rewards and reinforces self-interest, not collective interest, and acts as a harbinger for the unequal accumulation of resources, including decision-making power, education, culture, and the like.

The managerial staff at the glass factory were "privileged by high salaries and perks, [and] those bureaucrats and technocrats were prone to form their own interest group." Given the conditions in China, the workers in Shanghai along with workers all over China had taken up the revolutionary call and begun studying Mao's selected works and quotations and had begun carrying out waves of rebellion against such class divisions.

What is clear—and in contrast to the "left-communist" and anarchist narratives—is that the workers were not motivated by any saboteur or "anti-authoritarian" motives but were instead compelled to increase production on the basis of the revolutionary line, through politics and not management. Of the bureaucrats in charge, the rebels said, "These cadres have already been degraded to be the objects of the revolution. You can neither grasp revolution, nor promote production without removing them." With this attitude, in late 1966 the rebels began sweeping these people out of power. [2]

First, they implemented broad democracy on the factory level, holding a general election and developing a governing body. This was the first time this factory was totally in the hands of the workers. Their basis for selecting leaders was not expertise or social status; instead, drawing directly from Mao, they chose based on who was a true servant of the people. The workers chosen were known to avoid the office and engage directly with their co-workers in production on the shop floor, shoulder to shoulder with the Shanghai proletariat.

At this same time, the Shanghai Party Committee, deeply infested by capitalist roaders, was fighting for pay incentives (not out of concern for the workers, but in an attempt to divide the working class). They had organized massive reactionary strikes as an act of defiance. In spite of a shortage of workers in these circumstances, the Shanghai glass factory increased its output by implementing a socialist education campaign that opposed both coercion and pay incentives. This was possible only due to the increased class consciousness of the average worker, who came to understand that the purpose and measure of their production was social well-being and not profit. In every instance where workers grasp this, the productive forces are liberated; production becomes a cause in the class struggle in the interests of workers and peasants.

The heroic struggles of the glass factory workers were immediately noticed by the left-wing leaders of the GPCR and the Maoists in the Party. This single spark ignited fires across all the major factories in Shanghai and came to serve as an example across the country. At the same time, though this movement's flaws were not yet detected, they imposed themselves later—the Shanghai workers had to grasp and apply the three-in-one combination in place of management—drawing from the experience of the Yenan rectification campaign during the People's War. These People's Committees had, in the Yenan rectification movement, served to provide the movement with both democracy and centralism, both mass input and authority, both veteran experience and rebel shakeup, both the stability of a structure and the invigoration of storming new gates.

The January Storm

Leaders of the GPCR, namely Zhang Chunqiao, promised that 1967 would be a year of enhanced criticism and struggle against the handful of Party cadres in Shanghai taking the capitalist road. When these criticisms and struggles were mounted, the capitalists in the Party responded with the aforementioned reactionary strikes and even by trying to cut the water and electricity to the city. Their sabotage and manipulation compelled workers to go even further than the general calls of the GPCR, and to actually begin seizing the means of production directly from capitalist roaders.

Things can get confusing in examinations of the vast complexity of the GPCR, but what is crucial to keep track of is which key sites of struggle the right maintained control over. While the workers had begun seizures of certain factories, newspapers like Liberation Daily, which was the biggest paper in Shanghai, was still controlled by the right and almost never published any revolutionary news. The left-wing papers could scarcely produce enough copies even for their own staff with the equipment they had—with the consequence that around the new year in 1967 workers at Liberation Daily were inspired by the rebels in the glass factory (among other places) to seize power in the newspaper. This increased the spread of revolution greatly. To no one's surprise, the narrow economist bureaucrats responded with charges of ultra-leftism. In response to such charges, the revolutionary workers, from their expanded platform, issued what became a call to arms. [3]

It is important to remember that not only was Shanghai the largest city in the People's Republic of China—it also had some of the most advanced class consciousness. The right-wing in charge of the Shanghai Party Committee could not maintain power for long; Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan were sent by the revolutionaries in the Party to organize Shanghai while Mao himself kept a close watch on events.

Mao's expression "revolution is not a dinner party" so vividly applies to the GPCR, which was neither magnanimous nor refined. There were many frantic or confused actions, and a whole lot of secret activity on the part of the conspirators and capitalists. What is abundantly clear however is that it was the Maoists playing the leading role in the January Storm. Never had a city the size and importance of Shanghai seen such great upheavals that placed the workers in direct control. Just to give readers some idea of the scope of the revolution, it's worth noting that Shanghai is the most populated city in the world today—and had more than 10 million residents in 1967.

At a large mass meeting on January 6, the rebels aired their demands via closed circuit television all across Shanghai and neighboring areas. They demanded the removal of the local Party Committee leader, Mayor Cao, whom they insisted would be forced to reform through labor under the rebels' supervision, stating further that he would

produce a confession within seven days and that the Shanghai newspapers would denounce him by name. The rebels intended to expose his connections to the Liu-Deng rightist headquarters and prove how he had directly, in a counterrevolutionary fashion, opposed the teachings of Chairman Mao. This televised mass rally put the capitalist roaders on the ropes and proved to be a turning point. The reactionaries were no longer able to mobilize the conservative elements among masses, and the revolutionary masses became even more committed. [4]

Even though the Shanghai Party Committee was still officially in control, the people just stopped listening to them. At this point workers seized the ports to prevent the travel of the reactionary Scarlet Guards, a mass organization launched by the rightists in the Shanghai Party Committee. After the port seizures, the rebel workers and revolutionaries began exerting their influence over the banks to ensure that decisions were made in accordance with the rebels' interests, and that loans and financing stopped being funneled to counter-revolutionaries like the Scarlet Guards. While most rebel organizations targeted revisionist authorities and feudal customs, rival groups of Red Guards like the Scarlet Guards, often composed of children of high-ranking party cadre, organized themselves to defend their privileges and the positions of their parents. [5] While revisionists and left-liberals will tarnish the word "socialism" by applying it to any instance at all of welfare capitalism, the advanced workers in Shanghai identified welfare as one of the main counter-revolutionary trends. The rebels hung numerous big-character posters that highlighted this, stating that workers already had a higher income than peasants and therefore that pay raises were intended only to destroy the unity between workers and peasants. The rebels emphasized that the Party bureaucrats would sign off on any economic demand to distract them from the political questions pertinent to continuing the revolution. Massive propaganda teams were organized to promote the views of the rebel workers.

In the days between January 11 and 14, rebel workers and their revolutionary leaders took control of most of the city, including all ports and railroads. The unity of the rebel workers and student Red Guards led to the development of a strong left camp, which fully imposed itself on the right without relenting. At the point when the rebel leaders Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan were discussing the formation of a central body to replace the now basically ineffective and non-functioning Shanghai Party Committee, the various rebel and Red Guard groups were already in the process of organizing mass meetings and an extensive network. They formed a center called the Shanghai Revolutionary Rebel Organizations' Liaison Post (hereafter the Post), with the largest contingent being the Workers' General Headquarters, led by Zhang. [6]

The Post consisted of many different factions, so it had to operate on the broadest possible unity. Key responsibilities of the rebel leaders Zhang and Yao were to organize two-line struggle between different and contradicting factions, organize the line struggle along revolutionary lines, strengthen the rebels' organ of power in terms of both protest and administration of factories etc. and facilitate economic development—literally saving the city from the near-bankruptcy imposed by the reactionary strikes and sabotage. While the Post was not successful in its aims in the long run, it was the embryonic form of the Shanghai Commune, and included most, though not all, of the rebel factions.

These rebel groups came into hostility with each other at times, with organizations uniting with the Post while others were expelled. We can understand this purification process as one dividing into two, and the fact that this process occurred paints the clearest picture that the proletarian dictatorship in the hands of workers and rebels was strengthening.

Some of the major debates and two-line struggles in this period involved important questions: whether it's better to be politically wrong while respecting chain of command when leaders are wrong, or to stick to the correct politics even if it means going against official leaders; and whether those who had taken the capitalist road constituted a bourgeois government that had to be violently overthrown or whether the vast majority of them were just confused or misunderstanding Mao Zedong Thought. Top leaders like Zhang did a remarkable job at maintaining unity in the interest of propelling the GPCR forward. It was for this kind of work that they were labeled criminals after the counter-revolutionary coup in 1976.

Hindsight has proved essential in assessing and synthesizing the overall lessons of the GPCR, without which there would be no Maoism proper. Throughout this period rightists like Zhou En-lai framed the workers seizing power as a rightist plot. It is relevant to point out that Premier Zhou was the leading figure for the political rehabilitation of arch-revisionist Deng Xiaoping. He made numerous concessions to US imperialism and enacted reactionary foreign policy toward the Pinochet regime in Chile by issuing support for it. When he died, the right rioted in his memory. One major mistake is to view the GPCR as something stagnant, ignoring that phenomena can and do turn into their opposites.

Zhou and other conservatives argued that the old capitalist roader cadres should not be dismissed but only "supervised" by rebels. As usual, the arts of concession and centrism were fine-tuned and put to use by many, who avoided detection while proving invaluable to those in power taking the capitalist road. Indian Maoist revolutionary Charu Majumdar explained centrism as rightism accordingly:

"The struggle between the two lines is there within the Party and will continue to be there. We must oppose and defeat the incorrect line. But we must be on our guard against centrism. Centrism is a brand of revisionism—its worst form. In the past, revisionism was defeated again and again by revolutionary elements but centrism always seized the victories of the struggle and led the Party along the revisionist path. We must hate centrism." [7] ("Hate, Stamp and Smash Centrism") What is critical here is Majumdar's position that centrism is the worst form of revisionism precisely due to its ability to go undetected. While Comrade Majumdar is clear that the incorrect line must be defeated decisively, the centrist will argue that 1) two-line struggle means successive (and often increased) concessions must be made to the incorrect line, that 2) instead of struggling for unity we must maintain a false unity, and that 3) eventually two will combine into one. This trickery has served the right well, and nowhere better than in China, because there the centrists did more damage than the rightists because they represented the contradiction in the Party that activated the rightists by keeping them around.

During this period the old rightists in the Shanghai Party Committee waged a tireless campaign inside and outside of the workers' New Power to create discord, disunity, and dysfunction. While the vast majority of workers saw Comrade Zhang as the local representative of Mao, fringe Red Guard factions and the Local Party Committee focused their attacks on him. One of history's lessons that holds true in all revolutions is that the forces of reaction will always seek to sever the heads of the movement, to separate the movement from its leadership and the masses from the militants. Zhang held the unique position of being the link between the revolutionaries in Shanghai and the Party center in Beijing, making him the most appropriate target for those who knowingly or not opposed Maoism and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Shanghai Party Committee continued to exist in name only. The revolutionary line posed by Zhang and Yao was to organize to take it over with forces that truly represented the Commune's numerous rebel groups. Others were less measured and sought to take over the Committee with only a few groups. They went on without any support to occupy key spaces of the Committee and even sent representatives to Beijing proclaiming victory. Mao made no comment on this. The representatives from Shanghai, when returning from Beijing, produced a forged letter from Chen and Zhou that recognized their leadership, claiming they would take over the Committee with official authorization. This claim was demonstrably false, as none of the major workers' rebel organizations took part in this seizure.

The leaders of this power-grab were quickly disposed of by the broader rebel groups, and a number of debates proceeded about where to establish the new central organ—the Shanghai People's Commune under the leadership of Zhang Chunqiao.

Before the Shanghai Commune could be fully established, a group known as the Red Revolutionaries captured the government seals and refused to turn them over to the new Commune center. This posed the threat of outright civil war, since most of the rebel groups composing the Commune were not involved with the Red Revolutionaries. This crisis caused the postponement of the Shanghai Commune's official inauguration. The Red Revolutionaries, having been discredited, turned their bitterness and ire toward Zhang and began their mischief.

Their retaliatory campaign included prying into the backgrounds of Zhang and Yao, looking for dirt with which to discredit them. This was likely suggested by the old Party Committee, who had already been removed — after all, it was them that thought they had damning evidence in the Party archives. While the Red Revolutionaries came upon what they believed to be discrediting histories of leadership, none of it tarnished the characters of Comrade Zhang or Comrade Yao. Cheap attacks were made on the basis of errors committed by family members of the revolutionaries that the Party was already well aware of. [8]

In the minds of the Red Revolutionaries, they were beyond reproach, and hence anyone who opposed them seizing power must therefore be an enemy agent. We see the same desperate maneuvers from contemporary revisionists in the form of bad-jacketing and pig-jacketing. By attacking Zhang in an open propaganda campaign, the right was able to operate through the impulsive, easily manipulated sections of the left to attack the formation and consolidation of the Shanghai People's Commune. In several of these power seizures, those who had seized power did not turn it over to the representatives of the Commune but conceded to give it back to the already discredited Party Committee. This is a powerful picture of what is meant by the term "left in form, right in essence." It is telling that among the numerous false charges against Zhang, one was that he had engaged in "new economism" by being "too cruel" to the old, dispossessed rightists. It was common in attempts to discredit Zhang and Yao to cite their involvement in the old Shanghai Party Committee, conveniently omitting that they were the very first Party leaders to come out in support of the rebel workers' organizations against the Shanghai Party Committee itself. Even if some of those doing so were acting from genuine confusion and did intend to serve the people and the revolution, their mistake was one that could be made good use of by the Committee members who had always opposed the rebel workers and subjected them to torment and humiliation. Yao and Zhang worked together in 1965 on the articles criticizing the

play On the Dismissal of Hai Rui, which were the opening salvos of the GPCR itself. All this history was easily cast aside by the impulsive and easily manipulated as Zhang and Yao were misrepresented as secret capitalists.

The rightists' repeated attacks against Zhang, often organized in secret, further delayed the inauguration of the Commune. As the factions behind the attacks became frustrated due to successive failures, they also became more violent, putting at least one of Zhang's supporters into a coma. [9]

What is clear from this history is that the construction of the Commune was not easy. It was not monolithic, but rather a product of intense class struggle, at some points verging on armed struggle. Eventually, through the correct leadership of Zhang and through Mao's repeated public endorsement of him, a more consolidated body was formed in the Shanghai People's Commune that won over some of the anti-Zhang Red Guard groups. Of course, it's hard to prove what many at the time held as common sense: that the hundreds of thousands of former Scarlet Guards had changed only superficially, swapping arm bands but remaining the same in political essence. Many of them had joined the existing mass organizations to continue their reactionary, anti-Commune, anti-Zhang campaigns.

Far from being a negation of the Party form or the proletarian dictatorship, the Shanghai People's Commune exemplified these two Maoist principles. And what is more, the struggle for the Commune was led remarkably well by 3 of the 4 defenders of Mao who were later labeled the "Gang of Four." The only one of these four not leading the Commune was Jiang Qing, who avidly defended it, alongside Mao. This period and its leaders produced several highly useful books as well, including Fundamentals of Political Economy (the "Shanghai Textbook") and A Basic Understanding of the Communist Party of China. These books are primers on the operation of the Party, how to live as a Maoist, and Maoist political economy.

We have tried to present a concise summation of the events that led to the establishment of the Commune. While it is not possible to unpack all the details, it is a necessary precursor to discussing the life as well as the death of the Commune.

Evaluating the Shanghai Commune

The Commune operated as the central ruling organ of Shanghai, and responsibility for its diverse activities fell to teams whose leaders were chosen from and by the Commune's many constituent organizations according to the principles of the Paris Commune. These teams were as follows:

> Grasping Revolution and Promoting Production Team, in charge of industry and communication;Organizational Team, in charge of registering and investigating members of the Commune and mass organizations; Political Propaganda Team, in charge of propaganda work in news and arts; Liaison Team, in charge of communication and investigation of various mass organs and rebels of basic-level units; Investigation Team, in charge of studying policy and drafting documents; Security Team, in charge of public security and jurisdictional issues; Reception Team, in charge of accommodating visitors, networking with personnel from outside Shanghai, and handling related affairs; Office, in charge of the everyday affairs of the Commune; Logistics Team, in charge of logistics. [10]

In contrast to the Paris Commune model, the Shanghai Commune understood itself as transitional, in accordance with the Maoist principle of continuous revolution and the fact that the socialist period is a transitional one. Hence, the Commune intended to broaden its implementation of democracy over time, keeping politics in command and class struggle as the key link. This broad democracy did not come to be implemented before the downfall of the Commune; they practiced democracy for the rebels and dictatorship for the reactionaries as the policy of the time. Instead of emerging through general elections, the leaders were nominated and chosen as representatives of their mass organizations in the Commune. These leaders were still subject to criticism and recall at any time.

The inability of the Commune to appoint its own ministers caused a high rate of recall. The factions and mass orgs frequently recalled and replaced their delegates, hurting the Commune's consistency and effectiveness. Although there were cadres in top leadership positions, there was no Party Committee. This gave the CPC difficulty in properly leading the Commune. This contradiction was inevitably beneficial to dissident and anti-Party factions within the Commune as well as to many of the hidden rightists. Absolute equalitarianism became a clarion call for such rightists, who produced ultimatums and fake declarations. As Lenin says in Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder, "anarchism was not infrequently a kind of penalty for the opportunist sins of the working-class movement. The two monstrosities complemented each other." [11] While the Maoist position is to consciously restrict bourgeois right over time, according to class struggle and the concrete conditions, the absolute equalitarian line is to abolish bourgeois right all at once, by destroying all distinctions, all personal titles, and all division of labor. The former position wages revolution and propels socialism along the revolutionary road to Communism, while the latter position destroys production, spreads poverty and discord, and in reality blocks socialist development, laying down ideological suppressive fire to allow the open rightists to march protected and reclaim

the reins of the state. In this way we can understand what Lenin meant by calling anarchism the penalty for the sin of opportunism. Along with similar errors like ultra-democracy, absolute equalitarianism can be understood as an attack on the principles of leadership and Communism, and more precisely as a right-opportunist tailing of the masses, which causes such errors and also reproduces them.

Horizontalism is always a rightist disease that at times presents itself in a leftist disguise. In the case of the Commune, the absolute equalitarian line came to resemble something similar to the identitarian lines we see today. For instance, when the rightists opposed the three-in-one committees, the reason they offered was that that no Party cadres could ever be trusted again because of the past activity of some Party cadres. Little to no evaluation was made of the actual cadres and the concrete histories of their politics and which lines they held—unless of course these facts could be twisted to support the opportunism of the absolute egalitarians. In essence both horizontalism and this sort of identitarianism make concerted attacks on the revolution, and in the instance of China it was a concerted attack on the dictatorship of the proletariat. While claiming to be the real adherents of Mao Zedong Thought, the absolute egalitarians denounced all cadres on the basis of their identity as cadres. By any reason and logic, this can be understood only as an attack on Mao and his line, who in the main part had led the Party through revolution and all major decisions since the conquest of power. These dissident factions were hell-bent on repeating the exact same defects that doomed the Paris Commune. These groups were only a minority of the factions that composed the Commune. Ever since, those in the "left-communist," postmodernist, post-Maoist, and anarchist traditions have sought desperately for proof that the Party form and the dictatorship of the proletariat have been surpassed. In a deceptive effort to frame the Commune as an alternative to the Party and the socialist proletarian dictatorship, these types zoom in on this minority, ignoring the character of the vast majority of the rebel organizations in the Commune. In the words of Comrade Zhang himself, "there are still many 'fortified villages' held by the bourgeoisie; when one is destroyed, another will spring up, and even if all have been destroyed except one, it will not vanish of itself if the iron broom of the dictatorship of the proletariat does not reach it." [12]

A small handful of dissident factions (three of them) began spreading rumors that the Party Center in Beijing had no knowledge of the existence of the Shanghai Commune and that Zhang was to blame for this. On this pretext they could frame the Commune as illegitimate and attack the Workers' General Headquarters, led by Zhang. In the event that their attack failed, just as the by-then-disbanded Shanghai Party Committee had, they planned to mobilize the workers who still held anti-Commune sentiments to go on general strike to disrupt the economy and reverse the increases in production achieved by the new central organ. In spite of these continued attacks against the Commune and

the Workers' General Headquarters that constituted the dominant force within it, the dissident factions and their allies in the old Party Committee were weak in the face of the much larger pro-Commune factions. The greater threat that emerged later—in the coup against the Four, the cessation of the GPCR, and the reversal of the revolution and capitalist restoration—came from the People's Liberation Army. [13]

And it was those historical experiences—which demonstrated the danger posed by the army—that have proved some of the most important in the history of the Commune. These object lessons were critical in the overall synthesis of MLM, principally Maoism, which corrects the mistakes of the past by theorizing the necessity for Party militarization and the concentric construction of the three instruments of revolution. During the GPCR, the official line for the PLA was to not interfere, and likewise the rebels who were mobilized by the Maoist revolutionaries were told not to attack the PLA. As time went on, non-interference proved impossible for both rightists and leftists. Many corrupt Party officials taking the capitalist road made good use of this division between the revolutionary masses and the PLA by using military bases as places to stow incriminating documents (as well as dossiers on rebels that were later used in mass arrests of Maoists and their supporters after the coup), since their own offices were unsafe due to constant threat of bombardment by Red Guards. The always-close relationship between capitalist roaders and army officers, a mutually beneficial and ultimately reactionary relationship, made this the ideal place to hide such materials. Every attempt by revolutionaries to spread the GPCR in the military met the stiffest opposition. While the GPCR did in fact penetrate the military and saw great advances there, this was a constant uphill battle, and it never went far enough. This was especially the case when the Commune was established (only one year into the GPCR), but it remained true throughout the whole of the GPCR. The division between the military and the masses proved favorable to the interests of the bourgeoisie within the Party.

The Maoist line, one expressed in no uncertain terms by Mao himself, was that non-involvement was a myth and that the military could not escape class struggle or avoid confrontation, and that it should side with the left, with the revolutionary masses, as servants of the people. In many cases the PLA was already deeply involved in hiding the files of rightists and even hiding rightists themselves who had become targets of the GPCR and local Red Guards. Mao held that this should be rectified by forcing the military to openly support the rebels. As opportunists do, the military often took up this call by determining leftists to be rightists and rightists to be leftists and hence backed up the most conservative forces they could find. This was not primarily the case in Shanghai, but this offers just one example of the great difficulties the revolutionary forces in the GPCR had to contend with throughout China. [14]

Even though the local garrison was in support of the Commune, the national military was not. Needless to say, the citywide power seizures in Shanghai pushed top military leaders into an absolute panic. They rejected the laws of dialectical materialism and the teachings of Mao, attacking the GPCR for the chaos it created, characterizing it as a disaster of epic proportion (thus making the same argument bourgeois scholars have made against the GPCR ever since). Maoists have constantly held that great chaos under heaven was a good and necessary thing to continue the revolution through socialism and into Communism.

The military itself was held in great prestige by the masses, to a point that the disposed Shanghai Party committee had at first attempted to bribe rebel organizations by offering them PLA uniforms [15]. It also was not directly involved in most of the hardship the masses faced, so its influence among them, unlike that of the capitalist roaders in the local Party Committees, was untarnished. Nonetheless the contradiction between the army and the masses existed and continued to assert itself in periodic flare-ups. The prevailing world conditions, with China facing a dual imperialist threat from the USSR and the US, also meant that Maoists had to make concessions to top military leaders, although these concessions and considerations were not extended to the cadres who had taken the capitalist road.

Overall, the military was either ignorant of, feigned ignorance of, or was repulsed by the principles of the Shanghai Commune. Many top military leaders preferred the business-as-usual pre-GPCR methods of managing and defending the state, and were thus disoriented by the whirlwind of the GPCR. The main thing that caused them to panic is that, unlike other manifestations of the GPCR, the Shanghai Commune embodied the principles of power seizures by force of arms to overthrow the bourgeois headquarters and the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie they imposed—that is, the use of revolutionary violence to smash the State and replace it with the Commune model.

The existence of the Shanghai Commune made the military extremely uneasy, because they knew full well that the Paris Commune sought the abolition of the standing army and that Shanghai was greatly influenced by the experiences of the Paris Commune. Due to a lack of theoretical comprehension, some top military leaders even assumed that once socialism is achieved it is static and must be defended as such. As the Commune rushed to educate and uplift the working class and the masses politically, organizationally, and through armed struggles, the top brass began to fear for their long-term existence under such a system and came to bitterly hate it. Even if no Maoist advocated for the immediate abolition of the standing army (just as they did not advocate for the immediate eradication of bourgeois right), the very thought of restricted military privilege was enough to spread dissent among military officials. One

of the main principles of Mao Zedong Thought and of MLM today is a rejection of the military lines and structures of the Red Army in the USSR, and of course there were the militarist rightists in the PLA who preferred a Soviet model for the military structure.

While many in the military opposed the essence of the GPCR, Mao and his followers believed that should the GPCR fail, the correct line would be to return to the countryside and initiate armed struggle, to wage guerrilla war and reconquer power. ("If those of you in the Liberation Army won't follow me, then I will go and find a Red Army, and organize another Liberation Army.") [16] This stance holds particular relevance for Maoists in China today, who must make Mao's prophetic stance a reality. It is believed by some GPCR historians (e.g., Xu Youyu) that in 1967 the military held up to 1 million revolutionaries as prisoners. During this year Mao himself and his supporters advocated for their release. There was no shortage of cases of the military killing rebels who protested them or threatened them in some way. The January Storm and the Shanghai Commune sparked both waves of revolution and stiff reactionary response all over China.

While Mao had been a supporter and defender of the January Storm and backed the majority in the Commune led by Zhang, he determined that the Commune model had many shortcomings and had to be replaced. Much of Mao's criticism was based on observations made in the article, the historical lessons of the Paris Commune and the need to avoid its mistakes, the inability to apply the three-in-one combinations, and most importantly the role of cadres and the Party. Mao also understood that without three-in-one combinations, things would get out of balance fast, and that factions like the anti-Zhang absolute egalitarians would pose an ever-growing problem. In these attacks against Zhang it became clear that the reactionary line of attacking all cadres regardless of their history and political line was an instrument of the right who had been cast out of power. And perhaps due to the anger and conservativism of certain key military leaders and the threats posed by the USSR and the US at the time, opposing the Commune form may have been a necessary compromise to keep the military in check. These speculations are just that, because the information from Mao himself in this period was restricted or destroyed during the Deng era. Much as Deng and his goons attempted to destroy the works produced by the leaders of the Commune (which in the case of the Shanghai Textbook were ripped off the printing presses and destroyed), they also went after and in some cases successfully eradicated Mao's own works and many of his records.

The majority of Mao's talks with Yao and Zhang were on the topic of the wreckers and dissidents who had led the campaigns against the Commune and Zhang. He stated,

"If everything were changed into commune, then what about the party? Where would we place the party? Among commune committee members are both party members and non-party members. Where would we place the party committee? There must be a party somehow! There must be a nucleus, no matter what we call it. Be it called the Communist party, or social democratic party, or Kuomintang, or I-kuan-tao, it must have a party. The commune must have a party, but can the commune replace the party?" He was even more sharp when attacking the proposal in the absolute equalitarian line that all individual titles should be removed: "This is extreme anarchism, it is most reactionary. If instead of calling someone the 'head' of something we call him 'orderly' or 'assistant,' this would really be only a formal change. In reality there will still always be 'heads.' It is the content which matters." [17]

Mao here asserts clearly and without delicacy that the heroic revolutionary masses make history but must be guided by Communist leadership with firm mass links. Leadership will emerge: no matter whether it is recognized or not, its existence is an objective fact. Mao, drawing from the lessons of Shanghai, promoted the following formula for organizing the cities: "The basic experience of revolutionary committees is this—they are threefold: they have representatives of revolutionary cadres, representatives of the armed forces, and representatives of the revolutionary masses. This forms a revolutionary 'three-in-one' combination. The revolutionary committee should exercise unified leadership, eliminate redundant or overlapping administrative structures, follow the policy of better troops and simpler administration and organize a revolutionary leading group which keeps in contact with the masses."

The rightists who had previously held power, as well as those who were left in form and right in essence, were managing to once more promote strikes and slowdowns that were damaging to the majority of the people. Much of what they were insisting on practically meant encouraging the GPCR to shift its attacks from those in power to average cadres, street committees, and even the masses. In this way those on the right who had lost power planned to slip back in once more and use their own activity as proof that the revolutionaries' ideas would not work.

Those in power taking the capitalist road encouraged the masses to make these economic and not political demands, to which they then made concessions and in doing so bribed the masses to stop struggling. This sort of economism is praised by "left-wing communists." They try to claim the Shanghai Commune as their own history, yet they vacillate just as the fake left did back then between economism and pathetically trying to lash out and bring down everyone. In Elliott Liu's book Maoism and the Chinese Revolution: A Critical Introduction and its precursor, Bloom and Contend, penned under the name Chino, he takes more or less the same position as the minority

of absolute equalitarians and parrots the old Trot analysis that "Stalinism" was to blame, shifting all the contradictions onto Mao himself. The only difference is that the absolute equalitarians claimed in form to uphold Mao's thought. He frames Zhang as an opponent of the Commune and ignores both the fact that he led it and the fact that it was supported by Mao and the Maoists in the Party. [18]

What is worse is that by seeing all cadres and any attempt to maintain the army as bad, he more or less repeats one of Stalin's worst mistakes—of seeing the Party itself a monolith; he simply inverts the judgment on the Party while preserving the anti-dialectical error. He positions the three-in-one combination as a new device used to create an imbalance in rule, when in reality it was the method Chinese revolutionaries had been using as far back as the anti-Japanese struggle in the red base areas like Yenan. Yenan and similar base areas saw the most advanced struggles of their time, which led to many of the principles that guided the GPCR and ultimately the very formation of the Commune. By zeroing in on the relatively minute factions of dissident Red Guards and even supporting the economism of the old Party Committee, Liu and others like him attempt to lay claim to the Commune. This is an example of classic subjectivism. The role of leadership is to achieve unity and synthesize the revolutionary line via organized two-line struggle. Mao accomplished this by implementing the three-in-one combinations just as Zhang had accomplished this in the Workers' General Headquarters in his struggle to unite it with the vast majority of rebel worker organizations and revolutionary mass organizations. To make things even more difficult for some readers, Liu and others like him tend to focus their critiques on Mao Zedong Thought and avoid actually engaging with MLM, principally Maoism, which is what is practiced today. MLM is the overall synthesis of past successes and mistakes summed up in the third and highest stage of Marxism thus far. Three-in-one combinations have always been present in MLM and are evident in the People's Committees that govern base areas and lead class struggles in the People's Wars. In fact, the three-in-one combinations have reached a qualitatively higher stage themselves with the theory of concentric construction of the three instruments of revolution as promoted by the Communist Party of Peru and its Chairman Gonzalo.

Principally Maoists—in contrast to the various conservative, opportunist, and rightist forces who call themselves Maoists—address the big question: what went wrong with the GPCR that prevented it from carrying out its stated purpose of preventing capitalist restoration? The answer is, Party militarization, the sea of armed masses, and concentric construction, all of which find their greatest importance in cultural revolution—the continuation of revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Arriving at these solutions depends on correctly understanding that the fissures formed between the Party and the masses, the military and the Party, and the military and

the masses are simultaneously the sites where capitalist restoration is carried out and breeding grounds for the bourgeois impulse toward restoration. Part of grasping cultural revolution and Protracted People's War as universal means analysis and synthesis of these contradictions that allowed the military to be used in a bourgeois coup against the revolutionaries.

Of course, anyone can remember that Mao's four representatives were scapegoated by the reactionaries in China for all the "excesses" of the GPCR and were imprisoned, while the rebel workers and Maoist-supporting masses were interned en masse. The very same black files and dossiers held in the military barracks by the capitalist roaders were used to this end. The importance of the Four here as symbols of Maoism and Maoist top leadership cannot be understated. Three of the Four were leaders of the Commune, Zhang and Yao being its top two leaders and Wang being an important figure in both the Commune's Maoist rebel movement and the Wuhan Incident. The only one of Mao's four main supporters who was not instrumental in the Commune was Comrade Jiang Qing, who remained a consistent supporter of it.

Conclusion

The argument for the self-governing of workers denies the very principles that make—and have made—the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and landlord classes possible in the first place. As Lenin and Marx insisted (as well as every real Marxist, for that matter), the consciousness of workers themselves without Communist leadership is insufficient to go past their short-term economic interests. This is precisely why the absolute equalitarians and the old corrupt Party cadres united around economism. The same influence today in the US manifests in the form of seeing service to the people programs as the main means of "base-building." The organizations and tendencies that put this line into practice do nothing more than cater to the basic needs of the people in reproducing themselves as they are and fail to serve them politically. They do not and will never recognize that, as Gonzalo says, "the struggle for Power [is] the first and foremost demand of the masses."

The combination of Communist leadership with mass initiatives and enthusiasm in class struggle, however, is foundational in MLM, principally Maoism. This is why the Communist army (the Red Army or the People's Army) is the main avenue through which the Party conducts its mass work. This more than anything else ensures the strength of the connection between the masses and the army. And through this connection, led by the militarized Party, the masses themselves are recruited into militias around the Communist army—the masses become militarized, educated, and forged into fighters. Through contact with the masses, the Communist army can maintain its

character as such and not become a disconnected force materially sympathetic to the capitalist roaders, whose emergence is an inevitability. In short, the call for workers' self-governance is necessarily a dressed-up demand for capitalist restoration.

Viewing the Shanghai People's Commune as a sort of apex of the GPCR, which itself was an apex of class struggle and revolution, allows us to glimpse what highly advanced stages of socialism might entail. It also stands as a warning about the many things that can and will go wrong in conditions of uneven development, as class struggle continues in socialism and even becomes more acute. One critical lesson is that holding general elections to produce a central organ offers no protection whatsoever against economists attempting to kill or isolate the Communist leadership.

Students of Communism would do well to give more time and study to the Shanghai People's Commune and to evaluate it as Maoists. Much more discussion takes place around the Paris Commune as the first manifestation of working-class power; but the Shanghai Commune is unique, as it was the first large-scale revolutionary power seizure under the proletarian dictatorship. We must defend it and learn from it, and in particular defend the role of revolutionary Maoists and of Zhang Chunqiao in leading it. Revolutionary science develops through its leadership, and the work of the Four was an essential part of the process of Maoism's development from Mao Zedong Thought into MLM. Arriving at and upholding this understanding requires an ideological power seizure—snatching the Commune from the filthy grasp of opportunists and situating it firmly as an advanced product of Maoism, which helped develop it into MLM, principally Maoism.

What we will address more in Part 2 is the question of the sea of armed masses and how Party militarization is the key link in preventing restoration. What we can see in the experience of the Commune is mainly the need to advance our comprehension of the three-in-one combination further, grasping its higher manifestation in concentric construction, in which the Party, the military, and the mass movement stand together and work together, maintaining the leadership of the Party and its mass links.

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