CHAPTER VI
Political Interests, Recruitment, and Conflict

The central process in every political system can be described as the conversion of demands representing the interests, goals, and desires of individuals or groups within the society into political decisions that are then applied and adjudicated through government structures. This process includes two stages: the first is the input stage in which demands are fed into the decision-making structures; the second is the output stage, which includes the making and implementation of decisions. Although this description best fits states with distinct legislative and executive organizations, it can also be used to analyze the functioning of Communist systems. This chapter explores the input process of demands on the system, while the following chapter examines the output process of transmitting decisions into governmental action.

Almond and Powell divide the processing of demands into "interest articulation" and "interest aggregation." The former refers to the process by which individuals and groups make demands upon the political decision makers, the latter to the conversion of demands into general policy alternatives. In modern democratic societies, these two functions have relatively distinct structural counterparts. Interest articulation typically finds its


most effective channels in the communications media and a variety of more or less organized interest groups, while interest aggregation is performed primarily by political parties. Analysis of political demands in the Chinese system cannot rely on comparable institutional patterns, but the functional distinction between articulation and aggregation leads to an opening generalization about the handling of conflicting interests in China.

In a directive written for the Central Committee in June 1944, Mao Zedong offered a classic statement of the mass line that still stands as the CCP's core conceptualization of how the political process should work:

In all practical work of our Party, all correct leadership is necessarily "from the masses, to the masses." This means: take the ideas of the masses (scattered and unsystematic ideas) and concentrate them (through study turn them into concentrated and systematic ideas), then go to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast to them and translate them into action, and test the correctness of these ideas in such action. Then once again concentrate ideas from the masses and once again go to the masses so that the ideas are persevered in and carried through. And so on, over and over again in an endless spiral, with the ideas becoming more correct, more vital and richer each time.3

This statement suggests a number of basic principles that are relevant to the analysis in the next two chapters. Of immediate interest is the implicit distinction between interest articulation and aggregation: the masses articulate (express their "scattered and unsystematic ideas"); the party aggregates (turns them into "concentrated and systematic ideas"). As this core concept developed over the years, the CCP established a set of techniques and institutions designed to implement it. Prominent among these are discussion groups, mass movements and meetings, representative bodies, mass organizations, mass media, and a party leadership style emphasizing accessibility and investigation, all seen in part as structures for encouraging the expression of popular opinions and demands. The structural channels for articulation are, therefore, extensive, and they carry a large volume of popular


political opinion and discussion. At the same time, they function 
in a political context that significantly curtails the scope and 
effectiveness of the demands they transmit.

One major restriction is that the CCP monopolizes the aggrega-
tion function. The party sees expressed interests as "scattered 
and unsystematic" and intends that they remain so except as 
they are "concentrated and systematized" by its organization 
alone into policy alternatives. There are, of course, organizations 
other than the CCP that have the potential capacity, in terms of 
their memberships and scale, to aggregate the demands of par-
ticular groups in Chinese society, and they do tend to support 
the interests of their members. These organizations are not 
autonomous, however. Their leadership is dominated by party 
members whose job it is to ensure that the organizations in 
question do not compete with the CCP in formulation of policy 
proposals or advance demands that are in conflict with the 
CCP’s general line. The official monopoly on communications 
media reinforces this pattern; even if a group wishes to act in a 
more autonomous way, it cannot make its position known to a 
larger public except through media that are subject to close 
party supervision.

Moreover, the distinctions discussed in Chapter 4 between 
"people" and "enemies," between nonantagonistic and antago-
nistic contradictions, have their most forceful practical impact 
in making vulnerable all expressions of competition in political 
demands and policy alternatives. Whenever the element of conflict 
or contradiction is introduced, it brings with it the possibility 
that one side or the other may be cast into an antagonistic role, 
meaning not simply loss of the issue in question but exclusion 
from the political arena. That this practice has a certain legitimacy 
in Chinese political culture (in the belief that political roles 
should normally conform to and support the prescriptions of a 
single source of authority) increases its restrictive effect on the 
expression of political demands.

In order to understand the logic of CCP’s political hegemony, 
it should be remembered that as a revolutionary Marxist party, 
its claims to legitimacy are based on its vanguard role vis-à-vis 
the masses rather than its representational character. Effective 
leadership requires a concern for the welfare and opinions of the 
masses, but it also requires organizational and ideological disci-
pline. The party and other public organs are not to be a battle-
ground for politicians representing various particular interests 
and constituencies. Each cadre and party member should be 
accessible to and solicitous of every individual citizen’s needs 
while advancing the good of the whole society. The good of the 
whole society should be reflected in current party directives. 
Openly to promote the interests of one particular group is not 
perm itted if the interests of a part of society are put above the 
interests of the whole. By contrast, modern multiparty democracies 
assume that the best policy for society as a whole will emerge 
from the relatively unrestricted political competition of particular 
interests.

The articulation of popular interests consists mainly of frag-
mented, unsystematic demands that have few resources for 
effective political organization and communication, or of more 
organized demands that tend to support known party policy. 
The effective expression and aggregation of competing demands 
is largely a function of elites whose position legitimizes their 
handling of controversial issues and provides some protection 
against the possibility of exclusion from the political process. 
Given that effective articulation and aggregation of conflicting 
interests is normally carried out by elites, this chapter gives 
picular attention to the recruitment process that determines 
the composition of political leadership and to major patterns of 
elite conflict in post-1949 China. However, political conflict 
exists at all levels of Chinese society and is expressed in certain 
ways outside elite circles. We turn first, therefore, to a closer 
consideration of the popular articulation of interests.

POPULAR ARTICULATION OF INTERESTS

Conflict and Stratification in Chinese Society. Despite the 
prominence in Chinese politics of struggle against antagonistic 
contradictions in which the "enemy’s" position is denied any 
right or means of expression, a wide range of conflict remains 
nonantagonistic and hence entitled to airing. Nonantagonistic 
conflict is also seen in terms of correct and incorrect resolutions, 
but CCP theory insists that the incorrect position should express 
itself and be corrected by persuasion rather than repression. The 
best statement of this principle is, of course, Mao's 1957 speech
on contradictions. In that speech, Mao also forthrightly identified some of the class or group dimensions of such conflict:

In the conditions prevailing in China today, the contradictions among the people comprise the contradictions within the working class, the contradictions within the peasantry, the contradictions within the intelligentsia, the contradictions between the working class and the peasantry, the contradictions between the workers and peasants on the one hand and the intellectuals on the other, the contradictions between the working class and other sections of working people on the one hand and the national bourgeoisie on the other, the contradictions within the national bourgeoisie, and so on. Our People’s Government is one that genuinely represents the people’s interests, it is a government that serves the people. Nevertheless, there are still certain contradictions between this government and the people. These include the contradictions between the interests of the state and the interests of the collective on the one hand and the interests of the individual on the other, between democracy and centralism, between the leadership and the led, and the contradictions arising from the bureaucratic style of work of some of the state personnel in their relations with the masses.¹

Omitted from Mao’s 1957 speech was a discussion of contradictions within the leadership, but elsewhere he spoke freely of this problem. Thus, in August 1966 at the Eleventh Plenum of the Central Committee, he commented that there were, and always had been, factions within the party.² However, the admission that conflict occurred “among the people” was not intended to encourage public conflict. There is no place for public opposition. Those who disagree with a policy express themselves privately or work behind the scenes to reverse policy, but, in public, the appearance of unanimity is maintained.

The CCP’s attempt to grapple with the problem of conflict within the accepted classes and structures of socialist society also acknowledges the existence of politically derived stratification. One scholar has reconstructed official statements on stratification before the Cultural Revolution into the following hierarchy:

I. The ruling elite or “vanguard”
   A. Party cadres
   B. Party members
   C. Communist Youth League members
   D. Nonparty cadres

II. The working class and its allies (“the people”)
   A. Workers
   B. Peasants, with “poor and lower-middle peasants” on a par with workers and distinctly above wealthier peasants
   C. Intellectuals and petty bourgeoisie
   D. National bourgeoisie

III. Declasse “enemies of the people”³

In contrast to this image of horizontal divisions, another scholar has conceptualized Chinese society in terms of vertical lines between institutional sectors; that is, party, government, and army rule over five major socioeconomic sectors—industry, agriculture, business, schools, and army—or more simply over two great divisions of cities and villages.⁴

Finally, Mao’s increasing concern, from the early 1960s on, about the emergence of new bourgeois elements among the people or even within the party, led him to apply old class labels to groups defined by ideology rather than by social background. The result was great flexibility if not confusion in class analysis, since class references were sometimes to official labels, which all Chinese were assigned in the early 1950s, and sometimes to current manifestations of “revolutionary” or “counterrevolutionary” character, which might be different from the original class label.⁵

¹John W. Lewis, “Political Aspects of Mobility in China’s Urban Development,” American Political Science Review, vol. 60, no. 4 (December 1966): 906–7. We have simplified Lewis’ description of the hierarchy.

⁵“Selections from Chairman Mao,” Translations on Communist China, no. 90, JPRS—49829 (February 12, 1970), pp. 6–7.
These different perspectives on conflict and stratification suggest the range and variety of potential cleavage in Chinese politics. Among elites, the principal lines of cleavage may lie between different factions or opinion groups on major policy decisions; between governmental sectors, such as party, state, and army and their functional ministries or departments; between regional groupings and units, such as urban and rural or coastal and inland areas, or provinces and cities; between the central government and its subordinate administrative groupings, with the minority areas posing a special problem in the balancing of local autonomy against central direction; and between various elite strata—senior and junior cadres, party and non-party cadres, "red," and "experts," and so forth—with differing qualifications and experiences. Roughly comparable lines of cleavage may emerge at the basic level between groups who differ on the wisdom or means of implementing received policy; between local departments and offices; between local units, such as differently endowed or different types of collectives and enterprises; between the masses and local cadres; and between different classes or groups within local units such as regular and seasonal workers in factories, richer and poorer peasants in communes, politically favored and disfavored students in schools, and so forth.

The general pattern of these conflicts is that the prevailing opinion group or faction has an apparent consensus behind its policy. Ideally, it is also responsible for the results of its leadership and is removed if they are unsatisfactory. However, there are many less than ideal outcomes. In some cases, the interest conflict is between inherently unequal groups. For instance, during the Cultural Revolution, seasonal factory workers tended to be more radical than regular workers, expressing the frustrations of their inferior status. In other cases, the prevailing group uses its authority to attack and permanently weaken potential opposition. This kind of factional behavior is now condemned by the center, but Deng’s insistence in 1984 on total negation of the Cultural Revolution displays a kind of element of factional consolidation. In still other cases, vertical linkages determine the fate of lower-level leaderships. Personal ties or policy identifications can produce ripple effects on lower-level officials when provincial or central leadership is changed.

All of these lines of cleavage, which delineate potential or latent interest groups, have been discussed in official writings and have been involved visibly in the policy process. They have been most evident in crisis periods, which have permitted or even encouraged latent conflicts to express themselves openly, but the potential for group conflict is always present in Chinese politics. To analyze all of these conflicts in detail, tracing their rise and fall over time, would require a volume in itself. The discussion here concentrates on the ways in which popular interests are articulated, stressing the crucial question of organization and offering a few illustrative examples of particular conflicts.

Unorganized Articulation. The CCP’s desire to encourage expression of popular demands combines with its hostility toward organized competition or opposition to produce a substantial volume of unorganized, fragmented articulation of interests. By unorganized articulation, we mean articulation of interests by individuals or small numbers of people who have little opportunity to link up or communicate with others who might support the same demands. The public to whom these demands are known is normally quite limited, consisting essentially of immediate superiors and other members of the groups from which the demands come. The communications media may publicize them to a wider audience but usually only when higher elites have decided that the expression merits attention as a good or bad model. Selection as a good model may induce visits or communications from other units, but again this happens only with the stamp of official approval. The basic rule is that those expressing the demand have no independent means of expanding their audience and maintaining regular contact with those outside of their own unit who might be interested.

The prevalence of unorganized articulation of interests in Chinese society lends great importance to two political assets: access to decision makers and personal connections. In theory, any citizen can approach a public official with his or her problem, and considerable publicity is given to the mass outreach efforts of the government and party. However, the task of influencing policy often begins with a visit to friends or relatives in power or to friends who have friends in power. This is known pejoratively
as using the "back door." The back door is universally resorted to when available because of the vulnerable and powerless situation of the person attempting to influence policy. The role is essentially that of a petitioner attempting to persuade someone in authority; the assertion of individual rights or the threat of electoral action would usually be inappropriate. In seeking to gain power or simply to minimize risks in such a political environment, an individual would be well advised to nurture relationships that would favorably incline officials to his or her interests. In extreme form, the importance of access and connections has led to large structures of patron-client ties, and many careers have been made by climbing the connection network.

The most frequent and effective unorganized articulation occurs precisely where the system provides for it—in the political processes within basic-level government, that is, the level of production teams and brigades (or now simply villages), workshops and factories, and residents' committees. Here, several features encourage the regular expression of popular demands. First, the smallest groupings (production teams or villages in the countryside, work teams in factories, and residents' small groups in cities) have frequent meetings and choose their own group leadership. Second, the masses also have a direct voice in the more inclusive groupings at this sublevel (production brigades, factorywide organization, and residents' committees) through the selection of representatives to managing committees or,  

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level, given the restrictions on external organization and communications and the administrative guidelines that make serious deviation unlikely, expressions of difference and even opposition pose little threat. The Chinese tendency to report decisions as consensus-building acts—"after thorough discussion and education, all agreed that this was the correct line"—does not mean that real give-and-take has no place in the process. The nature of the primary unit setting ensures a substantial variety of expression among its members.

Beyond this, there are other means of expressing individualized or deviant demands in a focused way. In the more confrontational days of the Cultural Revolution, the writing of big character posters (da ziba) was a common means of placing one's views before the unit as a whole. Since 1977, letters to communications media and personal visits to higher-level cadres and offices are encouraged. In rectification campaigns, the masses have a special opportunity to review and criticize the performance of local elites. All of these add to the scope of unorganized articulation but do not escape the restraints imposed by party leadership. The public debate of the winter of 1978–1979 exemplifies this. Emboldened by the new "hundred flowers" atmosphere of 1978 and elite attacks on the Gang's violations of socialist democracy, many citizens began to write letters and posters that questioned the Maoist legacy, criticized aspects of the socialist system, and called for fuller observance of democracy, legality, and human rights in China. Democracy Wall in Peking became a special gathering point for displaying and distributing dissident writings. The public expression of these views, often in full view of Western reporters and accompanied by discussion and rallies in the streets, soon brought official reaction. By the spring of 1979, authorities had arrested some of the leading dissidents, reminded all citizens that public debate must support the party and socialism, and curtailed activities at Democracy Wall. Socialist democracy was not to be confused with bourgeoise democracy or to be used as a vehicle for weakening party leadership.

Finally, popular demands may express themselves through acts of noncompliance or resistance, such as absenteeism, slowdowns, concealed violations of regulations, capitalization on loopholes or ambiguities in policy, and so forth. The history of rural collectivization provides an example. The first push to collectivization in the early and mid-1950s saw its share of peasant footdragging, slaughtering of livestock, and withdrawals from cooperatives and collectives. During the commune and retrenchment period, some peasants withheld personal implement from the communes, concealed or misrepresented harvests, and took advantage of the restoration of private plots and free markets. This mode of articulation, unlike those discussed previously, may have a quick and forceful impact on national elites and may possibly result in policy change; however, it must be very widespread to do so. Resistance to collectivization in the 1950s was noticeable but accomplished little more than short-run delays or adjustments. Resistance to the Great Leap did bring major policy changes but only in combination with a national political and economic crisis. Of far more concern than direct resistance to national policies are acts of opposition toward local policies and leaders. However, the strongly hierarchical structure of Chinese politics makes retribution more likely than success. Individualized noncompliance or resistance, then, also has its limitations and is risky for those who engage in it.

Organized Articulation. Organized articulation occurs when the group making the demand has members drawn from many units or localities and some means of communication with its membership and the larger public. The most powerful and enduring organizations of this kind in China have been elite political structures—the state bureaucracies, the CCP, the PLA, and the Youth League. We are concerned here with the more representative organs of the state and organizations of a more popular character such as the Women's Federation, the trade unions, the democratic parties, and so forth. What these organizations have in common is that they provide an institutional interface between the political leadership of the CCP and the various officially acknowledged segments of the masses.

There is a basic ambiguity in the political role of these organizations that has led to fluctuations in their salience and even existence. From the founding of the PRC until the anti-rightist campaign of 1957, the CCP was very concerned with giving citizens, including capitalists and intellectuals, a sense of security and contribution to the new regime. The people's congress system established in 1954 and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) were only the most prominent of officially sponsored organizations purporting to represent certain categories of the population. Of course, Mao Zedong had made it clear in his 1949 speech “On the People's Democratic Dictatorship” that a class revolution had taken place and that the party's dictatorship was not to be questioned, but the existence of these groups and the access they provided to the party lent some legitimacy to the particular interests they symbolized.

With the anti-rightist campaign, and more emphatically with the Cultural Revolution, proletarian dictatorship was tightened and the party tended to displace all other political and societal organizations. The party represented the interests of the ruling majority class of society as a whole, and it was unnecessary to have quasi-autonomous people's congresses, unions, economic organizations, and so forth. It was not legitimate to represent special interests in society, so such associations could only be justified as special instruments of party control. The post-Mao era, however, has shown a respect for particular interests in society and has allowed a wide variety of organizations to flourish again. The reforms in the people's congress system and the resurrection of the CPPCC described in Chapter 3 are only the most important examples of a trend favoring the proliferation of organizations.

Although the acknowledgement of the complexity of society and the need for various representative groups is stronger in the 1990s than it was in the 1950s, these groups should not be mistaken for their Western interest-group counterparts, although they have cognates in other Communist systems. They do not officially lobby the party on behalf of special interests, and they do not criticize current policies. They have advanced the interest of their members within the political system with regularity and effectiveness only when their demands were compatible with general party policy. Leadership at the provincial and national levels is held closely by party groups within the organizations that are directly responsible to the respective level of CCP leadership. Nevertheless, the organizations are not simply passive sounding boards for the party. They provide important access points between the party and the organized masses, which allow the voicing of special interests in ways that do not threaten party hegemony and yet pressure the shaping of policy.

The general political process within these organizations might be called the building of a targeted consensus. The party provides the target. It sets the agenda, the terms of public discussion, and the general outcome. The party is interested in the reception of its policies and their improvement, but it does not encourage open criticism or autonomous policy formulation. Within the framework set by the party, participants pursue their individual and group interests by reinterpretation, discussion, and proposals. Most of the significant activity is informal and unreported, and conference resolutions are for the most part bland and unambiguous. The process benefits the party by establishing an official consensus, although, given the party's agenda monopoly, the consensus can be more apparent than real. The party can also amend its policies and acquire new inputs without facing the conflict of open criticism or competition. The participants benefit through the access they have to party decision makers and through the possibility that their specific requests might be attended to.

Given its constitutional status as the supreme political power in China, it may seem strange to treat the people's congress system in the same category as groups with no constitutional role. However, the elections of the people's congresses and the course of their meetings are more similar to the other groups under discussion than they are to a Western legislature. It is true that the political and even legislative powers of the standing committees of national and provincial people's congresses have been expanded, but the role of normal members and the standards governing elections remain the same.

An election unit for a county-level people's congress is a small and relatively cohesive group, one or several work units or several production brigades. Candidates do not usually campaign openly for election, and they do not endorse political platforms. They run on their status as model citizens, on organizational affiliations, and perhaps on their representativeness as a woman, a minority nationality, a scientist, and so forth. Once elected, a delegate is to keep in touch with his or her constituency and to forward their complaints and suggestions to the government. The relevant government agency is required to respond to such delegate initiatives. At meetings of lower-level people's congresses, discussion of government work reports and budgets provides members with access to important officials and some opportunity to amend government plans, however, there is no legislative agenda. Legislation is passed at the provincial and national congresses, although the passage of the draft is not in doubt and, as at the lower levels, the importance of the meeting for the delegate is not the power to vote but the opportunity for access and discussion.

The CPPCC occupies an ambiguous halfway position between the citizen-based interest articulation of the people's congress system and the clearly delineated constituencies of other mass organizations. It is the symbol of the united front between the CCP and nonparty groups, which, for patriotic motives, furthers reification with Taiwan, modernization, and intellectual and cultural affairs. Membership includes non-Communist parties that sided with the CCP in the civil war, representatives of religious and ethnic minorities, large numbers of distinguished personages from various fields, but especially intellectuals, educators, and CCP members involved in the United Front work. Meetings of the CPPCC coincide with people's congress meetings, and their members have comparable access to government officials. CPPCC meetings tend to be more lively than their corresponding people's congress meetings, possibly because they have a larger percentage of intellectuals and distinguished figures. Members are permitted to address petitions to government agen-

cies. In general, the CPPCC acts as the main institutional interface between a large number of groups, especially intellectuals, and the party-government decision makers.

Since 1978, there has been an explosion of special interest organizations. Professions, academic disciplines, and even hobbyists such as stamp collectors are establishing organizations at the national, provincial, and municipal levels, holding conferences, and publishing journals. A typical case is the academic discipline of political science, which was abolished in 1952 and revived in 1980. As of 1984, the Chinese Political Science Association had a membership of 1,000, eleven local associations, a research institute with a staff of twenty, and two in-house journals. The influence of organized articulation of interests in Chinese policy making should grow if these groups continue to proliferate, consolidate, and develop a public voice; but the experience of older organizations is instructive concerning the historical vulnerability and limits of such organizations.

The women's movement, represented organizationally before the Cultural Revolution by the Women's Federation and its official publication Chinese Women (Zhongguo Funiu), has probably been the most outspoken and effective articulator of particular interest groups. It alone among the mass organizations has consistently criticized the social position of its membership and demanded that this situation be improved. It has, for example, called for election of more women representatives, advancement of more women into schools and the CCP, better enforcement of the marriage law, and elimination of inequalities between men and women in pay and employment opportunities. The CCP has frequently endorsed these demands, agreeing that women have not attained the full equality promised in the initial reconstruction reforms. To some extent, therefore, the vigor of the women's movement has rested on the support or receptivity of national elites. Nonetheless, elite support has been neither constant nor sufficient to realize the goals in question, so that women's organizations have had to push their demands aggres-

sively and can claim much credit for gains in their constituents' status since 1949. It is important to note that much of the effectiveness of women's organizations has been at the local level, pursuing their cause on specific policies and cases. Generally, the organized expression of popular demands seems more effective at the local level than the national level, as long as it stays within the guidelines endorsed by the leadership.

The All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) offers a different example of the possibilities for organized articulation. Although workers' organizations have also enjoyed generalized elite support and have done much to improve their members' working and living conditions, the ACFTU illustrates the political hazards of explicit defense of group interests. On three occasions since 1949, trade unions have moved toward positions that provoked elite retaliation. The first two in 1951 and 1957 involved demands by ACFTU leaders for some independence from the CCP and for greater attention to worker interests, as opposed to state or managerial interests. In both cases, the CCP removed the principal offenders from their ACFTU positions and reassessed the primacy of its policies as a guide for union action. The third occurred in the winter of 1966–1967, when some workers, encouraged by their union leaders and promises of economic benefits, entered the Cultural Revolution on the side of the Liuisis and resisted extension of the revolution into the factories. Subsequently, the ACFTU was dissolved, its publications suspended, and its policies denounced as "economism".


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in the service of Liu Shaoqi's line. The demise of the ACFTU thus stemmed partly from its tendencies to offer a competing view of workers' interests but mainly from its close identification with the party bureaucracy that existed before the Cultural Revolution—an identification established, ironically, with some union resistance. For the ACFTU, organized articulation of interests that conflicted with CCP policy led to a quick reassertion of party control but not to organizational dismemberment; the latter came only with the unions' apparent entry into CCP factional struggle as an organizational base for one of the competitors. However, when the disgraced faction returned, so did the unions. Since the death of Mao, the unions have broadened their influence and functions within enterprises.

Trade union experience suggests the dilemma that confronts organizations whose demands deviate from CCP policy. If the top leadership says that these demands represent a narrow, selfish interest contrary to the collective interest, the organization has little choice but to give in or to advance a different image of the collective interest. However, the latter course enters the field of aggregation and challenges the CCP's monopoly over the formulation of policy alternatives. Despite the obvious political hazards of this course, nonparty groups have moved toward it on occasion. One example is the "hundred flowers" campaign of 1957, in which a few intellectuals moved beyond complaints about their own role in socialist society to a broader attack on party leadership and line. The critics of 1957 had some of the rudiments of an oppositional organization in the democratic parties and their newspaper, *Enlightenment Daily* (Gwanganmu Ribao), but entry into interest aggregation—if indeed it really went that far—was bound to fail for lack of any real power base. A much more vigorous and formidable form of organized group conflict emerged in the Cultural Revolution.

Factionalism among mass organizations was a decisive factor in the Cultural Revolution's shift from mass "power seizures" to
restoration of order under PLA auspices. That influence alone indicates the importance of organizational conflicts during the campaign, but these conflicts are also of interest for their progression from a relatively narrow articulation of interests to a broader aggregation of multiple interests in competition for local power. From mid-1966 to early 1967, Red Guard and rebel groups proliferated, frequently along discernible economic, political, or institutional lines. That is, they tended to begin as small-scale organizations based on a single school or factory, where organizational divisions emerged within a unit, they were often between regular and seasonal workers, between different classes within a school, or between students of more or less privileged political and economic backgrounds. Conflict centered on which group would lead the movement in its unit, on how to go about ridding the unit of its capitalist-readers, and on whether students should "make revolution" in factories and enterprises.

However, these early organizational limitations evaporated quickly. As the campaign continued, Red Guard and rebel attention shifted to municipal and provincial offices where the old power holders were still sitting tight. Citywide organizations of students and workers began to emerge, and when the Maoists in Peking authorized power seizures in the winter of 1966–1967, the way was open for the formation of federations of the new mass organizations. In most cities, two major coalitions loosely identifiable as conservatives and radicals (but each claiming support from cadres, workers, students, and peasant groups) came to the fore. Although economic and political interest probably influenced lines of cleavage, each coalition claimed to speak for the revolutionary masses as a whole and wanted to control mass representation on the revolutionary committees that were then being formed. The principal issue was that conservatives tended to accept the trend toward compromise with old cadres, whereas radicals held out for a thorough cleansing of the system. In effect, these coalitions were aggregating local interests around the broader issue of consolidating or deepening the Cultural Revolution. This was something the national leaders could not tolerate, and the ultimate victory of consolidation spelled the end for all of the larger-scale mass organizations, conservative and radical alike.

Bureaucratic Articulation. The foregoing discussion indicates that elite control of the articulation process is neither static nor absolute. Unorganized popular input at the lowest levels is substantial. Top elites have controlled organized articulation much more closely but have not prohibited it. Rather, their stance has been to support organized expression of popular demands in principle and then to take corrective action against those perceived as erroneous or antagonistic. They have been unequivocal in their hostility to popular organization that appears to compete for legitimacy as the aggregator of interests. The Cultural Revolution was an extreme manifestation of this pattern in which an extraordinary level of popular political activity was followed by an attack on factionalism and a sharp reduction of organizational opportunities. It is significant, however, that popular demands do enter the political process. Even if mass organizations lack the autonomy and resources to present these demands effectively, elites may consider them and at times champion them in the decision-making process. Bureaucratic articulation of popular interests is, in fact, the key variable in determining their viability and effectiveness.

The importance of bureaucratic articulation stems from the relative security, influence, and access to communications media that higher elites enjoy. Bureaucratic position is by no means invulnerable, as demonstrated by the Cultural Revolution, but its advantages over popularly based organizations and represent-

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tatives are clear. Citizens have no significant means of pressuring decision makers above the basic level. If they or the organizations accessible to them persist in advancing disfavored demands, they risk political reprisals. Bureaucratic support is normally essential for popular demands to receive a hearing among higher officials. On the other hand, bureaucrats do not need a demonstration of public opinion to advance what they may perceive as popular interest; they may initiate, as well as screen, the articulation of popular demands.

Bureaucrats naturally tend to articulate their own interests, and in authoritarian regimes these interests are especially powerful. It is their responsibility for the proper functioning of some aspect of society that governs their attention to popular interests. For instance, both the Ministry of Agriculture and the masses of peasants would be happy to have a bumper crop. Ideally, then, a plausible proposal from the masses for improving productivity would find an audience in the bureaucracy. From a slightly different angle, part of the proper functioning of society is a smooth and cooperative relationship between party, government, and people. It is somewhat risky for cadres to persist in policies that create widespread dissatisfaction or apathy, and conversely, it is useful to their careers to find policies that unleash the enthusiasm of the masses. Given the many levels of Chinese leadership, it is even possible that a higher bureaucratic level might articulate popular criticism of a lower level. One interpretation of the 1979 reforms of the county-level people's congresses is that the center, which originated the reforms, assumed that its modernization policies were more popular with the people than they were with lower-level functionaries and therefore wanted to increase the avenues for democratic pressure on local government. However, in general, it is to the interest of bureaucracy as an elite and it is consonant with Leninist ideology to maintain the hegemony of the party-state apparatus. Our analysis of the Chinese political process turns logically, therefore, to elite recruitment and conflict.

10See Darrell Hammer, USSR: The Politics of Oligarchy (Hinsdale, Ill.: Dryden, 1974) for a portrayal of the Soviet Union from this viewpoint.


POLITICAL RECRUITMENT

Three core political roles—activist, cadre, and party member—dominate the staffing of the Chinese political system. These roles may overlap (and each has its own important subdivisions), but the differences among them shed light on some basic characteristics of the recruitment process. Activists are ordinary citizens not holding full-time official positions who acquire a special interest, initiative, or responsibility in public affairs. Cadres are those who hold a formal leadership position, normally full-time, in an organization. Party members are, of course, just what the term states.

Activists. Becoming an activist is generally the first step in the political recruitment process, and it is from the ranks of activists that most new cadres and CCP members are drawn. Local party organizations keep close track of activists within their jurisdiction, counting and labeling them as such and turning to them when political campaigns and recruitment are under way. However, in practice there can be no rigid criteria for determining who merits this designation. Virtually every citizen is potentially eligible, the traditional exclusions being the "five bad elements"—landlords, rich peasants, counterrevolutionaries, rightists, and miscellaneous "bad elements"—who have never constituted more than a few percent of the population. There are myriad considerations that may distinguish certain individuals from the mass. Personal qualities and community standing are particularly important, however.

Personal qualities leading to activism include motivational and skill elements. From an official point of view, "correct" motivation is the cardinal ingredient; selfless commitment and the desire to serve is by itself sufficient to establish activism. Some approximation of the ideal motivation no doubt infuses most activists, but personal ambition also enters in and, as elites reluctantly acknowledge, may even be the decisive

motivational factor at times. Young men in rural areas may establish themselves as desirable mates by demonstrating prowess in activist roles, while youths of undistinguished class background sometimes attempt to prove their revolutionary zeal through taking the lead in volunteer activities. Some personal skills or ability are necessary to translate desire into operational activism. Literacy, intelligence, energy, and skill in human relations are obvious assets. For mature activists, standing in the community is important since much of the activist’s work involves mobilization of associates. The key factor here is not simply popularity but rather an expectation of informal leadership, a popular willingness to accept the activist’s credentials. This may derive from the aforementioned personal qualities or from more generalized institutional considerations. Members of a unit may expect an individual to fill the activist’s role because of his or her evident desire and ability, or because the individual is a PLA veteran, a party or league member known to be favored by local cadres, or even a natural leader through age or kinship determinants. A strong group feeling about an individual’s fitness for the activist role may compensate for modest motivation or skills.

Local elites are by no means passive observers of this process. The party consciously recruits and even cultivates activists, particularly in the course of mass movements, which are the single most important testing ground for the demonstration of activism, and it has the power to deny political recognition to individual candidates for the role. On balance, however, self-selection, personal ability, and group support tend to determine recruitment of activists, with local officials watching the process closely to vet undeclared candidates and select for more important roles the few deemed most promising.

Cadres. Recruitment to cadre status is quite a different matter. At the lowest levels, activist and cadre roles may overlap when an activist is selected for formal leadership responsibilities within a primary unit. For example, activists fill many posts in production teams and brigades, and to a lesser extent in commune governments, that carry local cadre status. However, local cadres who receive their salary from the primary unit involved and whose recruitment reflects the considerations described above are a special group within cadre ranks. More influential and typical are the twenty million state cadres who staff state, party, and mass organizational hierarchies above the primary level and receive their salaries from the government. Recruitment to these posts is by appointment from within the bureaucracies through personnel sections of the state and organization departments of the CCP. Since party-member cadres dominate personnel sections within the government, owing to the obvious importance of this function, the CCP tends to control the appointment, promotion, transfer, and dismissal of all cadres above the primary level. Influences from outside enter the process through examination of a prospective appointee’s motivation and relations with the masses, opportunities for mass criticism of cadres, especially during rectification campaigns, may also affect personnel decisions. With the shift from activist to cadre roles, however, the critical influence on recruitment shifts from individual motivation and community preferences to decision by party-member cadres within the bureaucracy.

The most serious problem in cadre recruitment is tension between political and professional criteria, the “red-expert” contradiction. Before 1949, party leaders thought of the cadre as a combat leader fighting in the context of guerrilla war. The role demanded direct leadership over and relationships with the masses, a high degree of political consciousness, and an ability to apply central directives flexibly in the course of an acute political struggle. After 1949, many cadres became workers in state institutions and departments, in which job-oriented skills were critical. The definition of a cadre expanded to accommodate the role’s new requirements, but the old conception of ideal cadre qualities endured. Cadres were to be “both red and expert”—“red” to ensure the desired style of leadership and “expert” in the work assignments demanded of them. Unfortunately, there were simply not enough red-experts to staff the expanding bureaucracies. But if red and expert qualities could not be combined in each cadre, they could be
balanced organizationally through the employment of some reds and some experts. The distinction between party and non-party cadres is obviously relevant here.

Party-member cadres are not always red and lacking in expertise; nonparty cadres are not always experts and lacking in redness. However, the CCP has relied on party-member cadres to maintain the redness of cadre ranks as a whole. That is, it has been willing to employ nonparty experts as cadres so long as party-member cadres occupy the leading positions or retain de facto control in each bureaucratic unit. The goal of "both red and expert" has never been abandoned, but in practice there has been a tendency to accept the priority of expert qualifications in the recruitment of nonparty cadres. For these cadres, insistence on redness shifts from the recruitment stage to their control and education in office. At the same time, the demand for redness in the recruitment of party members becomes more intense, since it is the role that must ensure the primacy of politics in the system as a whole. However, the designation in 1978 of modernization as the party's central task has given expertise an unaccustomed influence within the party. When the content of politics requires expertise, then one must be expert in order to be red.

**Party Members.** Admission to the CCP is the decisive act of political recruitment. For the activist, politics remains basically an avocation pursued within the primary unit. For the nonparty cadre, politics is a full-time job of broader scope, but the political status attaches to the position, not to the individual, and carries no presumption of permanent or growing political responsibilities; moreover, the nonparty cadre has no access to positions of supreme power and only limited opportunities for upward advancement. Party membership alone implies a life-long commitment to politics, configures a political status independent of work assignment, and provides entrance into a political career with significant opportunities for advancement and power. In 1984, there were 588,000 party members involved in central-level and provincial-level organizations, and 13.5 million were involved at the prefectural and county levels.24


Thus, one-third of the party's 40 million members are involved with relatively high governmental levels, and about one-fourths of all state cadres are party members. Of course, party membership is not necessarily permanent and does not lead inevitably to positions of power; members may withdraw or be expelled and many never become cadres. But the presumption of permanence and special political qualities remains, so that the party member is always in a position of relative political prominence. An ordinary worker, the party member is always a prime candidate for the activist role; among activists, the party member is most likely to be selected as a cadre; and among cadres, the party member is superior in political status and opportunities to nonparty colleagues.

The CCP intends that recruitment to its ranks be carefully controlled and highly selective, admitting only those who are truly red and expert. It alone decides who shall enter its organization, vesting control of recruitment in the party branch subject to approval by higher party committees, although popular opinions on candidates may be solicited. Since competition for membership is keen, party recruitment is really at an advanced level, drawing heavily from the ranks of those who have already attained activist or cadre status. Nonetheless, there is nothing cut and dried about this process. Historically, political recruitment has been a constant source of concern for the CCP, shifting frequently in its intended and unintended consequences for the composition of political leadership. A survey of changing patterns of recruitment, with particular attention to the party itself, will help to clarify this point.

**Recruitment Patterns to 1933.** The CCP began to grow in the 1920s as an urban-oriented party of intellectuals and workers, but this pattern ended abruptly in 1927. Although the influence of these early years was crucial for the oldest Communists, Chiang Kai-shek's April 12th "coup" virtually eliminated the party's mass membership (see Table VI.1) and drove the remaining members to the countryside. From the late 1920s to the late 1940s, the CCP was a party of peasants and soldiers—the latter also of peasant origin—led by a small number of better-educated revolutionaries and occasionally infused with some idealistic intellectuals. Recruitment was in a real sense self-recruitment.
The CCP tested and screened its own membership, of course, but the very act of association with the revolution was a powerful, prior testing device. Most followers did not join the Communist movement casually for security, material, or opportunistic reasons. Hardship, danger, and the threat of execution by the Nationalists were risks faced by party members and followers alike, and there was little assurance of ultimate victory until very late in the game. A strong element of political commitment was implicit, therefore, in identification with the movement. The CCP, eager to expand and faced with steady losses from death and defection, was able to absorb most of the followers who applied.

Once members of the party, new recruits received a natural socialization in Maoist virtues. Life was frugal and rustic, organization simple and close to the masses, political implementation decentralized, and the military experience always close-at-hand. Survival alone was almost sufficient to ensure upward mobility as the movement filled the places of departed comrades and tried to extend its influence. In short, environmental factors tended to resolve questions of recruitment and advancement in a way that produced a relatively homogeneous party of dedicated peasantsoldier revolutionaries.

A second pattern began to emerge in the late 1940s and lasted through 1953. This was the period when CCP military power spread rapidly over all of China, when the establishment of a new political structure to consolidate victory and implement reconstruction reforms became necessary, and accordingly, when a burst of recruitment to activists, cadre, and party roles took place. Significantly, it was also a period when many of the earlier situational controls on recruitment disappeared. Although intense political struggle continued, particularly in land reform and suppression of counterrevolutionaries, the movement was now victorious. To join was to cast one’s lot with a government in power whose future seemed secure and promising. Those who wanted to join no longer had to live in or travel to the red areas but could seek access to political positions in their own communities—although many were sent to other areas for actual service. The cities became a major source of recruitment for the first time since the 1920s. The CCP recognized that the new circumstances made it easier for opportunists, careerists, and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period and Year</th>
<th>Number of Members</th>
<th>Average Annual Increase in Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First Revolutionary Civil War</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921 (1st Congress)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922 (2nd Congress)</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923 (3rd Congress)</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1924 (4th Congress)</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925 (5th Congress)</td>
<td>7,967</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927 (5th Congress)</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second Revolutionary Civil War</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928 (6th Congress)</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>122,518</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937 (after the Long March)</td>
<td>255,333</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anti-Japanese War</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>765,447</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>736,151</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>833,420</td>
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<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>1,211,128</td>
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<tr>
<td>1945 (7th Congress)</td>
<td>1,348,320</td>
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<td><strong>Third Revolutionary Civil War</strong></td>
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<td>1946</td>
<td>1,470,556</td>
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<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>3,065,535</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>4,438,080</td>
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<td><strong>Under the People’s Republic of China</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>5,821,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>5,762,928</td>
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<td>1952</td>
<td>6,001,696</td>
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<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>6,121,254</td>
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<td>1954</td>
<td>7,055,473</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>9,285,894</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956 (8th Congress)</td>
<td>10,754,304</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>12,790,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>13,580,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>13,580,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>17,000,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>28,000,000</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>55,000,000</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977 (11th Congress)</td>
<td>39,657,212</td>
<td>6</td>
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</table>

Sources: The figures for the years 1927–1961 are reprinted from John Wilson Lewis, Leadership in Communist China, pp. 110–111, copyright 1965 by Cornell University, used by permission of the publisher, Cornell
even "class enemies" to acquire political status and was relatively cautious in party recruitment. Although organizational growth was substantial during 1949–1953, it was modest and irregular relative to later years. Rectification campaigns in 1951–1952, designed to weed out the undesirables admitted during this fluid period, even brought a temporary halt to party growth (see Table VI.1).

The need for activists and cadres could not be postponed, however. The great campaigns of 1949-1952 demanded and produced millions of new activists primarily from oppressed and outcast groups in the countryside with large numbers of students also rising to the call. These early rural activists, recruited in often violent campaigns against the old social order, became the foundation of Communist political power in the villages. They probably constitute even now a significant proportion of the local cadres in rural production units. The need for state cadres was no less urgent, and here the CCP was particularly short of talent. Intensive efforts raised the number of state cadres from 720,000 in 1949 to 3,510,000 in 1952; 5,270,000 in 1955; and 7,920,000 in 1958.25 Of the 2,550,000 cadres recruited between 1949 and 1952, the majority (57.7 percent) were worker and peasant activists from the mass campaigns; 40.1 percent were members of the CCP and PLA or progressive elements among the retained personnel (former Nationalist officials) who had gone through short-term training; and 2.2 percent were graduates of higher schools.26

This early period was one of tremendous political mobility, both downward and upward. Most old officials were ruined, and many who stayed on as retained personnel were forced out later when more reliable cadres emerged. Some of the new recruits as well as old revolutionary cadres failed to pass the test when their qualifications and performance were reviewed in rectification programs. Mainly, however, the period was one of relatively open recruitment and upward mobility in which new activists and cadres entered the political system in its formative years, thereby establishing themselves within it. The CCP could take satisfaction in having met the immediate problem of numbers, but it was acutely aware of qualitative problems arising from the necessarily loose standards of the time. Party strength was still insufficient to supervise thoroughly the work of all offices, many filled with cadres of questionable readiness. In addition, the cultural and technical skills of most activists and low-level cadres were quite low; in fact, many were illiterate and totally untrained for administrative work.

Institutionalization of Recruitment, 1954–1965. Between 1954 and 1965, the CCP developed an institutionalized recruitment system that responded to the weakness and irregularities of the earlier period, changed significantly the determinants and composition of party membership, and became an underlying cause of the Cultural Revolution. The central rationale for this transformation was to ensure CCP dominance over the process of socialist construction. If a large bureaucracy liberally staffed with experts was necessary for administering the transition to socialism, the CCP was determined that these experts be red or at least be under red leadership. This in turn required a vigorous expansion of the CCP and its organizational units and a movement of party members into other organizations. Beginning in 1954, the CCP added over 1 million new members in nearly every year until 1961—the last year in which figures were reported before the Cultural Revolution—at which time its membership reached 17 million (see Table VI.1). The number of basic-level party organizations increased from 250,000 in 1951 to 538,000 in 1956 and 1,060,000 in 1959.27 The dominance of party members within state and mass organizations advanced so rapidly that by the time of the Great Leap, CCP committees were the effective governing bodies within all levels of administration.28

26See Barnett, Cadres, Bureaucracy and Political Power, passim.
27Ibid., pp. 103–104.
while, all cadres came under a regularized system of graded ranks and salaries, annual review, and bureaucratic stratification. The composition of the CCP changed as it grew into its increasingly intimate relationship with government departments. Although a majority of its members continued to come from peasant backgrounds and to work in rural areas (due to the overwhelmingly agrarian society and economy), urban influences increased sharply. By 1957, only 66.3% of members came from peasant backgrounds, whereas 14.8% were intellectuals, 13.7% percent were workers, and 4.7 percent fell in the "other" category. Sample data on major cities indicate that by 1959, 4.4% of urban residents were party members, compared to only 22.2% of the total national population admitted to membership: urban members probably totaled about 4.4 million in that year, or nearly one-third of all party members. Many of those recorded as working in agriculture—about 58 percent of CCP members in 1959—were local cadres with administrative responsibilities in rural towns.

Where did the CCP find such large numbers of new recruits, and how did it satisfy itself that they were red and expert candidates who could work effectively in state administration and economic construction? Basically, it institutionalized the recruitment process through two organizations, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the Communist Youth League (Cyl). The PLA historically had been a major supplier and employer of CCP members. From the late 1940s, with the influx of ex-Kuomintang troops and then younger conscripts, and with the increasing civilian orientation of the CCP, the proportion of party members in the army gradually declined. The officer corps retained a heavy concentration of members, who virtually monopolized the senior grades, but members became a minority among the rank and file. On the other hand, as the PLA demobilized from its Korean War strength and entered into a conscription system with regular terms of service, it began to feed a steady stream of demobilized soldier into civilian life—nearly 7 million between 1950 and 1958. Supplemented by much smaller numbers transferred to duties in civilian organizations, usually as cadres, without being released from service. For a variety of reasons, demobilized and transferred soldiers were prime candidates for activist, cadre, and party member roles. Their term of service (according to the 1955 conscription law, three years for the army, four for the air force, and five for the navy) gave them disciplined organizational experience, regular political education, minimal literacy, and, in some cases, special technical skills. Moreover, the PLA's conscripts were an elite group to begin with, since only a fraction of those who reached the conscription age of eighteen were taken. Many were from peasant families, which gave them political advantages of a favored class background, but they were the pick of China's rural youth.

The Youth League. The Youth League's importance in recruitment is obvious, since it received official recognition (until 1966) as the most appropriate organization in which youth demonstrated and acquired advanced political qualifications. The League's growth in the 1950s was impressive (see Table 6.2). Starting from scratch in 1949, it matched the CCP in size by 1952 and was close to double the size of its parent organization by 1956. Its growth slowed during the Leap and its aftermath, but the Cyl remained the largest activist political organization in the People's Republic. Membership apparently remained around the 25 million mark into the early 1960s, when pressures for growth resumed. One scholar estimates that membership rose to around 40 million by 1965, although Communist sources have confirmed only that a great recruitment drive in 1964–1965 brought in 8.5 million new members. The League probably became the leading source of new party members about 1954, the time that the CCP began its own major growth period. Indeed, the Cyl's emergence in the early 1950s as a substantial pool of organized, accessible, and presumably reliable activists was
Table VI.2 Communist Youth League Membership, 1949-1959

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Members in millions</th>
<th>Branch units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1949 (April)</td>
<td>6.19</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949 (October)</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949 (December)</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950 (June)</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951 (September)</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>242,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952 (September)</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953 (June)</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>380,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954 (May)</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>520,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955 (December)</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956 (June)</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957 (May)</td>
<td>23.00</td>
<td>920,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958 (July)</td>
<td>25.20</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959 (May)</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Undoubtedly one factor encouraging the CCP to open its recruitment drive. The precise number of League members entering the party is not known. One of the few direct references was a 1957 report that 2.8 million had done so between 1949 and the end of 1956. This represented over 40 percent of CCP growth for the same period; in fact, since the League probably began to provide large numbers of party recruits only from 1954, the figures suggest that by the mid-1950s a solid majority of new party members were Youth League. The last report on this topic before the Cultural Revolution stated that 600,000 league members joined the party in 1959, which must have been a very high proportion of those entering the CCP in that year.

The CYL's central role in recruitment before the Cultural Revolution is clarified by the distribution of its membership. In effect, the League was the key organizational linkage for China's incipient "new class." the subelite of activists and low-level cadres concentrated in urban settings—among students, industrial workers, and state employees—and in the PLA. A few figures will indicate how organizational membership in the League, with its direct political advantages, overlapped with and reinforced the opportunities of skilled occupational groups. In 1957, League membership was distributed as follows: 16.4 million in villages; 3.6 million in schools; 2.28 million in industry; 1.8 million in the army; 970,000 in government offices; and 680,000 in commerce. Village members constituted only 70 percent of total League membership, a figure well below the rural percentage of China's population and an indicator of the CYL's persistent and acknowledged weakness in the countryside. (As late as 1964, the League had recruited only 13 percent of rural youth between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five and had major organizational gaps in production teams and brigades.) But in 1957 League members constituted major proportions of all the other categories given. Consider the following: 3.6 million in schools, when total secondary and higher school enrollment was about 5.6 million (and many in junior middle schools, the largest group of students in the total, would be underage); 2.28 million in industry, when the total of industrial workers was 7.9 million (and the majority ovage for the CYL); 1.8 million in the PLA, when PLA strength was 2.5 million (with many overseas); 1.65 million in "government offices" and "commerce," a very high percentage of employees under the age of twenty-five in such categories.

Despite their limitations, these figures leave little doubt about the institutionalized character of recruitment in the

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Footnotes:

67 In September 1956, CYL leader Hu Yaobang said that 2,000,000 League members had joined the party by that time; if this and the 2.8 million figures are correct, then 650,000 League members joined the CCP in the last three months of 1956, supporting the statement in the text. Sc Hu Yaobang's speech in Eighth National Congress of the Communist Party of China, vol. 2 (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1956), p. 319.
1954-1955 period. The CCP, seeking red and expert candidates with particular concern about redness, logically focused its search on the CYL, which was its own auxiliary and second only to the party in the assumed political activism and purity of its membership. To the extent that the party also wanted young candidates with somewhat advanced education or training (students and soldiers), or who were already acquiring valued work experience (low-level cadres, state employees, and industrial workers), it was also turning to institutions that were very much a part of the League's organizational domain. The CYL was probably enrolling from 60 to 90 percent of its age group in the PLA, the regular schools, the factories, and government offices. The League was relatively weak in the countryside, but even here it served as the logical provider of rural party recruits because so many of its rural members were village activists and cadres. As early as 1954, an estimated 6 million Leaguers were serving as basic-level officials in the countryside; given a League membership of 12 million and estimating rural members as 70 percent of the total, about 70 percent of rural Leaguers held village cadre positions in 1954.

Standing astride the institutional channels of political recruitment, the League interposed itself as a crucial barrier between the young citizen and higher political status. Yet that citizen's access to the League was often dependent on earlier entry into institutions highly selective in their admissions process (the regular secondary schools and the PLA). Moreover, all was not well with the League from a Maoist point of view. It was a huge bureaucracy, heavily oriented toward the cities and advanced schools, closely tied to the central party Secretariat and Propaganda Department, jealous of its power to pass judgment on the political qualifications of candidates, and filled with overage cadres making a career of youth work. The implications were not lost on the political aspirant who

recognized the institutional roles of the game that had to be played for the sake of a career.

Finally, we should note that institutionalization of recruitment gave great importance to seniority and made upward mobility difficult for the post-1954 recruit. As shown in the next section, central leadership remained closed to all but the oldest of the party elite. A study of local leadership reveals that cadres recruited before 1949 or during land reform tended to hold on to their posts, steadily advancing the age of xian and district cadres in particular and blocking advancement for those at lower levels. The influence of seniority was also evident among top elites at the provincial level who tended to retain their positions or be replaced by cadres of roughly comparable age, having the same result of a rising average age. Reliance on old cadres is particularly important in view of the distribution of party members by date of admission. As early as 1961, only 20 percent were pre-1949 entrants, while those joining after 1953 constituted 70 percent of the party. Those who entered the party after 1958—that is, after the revolutionary wars and reconstruction struggles—probably constituted close to 80 percent of the party by 1965. By 1966, the CCP was an organization of recent recruits lacking revolutionary experience, led by a small stratum of old revolutionary cadres who held most of the responsible positions within it.

Table VI.5 offers a simplified summary of the preceding discussion, emphasizing changes experienced by party organization between 1945 and 1965. Maoists recognized the shift from a revolutionary to a bureaucratic party and tried to combat it.

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There were attempts to reduce cadre numbers in the mid-1950s; initiation of movements to recruit more peasant CCP and CYL members, and repoliticization of the PLA in the late 1950s; socialist education and cultivation of revolutionary successor campaigns in the early 1960s; and a new CYL recruitment drive to add worker-peasant members and rejuvenate League organization in 1964-1965. These measures checked but did not reverse the institutionalization of recruitment. With the exception of the PLA, where Lin Biao’s revival of the revolutionary political style had a marked impact,66 none of the institutions involved turned decisively away from the post-1955 pattern. Maoist pressures simply created ambiguity and uncertainty in recruitment policy, possibly explaining the withholding of data on party and League membership after 1961.

"Fresh Blood" in the Cultural Revolution. The advantage of hindsight makes clear that pressure was building in the early 1960s for a radical rectification of the party. For one thing, the

**Political Interests, Recruitment, and Conflict**

socialist education movement of 1962-1965 was a precursor to the Cultural Revolution in a number of respects.67 The treatment of local cadres by visiting work teams was extremely harsh compared to earlier rectification campaigns. Political losses and hard feelings caused by this treatment created the base for later Cultural Revolution factionalization. Moreover, the movement clarified the differences between Mao’s desires to involve poor peasants in an external criticism of the party and the more Leninist approach of relying on internal party discipline. Mao appeared less critical of local party leaders but more radical in his solution, while the center organization, inspired by a report by Wang Guangmei (Liu Shaoqi’s wife), advocated harsh discipline through traditional hierarchical channels. Another event that contributed to radical rectification was the criticism of Soviet revisionism in the 1960s and the consequent commitment to prevent the emergence of revisionism in China. The first of the “five criteria for revolutionary successors” enunciated by Mao in 1964 was that “they must be genuine Marxist-Leninists and not revisionists like Khrushchev wearing the cloak of Marxism-Leninism.”68

The harshness of the Socialist Education Movement and the ideological leitmotif of the anti-revisionist polemic combined explosively in the Cultural Revolution. Although the party itself was not under attack and the targets were supposed to be limited to the “handful of capitalist-cadres,” the Cultural Revolution was replete with real and rhetorical attacks on the established recruitment process. The upsurge of Red Guards and rebels, purges of office holders, and suspension of the CYL cut sharply through existing routines and channels for political advancement. Maoist accounts commended the rise of millions of "previously unknown"

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68*The Problem on the General Line of the International Communist Movement* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1965), pp. 477-78. Each of the other criteria also contrasts the correct behavior of revolutionary successors with the crimes of Khrushchev. The “five criteria” (without the reference to Khrushchev) were written into the 1975 party constitution, chapter 2, article 3.
activists who were appearing on the political scene. As the campaign shifted to its consolidation phase in 1968, an important editorial in Red Flag forecast a more open and vigorous recruitment policy. Emphasizing the importance of recruitment in determining the future of the revolution, the editorial took its theme from a Mao quotation:

A human being has arteries and veins through which the heart makes the blood circulate, and he breathes with his lungs, exhaling carbon dioxide and inhaling fresh oxygen, that is, getting rid of the stale and taking in the fresh. A proletarian party must also get rid of the stale and take in the fresh for only thus can it be full of vitality. Without eliminating waste matter and absorbing fresh blood the Party has no vigor.

The editorial continued in explanation:

"Eliminating waste matter" means resolutely expelling from the Party the proven renegades, enemy agents, all counter-revolutionaries, obdurate capitalist roaders, alien class elements and degenerated elements. As for apathetic persons whose revolutionary will has declined, they should be advised to leave the Party.

"Absorbing fresh blood" consists of two inter-related tasks: Taking into the Party a number of outstanding rebels, primarily advanced elements from among the industrial workers, and selecting outstanding Communist Party members for leading posts in the Party organizations at all levels.

The preference for industrial workers is interesting, but the editorial made it clear that recruitment criteria ought to be political and moral rather than socioeconomic: "boundless loyalty" to Mao; defense of his line during the Cultural Revolution; exercise of power for Mao and the proletariat, not for self-interest; vigorous study and propagation of Mao's thought with no pride, conceit, or halfway revolution; close ties with and service to the masses. The editorial attacked Liu Shaoqi for relying on the bourgeoisie and bourgeois intellectuals and inveighed against "conventional criteria," "old habits," and "blind faith in elections" as conservative influences used to exclude good comrades. "Direct action by the revolutionary masses" coupled with approval by the leadership was the editorial's approved formula for the constitution of new organs of power.

How far the CCP actually went in absorbing "fresh blood" and procedures is a complicated question to which several answers are possible—all of which are limited by insufficient data. One response is that the Cultural Revolution initiated another spurt of party growth, with membership rising to 28 million by 1973 and over 35 million by August 1977 (see Table VI.1). Assuming that growth must have been slow in the early 1960s, and stopped altogether from 1966 to 1969, the 1970s were as heavy a recruitment period as the mid-1950s. The result was a substantial increase in the ratio of party members to total population, a ratio that rose from 1.72 percent in 1956 to 3.68 percent in 1977 (calculated from Table VI.1 and common population estimates). By the late 1970s, the CCP was almost entirely an organization of post-1949 recruits; about half of them were recruited after the Cultural Revolution.

There was also a substantial radical influence on party recruitment in the first few years after the Cultural Revolution. The constitution adopted at the Ninth Party Congress in 1969 removed an earlier requirement for a year's probation before full membership and added a stipulation that popular opinions be solicited in assessing applicants' qualifications. Scattered reports indicated that admission in this period was simpler and quicker, generally favoring Cultural Revolution activists. It may be assumed that there was strong influence on recruitment by dominant factions within party branches. The strongest evidence that post-1969 recruitment was under radical influence stems from later charges that the Gang of Four were stacking party rolls with their own supporters. In commenting on CCP membership at the Eleventh Party Congress in 1977, Ye Jianying observed, "There is the serious problem of impurity in ideology, organization and style of work among Party members as a result of the rather extensive confusion created by the 'gang of four' who in recent years vitiated the Party's line, undermined the Party's organizational principle and set their own standards for

Party membership." Ye clearly implied that the Gang’s "crash admission" efforts, bringing "political speculators" and "bad types" into the party, were one reason for the restoration of the one-year probation requirement and other disciplinary emphases adopted in the 1977 constitution. In general, the post-1976 assault on the Gang’s intraparty activities testifies to the radicalization of recruitment procedures during 1969–1976.

Recruiting for Modernization after Mao. Party recruitment in the post-Mao period has had two overlapping aspects. The first is directed at ridding the party of the factions and leftist of the Cultural Revolution, while restoring earlier organizational patterns. There is a clear preference for a more orderly, disciplined recruitment process. The reactivation of the old mass organizations—especially the Youth League, with its reported 1978 membership of 48 million and with explicit praise for its having "trained large numbers of outstanding cadres for the Party"—provided the screening institutions to implement it. The rise of former CYYL leaders Hu Yaobang to General Secretary of the Party and Hu Qili to Permanent Secretary of the CCP Secretariat certainly strengthens its prestige, although the ideological reorientation of the post-Mao period has made the League’s function especially difficult. Meanwhile, the party has been engaged in a lengthy effort to root out leftist, factionalism, and corruption. The reinstitution of the discipline inspection committees is the most important institutional reform, but there have also been numerous campaigns against undesirable tendencies in the party. The anti-cadre campaign of 1983 included corruption among its targets, and a major part of the 1983–86 rectification campaign is the elimination of three types of party members: followers of the Gang or Lin Biao, factionalists, and persons implicated in violence.\(^{35}\)


\(^{36}\)PR, no. 20 (May 19, 1978): 10.


The second aspect of post-Mao party recruitment is the adaptation of party leadership to the tasks of modernization. The problem of party modernization is closely linked to that of rectification and regularization, but it involves the additional element of reorientation. In order for the party to lead modernization, it must recruit intellectuals, reeducate its existing cadres, and prevent party interference in the proper functioning of state organs. Recruitment of intellectuals is a pressing concern because in 1984 only 17.8 percent of party members had a senior middle school education and only 4 percent were college graduates. Of course, these figures only reflect a general lack of advanced education in China. One in ten senior middle school graduates and one in three college graduates is a party member, compared to less than one in twenty party members in the general population.\(^{34}\) Nevertheless, it is vital to the party to recruit even more intellectuals because of their key role in modernization. From 1978 to 1984, a total of 580,000 professional and technical people were recruited into the party, approximately 10 percent of total recruitment during that period. Despite some members’ resistance to adding so many intellectuals to the party, this recruitment pattern will probably be intensified. Many current party members are being retrained in cadre schools at the central and local levels. The curriculum of these schools previously emphasized ideology but now is being reoriented toward science and management.

In general, post-Mao recruitment has reverted to the pattern of the mid-1950s, except that recruitment now is less class-oriented and even more committed to including intellectuals. The trends since 1977 have been predictable. Given the size of the CCP—surely the world’s largest bureaucracy, and one that attempts to maintain close control over every member—the routinism and institutionalization of recruitment must be difficult to resist. When the requirements of the "four modernization" policies are added, the evidence points strongly toward a recruitment process that will favor the more highly skilled and educated sectors of Chinese society, creating closer links between political status and socioeconomic status and fostering tendencies toward the
emergence of a new class of technocratic party elites, a situation already existing in the Soviet Union and many Eastern European countries.85

Recruitment to Top Leadership. Much more is known about China's top political elite—commonly identified by membership in the CCP Central Committee (CC)—than about membership in the party generally or in any other stratum of Chinese society. Although information is still limited, it reveals significant facts about recruitment to the highest level of the political system. These data illustrate broad trends in elite composition and more detailed shifts in intraparty struggles; attention here focuses on larger trends, with only a few observations on the relationship between CC composition and factional struggles.

Table VI.4 suggests several important changes in the CC over time. One of the more obvious is that the CC has grown steadily in size, making it less effective as a decision-making body but increasing its potential as a representative body for the party as a whole and strengthening its training and screening function for future Politburo service. Growth also means the CC has had regular infusions of new members; the lowest percentage occurred in 1978 when 31 percent of those elected to the Tenth CC were newcomers. Such figures are important since there are other ways in which elite change and mobility appears highly restricted. Moreover, Table VI.4 points to three major consequences of the Cultural Revolution: first, there was a particularly heavy turnover of membership in the election of the Ninth CC in 1969; second, the campaign sharply increased military representation on the Ninth CC, followed by successive reductions of PLA influence on the Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth committees; third, the upheavals of 1966–1969 and the decentralizing policies associated with the Maoist model shifted the balance of power on the CC from those holding positions in central offices in Peking to those with primary responsibilities in the provinces (for example, secretaries of provincial party committees, heads of provincial revolutionary committees, or commanders of regional PLA forces)—a shift that was reversed in the Eleventh and Twelfth CCs; fourth, the mass representatives, who became members of the Central Committee during the Cultural Revolution, had been eliminated by 1982. Those of this category in the Twelfth CC were new members associated with mass organizations such as trade unions. Finally, this table documents the return of rehabilitated cadres to the Tenth and Eleventh CCs, the "reversal of verdicts" on older cadres purged in the Cultural Revolution that was such a potent issue between the radicals and moderates during 1969–1976. The relatively small percentages refer to sixteen returnees in 1973 and twenty more in 1977, representing a substantial component of the former purge victims who were still alive to benefit from this reversal.

The iron grip of the Long March generation (people who had joined the CCP by the time of the epic Long March of 1934–1935) on PRC political power can be seen in the steady rise of the age of CC members. The average age of the CC rose from 46.8 in the Seventh CC elected in 1945 to 56.4 in 1956 and 61.4 in 1969; in other words, despite substantial turnovers of or additions to CC membership over these twenty-five years, most changes came from within the same increasingly elderly generation. The average age of the two committees elected in the 1970s continued to increase, although (inevitably) not as rapidly as before. More specifically, 67 of the 77 members of the Seventh CC were reelected to the Eighth in 1956; and even though only 53 of the 193 members of the Eighth CC weathered the Cultural Revolution storm to serve on the Ninth, the Long March group continued to hold 80 percent of the seats. The Long Marchers fell to 68 percent of the Tenth CC but then actually rose to 67 percent on the Eleventh CC elected in 1977.86 The percentage of post-1949 recruits on the CC rose sharply in 1973 but then fell in 1977, while the percentage of members of 60, and also over 70, rose steadily on the 1969, 1973, and 1977 committees. Although the Long March generation's dominance is obviously about to end, with many of its most prestigious representatives gone, its control of top leadership was still in place thirty years after 1949, even though the CCP had become essentially an organization of post-

85For a critique of this tendency in European Communist countries, see Georg Konrad and Ivan Szelényi, The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, 1979).

### Table VI.4 Changes in Composition of the CCP Central Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Number of members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Turnover of members†</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holdover from previous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Committee</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcomer</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returns‡</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Occupational background</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cadres</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLA</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masses</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Occupational level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Average age of full</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>members at election</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

†Twenty-five alternate members were added to the 8th Central Committee at its second plenary session in 1958.
‡Figures in II, III, and IV represent percentages of total (full and alternate) Central Committee membership.
‡Returnees are those full and alternate members who were not elected to the immediately previous Central Committee but who were members of an earlier Central Committee.


1949 recruits. The disappearance of the Long Marchers in the 1980s will be a momentous change, providing both a challenge and an opportunity for the CCP and its younger cohorts.

The Twelfth Central Committee. The combination of succession problems, factional struggles, and organizational reform created a considerable disjunction between the Eleventh and Twelfth CCs. A Central Advisory Committee was created in order to ease old leaders out of active positions, allowing them continued access to decision making but making room for newcomers in the CC. The Central Discipline Inspection Committee, which had been formed in 1979, had become a major party organ under the leadership of Chen Yun. A proposal to make a formal division of powers between the CC and the other two organs was rejected, but the proposal itself was indicative of a trend toward the division and institutionalization of authority.

The membership of the Twelfth CC reflects the victory of Deng Xiaoping and his pragmatist allies over leaders who had been against the Gang of Four but not totally opposed to Cultural Revolution policies. Hua Guofeng was the symbol and, in some respects, the leader of this group, and he went from CCP chairman, premier, and chairman of the party military committee in 1977 to an ordinary member of the CC in 1982. Many of Hua’s supporters were either not reappointed to the Twelfth CC or forced into the semiretirement of the Central Advisory Committee. On a more positive note, there was a doubling of the representation of the State Council, from 10 percent in the Eleventh CC to 20 percent in the Twelfth. This reflects the importance of economic issues as well as the growing political clout of the state apparatus.

Table VI.5 displays some of the complexities of political continuity at the CC level from 1977 to 1982. If we ignore transfers to the Central Advisory Committee and examine only the percentage of Eleventh CC members continuing in the Twelfth,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entered Twelfth CC at same level</th>
<th>Full Members</th>
<th>Alternates</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promoted to full members</td>
<td>18 (14%)</td>
<td>16 (12%)</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demoted to alternate</td>
<td>6 (3%)</td>
<td>6 (2%)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferred to Advisory Committee</td>
<td>18 (15%)</td>
<td>85 (67%)</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not continued</td>
<td>80 (61%)</td>
<td>51 (39%)</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Died or transferred elsewhere</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
<td>20 (16%)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>223 (100%)</td>
<td>195 (150%)</td>
<td>418</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Then a very serious purge is evident, more serious than the removal of Gang adherents in 1977 but not as serious as the gutting of the Eighth CC by the Cultural Revolution. One might argue that the Central Advisory Committee is a prestigious, if less active, organization, and, with an average age of 75, many of its members are not being purged but simply transferred to a more appropriate level of activity. However, the matter is not quite so clear, because even relatively young leaders were "kicked upstairs" if they had been promoted rapidly before Deng’s ascendancy, while the truly powerful figures in the Politburo refused to be retired regardless of their age. Even if transfer to the Central Advisory Committee is considered a lateral transfer, however, the discontinuity between the Eleventh and Twelfth CCs is considerable. It mirrors an important shift in factional strengths and in policy orientation during the post-Mao period.

Changes in the Politburo command special attention, since this body is generally considered the supreme decision-making elite. Recruitment of the Politburo mirrors the CC pattern of age and Long March domination; the average age of seventy-two for full members of the 1982 Politburo (up from sixty-eight in 1977) gives the PRG an extremely elderly top national leadership. Turnover on the Politburo has also been about the same as on
the CC, slightly higher overall due to more deaths but very close to the CC in purge percentages. In other ways, however, Politburo recruitment differs from the CC. Its size has been constant, reflecting the fact that it is a functioning committee, whereas the CC is more a representative assembly. In the Twelfth CC, there is a very strong linkage between the Secretariat and the Politburo. Of the nine new members of the Politburo in 1982, six had been members of the Secretariat.\(^{60}\)

The current organizational affiliations of Politburo members shown on Table VI.6 indicate the importance of linkage and access at the top of the Chinese political system. Except for the commanders of two important military regions, all of the linkages are with other central organs. This reflects the Politburo’s position of being the center of the center. There are ten joint appointments with the military, eight with the State Council, and four with the National People’s Congress. The military’s overrepresentation in the Politburo began with the Ninth CC in 1969 and continues, somewhat reduced, into the 1980s. The affiliations of the Politburo Standing Committee are a microcosm of those of the Politburo. Of its six members, two are leaders of the Central Military Committee and two are leaders in state organs. There are also linkages to three other key organizations, the Secretariat and party apparatus in general through Hu Yaobang, the Central Advisory Committee (CAC) through Deng Xiaoping, and the Central Discipline Inspection Committee (CDIC) through Chen Yun. The Central Commission for Guiding Party Consolidation (CCGPC) is the task force in charge of party rectification. It is the most important example of a comprehensive, ad hoc organization. It features a blue-ribbon leadership (Hu Yaobang and six other Politburo members) and extensive participation by CAC and CDIC personnel.

A fascinating question is what combination of qualifications and experiences creates access to CCP elitehood, but few solid generalizations can be formulated. By far, the most important criterion for PRC leadership has been membership in the Long March generation plus a capacity to survive physically and politically; those who met these conditions simply were the elite prior to the Cultural Revolution. That campaign revealed other considerations, however, with three new criteria emerging as particularly important recruitment assets. One was high military command, which seems to be a prime functional specialty for access to the top. A second was success as a provincial leader, with many new elite recruits capitalizing on their provincial bases; Hua Guofeng was an example, although his Hunan experience was not the only factor in his ascent.\(^{41}\) Finally, personal support from the highest leaders was a very effective asset, the best example being the Gang of Four who benefited from Mao’s patronage in the late 1960s. These criteria overlap and must blend with other personal and political skills to produce a successful career, but they remain important—not exclusive—paths to the top. Post-1976 priorities suggest that some technocrats, highly skilled in the administration of modernization policies, will join military commanders, provincial leaders, and protégés in the late 1980s as a fourth type of upwardly mobile cadre.

The 1970s transformed what Mao Zedong perceived to be the core problem of political recruitment. Mao was keenly aware of the necessity of “cultivating revolutionary successors” in large numbers to staff the burgeoning Chinese bureaucracies. His search was for cadres like himself who combined revolutionary ideology with intellectual or technical skills. The problem was that Chinese society seemed to offer relatively few recruits with these talents. Initially, there were plenty of reds, but their expertise was limited, whereas the available experts were contaminated by KMT influence or bourgeois education. When Mao saw that the new recruitment processes were not replicating his brand of revolutionary ideology, he began to fear that revisionist influences would overwhelm the party’s revolutionary core. Hence his suspicion of the new elite, his promotion of the Cultural Revolution, and his continuing search for “fresh blood” that had escaped or renounced the influence of impure background or education.

By the late 1970s, two developments had changed this perception of the problem. Mao and his closest associates were gone, and although Long Marchers remained influential, the


TABLE VI.6  **Affiliations of Politburo Members, 1983**

**Standing Committee**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position/Committee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chen Yun</td>
<td>1st Secretary, Central Discipline Inspection Committee (CDDC).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deng Xiaoping</td>
<td>Chair, Central Advisory Committee (CACC);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chair, Central Military Committee (CMC).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hu Yaobang</td>
<td>General Secretary; Chair, Central Commission for Guiding Party Consolidation (CCGPC).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Xiannian</td>
<td>President of the PRC; State Council Standing Comm. (SCSC).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ye Jianying</td>
<td>Vice-Chair, CMC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhao Ziyang</td>
<td>Premier; Head, Science and Technology Leading Group (S&amp;T LG); Minister in Charge, State Comm. for Restructuring the Economy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Full Members**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position/Committee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deng Yingchao</td>
<td>Chair, CCPCC; State Councilor;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deputy Head, S&amp;T LG; Min. in Chg., State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fang Yi</td>
<td>Honorary President, Acad. of Soc. Sci.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vice Premier; Vice Chair, CCGPC; SCSC; CC Sec.; CAC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>President, Party School; Adviser, CCGPC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hu Qiaomu</td>
<td>Adviser, CCGPC;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Xi Zhongxun; Xue Xiangqian; Yang Dezhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Desheng</td>
<td>Commander &amp; 1st Sec. Shenyang Military Region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ni Zhifu</td>
<td>Chair, Trade Union Fed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nie Rongzhen</td>
<td>Vice-Chair, CMC; Chair, Standing Comm. of NPC; Sec. Polit. &amp; Legal Comm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peng Zhen</td>
<td>Zhang Tingfu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yang Shangkun; Yu Quli;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Party Sec., PLA; CMC; Exe. Vice Chair, CMC; Adviser, CCGPC; Director, Gen Polit Dept. PLA; SCSC; CMC; Vice Chair, CCGPC; CC Sec. Commander, Air Force.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Alternate Members**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position/Committee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Song Rongqiang</td>
<td>Adviser, CCGPC; Vice President, PRC; SCSC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulanhu</td>
<td>Chen Muhua; Qin Jiwei; Yao Yilin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SCSG; Minister, Foreign Econ. Rel. and Trade. Commander and 1st sec., Beijing Military Region. SCSC.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

*CCP Central Committee Secretariat.

CCP was no longer dominated by a desire to replicate old revolutionary cadres. Moreover, the pool of potential recruits had expanded enormously due to increases in the number of activists, middle school graduates, members of mass organizations and the party, and cadres with substantial administrative experience. With this large and diverse body of potential recruits, nearly all of whom were products of socialist society and spread throughout that society, the danger of any particular group of recruits (such as intellectuals) transforming the party seemed small. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the party was already transformed so that it could no longer perceive the problem in Mao's terms or with his sense of urgency.

The core recruitment problem for the 1980s, then, seems to be emerging as a mix of managerial and bureaucratic concerns: how to administer a process that requires review and examination of tens of millions of cases, how to balance priorities in the training of various specialties, ranging from rural to nuclear technology, from basic-level activists to computer experts, from foreign language specialists to factory managers, and so forth; and how to prevent political recruitment processes, necessarily based on a great variety of institutional training and election grounds, from producing enclaves of special interests that will breed factions and threaten the CCP's centralized organization and ideology.

**ELITE CONFLICT**

To summarize the discussion thus far, CCP theory recognizes the existence of multiple interests within Chinese society and maintains that nonantagonistic ones among the people should be expressed politically. The possibly competitive demands so legitimized emanate from a wide range of socioeconomic, institutional, and geographic groups. Popular articulation of demands occurs largely within basic-level government, especially within primary production and residential units, and is typically unorganized and fragmented. Organized articulation by nonparty groups is supervised closely by CCP elites to check competition with the party and to ensure that demands conform to its general line; deviations can and do occur to bring disciplinary and, if necessary, repressive responses from the CCP. Bureaucratic articulation, in which office-holding elites champion selected interests, is the primary means for injecting demands into the decision-making process, hence the importance of recruitment to higher political roles. The CCP hopes that its recruitment process will produce a unified elite of "red-experts" who will rise above partial interests in their aggregation of political demands. In fact, the party never has been monolithic in either ideology or organization. It maintained a relatively high degree of cohesion from the late 1950s into the early 1980s, but with its victory in 1949 it began to undergo major changes. It increased greatly in size; began to accept recruits of more varied motivation, skills, and backgrounds; expanded its control over, and then direct management of, the administrative processes of government; and bureaucratized its organization to cope with these new conditions. In the process, the CCP absorbed the basic contradictions of Chinese society, and its organization became an arena for conflict between the demands of different strata, regions, generations, and institutions.

The resulting political process bears some similarity to the bureaucratic politics of traditional China as discussed in Chapter 2, but it operates in a much more encompassing and complicated governmental structure that opens the process to a greater variety of institutional and societal pressures. Closer to the mark is Rigby's concept of "crypto-politics," in which state direction of a tremendous range of activities creates an elaborate set of political institutions without permitting truly open, competitive politics in any of them; political conflict tends to be carried on in secretive or guarded ways throughout the governmental structure, in executive and administrative as well as nominally political institutions. The Chinese brand of crypto-politics is a volatile one that has encouraged a good deal of guided conflict resolution at the mass level and at times opened elite conflict to public view and even participation. In general, however, the definition and resolution of major political issues is the responsibility of party officials, whose conflicts are fought inside the bureaucracies in which they serve and are seldom exposed fully to public view. The political criticisms that appear in the media are usually case analyses of a particular failing such as factionalism, or more

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general critiques with unspecified targets. Political attacks are never openly and directly rebutted. Opposition is shown through inattention or reinterpretation of the attack, or through emphasis on some countervailing political principle. The process is political, but it does not lend itself to easy distinctions between articulation and aggregation, between decision making and administration.

At Frederick Teiwes has pointed out in an insightful review of political conflict in China, there are official "rules of the game" for intraparty conflict. These include such principles as collective leadership and democratic centralism, and contain provisions for dissenting minorities to reserve their opinions on particular policies as long as they do not obstruct implementation. However, the organizational norms are heavily weighted in favor of authority. The room for legitimate opposition is narrow, ill-defined, and shifting; dissent is treated as a disciplinary problem. Organized opposition is forbidden. Under such rules, opposition and conflict are risky in the best of times. During the Maoist period, these rules were often violated.

Since opposition is so disadvantaged in the official arena of Chinese politics, it is not surprising that informal patterns of elite politics are common. A major source of information about these patterns is the frequent criticisms of them in the press. Leftism, feudalism, factionalism, localism, and departmentalism are all known to be problems through official denunciations. However, it is impossible to know the extent to which each of these influences Chinese politics. Moreover, some oppositional patterns are based on policy differences (leftism, for example), some are based on individual loyalties and have no policy content (feudal patron-client relations), while others may involve a mixture of policy and personal commitments (departmentalism and localism). Factionalism, in particular, is an ambiguous problem, both as a term of analysis and as a term of abuse.

Because of the evident importance of informal patterns of elite conflict and the opacity of Chinese decision making, a number of explanatory models of elite conflict have been formulated. One of the most prominent is Lucian Pye's factionalism model, which utilizes his theories of Chinese political culture to argue that Chinese politics is based on the conflict and accommodation of hierarchical clusters of personal relationships. A faction may promote a certain policy in order to advance its interests, but basic to the faction is the cluster of personal relationships. Although some scholars would dispute Pye's political culture explanation for factionalism, all would agree that factionalism has played a very serious part in Chinese politics at least since 1966. Proof of this is that the party rectification campaign has as a major goal the elimination of factions, and yet there are complaints that the campaign itself has been manipulated by factions. It is not easy to separate personal factional ties and policy commitments. It may seem reasonable to distinguish conceptually between opportunistic "factions" and policy-oriented "opinion groups," but they are much more difficult to distinguish in reality, and, in any case, Leninist party discipline disapproves of both. A faction might promote a policy for its own advancement and then find that its policy stake requires other, congruent policies. At this point, the opportunistic faction has a policy platform that it cannot abandon without costs. If we start from the policy end of the analysis, a group of cadres passionately devoted to a particular policy but who had no prior personal relationship would find it to their policy-oriented, political interests to develop personal contacts and be concerned for another's well or woe. This indistinguishable interplay of personal and policy interests can be seen in the behavior of political groups in every political system.

70People's Daily, November 15, 1984, p. 5.
Political Interests, Recruitment, and Conflict

A pattern of elite conflict somewhat more unique to China is the Cultural Revolution concept of the "struggle between two lines," an alleged long-term, mortal conflict within the party between the two revolutionary movements, led by Mao and the revisionists, headed by Liu Shaoqi. Although the leftists made every effort to show that Liu had always been a counterrevolutionary, "two-line struggle" as historical analysis was for the most part invidious interpretation and slander. The actual policy differences between Liu and Mao will be discussed below, but the political function of "two-line struggle" was to brand the party establishment as class enemies and as targets for mass attack. The ideological terrorism implicit in two-line struggle raised the stakes of political conflict for both elite and masses.

The greater institutional pluralism of the post-Mao period may lead to a phenomenon much discussed in Soviet and Eastern European politics, namely the emergence of political interest groups. Chinese mass organizations were discussed earlier in this chapter, but one must be cautious about calling them "political interest groups," and other organizations would appear to have even less claim to the designation. There are surely group interests, but it is difficult to prove that interest groups exist as a regular means of advancing them. Critics of the interest group approach in the Soviet and East European studies have argued that these groups have little legitimacy or autonomy within their systems. This caution applies with great force to China, where the struggles of the 1950s and 1970s revealed not only the existence of factions but also their vulnerability to charges of illegitimacy. Further research may delineate more sharply the kinds of interest groups that operate and endure in the Chinese political process, or possibly what kinds will emerge in the more institutionalized system that is taking shape, but the question remains a controversial one.

As the discuss of "two-line struggle" and interest group politics implies, the patterns of elite conflict have changed considerably over time. The relative balance of consensus and conflict within the party, the salience of official norms for conflict management, and the prevalence of factionalism have all responded to the existing political situation. Therefore, we must look for phases of development in patterns of elite conflict.

Contained Conflict in the 1950s. Earlier discussions of radical-conservative and Maoist-bureaucratic conflicts have outlined the major issues of post-1949 politics. We now explore the changing patterns of elite cleavage produced by these issues. From 1949 to 1957, the CCP maintained a relatively high degree of cohesion without repressing intraparty differences or resorting to extensive purges. The crucial decisions—those that marked the shift from the First Five-Year Plan (FFYP) to the Great Leap—emerged from a vigorous debate that addressed itself directly to issues and avoided open, personalized attacks on top leaders. Conservatives stated their positions, accepted their defeats, and continued to serve. Radicals, too, accepted temporary setbacks without turning vindictively on colleagues who opposed them. Opinion group politics was thus the dominant mode of conflict. Leaders were able to differ on policy issues without forming permanently antagonistic groups. As new issues or stages arose, individuals might shift their positions or find themselves aligned with a new opinion group. Generally, elites were willing to maintain the appearance of unity in support of majority decisions.

Party cadres experienced significant consolidations and disciplinary movements during the first half of the 1950s, but in general, party discipline confirmed the official organizational norms. The special demands on party members were offset by special consideration in disciplinary matters. Although disputes were not carried into the public media, there is evidence that party members spoke their minds without retaliation. There were relatively few ideological campaigns during this period, and their targets were usually bourgeois intellectuals.

The only major factional crisis among the elite was the 1954 purge of Gao Gang (Kao Kang) and Rao Shushi (Hao Shu-shih).
Gao was a Politburo member, the party leader of Northeast China, a vice-chairman of the PRC, and head of the State Planning Commission; Rao was a leader in the East China region and director of the CC's Organization Department. The Gao-Rao clique was a faction aimed at controlling succession after Mao, not simply an opinion group taking a distinctive stand on certain issues. Although Gao represented a Soviet-style approach (particularly in factory management) that was in conflict with Mao's, his group's fatal error was an attempt to capture control of the central apparatus using its organizational position as a base and trying to recruit additional followers within the CC. The specific accusations were that they opposed Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai in order to become vice-chairman of the party and premier, that they engaged in activities designed to split the party, and that Gao Gang enlisted Soviet help in these activities and gave inner-party secrets to the Soviets. This factional power play was smashed in February 1954, although it was not made public until 1956. The Gao-Rao affair was the exception that proved the rule of moderate elite conflict in the mid-1950s, because Gao and Rao were punished for the breaches of organizational norms. After 1966, such factional behavior seemed almost normal, and Lin Biao's attempt to seize power in 1971 was a logical outgrowth of a changed elite environment.

The Sharpening of Conflict, 1957–1966. The anti-rightist campaign that concluded the brief experiment with open criticism in the hundred flowers campaign introduced a new level of coercion and ideological harshness into Chinese politics. However, at this point in 1957 the victims were still primarily bourgeois intellectuals—teachers, students, merchants and non-Communist political figures. Remaining rightists had their labels removed in 1979; however, in its 1982 official history, the party declared the campaign excessive but justified.77 The major goal of the anti-rightist campaign was that of consolidating the party's ideological and political leadership, but the methods of "merciless criticism" that it introduced were shortly to be applied within the party.

The strains placed on China's leadership structure by the Great Leap Forward and its failure led to harsh treatment of local cadres and a major purge of top leaders. This was the August 1959 purge of Peng Dehuai, minister of defense and Politburo member; Huang Kecheng (Huang K'o-ch'êng), PLA Chief of Staff; Zhang Wentian (Chang Wen-t'ien), vice-minister of foreign affairs and an alternate member of the Politburo; and Zhou Xiaochou (Chou Hsiao-chou), first secretary of the Hunan Provincial Party Committee.78 Peng's removal was a questionable decision in terms of the opinion group-faction distinction, as he and his associates ostensibly were promoting a debate on Great Leap economic policies. They did this mainly within organizational channels, in closed session, and without attacking Mao's leadership directly. There were two arguments for designating Peng's activities as factional and hence legitimizing his purge. First was his and Huang's powerful military position, their known dissatisfaction with Maoist pressures against military professionalism, and the possibility that Peng had communicated his unhappiness to Soviet Premier Khrushchev; the threat of organizational opposition was formidable even if the debate was cast in terms of policy issues. Beyond this, Mao apparently regarded the attack as a challenge to his own policies, which had already been debated and approved; Peng was violating discipline and indulging in "right opportunism" by questioning Mao's leadership at a critical juncture and raising issues that he could have raised earlier.79 These considerations were sufficient to

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77These charges are mentioned by Liao Gaolin, "Lishi jingyan he wenxue di fashan daxue" (Historical experience and our developmental path), a speech given on October 25, 1980 to the Conference on Party Historiography of the national party school system. The speech was not publicly released, but it was reprinted in the Taiwanese Zhongguo yangri (Research on Chinese Communism), vol. 15, no. 19 (September 15, 1981): 186–177. The Gao-Rao reference is on p. 119.

78According to Teiwes, Politics and Purges, p. 291, 8.5 percent of the teachers at Fudan University and 6.6 percent of the China Democratic League were declared rightists, in comparison with 1.8 percent of party members in Chongqing (Chungking).
secure Peng's dismissal as defense minister but not wholly persuasive. He was not denounced by name; he retained his seat on the CC; and he was even a candidate (albeit unsuccessful) for reinstatement in 1962. The unsettled status of Peng reflected the marginal nature of his guilt as seen by many on the CC and was a harbinger of the more open and divisive conflicts of the 1960s.

Open Conflict in the 1960s. Just as the debate over the FFYP and Great Leap lines dominated the 1950s, so the Cultural Revolution dominated the politics of the 1960s. The former contained intraparty conflict in shifting opinion groups, which blurred lines of cleavage and made political liquidation of opponents the exception rather than the rule. The latter opened conflict to public view, revealing hardened cleavages that led to sweeping purges. Factions in the earlier period were weak and vulnerable to a majority consensus against that style of politics. They grew stronger in the 1960s, providing protection for their members and serving as building blocks in the formation of coalitions of power. Behind this shift lay an intensification of conflict over fundamental issues, represented by the "struggle between two lines" of the two most powerful leaders, Mao Zedong and Liu Shaoqi.

It is not possible to review here the full range of differences between two men so deeply involved for so long in leadership of the Communist revolution. The record is not complete and has been distorted by the vilification of Liu that accompanied the Cultural Revolution. Still, the differences between Mao and Liu were real, particularly in their general views of the worker-peasant relationship; of the relationship among party organization, leader, and masses; and of the proper attitude toward the Soviet Union and its example.69 Liu tended toward a more orthodox Marxist admiration for the industrial worker and suspicion of the peasant's potential, whereas Mao had tremendous faith in the peasant's capacity for self-initiated political and economic advance. This difference found expression in Liu's skepticism about rapid agricultural collectivization and his belief that it ought to follow mechanization, industrialization, and class-state guidance. Mao, in contrast, was the foremost advocate of rapid collectivization, arguing that it could foster and even precede mechanization and industrialization and that the peasants could carry this out largely on their own.

Differences on the industrial-agricultural relationship spilled over into questions of organizational leadership. Liu was at heart an organization man, dedicated to the principle of party above leader and to the maintenance of organizational discipline and authority. Although sensitive to the evils of bureaucracy, he saw no substitute for orderly, hierarchical administration and was inclined to defend higher cadres, including "experts," against what he saw as excessive mass democracy. Mao recognized the virtues of organization but placed his primary faith in the authority of the highest leader coupled with mass support and action; he was thus less inclined to defend the sanctity of the organization against the unsettling effects of mass movements and found it intolerable to subordinate his own views to those of his colleagues.70 Finally, Liu was more inclined than Mao to see the Soviet Union as a positive model for China and possibly less inclined to see it as a real military threat.

Neither Mao nor Liu was totally consistent in articulation of these differences. Both tried at times to accommodate the other's views, or at least to conceal their divergence. The fascinating question is why their conflict, contained in the 1960s, should acquire sufficient virulence to split the party openly in the 1960s. The change was due partly to a natural hardening of views with age and experience. With each new round of debate, each probably became more familiar with the other's arguments and more persuaded of his own correctness. With advancing age and Liu's apparent grip on the succession to Mao (he had already replaced Mao as chairman of the PRC and was second in command within the party), resolution of the struggle acquired more urgency. Moreover, there were several trends in the Chinese governmental process that contribute to an understanding of the split and why it took the factionalized form that it did. These


trends underscore the point that political conflict in China pervades executive and administrative processes as well as articulation and aggregation. They are noted briefly here, with a fuller discussion reserved for the succeeding chapter.

Mao’s declining role in the decision-making process was one trend that exacerbated his struggle with Liu Shaoqi. During the 1950s, Mao’s vigor and prestige were usually sufficient to build a consensus on major decisions. As late as 1959, he was able to induce at least temporary and surface unity on the controversial dismissal of Peng Dehuai. However, at some point in the 1950s Mao had agreed to a division of the highest leadership into a first and second front, placing himself in the second front and thus removing himself from direct supervision of party and government operations. His relinquishment of the chairmanship of the PRC in late 1958 reinforced his isolation from administrative processes. Moreover, his refusal to retreat on such pivotal issues as the Great Leap and the Sino-Soviet conflict strained his relationship with some of his senior colleagues. By the early 1960s, Mao had lost his decisive authority within the top leadership, although his public stature was undiminished. This weakening of the authoritative voice of party consensus encouraged a growth of factionalism in which Mao himself participated.

Lines of potential cleavage also were expanded and complicated by the party’s increasing assumption of governmental responsibilities, the differentiation of governmental structure, and the 1957 decentralization that strengthened the powers of provincial-level governments. The CCP’s top elite no doubt retained their memories of more homogeneous experiences, but their contemporary roles had become distinctly heterogeneous. By the late 1960s, most had acquired responsibility for leadership in functionally defined governmental and party systems or in geographic units of administration. Inevitably, they became preoccupied with their immediate responsibilities and sensitive to the interests of their constituents. Inevitably, too, they acquired potential power bases in the bureaucracies they supervised.

How far this compartmentalization of power had progressed by the time of the Cultural Revolution is uncertain, but it had at least created a situation in which no unitary bloc could control the party. Factions or potential factions were too numerous to be isolated and repressed by a unified majority. Power required a coalition of forces and invited coalition tactics on the part of opponents. The struggle that Mao forced on the CCP in 1965–1966 could not be contained, simply because the adversaries were too evenly matched and too well defended by their own institutional resources. Mao reestablished his leadership only by forcing a coalition and mobilizing mass support for a public attack on his entrenched opponents. For the first time in post-1949 history, a purge was initiated and made public before the CC had worked out its own consensus decision.

No simple description does justice to the intricate factional maneuverings—demonstrable and alleged—that characterized elite behavior between 1965 and 1969. In simplest terms, Mao defeated the Liu-Deng revisionists by seizing the initiative in coalition politics and playing it with great skill. His opponents were probably a majority of the top leadership, judging from what is known of CC meetings in 1965–1966 and from the extent of later purges, but they never succeded in building a unified defense against the onslaught; their bases protected them for a time, but their fragmented organization was a fatal weakness.

Mao, on the other hand, established early a coalition that gradually destroyed his opponents and emerged supreme at the Ninth Party Congress in 1969. This coalition was held together by a personal commitment to Mao’s leadership and varying degrees of sympathy for his political stance, but it consisted of at least three factions. The most distinct of these was a radical faction, which favored a thoroughgoing Maoist position as enunciated early in the Cultural Revolution and which had its organizational base in the CC’s Cultural Revolution Group as reconstituted in the summer of 1966. Its leaders were Chen Boda (Ch’ien Po-ta), Kang Sheng (K’ang Sheng), and Jiang Qing, supported by other radical propagandists serving in the Cultural Revolution Group.

It was close to Mao in personal terms, in that it included his wife, Jiang Qing, and his reputed son-in-law, Yao Wen-juan; Chen and Kang also had histories of intimate association with Mao. Furthermore, it had a powerful regional base in Shanghai, where Jiang and Yao were active and had gained the support of Zhang Chunqiao, who rose to leadership in Shanghai during that city’s January Revolution of 1967. Finally, the radical faction had a mass base in the Red Guards, who looked to members of this group for authoritative indications of Mao’s wishes. For
obvious reasons, then, it held the initiative during the early part of the Cultural Revolution.

The second faction was associated with Lin Biao, whose strength rested on the PLA and his designation in the summer of 1966 as Mao’s “comrade-in-arms” and heir apparent. The Lin faction was by no means coterminous with the PLA, which had its own internal divisions, but rested largely on military officers closely associated with its leader. Still, Lin’s post as defense minister gave his faction tremendous leverage within the organization that became the de facto government during much of the Cultural Revolution. Premier Zhou Enlai headed a third group of high-level cadres who survived the first year’s purges. The most defensive and least distinct of these three groups, it was perhaps a faction by default, a residual category of leaders who held on due to Zhou’s protection and the need for some continuity in administrative leadership.

Tension within the Maoist coalition became evident as early as the summer of 1967, when the slogan “drag out the handful of capitalist-roaders in the army” was put forth. Authority for this slogan came from a Mao directive of May 16, 1966, which had included the PLA among those institutions that had to be purged of their capitalist-roaders—one of the few such references to the PLA, which otherwise was accorded the privilege of conducting internal rectification of its own. Those behind this attempt to turn the campaign on the army and perhaps other leaders became known, from the date of the directive, as the May 16 Group (or 516 Group). More accurately, only some of them were so labeled, because the slogan initially had widespread support particularly from the Cultural Revolution Group. The anti-PLA campaign peaked during the Cultural Revolution’s most threatening military confrontation in Wuhuan in July—August 1967. In the aftermath of the Wuhuan incident, however, a reaction set in. The top leadership retreated from the “drag out a handful” theme and laid the blame on the May 16 Group, now identified as an “ultra-left conspiracy” aimed at Zhou Enlai as well as military figures. Purged as core elements of May 16 were Wang Li, Qi Renyu (Qi Ren-ju), Guan Fung (Kuan Feng), Mu Xin (Mu Hsin), Zhao Yiya (Chao Li-ya), and Lin Jie (Lin Chieh)—all members of the Cultural Revolution Group and the leading writers and propagandists of the early stages of the campaign. Although none of the radical faction’s most prominent members was implicated at the time, the purges of the May 16 Group marked a sharp decline of its influence within the Maoist coalition. Moreover, the May 16 incident was to surface again in elite conflict after the Cultural Revolution.

Factional Conflict in the 1970s. Elite conflict in the 1970s combined elements of both earlier periods. Generally, leaders tried to contain conflict, to avoid open charges and full-scale mass mobilization in their struggles, and to keep purges secret until after the event; the two key purges, of Lin Biao and the Gang, brought mass criticism campaigns only after the victors had acted against their targets. On the other hand, factional groupings made use of organizational bases, communications media, and popular activities—especially demonstrations and the writing of posters—in a way that belied any idea of elite consensus. Two-line struggle was at best a loose conceptualization of the resulting tensions. Hua Guofeng’s group claimed adherence to Mao’s revolutionary line, initially branding Lin and the Gang as successors to Liu’s rightist line; the travesty of this effort to continue using two-line analysis was obvious when Deng later insisted on an ultra-leftist label for the Gang. Closer to the mark was the radical-moderate interpretation that the Gang was the successor to Cultural Revolution radicalism, with Zhou, Hua, and Deng successors to earlier revisionists. However, the

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Wuhan Military Region, was backing a rebel federation labeled “conservative” by Peking rather than the opposing Red Guard and rebel organizations that Peking deemed “correct.” When Xie Fuzhi (Xie Fuzhu) and Wang Lichen by Peking to mediate the dispute) affirmed the central view, the Wuhan command and their “conservative” allies arrested the insurgents and took control of the city. Peking’s dispatch of Zhou Enlai and loyal troops to the area reestablished its authority, but not without a very tense confrontation that involved some fighting between loyalist and regional forces.
Gang was in some ways more Maoist than Mao, and the moderates continued many policies associated with Mao. In other words, the radical-moderate cleavage of the 1970s was not identical to the Mao-Liu cleavage of the mid-1960s in either style or substance.

The Maoist coalition—consisting of radicals, Lin Biao's faction, and Zhou En-lai's supporters—began to disintegrate shortly after the Ninth CCP Congress of 1969. Chen Boda, the highest ranking radical, disappeared from public view in August 1970; subsequent attacks on his "careerism" and on the May 16 Group indicated that his group was on the defensive for some of its campaign excesses. Lin Biao fell shortly thereafter, accused of planning a coup against Mao. The official version held Lin conspiring with Chen to seize power, planning the coup when his efforts were obstructed, and dying in an airplane crash in Mongolia, on September 13, 1971, when his attempt to assassinate Mao failed. Many observers doubted this story, but Lin had clearly split the coalition with his ambitions and probably his opposition to some policies favored by Mao and Zhou, such as rapprochement with the United States. The incident eliminated the Lin faction—five military members of the Politburo and several other CC and provincial figures fell with him—and led to a general decline of the administrative power acquired by the PLA during the Cultural Revolution.

By 1982, Zhou was the active governmental leader, as Mao increasingly withdrew from public life. The next four years were full of tense debates as Zhou tried to institutionalize a new development program, while the radicals (now led by Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan, and their young Shanghai protege Wang Hongwen) tried to weaken or dislodge him. Inhibited from overt attacks on the Gang by their close association with Mao, Zhou relied on his organizational base in the establishment, which he strengthened by sponsoring the rehabilitation of many experienced cadres purged in the Cultural Revolution.

The Gang engaged in more overt factional activities, capitalizing on their strongholds in the communications network, some universities and factories, and the Shanghai region. Through

The media, they urged militant struggle against the continuing threat of capitalist restoration, using several campaigns of the 1972-1976 years as thinly veiled offensives against the moderates; particularly striking was their publication in Shanghai, beginning in September 1973, of a new theoretical journal titled Study and Criticism (Xuejiao yu pipan) to carry more extreme attacks than those in the official CC publications in Peking, over which they also had considerable control. They mobilized mass support to criticize industrial and educational cadres who were modifying Cultural Revolution reforms, giving national publicity to a few individuals willing to "go against the tide" with such criticism. Shanghai was a locale for organization of a model urban workers' militia that lent paramilitary support to their position.

Zhou's death in January 1976 exposed the complexity and volatility of elite alignments. The Gang struck quickly, with Mao's support, to open criticism of Deng Xiaoping (who had essentially taken over Zhou's duties during the premier's illness) and to block Deng's accession to the premiership. But others, possibly also including Mao, opposed radical claims to the post, resulting in a compromise choice of Hua Guofeng as acting premier. Growing tension in Peking climaxed with the Tiananmen Incident of April 5, in which popular protest against removal of memorial wreaths for Zhou from the great public square turned into an unruly demonstration of some 100,000 people, many expressing antiradical slogans and demands. Peking authorities finally broke up the demonstration late in the day, calling it a counterrevolutionary action staged by Deng's supporters. Politburo directives named Hua full premier, dismissed Deng from all his posts (but left him a party member).


and defined his contradiction as "antagonistic." Hua's position was not solid, however, despite profuse claims that he was Mao's personal choice. The Maoist umbrella now seemed to cover several actors (the Gang, Mao himself, Hua, and some military and security leaders), while the moderate spectrum included some cadres going along with Hua and others working for Deng's restoration. Great confusion marked the debates of the next several months, with Tianshui-type incidents occurring in many provincial cities, while the leftist-controlled media seethed with anti-Deng polemics.

Hua's purge of the Gang soon after Mao's death in September 1976 rested on a broad coalition, with prominent support from the military-security apparatus, that necessarily included many who had taken different positions on events surrounding the Tianshui Incident. Hua initially continued the criticism of Deng, but he was faced with powerful pressures—publicized, like most conflicts of the 1970s, in both elite communications and popular posters—which favored Deng's second restoration as CCP vice-chairman and vice-premier of the government. Deng was restored to these positions at the Eleventh CCP Congress in September 1977. For roughly a year, Hua and Deng maintained a working relationship, mediated by Ye Jianying as senior leader of the military cadres, in advancing the four modernizations policies. There were evident differences between them, however, with Deng less inclined to invoke Maoist symbols and more emphatic about the need for economic, scientific, and technical revolution.64

Deng and his supporters became more aggressive in 1978, pushing for further diminution of Mao's stature and demotion of several Politburo members associated with Deng's 1976 setback. The year began with an announcement of a campaign to criticize the Gang's ultra-leftist system of thought, and, in May, Deng's supporters launched the slogan, "Practice is the only criterion for determining truth." This slogan was important because it provided a basis for breaking away from policies endorsed by Mao before his death. The impact of the slogan was that Mao's directives could be questioned, a position opposed by the remaining leftist in the government. These leftists were now attacked for being "imprisoned by the system of thought of the Gang and Lin Biao." In October, this pressure brought dismissal of Wu De (Wu Teh) who, as mayor of Peking, had led the suppression of the Tianshui demonstration and subsequent criticism of Deng. Other Politburo targets of Pro-Deng posters were Chen Xi (Ch'en Hsi-lien), commander of the Peking military region, Ji Dengkui (Chi Teng-k'uei), commissar of the Peking region and Wang Dongxing (Wang Tung-hsing), member of the Politburo Standing Committee and head of the security establishment. Since removal of these men would strip Hua of much of his Politburo support, the wall poster campaign suggested that Deng might be seeking Hua's positions for himself. Deng's supporters were increasingly open, too, in their insistence that the classification of the Tianshui Incident as counterrevolutionary be reversed and that its suppression be investigated, and they openly repudiated the Cultural Revolution. In attacking the 1965 article by Yao Wenyan that began the great campaign, they were very close to a repudiation of Mao's entire post-1965 career. These themes were also very threatening to Hua, whose own position rested very heavily on Mao's endorsement and the Tianshui affair. The news reports on all these posters, articles, events, and rumored events included some references to physical violence in mass debates over the issues.

The Third Plenum of the Eleventh CC, held in December 1978, confirmed Deng's political ascendency and began a major new phase of Chinese politics.65 In addition to endorsing many demands associated with him—reversal of the Tianshui verdict, continued rehabilitation of veteran cadres, the stronger criticism of the Cultural Revolution—the Plenum added several of Deng's supporters to the Politburo and to other high state and party posts. There was compromise, too, as Hua initially retained his leading positions and considerable Politburo support; however, the victory of Deng, rather than the compromise with Hua,

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turned out to be the lasting result of the Third Plenum. There were posthumous rehabilitations of remaining victims of leftist, including Peng Dehuai and Liu Shaoqi. Public commentary on the Cultural Revolution and Mao's leadership after 1957 became increasingly harsh, culminating in an official reinterpretation of party history adopted in the summer of 1981. In addition to voicing a total condemnation of the Cultural Revolution, the reinterpretation criticized Hua Guofeng for leadership errors. This marked the final stages of Hua Guofeng's decline in power. He ceded the premiership to Zhao Ziyang in 1980. In 1982, the post of party chairman was abolished, and Hua lost his Politburo seat (although as of 1985, he still retained a seat on the Central Committee).

The struggle between Hua Guofeng and Deng Xiaoping is a very interesting and complex case of elite conflict. First, there was a strong influence of personal factionalism. Except for his post as chairman of the Military Affairs Commission (announced in June 1981), Deng has not held a top position since his rehabilitation in 1977. However, his personal prestige and connections have made his power irrefutable. Much of his support came from other rehabilitated leaders, as we have seen in the personnel changes in the Central Committee. By contrast, Hua initially held the top positions of party chairman, premier, and chairman of the Military Affairs Commission, but lacked the depth of personal relations with other leaders. Hua had come to the top as a compromise candidate, which meant that he lacked the solid personal and ideological support networks that Deng had developed. Moreover, as a compromise candidate, he found it difficult to exclude Deng, since Deng had allies within Hua's initial coalition. Finally, the coalition was unstable because Hua's more pragmatic supporters could find more effective leadership with Deng, and his leftist supporters were a defensive minority. As Hua's position eroded, he sided more openly with his leftist supporters. It would be a mistake, however, to see the conflict only as the struggle of personal factions. Hua's political stance was necessarily between Maoism and modernization. He both praised the Cultural Revolution and announced a 'new era' of the four modernizations. But the Cultural Revolution was deeply unpopular, and Deng Xiaoping was a national symbol of opposition to leftist. Deng's protests were referred to as the "practice faction" because of his slogan that "practice is the only criterion for determining truth," while Hua's supporters were known as the "whatever faction" because of a statement he made in early 1977 that "whatever Mao said must be followed." With these contrasting policy stances, Deng attracted the support of all those who hoped for a modern future for China, while Hua was left with those who had prospered during the Cultural Revolution. Moreover, some of Hua's potential leftist support was alienated by his overthrow of the Gang. In sum, Hua's high positions but weak personal and ideological support networks were no match for the connections and prestige of the initially ostracized Deng.

With power consolidation, Deng began to move into a middle position ideologically, while at the same time promoting boldly innovative economic policies. Deng began to move against the dissidents at Democracy Wall in early 1979, although he had welcomed their support against Hua a few months earlier. In March 1979, he enunciated the "four fundamental principles" that became the test for political heresy, and, by 1981, the remainder of the dissident movement had been sent to labor reeducation camps or been driven underground. Restraint was placed on the expression of negativism in literature by the criticism in 1981 of the screenplay for Unrequited Love by the PLA writer Bai Huo. The most extreme attack on new tendencies in literature and culture occurred in 1983 with the campaign to oppose spiritual pollution, but this campaign ran into high-level opposition and was aborted. Deng's moves against the right after the Third Plenum did not mean a reconciliation with the left. On the contrary, attacks on the left have become steadily harsher, culminating in a campaign in late 1984 to "totally reject the Cultural Revolution." The regime is trying to define an acceptable middle ground in Chinese politics by engaging in what it calls "a struggle on two fronts." 47


Of course, elite conflict did not end with Deng’s consolidation of power. Differences over new decisions produce new conflicts, and problems of succession create personal opportunities. Within Deng’s camp, some have been more conservative ideologically and in economic policy, while others have been more daring. Party General Secretary Hu Yaobang and Premier Zhao Ziyang are both considered among the more daring, while Chen Yun, the chairman of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, and Deng Liqun, director of the Propaganda Department, are considered more conservative. In 1984, Deng himself claimed to have withdrawn from active decision making, but these claims may be interpreted as an attempt to strengthen the prestige of Hu and Zhao and to prevent any succession problems. Clearly, Chinese politics remains in the mid-1980s an inextricable mesh of positions, policies, and personalities. The evolution of institutions, the success or failure of policies, and the death of a personality such as Deng (witness the aftermaths of the deaths of Zhou and Mao) will upset any existing equilibrium. As with political contests anywhere, the results cannot be predicted confidently.

CHAPTER VII
The Governmental Process

The Chinese governmental process, through which authoritative decisions are translated into action, involves all the institutions discussed in earlier chapters. This chapter identifies several principles and problems that are prominent in the process without attempting to explore them in detail; it is more in the nature of an essay, trying to bring together themes and material that have, for the most part, been introduced earlier. We begin with an overview of the governmental process and then turn to salient aspects of decision making, administration, the enforcement and adjudication of rules, and external influences on the process.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

Party leadership and mass line are the dominant principles of the Chinese governmental process. Although not inherently in conflict, they tend, in practice, to produce contradictory impulses that account for much of the complexity and instability of