

RADIO FREE EUROPE *Research*

COMMUNIST AREA

●China: Internal Affairs

23 February 1967

ROUNDING UP THE "COUNTER REVOLUTIONARIES"

An important part of the current phase of consolidation in Communist China is the attempt by the pro-Maoist forces to round up and render harmless all organized opposition. That such opposition exists has never been a secret. However, the exact form and organization of the opposition has been almost unknown in the West. Now, at this stage of the revolution when the Maoist forces are trying to stamp out the remains of the so-called "counter-revolutionary" organizations in a number of central provinces, the outlines of those organizations are slowly becoming visible.

From material carried by the official Chinese news media it now becomes clear that the organized opposition, both armed and unarmed, has been trying to carry out its activities under names which, for all but people closely involved with it, sound as being part of the Maoist revolutionary forces. Many of these probably include active communists, workers, and former members of the militia and the armed forces. They were organized in a variety of places but could never achieve a nation-wide, or even a regional unity which would have assured superiority over local pro-Maoist units in larger geographic areas.

An important reason for the weakness of the anti-Maoist forces has been their disunity even in individual localities. As far as it can be determined the opposition in most provinces was divided into "armies" and "detachments" which tried individually to take up the fight with the Maoists, and were brought down one by one by the Maoist revolutionary forces.

How The Anti-Maoists Were Overcome

In the Manchurian province of Heilungkiang a number of anti-Maoist organizations were easily overcome by the Maoists. One of the documents available on the methods of Maoist takeover in that province gives us an interesting description of the step-by-step liquidation of organized anti-Mao opposition.¹ The Maoists operating in the

1) "Basic Experience of Red Rebels in Heilungkiang Province in the Struggle to Seize Power", NCNA, 10 February 1967.

Heilungkiang provincial capital of Harbin first concentrated on taking over the local news media and the radio stations. According to the revolutionary committee's description of the process:

First, on January 12, we took over the Heilungkiang Daily the Harbin Evening News and the provincial and municipal radio stations, and the public security departments, all on the same day. From that time the newspapers and the radio carried the voice of the Red Rebels.

Then the Maoists proceeded to crush the anti-Mao opposition forces:

Next, the ringleaders of several counter-revolutionary organizations in Harbin, such as the "Red Flag Army" the "Combat Preparedness Army" and the so called "Jung Fu Chun" were imprisoned, and this caused these counter-revolutionary organizations to collapse soon afterward.

At the same time, a widely publicized mass rally was held to expose and condemn the ringleader of the Red Militia detachment who engineered the December 5th incident and he was arrested and dealt with according to law.

Under the pressure of this revolutionary situation the "August 8th Regiment", the most stubborn royalist force, announced its disbanding.

There seems therefore to have been skillful policy of dividing the rebel forces by arresting individual leaders, dealing with others "according to law" which, under the circumstances, probably meant execution, and bringing pressure to bear on the membership to achieve the collapse of the organizations themselves.

Although this seems to have taken place in Heilungkiang between the 12th of January and the 10th of February, when the report was published by the New China News Agency, in some other provinces the liquidation of the rebel forces did not take place until the middle of this month. In still others those forces may still be able to resist complete elimination.

The Crackdown In Shanghai

In Shanghai, for instance, the local Public Security Bureau is still in the process of rounding up the membership of the anti-Mao organizations both by arresting them and by calling on them to give themselves up to the Maoist authorities.

On 17 February the Revolutionary Rebel Committee of the Shanghai Public Security Bureau issued an order on the immediate abolition of two so-called counter-revolutionary organizations: the "Shanghai General Headquarters of the Red Flag Army", and the "Shanghai General Headquarters of the First Column of the Red Flag Army".²

2) The order was broadcast by the Regional Service of Radio Shanghai on 18 February 1967.

The two headquarters and the organizations under them have been for some time active in the Shanghai area and have, to some extent at least, taken over a number of government and mass organizations in the city. The two headquarters were encircled by the Shanghai Public Security forces and some allied pro-Mao groups in the evening of 17 February, and some of their leaders were arrested. From a commentary carried by Radio Shanghai on the following day one can easily appreciate the confusion created in China by the emergence of anti-Maoist organizations which operated under Maoist-sounding titles, and changed their names whenever it was considered necessary.

The Shanghai General Headquarters of the Red Flag Army for instance had earlier operated under the name "Shanghai Revolutionary Rebel Headquarters of the 'Defend Mao Tse-tung's Thought' Red Flag Army of Workers, Peasants, and Disabled, Rehabilitated, Demobilized, and Discharged Revolutionary Servicemen throughout China". There is hardly anything that would differentiate this name from other, similarly high-sounding names of the "real" Maoist revolutionaries.

The present process of sorting out those "real" groups from the false ones of course tends further to confuse the population.

More Anti-Mao Groups

In coastal Shantung province the Provincial Revolutionary Committee has just a few days ago labelled a number of "revolutionary" organizations as "reactionary" and the products of the "handful of persons within the party taking the capitalist road". An order issued by the committee on 18 February condemned as "illegal" and demanded the suppression of the following organizations:³

Shantung Special Command for Defending Mao Tse-Tung's Revolutionary Line;

Shantung Provincial Revolutionary Rebel Command of Young Intellectuals Working in Mountain Regions and in the Countryside;

Shantung Provincial Workers Revolutionary Rebel Liaison Headquarters;

East China Revolutionary Rebel Field Army;

The International Red Guards;

The International Revolutionary Rebel Army;

The Shantung Revolutionary Rebel Headquarters of Worker and Peasant Red Guards;

The Shantung Womens' Revolutionary Rebel Association.

3) The order was issued by the Shantung Provincial Revolutionary Committee and read on the Regional Service of Radio Tsinan, 18 February 1967.

The existence of such organizations, even if not military in character, must have sown confusion in the ranks of the pro-Maoist forces. It is of course possible that some of the above organizations are "real" Maoist ones but are victims of the current struggle for power being waged among Maoist revolutionary groups in a number of provinces today.

The overall impression, therefore, is that the "class enemy" is deeply entrenched in the majority of Chinese provinces and cities and the Maoist forces are in the laborious process of overcoming that opposition. Their task is made difficult and perhaps in some cases impossible by the fact that the anti-Mao opposition is hiding behind the mask of real revolutionaries. In some central provinces the mopping up operations are already under way or have been completed. In others the organized anti-Maoist forces could still be at large. Besides, many of the "revolutionary" mass organizations are also under the influence of the former party organizations which, naturally must be detected and outlawed by the Maoist revolutionaries.

Although the apparent lack of unity among the anti-Maoist forces has prevented larger scale operations against the Maoists, at least in the central provinces, it appears that the opposition is widespread and ready to emerge whenever an opportunity presents itself. Moreover, the very confusion of the situation in China today makes it almost impossible to detect and uncover all anti-Maoist organizations not to speak about individuals. The former party organizations therefore might at some time or another be able to resume their struggle for power, though having been suppressed at this particular phase of the revolutionary upheaval.

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