
PARTY FACTIONS

The CCP: a facade of discipline

The Communist Party of China (CCP) is theoretically the center of power, the source of legitimacy, and the ruling party of the Chinese state. However, the reality of that proposition has been extremely varied throughout the history of the People's Republic, particularly under the recurring circumstances of Mao's own opposition to the party leadership and his mobilization of forces outside the party to enforce his will.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is the most famous example of such Maoist activity, with its use of the Red Guard youth gangs and later the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to purge leading party cadre. The security and intelligence apparatus, under the overall direction of Kang Sheng, was used by Mao to direct much of the activity of the Cultural Revolution and was directed against his opponents within the CCP. After Mao had to deploy the PLA to "curb the excesses" of the Cultural Revolution, the army had virtually taken over the party apparatus in many localities.

Over the most recent period, the Deng group has tried to reorganize the party and restore it to some kind of normality. However, the status of the party organization and the membership remains very much in question. At the center in Peking, Deng is in control; but beyond that, out into the provinces and down into the middle and lower levels of party units in the communes, factories, PLA units, and so on, the degree of Dengist control is in question.

One reason is that a majority of the estimated 37 million party members were admitted to the party during the 1966-76 period from the beginning of the Cultural Revolution to the arrest of the Gang of Four, the period now condemned by Deng and his associates. This majority exists in the Central Committee, the leadership body of the party. While the Dengists have brought back many of the cadre who were purged by the Maoists, there is no question that a significant layer of the CCP membership once were adherents of the radicals represented by the Gang of Four. Of course, most of them have recanted and adjusted to the new leadership, but their degree of loyalty must remain in question.

Deng's reorganization

Deng has taken certain steps to restore his control over the party apparatus at the top. The most important

came at the Fifth Central Committee Plenum this February, where the Secretariat of the Central Committee was re-established along with the post of party secretary-general and granted overall responsibility for handling the day-to-day work of the party organization. As secretary-general, a post Deng once held before his purge in the Cultural Revolution, Deng installed his closest collaborator and protégé, Hu Yaobang. Hu is a candidate to replace Hua Guofeng as party chairman.

In general, the members of the Secretariat are Deng followers, but not *in toto* nor all to the same degree. One interesting Secretariat member, and the only PLA man among them, is General Yang Dezhi (Yang Teh-chih), who was formerly commander of the troops of the Kunming region and a leader of the 1979 war against Vietnam. Yang is not known to be close to Deng, and in the past was a strong supporter of Madame Mao.

An important element in Deng's party control apparatus is the Central Committee Disciplinary Investigation Commission (CCDIC) established at the Third Central Committee Plenum on December 18-22, 1978. This unit is clearly part of the overall security and intelligence apparatus, with a specific function as the action arm of the effort to rehabilitate and restore to positions of power and influence those CCP cadres persecuted during the Cultural Revolution. This also includes purges of current power holders; and the reach of the CCDIC apparently penetrates well down into all layers of the party apparatus throughout the country.

The CCDIC was initially provided with a 100-man staff. It is headed by a Standing Committee member of the CCP Politburo, Chen Yun, first secretary of the CCDIC. Second secretary is Deng Yingchao; third secretary is Hu Yaobang; and permanent secretary is Huang Kecheng. Huang is in operational charge of the activities of the organization—he was elevated to the Central Committee at the Third Plenum and was chief of staff of the armed forces in 1959, when he was purged along with Marshal Peng Dehuai (Peng Teh-huai) in the campaign at that time against "capitalist roaders" and "rightist opportunists." (Peng has since been posthumously rehabilitated.)

Activities of this body have been mentioned in Chinese news reports in connection with disciplining

leading cadre who refuse to carry out rehabilitation measures. In Shanxi Province, for example, there has reportedly been resistance to rehabilitations of what are called "victims of false and wrong accusations." Apparently cadre belonging to Deng's faction have "not been thoroughly rehabilitated," and the complaint has been aired that the perpetrators of the "frame-up" remain in official posts "throwing their weight around." In this instance, at least, the CCDIC is still unable to fully enforce its will from Peking.

Separation of party and government

The unsettled state of the CCP itself may be one of the major factors behind a current topic in the Chinese press and in the speeches of the Peking leadership. This is the campaign for the "separation of party and government" functions and personnel. At the September National People's Congress meeting this was a major theme, with the emphasis provided by the resignation of many senior party leaders from their state positions, including Premier Hua, so that they hold only party positions.

The rationale presented for this in Peking is to

'The factionalists'

The following is excerpted from an Oct. 29, 1980 commentary in the People's Daily, "Veteran Cadres' New Tasks":

Some old comrades worry that the factionalists, or even the attackers, smashers, and grabbers, might be promoted while the middle-aged and young cadres are being selected. This worry is justified to a certain extent because the *leading groups* of some areas and some departments have still not been properly consolidated today, and some factionalists might promote their followers in the name of promoting middle-aged and young cadres. That is why the central authorities have repeatedly reminded us that the organizational and ideological remnants of the Lin Piao and Jiang Qing cliques should not be underestimated [emphasis added]. . . .

Some people are deeply poisoned by the influence of the Lin Piao and Jiang Qing cliques. Their factionalist sentiments are serious and they still refuse to repent. Although they have some ability, they should never be promoted to leading posts. If they still occupy some leading posts, they should be brought down resolutely.

achieve more efficient functioning of government by taking party functions out of the government and having the party concentrate on matters of party organization, mobilization, and education of the population. This is all supposedly part of the enforcement of legal order and an end to the constant political campaigns which disrupted the functioning of the government.

However, another explanation is that the Dengists have their power base not in the party but in the state apparatus built up and protected by their late leader, Chou En-lai. What may be involved here is not some formal separation of powers, but an effective downgrading of the status and power of the CCP itself in the Chinese regime, a move which is sure to bring tremendous resistance from those who still derive their power and position from the primacy of the CCP. This trend regarding "state" and "party" is perhaps the most portentous aspect of the Deng bid for power.

Judging from the attacks on them in the Peking press, those who oppose the downgrading of the party role argue that the removal of the party role will open the gates for "bourgeois ideology," particularly under conditions of heightened Western influence. The worker-peasant party cadre, who had such an elevated status during the Maoist period, look askance at the current emphasis on restoring intellectuals, many of them non-party members, to a high social status in the state and party apparatus.

Within the Deng group itself, as well as leading party circles not closely associated with Deng, there are fears of "anti-Marxist" currents, a fear addressed frequently in the party organs. The clampdown carried out by Deng on the short-lived "Peking Spring," a flourishing of unauthorized journals that went so far as to attack Marxism and socialism, is evidence of fears that the de-Maoification campaign will undermine the very legitimacy of the Chinese regime as it now exists. Among the intellectuals are widespread fears of a backlash against the current liberalization.

An event that points up the fragility of Deng's grasp of the political structure is the decision to delete from the constitution the clause guaranteeing the "Four Big Freedoms"—to "speak out freely, air their views fully, hold great debates, and write big character posters." This was announced at the Fifth Party Plenum as an action intended to "help eliminate factors causing instability," and was read as a move directed against both the Gang of Four faction and the non-party intelligentsia. Curiously, some China watchers have cited this move as evidence of the "awesome consolidation of power" by Deng; it is more logical to view it as a manifestation of the weakness of the regime and the necessity to suppress public expression of the forces at work in the power plays now going on in the Chinese leadership.