

Charles Taylor Looks at Divided China

by Charles Ogilvie

Not even the experts could have predicted the extent of the fantastic upheavals now taking place in Red China.

Mr. Charles Taylor, former Peking correspondent of the *Globe and Mail*, was the only resident North American journalist in mainland China until the fall of 1965. He was invited to York Jan. 31 by Carmichael House to talk about what is currently happening in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. He admitted that the original thinking of the experts on the Red Chinese situation, himself included, had been 'all wrong'.

For the capacity crowd in Founders' JCR, Mr. Taylor outlined many of the difficulties in newsgathering facing the foreign newspaperman in China, particularly Westerners. The situation at the present time, with the Red Guards roaming the streets of Peking, is even more chaotic than normal. Much of the news coming out is gathered by Japanese correspondents travelling around the city, which for the sake of efficiency they have divided into spheres of influence, dressed in typical north Chinese winter clothing, reading the 'big character' posters found on every wall in the city which is not painted red. These posters put up by various 'Red Guard' groups do not generally carry very accurate news, but many unfounded rumours and half-truths. Additional confusion is caused by the fact that the Japanese who can read the Chinese characters sometimes fail to catch some of the precise meanings. China has no news censorship, and reports are transmitted to Japan as sent by the Japanese journalists. Americans in Tokyo translate the reports into English, often garbling them in the process. Such news from Japanese sources, suffering in interpretation, translation and transfer so many times, should be accepted with a great deal of reserve. Similarly, the reports originating in Hong-Kong should be treated with particular caution. It was Mr. Taylor's feeling that the only very credible reports coming out of China were those of the *Peking Daily* and *Radio Peking*.

Profound Upheaval

In Charles Taylor's view what is happening in mainland China today is the most profound upheaval since the Communist Revolution succeeded in coming to power in 1949. It is in part a power struggle, and part a working out of old rivalries. What is at stake is what course the Chinese Revolution will take from now on. On both sides are ranked men of dedication, who have worked all their lives for Communism in China. Mr. Taylor thinks that Mao's dream is not mad, and is possible and practical in China, but all the forces of modern history run counter to Mao's direction, so possibly Mao is waging an inevitably losing battle. For this reason Mr. Taylor admits to a sneaking admiration for the old revolutionary with his devotion to his original principles.

It seems incomprehensible to Westerners that 18 years after the revolution--18 years which have been a period of unequalled advance for China, in which China learnt to do more than China had ever done before--that Mao should not be satisfied that China has reached the point of economic take-off, and is within sight of relative affluence. But Mao is afraid that the Revolution will be betrayed to its own success. He saw the example of Soviet Russia, where increasing affluence caused people to de-

mand more, as well as political freedom. Mao regards this as heretical.

Mao also looks back on earlier Chinese dynasties, founded by peasant uprisings like his, which collapsed in corruption. Usurped by elites more concerned with their own interests. Mao fears that this will happen to his own revolution. He is afraid particularly for the young people. In interviews and speeches he has harped on this point, that they are too soft, that they have never sacrificed for, or been blooded by a Revolution.

He fears that his Revolution might go the same bureaucratic way as the Soviet Union. He is worried also about the intellectuals. This is a feeling of distrust, which has its roots in his early days as a young librarian

doctrinated. All these campaigns were on an enormous scale, and were tremendous many-sided campaigns to transform human nature. Mao has said, 'The nature of Chinese man must be changed or the revolution will be betrayed.' Mao believes that every Chinese must be a worker, soldier, peasant and intellectual. This is an ideal, but the fact in Yenan. In the 1930's and 40's, when the Communist Chinese armies were blockaded in mountainous Yenan in Northern China, every man had to be versatile and capable for doing everything.

Mao a Romanticist

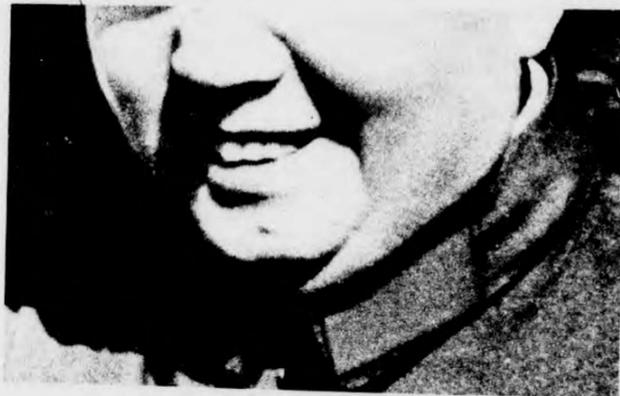
Mao is impatient and romantic. He is trying to recreate over all China the conditions of Yenan, 30 years later. In the eyes of most Westerners the conduct and



Will Mao see through...

when he was snubbed by the scholars for being a crude country youth with a rough Hunanese accent. Mao fears the intellectuals' power to take over the propaganda machine. The third group Mao distrusts are the peasants with their spontaneous tendencies to capitalism, their love of property. They want to keep their land. Even the communes had to return some land and livestock in order to pacify the peasants after the 'Great Leap Forward' in 1958. There is much unrest in the country-side at the

conditions of Yenan do not seem to be relevant to China's problems as a growing power. They do not seem to be relevant to the needs of the sciences, the bureaucracy, or technology. The people who oppose Mao's policies, and support the bureaucratic line were the majority in the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. But this was no new experience for Mao. He had lost the majority in the Party at least twice before the Revolution had been won in 1949. A crisis in the inner party struggle



...his revolution?

moment because the Maoists are saying that they will take the peasants' land and stock away.

Mao's cure is not mad, but shrewd, bold and incredibly clever. Toward the end of 1963 it was obvious that something was happening in China. Since 1959, the 'Great Leap Forward' period there had been a recession in China and the Communist Party had relaxed discipline. But the years 1963, 1964, and 1965 were years of good harvests and economic recovery. In 1963 mass campaigns were begun, which the Chinese attempted to keep quiet from the rest of the world. There was a whole series of campaigns, among the peasants, against artists, intellectuals, movies, plays. Everyone had to carry Mao's message. Young people had to put in extra physical labour and were sent to the country-side to help with the harvests. A mass militia movement was started, estimated to have between 15 and 25 million members. They were armed with rudimentary weapons, but the point was the discipline and drill. They were being made fit, and were being in-

seemed to be taking place in October of 1965. There seemed to be a special meeting of the Politburo. There were unusual movements of troops around Peking, and the highways leading to the secret airport used by China's top political leaders were closed. It seemed at that time that Mao had lost out. He left Peking for Shanghai and began collecting his political friends to begin the fight back.

One of Mao's most important new allies was Lin Piao, a long time mystery figure in Chinese affairs. One of the Marshals of the Red Army from its earliest days, he was little known, and spent most of his time travelling in the provinces with his own military entourage. Since the beginning of the 'Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution' Lin Piao has been working to build himself up as the best friend of Maoism. As part of his campaign Mao had the schools and universities closed, throwing the kids loose to get at the people and the party. They soon formed into the 'Red Guard' units now familiar in news dispatches from

Peking. Mao created special committees parallel to organizations in the Chinese Communist Party to get at his opponents in control of the regular Party apparatus a move unprecedented in the history of Communist power. Mao moved quickly to capture the organs of propaganda, and denied his opponents a form to express their ideas. Mao moved in, isolated his opposition, and picked them off one by one.

Mao's main opponent in the Party apparatus was Liu Shiao-Chi, who was China's President, and had appointed his own key friends to positions in the party. Liu had built up a vast network of personal loyalties. The Party bureaucracy was soft, quiescent, and believed in political pragmatism, and the position of Liu despite his apparent power seems to be weak. As for a widening of the struggle, Mao apparently does not want the army to get embroiled at this point. This is probably because Lin Piao cannot deliver the whole army. Neither Lin or Mao would want an all out Civil War, which could result if army commanders fight on opposite sides. Mr. Taylor estimated that in order to heal the scars being caused by the 'Proletarian Cultural Revolution' the Maoists will have to become more moderate. Economic necessities will have to be given more priority, more incentive will have to be given to the planners. It is his opinion that the final irony may be, that Mao by putting China through the throes of a desperate upheaval may have accelerated the very process he abhors, bureaucratization.

Increased Isolation

Another result of the 'Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution' has been a further set back in China's foreign relations. China has lost ground in Africa and Asia. To the under-developed nations of this area the Chinese example was attractive and appealing up until a few years ago. The Chinese had apparently succeeded in building an economic infrastructure by following moderate means and skillful economic policy, built so painstakingly after the 1956 Bandung conference, collapsed in confusion with the abortive 1965 Algiers Conference. Now the Afro-Asian nations view the upheaval in China with dismay. This new isolation is probably reinforced by the Chinese normal tendency to be rather chauvinistic in their attitudes towards foreigners, and is reflected in the Chinese disinterest in pressing for membership in the United Nations.

The effects the Chinese upheaval will have in the West, on the conduct of the War in Vietnam, are all incalculable. Whether Mao, or his opponents win out, is at the moment undecided. Although some say that Mao is just being used as a front-man for some kind of a conspiracy, all the campaigns bear the mark to Mao's thinking and experience. There is the possibility, Mr. Taylor replied in answer to a question, that if the army becomes too closely involved in the struggle, military rule, Bonapartism, could result. Mr. Taylor commented that many in the West take the position that it is Mao's opponents who are the reasonable men, and if they were to gain power, the West would be faced by men with whom it would be possible to deal. He pointed out that the advantages might not be so clear-cut. Moderate, bureaucratic, soviet-style Chinese administration might heal the Sino-Soviet breach, making Russia less eager to reach accords with the West than at the present.