

PAINTERS AND POLITICS
IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC
OF CHINA, 1949-1979

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SIX • THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, which took place between 1966 and 1976,¹ is referred to by many as the "ten lost years." For artists such as Ye Qianyu, who was beaten severely by his students and then jailed for nine years, such a formulation would be entirely appropriate. For those such as Lin Fengmian, who kept his work out of Red Guard hands by scrubbing it to pulp on a washboard,² even more than one decade of creative activity was lost. The physical and psychological violence inflicted by some Red Guard students on their teachers, their party leaders, and on each other has, understandably, produced a revulsion against any activity associated with the Cultural Revolution. Older artists in particular associate the artistic images of the Cultural Revolution very directly with the torture they suffered. For most young and middle-aged artists, however, the ten "lost years" included a good deal of painting, even if it was not what we might consider high art.

With the ouster of Mao's successor, Hua Guofeng, in 1979, the CCP took a clear stand against the policies of the Cultural Revolution. The official analysis of the Cultural Revolution by party historians is extremely negative, an opinion that most Western observers share. Zhang Shaoxia and Li Xiaoshan, for example, begin their discussion of Cultural Revolution art with quotations from a 1981 party document: "History has proved that the Cultural Revolution was erroneously launched by the leadership, was used by a counterrevolutionary group, and was an internal disturbance that brought severe suffering to the nation and to the people of all its nationalities."³

Although most people agree with this political line, such strong condemnations have made it awkward for artists to discuss work they produced during that period or to consider, except privately, its relationship to the art of preceding and succeeding periods. Even for those who were very active, the decade is often described as a "big blank." Many paintings made during the

period have been destroyed, either iconoclastically or pragmatically—that is, by recycling the canvas for new paintings or for scrap. Other works have been returned to artists from the public collections in which they once were held. One monumental image of Chairman Mao in swimming garb survives in the studio of an art professor and in 1986 was in excellent condition, except for a thick layer of dust (plate 10). The artists volunteered that they had kept the painting only because they planned to reuse the canvas and large wooden stretcher.

Another example is probably more typical. Because the artist lived in a city far from the museum that owned his painting, the work was unstretched and rolled up for return to him, thus cracking the paint. The artist, who remains proud of the fame he enjoyed during the Cultural Revolution, was nevertheless reluctant to keep the canvas in the studio he shared with several colleagues. In 1986, therefore, he stored it in the only available place: rolled up under the bed in his small apartment.

Connoisseurs would be unlikely to lament the disappearance of stereotyped Cultural Revolution pictures with the same sorrow they might bring to the loss of Lin Fengmian's oeuvre. Nevertheless, since modern scholarship calls for evaluating the period on the basis of its documents rather than simply eradicating the record, it is to be hoped that some of these paintings will survive. Although the post-Mao destruction of Cultural Revolution art has succeeded in achieving a "ten-year gap" in the history of Chinese painting, thus making literal a concept that was in part figurative, the Cultural Revolution did influence the development of Chinese art in important ways. For one thing, it revived the strongly antitraditional approach to Chinese painting that had flourished in the early 1950s and successfully indoctrinated an entire generation of artists in a narrowly defined Maoist mode of art. For another, its rejection of professionalism in science and economics pushed many ambitious young people into the arts. Finally, its populist emphasis expanded the practice of official painting to regions of China that had previously produced little art. Government cultural and personnel policies thus produced an artistic pool of unprecedented breadth and talent. Unfortunately, this increase in the quantity of promising artists was accompanied by a marked reduction in the number of permissible styles and subjects. By 1974, a new and uniform official style was clearly recognizable.

The political content of Cultural Revolution art, most of which promoted Cultural Revolution policies, has been largely condemned since 1979. It is important to note that the rejection of such works in post-Mao China was initially based on thematic rather than aesthetic or stylistic grounds. Most Cultural Revolution art was in fact directly descended from academic painting of the 1950s and early 1960s, and, as we shall see, the best of it was painted by academically trained artists. These pictures, for better or worse, must be seen

as part of the continuous development of painting in the PRC. They had their sources in earlier art; they left a profound legacy to the art of the 1980s.

In short, the Cultural Revolution provided the artistic training for the third generation of Chinese artists, young painters who emerged in the early 1970s through the official exhibition network and who remain active as official artists and art professors. (For most of them, traditional Chinese painting, with its poetry and its lofty ideals, was an art practiced by artists of the past; the art of the present was representational and was founded in the artist's human experiences and practical concerns. We will describe the environment in which these young artists flourished before concluding the book with a discussion of their absorption by the post-Mao art academy system.

Artists were particularly prolific during two periods of the Cultural Revolution. The first burst of activity accompanied the Red Guard movement of 1966 through 1968, which destroyed the Communist party apparatus and dismantled the educational system. The outlines of early Cultural Revolution artistic activity seem like a parody of the land reform and thought reform movements of the late 1940s and early 1950s, for in both eras zealous young revolutionaries attacked those who held power under the old society. As in the land reform movement, unauthorized violence against individuals was widespread and targets were chosen somewhat capriciously.⁴ Even artistic activity paralleled that of the early postliberation period, for it was almost completely limited to propaganda of an ephemeral nature. The second period of artistic activity celebrated the rebuilding of the party between 1970 and 1976.⁵

Political Background: The Birth of the Red Guard Movement

The political history of the Cultural Revolution may be more complex than that of any other period in recent Chinese history, but a schematic summary will help understand how and why art was made during this time.⁶ Most historians agree that the movement was launched by Mao Zedong with the goal of removing his rivals in the party. Because he came to view his chosen successor, Chairman Liu Shaoqi, as an opponent, yet was unable to rally support for his purge within the Communist party, he mobilized millions of students to simply destroy the party apparatus. His goals were not known to most of his supporters in 1966; moreover, his failure to control the activity he set in motion led to massive human suffering and loss of life that were irrelevant to those goals.⁷

A Red Guard chronology published in 1967 lists several important events leading up to the Cultural Revolution.⁸ In February 1966, Jiang Qing held a conference on military arts and literature at which praise for the thought

of Chairman Mao was the dominant theme. In particular, she singled out the *Rent Collection Courtyard*, a life-size sculptural installation made at the Sichuan Academy of Arts, as a model for the art world.⁹ Jiang Qing's critical stance was justified, according to the Red Guard version, by the approval of workers, peasants, and soldiers. The proceedings of the meeting were issued in April as the call for a "Cultural Revolution." Peng Zhen, the Beijing mayor, prepared a document in February that dealt with the proper implementation of the Cultural Revolution.¹⁰ In response to his suggestions, the FLAC began a campaign against Soviet revisionist art, academic art, and the capitalist trends in art research. Mao nevertheless criticized Peng's efforts as inadequate, and Peng's document was attacked for derailing Maoist policies.

On May 16, the Politburo, at Mao Zedong's command, issued a paper referred to as the May 16 Circular. It criticized Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping for "having let all of the ox-demons and snake-spirits out of their cages," for "stuffing up our newspapers, broadcasts, periodicals, books, textbooks, performances, works of literature, and art, films, plays, operas, art, music, dance, and so forth," and for refusing to accept the leadership of the proletariat.¹¹ Four high Communist party officials were dismissed: army chief of staff Luo Ruiqing, Beijing mayor Peng Zhen, director of the CCP Propaganda Department Lu Dingyi, and director of the CCP Central Committee Office Yang Shangkun.¹² Staffing shifts were made throughout the propaganda apparatus so that major newspapers became more responsive to Mao's wishes. A new Cultural Revolution Small Group (CRSG) was appointed directly under the Standing Committee of the Politburo to direct the movement—which, at this point, was official.

According to the Red Guard chronology, the principal art administrators reacted to the news with alarm. Wang Zicheng, a Ministry of Culture administrator, and Hua Junwu, of the Chinese Artists Association, rushed back to Beijing from Xingtai, Hebei, where they were engaged in work for the Four Cleanups campaign. Cai Ruohong reportedly began making lists of "good artworks" as defense against expected attacks on the Ministry of Culture and CAA.¹³ The Red Guard journal reported with glee the chaos that broke out on the *Meishu* editorial board in the wake of the May 16 Circular.¹⁴

On May 25, 1966, radical students at Beijing University posted big-character posters denouncing the school's president for suppressing student political discussion. Most students initially supported the president, but a week later Mao Zedong praised the contents of one of the posters. On June 1, Mao approved national broadcast of the text of the big-character poster.¹⁵ By this act, as the Red Guard viewed matters, he personally launched the Cultural Revolution.¹⁶ Zhou Yang and Lin Mohan, deputy directors of the party Propaganda Department and Ministry of Culture, were openly attacked soon after.¹⁷

With Mao's support thus withdrawn, most college party committees collapsed. Student activists, garbed in faded army uniforms, marched from school to school demonstrating against academic administrators. Wide leather belts with heavy buckles, a standard part of the costume (see plate 10 and fig. 136), were used by some students as weapons against those who failed to cooperate. The Standing Committee of the Politburo dispatched work teams to prevent anarchy on campuses. One prominent work team member was Wang Guangmei, Liu Shaoqi's wife, who participated in efforts to organize students for orderly criticism of specified cadres. This moderation was soon criticized as obstructionist by Mao's allies. Student activists involved in this early stage of the Cultural Revolution and who cooperated with the work teams were often sons and daughters of high officials, later referred to by the derogatory term "royalists."¹⁸ Neither the work teams nor the students understood who was Mao's real target in the early months of the campaign. As Mao and his close supporters sought to unseat the parents of such student activists, they instigated other students to attack the work teams, thus causing the first major factional split among the student activists.

By mid-June, all schools were closed. On June 4, some middle school students at Qinghua University wrote a big-character poster with the slogan "Rebellion is justified!" By late July, Mao had removed the work teams from the universities, and the students took charge. The name "Red Guard" was recognized by Mao on August 1 as the name for student activists who supported him.¹⁹

A meeting of Maoist members of the CCP Central Committee in early August set forth guidelines on the goals of the Red Guard movement. The Red Guard were mandated, first, to overthrow those within the party who took the capitalist road and, second, to uproot and destroy the "four olds"—meaning old ideas, old culture, old customs, and the old habits of the exploiting classes to corrupt the masses.²⁰ On August 5 Mao himself posted a big-character poster on the door of the room where the Central Committee met, calling on the Red Guard to "Bombard the Headquarters" of his party opponents who exercised "bourgeois dictatorship."²¹

Normal cultural activity in the capital largely ceased as students and teachers organized to support the Red Guard movement. Guo Moruo had made a self-criticism on April 10 in which he declared that all his work should be burned.²² With attacks on Zhou Yang in late May, the cultural establishment began to crumble. Over the course of the next year, well-known artists were attacked in the press and in their studios. The *guohua* artist Huang Zhou (see fig. 65), a staff painter of the military museum, was severely criticized, first in *Liberation Army Daily* and then in *People's Daily*.²³ This vicious attack had two reasons: he gave private painting lessons to one of Liu Shaoqi's children,²⁴ and he was close to Deng Tuo, an early target of the movement.²⁵ The mag-

nitude of the movement precludes listing all artists who were victimized.²⁶ In general, all those who reached adulthood before 1949 had "historical problems" that made them targets. In January 1967, when the Communist bureaucracy was overthrown nationwide, Cai Ruohong and Hua Junwu were targeted for attack and the Chinese Artists Association was "smashed."²⁷

Red Guard Artists, 1966–1968: The Overthrow of the Establishment

Political histories of the Red Guard movement rarely mention Red Guard from the art academies, for their small numbers and generally pacific attitudes had little influence on the movement as a whole. Art histories, similarly, are unlikely to mention Red Guard art, for it was, by definition, unofficial and was produced and publicized in chaotic circumstances. In any event, most young artists devoted more energy to political activities than to art of any kind. Nevertheless, academic artists, including Red Guard art students, proved crucial in establishing the visual images of the Cultural Revolution.²⁸ For example, two contending Red Guard groups from the Central Academy of Arts and Crafts, called, respectively, East Is Red and Jinggang Mountain, seized control of the huge billboards at the northeast and northwest corners of Tiananmen Square. Their competition was played out in the design and execution of huge painted images, which became models for billboards nationwide.²⁹

During the spring in which the Cultural Revolution was launched, college students and many teachers from CAFA were laboring in the countryside as part of the rural Four Cleanups campaign. The middle school students and their teachers, who had remained on campus, avidly joined the movement. They threw themselves into painting murals, cartoons, and posters in support of Chairman Mao and the Cultural Revolution, the most important functions of young professional artists during the first three years of the Cultural Revolution. Among the activities in which they later participated was preparation of a Red Guard exhibition that included propaganda pictures and confiscated property.³⁰

In late May, CAFA college students were ordered back to campus. Soon thereafter, in the earliest days of the movement on campus, the Mao Zedong Thought Red Guard was formed, a student group that counted the oil painter Ge Pengren and the *guohua* painter Deng Lin (a daughter of Deng Xiaoping) among its officers.³¹

The split between the pro-work team and anti-work team students mentioned above was only the first issue that factionalized the Red Guard. The next step came in July 1966 with the "matched couplet debate."³² According to scholars of Chinese politics, the crisis began when a group of middle school

students at the Beijing Aeronautical Institute posted a slogan in the form of matched couplets reading: "If the father's a hero, the son's a real man; if the father's a counterrevolutionary, the son's a bastard."³³ The slogan, which sought to make class distinctions hereditary, spread throughout the city, provoking controversy and antagonism within the Red Guard movement. Red Guard students in the colleges of music, drama, and art had particularly intense reactions to the slogan, for many of them came from "bad" class backgrounds. A Beijing artist recalls that Red Guard from revolutionary families began marching, demonstrating, and chanting the slogan. He remembers with particular indignation how the mob would apprehend any fellow Red Guard at will and require him or her to state loudly his class background. Students from ill-favored backgrounds, such as the children of bourgeois intellectuals, organized antislogan groups. More demonstrations in favor of the slogan were held, and a formal debate between advocates and opponents of the concept took place on August 6,³⁴ the day after Mao Zedong wrote his big-character poster calling upon Red Guard to "Bombard the Headquarters."

According to one former Red Guard, CAFA was occupied for three days by middle school students from all over Beijing who came to observe or participate in a debate at the Beijing Conservatory.³⁵ Some children of high officials, including Deng Xiaoping's artist daughter, publicly opposed the slogan. Siblings and friends found themselves bitterly divided. Heavily outnumbered CAFA Red Guard opposed the slogan with great vigor but were nonetheless defeated.³⁶ As proslogan students eventually prevailed nationwide, aspiring Red Guard from bad backgrounds were required to denounce their parents. A Hong Kong newspaper reported in November that students from the "seven black categories" were expelled from schools in Canton by the Red Guard unless they condemned their families.³⁷ For most of the subsequent decade, a person's class background was considered hereditary and determined access to employment and education.

Mao Zedong and the reorganized CCP leadership received Red Guard who traveled to Beijing from all over the nation on eight occasions between August 18 and December 1966. It has been estimated that the total number of Red Guard assembled at Tiananmen Square in the course of these receptions was between ten and thirteen million.³⁸ CAFA faculty and students hastened to participate in these patriotic events; as a result, Mao's meetings with the Red Guard became a favorite subject for young artists. An anonymous oil painting, *Chairman Mao's Heart Beats as One with the Hearts of the Revolutionary Masses* (fig. 110), published in 1968, was prepared for one of the Red Guard art exhibitions held in 1967.³⁹ Mao, dressed in a military uniform, strides across a stone bridge in front of the old palace to shake the hands of his young supporters on Tiananmen Square. The demonstrators are a carefully varied group of student Red Guard, workers, and soldiers of both sexes. Be-

hind Mao are key Cultural Revolution leaders: Lin Biao, Chen Boda, Jiang Qing, Kang Sheng, and Zhou Enlai. All but Kang and Zhou are garbed in military uniforms, emphasizing Mao's reliance on the army to maintain order after his purge of the CCP.

The authors of this painting are believed to have been a group of teachers and young students from CAFA—including one Soviet-trained artist and one taught by Xu Beihong—who worked collectively.⁴⁰ Because the socialist realist style encouraged by Jiang Qing and other Cultural Revolution leaders requires more technical skill than most Red Guard had, and because the paintings in major exhibitions tended to be extraordinarily large, collaboration in the planning and execution of the compositions was common. If Mao were to be the focus of the picture, as he usually was, it was especially important that his face be executed as skillfully as possible. In many cases, then, an experienced oil painter—normally a teacher—would be sought to help with this crucial part of the picture.

In *Chairman Mao's Heart Beats as One*, the artist who executed the face of Mao Zedong was a painter capable of both subtle effects of chiaroscuro and representational accuracy. The hand responsible for depicting the students at the right, by contrast, was far less skilled. The images of Chen Boda, the plump bespectacled figure, Jiang Qing, Lin Biao, Kang Sheng, and Zhou Enlai are technically superior to those of the Red Guard opposite them, but still weaker than the rendering of Mao. The image of Zhou Enlai, who stands prominently in the painting's foreground, is the least well rendered of the government officials. Thus, at least three different hands may be discerned in the execution of this picture, a situation typical of the collaboration encouraged by the communistic ideals of the Cultural Revolution. Another group of CAFA professors, including Hou Yimin and Jin Shangyi, were required to paint a more polished version of this composition for the 1972 National Exhibition (fig. III).

The precise course of development of the Red Guard movement among art students in Beijing remains unclear, but former Red Guard from CAFA agree on the major events of the 1966–1967 period, namely: the 1966 smashing of the plaster casts used in drawing instruction; the Black Painting Exhibition of 1966 and the beating of old professors; the bloodlines debate of 1966; the factional battles and hostage taking of 1967; and the “Long Live the Victory of Chairman Mao's Revolutionary Line” Exhibition of October 1967. Although some CAFA Red Guard were in the crowd that watched the torching of the British embassy in August 1967,⁴¹ most considered it a minor event.

Early in the 1966 frenzy of student activism, sometime around August 25, “revolutionary students and teachers of the Central Academy of Fine Arts” conducted a dramatic symbolic event: the smashing of the instructional plaster statues.⁴² An integral part of the CAFA curriculum, as of European academies

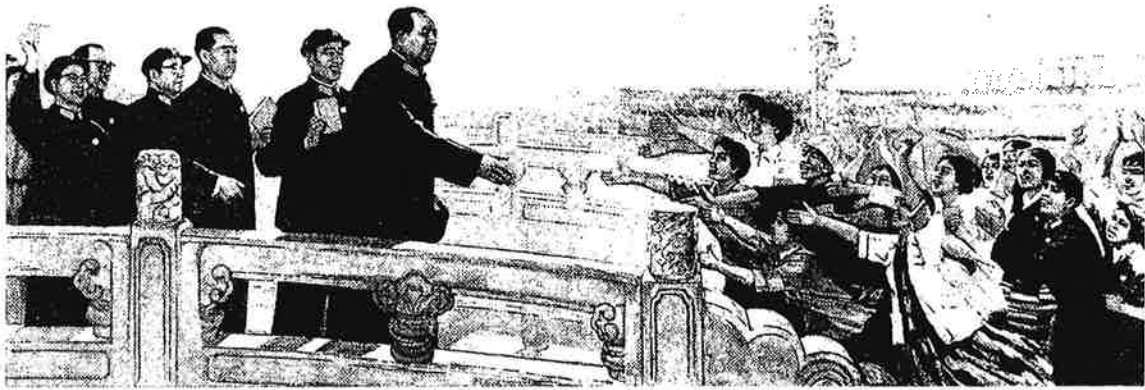


FIGURE 110

Anonymous, *Chairman Mao's Heart Beats as One with the Hearts of the Revolutionary Masses*, ca. 1967, oil painting.

on which that curriculum was based, was the rendering in pencil or charcoal of plaster casts of famous European and Asian sculptures. Now, however, declaring that the academy's collection of plasters, which included reproductions of such works as Michelangelo's *David*, the *Venus de Milo*, and the *Apollo Belvedere*, represented the "four olds," CAFA Red Guard ritually destroyed the pieces with axes and shovels. They then threw the remnants onto a bonfire, parading around it in a victory celebration. Since completion of the ambitious undertaking required a great deal of physical exertion, the art students were assisted by students from the physical education department of Beijing Normal University.

One of the most appalling events of the early Cultural Revolution period involved violence against people as well as property. In order to smash "the power-holding faction," a black painting exhibition was held at CAFA by the Red Army group of the CAFA middle school, a group composed chiefly of radicalized sons and daughters of high-cadre families. Works of art, including paintings by Dong Xiwen, were stripped from the academy gallery for castigation. At least four faculty members, Ye Qianyu, Luo Gongliu, Li Kuchan, and Huang Yongyu, were beaten with belts and belt buckles by Red Guard students and faculty. Witnesses and participants in this dreadful spectacle still recall vividly the conduct of each victim as he was publicly tortured. After being physically humiliated, most old artists and administrators were incarcerated in



FIGURE III

Hou Yimin, Deng Shu, Jin Shangyi, Zhan Jianjun, Luo Gongliu, Yuan Hao, and Yang Lin'gui, *We Must Implement the Proletarian Cultural Revolution to the Finish*, 1972, oil on canvas.

makeshift prisons on campus, referred to as ox-pens, since the prisoners were called, in Mao's terms, ox-demons and snake-spirits.

The CAFA Red Guard, like those in other institutions, formed themselves into small activist groups that coordinated revolutionary activities. One artist in Shanghai maintains that all members of his work unit were Red Guard, unless they received the label of ox-demon or snake-spirit. This high level of participation appears to have been the case in Beijing arts units, as well, though some young people, particularly early Red Guard activists and others who withdrew after their parents fell victim to the campaign, declined to take part.⁴³ In practice, the movement pitted young artists against their older teachers.

In the fall of 1966, Red Guard were encouraged to make "Long Marches," in emulation of the earlier travels of the Red Army.⁴⁴ Most Red Guard from CAFA went to the countryside, including Yan'an, known as "the sacred spot of the revolution." One typical group of young artists went to Datong during the winter of 1966–1967 to make propaganda paintings for a memorial to coal miners who died during the Japanese occupation. While the students were away, workers at the college guarded their captives in the ox-pens. Art students from other parts of China camped out in Beijing art institutions while the usual occupants were absent.

In January and February 1967, the "National Assembly of Red Art Rebels" met in the National Art Gallery in Beijing to attack "the seventeen years of the black line in literature and art" and to struggle against the capitalist roaders in the art world.⁴⁵ The "rebels" included students and young artists affiliated with art and film academies, the CAA, and institutes of Chinese painting; they had traveled to Beijing from all over the nation. The Ministry of Culture auditorium, the National Art Gallery, and the CAFA auditorium were converted into "national liaison stations" for Red Guard affiliated with arts institutions. One important function of such stations was to arrange shelter for fellow radicals from out of town. According to one former Red Guard leader, his group was granted \$3,000 RMB by the Ministry of Culture, which can have been no more than a hollow shell by this time, to fund their criticism meetings and to publish a set of propaganda posters.⁴⁶ If that indeed occurred, "rebellion" in the art world had taken on an "official" face.

The primary targets of the rebels' campaign were the national CAA leaders Hua Junwu, Cai Ruohong, and Wang Zhaowen, although academy leaders Liu Kaiqu and Zhang Ding were presented for criticism as well. (A participant who traveled from Kunming to Beijing to attend the conference recalls that the seriousness of the event was marred by the cartoonist Hua Junwu's presentation. He was required to stand for criticism before the audience with an example of his politically erroneous art held above his head. His cartoon was so funny that the audience began to titter and was unable to generate the necessary indignation at his alleged crimes.) On the second day of the meeting, the rebels confiscated the official seal of the CAA. This traditional Chinese gesture of seizing power had the practical effect of preventing deposed CAA officials from issuing any official documents or correspondence. On January 19, the Ministry of Culture was seized by a group called the Revolutionary Rebel Joint Committee.⁴⁷

By February 15, 1967, a Red Guard art periodical had been founded in distant Kunming. *Qianjunbang* (The One-Ton Cudgel; fig. 112) was a single-sheet poster issued by the Yunnan Red Art Rebels Liaison Station, which occupied the local CAA branch, and cost five Chinese cents. According to one contributor, it was one of the earliest publications for Red Guard of the art world and was avidly read by artists all over China. The provincial branch of the FLAC was not actually abolished, though it changed both its function, which now was to issue Red Guard propaganda, and its name, which became Revolutionary Rebel Corps. The new propaganda publications, not surprisingly, bypassed regular pre-Cultural Revolution dissemination procedures. Rather than working with a publisher, the Red Guard artists simply took their artwork to the printing factory, which produced it at cost, as an act of patriotism. The Red Guard then distributed their product nationally.

Several of the artists who emerged in Yunnan were trained at CAFA. One



FIGURE 112

The One-Ton Cudgel (Qianjunbang),
broadsheet, no. 1, Feb. 15, 1967, pub-
lished by the Yunnan Red Art Rebels
Liaison Station, collection of Sun Jingbo.

of them, Sun Jingbo, a graduate of the CAFA middle school, produced a poster in 1967 to promote the slogan "Struggle with words, not with weapons" (fig. 113). The fierce expression on his figure's face is typical of Red Guard propaganda and was probably influenced by theatrical conventions of Jiang Qing's model operas. Otherwise, the charcoal rendering of a well-muscled female figure with arm extended is a testimony to his academic training in anatomy, perspective, and Soviet-style rendering. Similarly, an exhibition poster announcing a "Proletarian Cultural Revolution Painting Exhibition" in commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Mao's Yan'an Talks has been attributed to Jiang Tiefeng, a 1964 graduate of the CAFA printmaking department (fig. 114).

In June 1967, the CAFA Red Guard began publishing a monthly magazine called *Art Storm (Meishu fenglei)*.⁴⁸ Although the editorial offices were on the CAFA campus, the periodical was in fact a joint effort of Red Guard groups



FIGURE 113

Sun Jingbo, "Struggle with words, not with weapons," 1967, poster, published by the Studio of the Yunnan FLAC United Struggle Team and Yunnan Red Art Rebels Liaison Station, collection of the artist.

from most Beijing art institutions. The sponsoring organizations were the Great United Congress of CAFA Classes and Departments; the Red [Guard] Congress Central Academy of Fine Arts Prairie Fire Armed Struggle Team;⁴⁹ the Red [Guard] Congress Central Academy of Arts and Crafts East Is Red Commune; the Middle School Red [Guard] Congress CAFA Middle School



FIGURE 114

Jiang Tiefeng, "Proletarian Cultural Revolution Painting Exhibition," 1967, poster, collection of Sun Jingbo.

Antirevisionist Brigade; the CAA Red Rebel Group; the Museum of Chinese Revolutionary History Revolutionary Rebel United Committee; the Chinese National Art Gallery Red Rebel Group; the Chinese Art Research Center Cultural Revolution Delegates Small Group; the Beijing Painting Institute Mao Zedong Thought Armed Struggle Group Revolutionary Committee; the People's Art Press Red Small Soldiers Armed Struggle Corps; the People's Art Press Prairie Fire; and the CAFA Sculpture Creation Studio Ten Thousand

Mountains Red Corps.⁵⁰ Many of these units were dominated by CAFA students or graduates.

The first issue of *Art Storm* reported on a June 6 conference entitled "Cut Off Liu Shaoqi's Black Hand in the Art World—Thoroughly Eliminate the Poisonous Weeds Erected as Steles and Biographies for Liu Shaoqi." Art and culture leaders were brought to the Museum of Revolutionary History for face-to-face attacks before delegates of the labor congress (*gongdaihui*), military, and art world revolutionary rebels. Those who appeared—Qi Yanming, Xu Pingyu, Wang Yeqiu, Cai Ruohong, Hua Junwu, Shao Yu, Li Zhaobing, Xu Binru, and Chen Pei—were held responsible for the production and publication of "dog portraits" of Liu Shaoqi.⁵¹

The remainder of the June issue was devoted to castigating art in which portraits of Liu Shaoqi appeared. In one heinous example, it was found that 172,077 copies of Hou Yimin's oil painting *Liu Shaoqi and the Anyuan Coal Miners* (fig. 78) had been published by People's Art Press between 1962 and 1965.⁵² Hou Yimin, notably, was considered by Xu Binru, director of the Museum of Revolutionary History, to be an expert in painting the "Liu-demon." Other targets included the Hangzhou professor and Maksimov student Wang Dewei, who had exhibited a handsome painting of Liu Shaoqi in the forest talking to lumbermen in the 1964–1965 national exhibitions;⁵³ and the CAFA professor Li Qi, who had painted a *guohua* portrait of Liu. In a pattern we observed during the anti-Jiang Feng campaign, the erroneous art produced between 1961 and 1965 was blamed both on its artists and on politicians, in this case Deng Xiaoping, Lu Dingyi, and Zhou Yang.⁵⁴

On May 23, 1967, after a year of destruction, the Cultural Revolution Small Group announced the establishment of a literature and arts group under the direction of Jiang Qing. Other members of the group included Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wen yuan, and Qi Benyu. Liu Jucheng was to direct artistic activity. May also featured an exhibition of paintings by the Proletarian Cultural Revolution Red Painting Guard at the former Rongbaozhai Gallery. It was sponsored by various other Red Guard art groups from the publishing industry, including publishers of the periodical *Art War Gazette* (*Meishu zhanbao*).⁵⁵ Another exhibition, called "Long Live the Victory of Mao Zedong Thought Revolutionary Painting" and prepared by eighty rebel units, was held at the Chinese National Art Gallery on May 28, 1967, in honor of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Yan'an Talks. A meeting of almost a thousand people was held in conjunction with the exhibition, at which former art leaders, including Cai Ruohong and Hua Junwu, were once again attacked and humiliated.⁵⁶

In June, the Red Guard Congress CAFA Prairie Fire Great Criticism Brigade began a campaign against artists who had worked in Chongqing during World War II, allegedly in collaboration with Liu Shaoqi. Their leader was

said to have been former culture Minister Xia Yan, and they included the prominent artists, critics, and cultural figures Zhang Ding, Ye Qianyu, Huang Miaozi, Zhang Guangyu, Zhang Zhengyu, Hu Kao, Yu Feng, Ai Qing, and Ding Cong.⁵⁷

The following issue of *Art Storm* included an attack on the Beijing Chinese Painting Institute for being a royal painting academy run by Deng Xiaoping and Liu Shaoqi. Liu was attacked for the mild comments he had made in support of *guohua* during the Hundred Flowers campaign (see above, p. 180). The Red Guard asserted that Mao and Zhou Enlai had intended the institute to paint socialist realist pictures but that the Propaganda Department and Beijing municipal government had led it astray. The original leadership, significantly, included no party members, and two of the four directors were rightists. The director of the Beijing Cultural Bureau had apparently claimed that the Chinese Painting Institute was rather like a Culture and History Hall (*Wenshi-guan*) and need not be so politically activist.⁵⁸ Emphasizing those circumstances, its director, Cui Zifan, had, according to the Red Guard, devoted himself to raising birds. The institute was always deserted, with only a few doves strutting about, like an old temple. Even worse, the Red Guard asserted, was that many of its artists had held exhibitions and published one-man albums during the famine years.⁵⁹ As in the Anti-Rightist campaign, the facts may have been accurate, but their interpretations were somewhat hysterical.

Between June 10 and 12, 1967, a "ten thousand person meeting" was held at the Beijing Workers Stadium under the auspices of the literature and arts group of the CRSG. Chen Boda, Qi Benyu, revolutionary groups from art units, and one of the *Rent Collection Courtyard* artists delivered speeches. Lu Dingyi, Zhou Yang, Xia Yan, and others were presented for "struggle" by the masses.⁶⁰ On July 1, seven or eight hundred people met in the CAFA auditorium to "struggle" (attack) Cai Ruohong. Hua Junwu received similar treatment on July 10 and 11; Zhou Yang and Lin Mohan appeared on July 23 and 24.⁶¹ It was announced on July 21, 1967, that a new cultural administration, probably intended to assume the functions of the old Ministry of Culture, would be formed under the CRSG literature and arts group. None of the leaders of this new administration's art section were artists we have mentioned before. On August 2, Zhou Yang was "struggled" once again in the CAFA auditorium by this new organization.⁶² Most old artists lived under guard and were prohibited from painting during these years.

A new school directorate, called the Preparatory Group for the CAFA Revolutionary Committee, was announced by the literature and arts group of the CRSG on August 3, with Chen Bo, a leftist former administrator, put in charge.⁶³ The new group, however, failed to restore order; instead the Red Guard factions fought to gain control of the school Revolutionary Committee.⁶⁴

At the same time that power was being successfully wrested from former arts leaders, Red Guard art groups began struggling internally. In 1967, despite efforts by Zhou Enlai and others to prevent such divisions, Red Guard throughout Beijing split into several antipathetic groups.⁶⁵ A primary reason for the rifts was power struggles over control of the Red Guard Congress and the new Beijing Revolutionary Committee.⁶⁶ Such tensions appeared in the art world, as elsewhere, as early as the Red Guard seizure of the CAA in January.⁶⁷ The most decisive splits in Beijing were between the Sky faction, named for the Red Flag group of the Beijing Aeronautical Institute, and the Earth faction, named for the East Is Red group of the Geology Institute. By June 1967, the Earth faction had won control of the Red Guard Congress.

Most schools in Beijing divided internally along similar lines. According to CAFA historians, the CAFA Red Guard decisively split in May 1967.⁶⁸ Each side aligned itself with one of the two predominant factions in Beijing, and both groups engaged in even more extreme behavior than had already been displayed. Hong Yung Lee has found the Earth faction students in Beijing to be, in general, children of less prestigious class backgrounds, more politically radical, and more closely linked to Jiang Qing and the Cultural Revolution Small Group. The Sky faction students were from better—that is, more revolutionary—class backgrounds, were more moderate politically, and tended to be sympathetic to Zhou Enlai's administrative methods.⁶⁹ Ideological differences between the two groups in the art world, if they existed, are difficult to assess. No trace of them is evident, at least to the foreign reader, in *Art Storm*, which was aligned with the Earth faction. Participants in a May 18 symposium to commemorate Mao's Yan'an Talks included Red Guard from twelve units, including factory workers, clerks, the Great United Congress of CAFA Classes and Departments, the Red Guard Congress CAFA Prairie Fire, and the East Is Red group of the Geology Institute. It was, thus, likewise an activity of the Earth faction. Former Red Guard artists tend to agree that the factions in each art institution had their own dynamics and were based in part on personal friendships and animosities.

As in other institutions, "class background" played some role in factional alignments within CAFA. Some of the Revolutionary Alliance/Red Flag Red Guard, which was aligned with the Sky faction, were sons and daughters of revolutionary martyrs, cadres, or soldiers or were of peasant or worker stock. Some Prairie Fire Red Guard, aligned with the Earth faction, were children of intellectuals or of bourgeois stock. Revolutionary Alliance/Red Flag members were more likely than Prairie Fire Red Guard to be prominent party members.

On the whole, however, the factional divisions within the art academy seem to have corresponded less with family background than with social factors, such as studio assignments and friendships. The Revolutionary Alliance/Red Flag faction at CAFA, for example, was dominated by young faculty

trained in the Soviet Union, assigned to the Soviet-style oil painting studio (Studio Two), or trained in Luo Gongliu's oil painting class between 1960 and 1963. Most were party members with considerable experience in previous movements and born of good revolutionary stock. One Revolutionary Alliance/Red Flag organizer had been instrumental in the Maoist criticisms at CAFA in the fall of 1964 and was a focus of factional animosity. Former Red Guard have described this group, in late 1950s parlance, as the group that was both red and professional. Many CAFA middle school students, especially children of revolutionary cadres, allied themselves with this group.

The opposing faction at CAFA, the Prairie Fire group, was dominated by young oil painting instructors from Studio Three, the national-style studio. The group seems to have been less well unified than the Revolutionary Alliance/Red Flag group, and to have evolved in opposition to the other faction rather than as a result of any compelling affinity among group members. It reportedly included some graduates of Maksimov's class and many of the school's undergraduate students. A former Prairie Fire Red Guard describes his group as consisting of technically skilled artists with few personal political ambitions. Although it was difficult to remain unaligned, lest one be victimized by both factions, one former student has estimated that, as the conflicts grew more dangerous, as many as a third of the art students dropped out of the movement altogether.

Whether the differences were ideological, class-based, or personal, the factional split was important, in some cases leading to bloodshed.⁷⁰ Activists of both stripes believed that they were on the correct side of the power struggle. Each faction sought to attract attention by doing a better job implementing the decrees of Chairman Mao, and intense competition developed as to which Red Guard faction would be assigned to handle a particular "case." For example, it was reported in the press that the Red Flag unit from the Peking Foreign Languages Institute, a group aligned with the Earth faction, broke into the Foreign Ministry on about May 16, 1967, after having been passed over by Zhou Enlai in their bid to conduct the official criticism of former head of state Liu Shaoqi.⁷¹

As factional loyalties solidified by 1967, non-CAFA representatives from the Sky or Earth factions sought to participate in criticizing victims. In some instances a work of art or even a person to be criticized would be seized and hidden from the opposing faction. Opposing Red Guard groups at CAFA occupied the two largest buildings on campus as forts. Rocks were catapulted back and forth across the athletic field. The Prairie Fire group held the three-story art gallery, which was strategically located at the edge of campus. The Revolutionary Alliance/Red Flag group set up their headquarters in the two-story library in the center of campus. Battles and hostage taking of Red Guard from opposing factions became serious. One notorious incident in the conflict

was the capture by Prairie Fire partisans of the oil painting instructor Wen Lipeng, a graduate of Luo Gongliu's class and the son of the poet-martyr Wen Yiduo. He was eventually freed by Revolutionary Alliance/Red Flag partisans, who believe they saved his life from the Earth faction Red Guard.⁷²

Older faculty continued to be physically and mentally abused throughout the first year and a half of the Cultural Revolution. As we have seen, CAFA party committee member and oil painting instructor Hou Yimin, initially sympathetic to the Prairie Fire group, eventually became a Red Guard target himself. Not only did he paint the disgraced *Liu Shaoqi and the Anyuan Coal Miners* for the Museum of Revolutionary History, but he also had a "landlord" family background and he liked to collect antiques. He was reportedly hung by his arms and beaten; his Soviet-trained wife, Deng Shu, suffered a heart attack when she was assaulted. Wang Shikuo endured torture at the hands of Red Guard hoping to force a confession of espionage; his wife was dragged down two flights of stairs by her hair.⁷³ The desire to forget the "ten lost years" by most of those involved is completely understandable.

Red Guard Art

The Central Academy of Fine Arts succeeded in attracting national attention for its propaganda work at the height of the movement. A *People's Daily* report of February 23, 1967, records that "rebel artists" of CAFA had drawn propaganda pictures based on Mao's quotations, "a new event in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and a great initiative of the fine arts circle."⁷⁴ The following day a foreign reporter described lines of workers at post offices and other public institutions waiting to purchase a "news sheet caricaturing thirty-nine targets of the Cultural Revolution."⁷⁵ This poster fits the description of an elaborate cartoon designed by Weng Rulan, an advanced undergraduate in the CAFA *guohua* department.⁷⁶ The version reproduced here (fig. 115) bears the title "A Crowd of Clowns" and was issued by a transitory Red Guard group, the Preparatory Office for the Struggle Peng [Zhen], Lu [Dingyi], Luo [Ruiqing], and Yang [Shangkun]'s Counterrevolutionary Revisionist Group.⁷⁷ At the time the poster was made, this organization occupied offices in the municipal government complex,⁷⁸ a situation no doubt resulting from the January overthrow of the city government.

According to the artist, the poster depicts the first thirty-nine high-ranking targets of the Cultural Revolution in the order they were purged from government. The figures are caricatured so as to reflect their personal quirks and political position. The artist, whose father was a professor of history, established her iconography by discussing the purged leaders with her father's friends,

most of whom were idly passing time at home after having been purged themselves. They were able to supply colorful anecdotes that helped the young artist understand the significance of the purges, and gave her hints about the best-known foibles of individual leaders.

One of the many ironies of the Cultural Revolution is that the young people used by Mao for his own political ends were products of the very system they overthrew. Weng Rulan, for example, was at the time a twenty-two-year-old Beijing native educated in New China. Her father was a specialist in the Yuan dynasty who taught at Beijing Normal University, and her mother taught at the National Minorities Institute. Weng Rulan was recognized for her artistic talent as a child; when she was eleven her work was included in an exhibition of children's art sent to Yugoslavia and published in China.⁷⁹ In 1956, at the age of twelve, she was accepted at the CAFA middle school, the most prestigious of the nation's specialized art boarding schools.

During Weng Rulan's six years in the middle school, she pursued a curriculum that included regular high school classes but emphasized technical training in art. Many of her teachers were the best graduates of the CAFA college and graduate programs. Her middle school class was part of a short-lived experiment in full implementation of Soviet arts education, for it admitted students directly from elementary school. The administration, however, found that the young students presented special difficulties that the staff could not handle and the following year reluctantly returned to a shorter four-year course. Otherwise, the fundamental curriculum remained largely the same until the Cultural Revolution.⁸⁰

A younger artist who studied at the middle school from 1963 to 1968 remembers the curriculum as follows. In the first two years, the course work was roughly evenly divided between art courses and regular academic work.⁸¹ By the third year, the balance had shifted so that art occupied about 75 percent of class time. Specialized subjects such as calligraphy, oil painting, and Chinese painting were taught according to a daily rotation. Drawing and watercolor painting, which in turn required a solid understanding of form and color, constituted the core of the students' technical training. Instruction in drawing followed the Chistiakov system, proceeding from the depiction of geometric objects in space, such as spheres, cubes, and cones, to drawing plaster casts of famous sculptures, and finally to rendering the human form. At mandatory evening study halls the students usually practiced their drawing, sometimes posing for one another.⁸² According to the former director, at least 90 percent of the graduates went on to college, presumably at an art school.

Weng Rulan graduated from the CAFA middle school in 1962. Examinations for admission to CAFA were not conducted in that year, but faculty from the college personally selected students they wished to see enter the five-year CAFA college program. Weng was chosen as a student by Ye Qianyu, chair-



FIGURE 115
Weng Rulan, "A Crowd of Clowns,"
1967, poster, detail (*opposite*),
collection of the artist.

man of the *guohua* department, and thus became a *guohua* figure painter. Much of Ye Qianyu's work is very linear, and Weng became a specialist in the outline style.

By the time the Cultural Revolution began in 1966, Weng had completed four years of her five-year *guohua* major, had undergone ten years of professional art training at CAFA, and was thoroughly steeped in the principles and history of Communist art. The complex composition and amusing caricatures of "A Crowd of Clowns" are very much a product of that careful training. In her cartoon can clearly be seen the legacy of her teacher's style (fig. 48), whose figures include slightly squared shoulders and knees and lively variations in line width, a stylistic heritage she did not reject even though Ye Qianyu was an early target of the Red Guard.

The composition of "A Crowd of Clowns" has many possible models within the academy. One that comes immediately to mind is a *nianhua* by



Hong Bo, former party secretary of CAFA, which was well known after its publication in the catalogue for the 1949 national exhibition (fig. 7). Twenty-five north Chinese peasants and Communist cadres parade across Hong Bo's picture in celebration of heroes of the civil war. They are arranged in a serpentine fashion, so as to leave space for each figure. Members of the varied group travel by foot, horse cart, and horseback, are garbed in peasant style or blue cotton work clothes, and carry slogan-emblazoned banners, drums, folk trumpets, and cymbals.

Just as preliberation woodcuts reworked the established iconographic forms of folk art to help Mao Zedong in propaganda battles of the 1940s, so Weng Rulan manipulated icons of early Communist art to attack the CCP's ousted leaders on Mao's behalf. The first of the thirty-nine figures in "A Crowd of Clowns" is Lu Dingyi, director of the CCP Propaganda Department and minister of culture. Lu beats a broken drum that emits noises such as "dogmatism," "pragmatism," and "simplification." Wu Han, Liao Mosha, and Deng Tuo, who had been attacked for criticizing Mao in their writings, follow. Deposed vice-minister of culture Xia Yan blows a trumpet that sounds "The 30s"; he stands alongside Zhou Yang, whose own trumpet urges "The Wang Ming Line," "Literature of National Defense," and "Oppose Lu Xun." Each figure is labeled and satirized. The playwright Tian Han wears a Peking opera robe, the collar of which is embroidered with the word "anti-party." General Luo Ruiqing, whose leg is in a cast, is carried in a basket. (Luo broke his leg the previous year in an unsuccessful suicide leap from a building.)⁸³

Wang Guangmei, Liu Shaoqi's wife, rides a bicycle in the high heels, sheath dress, and jewelry for which the Red Guard ridiculed her.⁸⁴ A book, *The Sayings of Chairman Liu*, rests on the front of her bicycle, and a pile of hats on the rear. The hats are labeled "counterrevolutionary," "true rightist," "false leftist," "anti-party type," and so forth. Marshall He Long stands behind her, depicted with exaggerated emphasis on his hairy chest, arms, and mustache. He wears Peking opera flags on his back that bear the "If the father's a hero" slogan, and thus is portrayed as a supporter of the "bloodlines" Red Guard group. Following in sedan chairs are Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping, and their supporters. Deng plays bridge with cards that read "king" and "work teams."

The ridicule of purged party leaders had a venerable history by the time Weng made her poster. Her work, in fact, treats her subject much more mildly than some humorless cartoons of 1955, which portray the disgraced Hu Feng as a thoroughly evil tiger or villain. Nevertheless, "A Crowd of Clowns" makes a statement relevant to Red Guard factionalism as well as to high-level politics. Trailing behind the last purged leader are a ragged line of small figures carrying the tattered flags of rival rebel groups: West Guard, East Guard, United

Action Committee (UAC), Red Flag Army, and so forth.⁸⁵ These groups were all associated with the slogan "If the father's a hero, the son's a real man; if the father's a counterrevolutionary, the son's a bastard." The flags on He Long's back that bear this slogan are thus an intentional irony, for his son was a UAC leader.⁸⁶ In this way the young Red Guard activist was attacked with what amounted to his own slogan, for once his venerable father had been condemned, he had no choice but to assume the bastard label himself. According to Gao Gao and Yan Jiaqi, the conflict between the UAC, a group composed largely of children of high officials, and other Red Guard groups, who had overthrown these same officials, reached its height on about May 29, 1967, at anniversary celebrations for the founding of the Red Guard.⁸⁷

Not only was Weng Rulan's placard made available to workers in Beijing, but it was also posted throughout the city's diplomatic district. It was even mailed to foreign purchasers of Chinese books and periodicals, the source of the version reproduced here. Such wide distribution marked a great publicity victory for the Red Guard faction with which the artist was affiliated.

Many of the published works from the early years of the Cultural Revolution were painted for one of the many Red Guard-organized exhibitions. Some former Red Guard artists have even suggested that the organization of Beijing exhibitions was factionalized, with specific Red Guard groups taking charge of each. The idea seems reasonable in light of the extreme animosity that developed between the groups, though most former Red Guard claim that loyalty to Chairman Mao outweighed factional attachments. For important exhibitions, then, competing factions might cooperate. The important May 28 exhibition at the Chinese National Art Gallery opened during the worst struggles for control of the Red Guard Congress, but no traces of the factional conflict appear in *Art Storm*.

The Red Guard, inspired by the cult of Mao Zedong and guided by Jiang Qing, set out to construct a new pictorial history for the People's Republic of China, one that dramatized Mao's revolutionary role and minimized that of most other Communist leaders. A publication of the period asserts: "It is Chairman Mao who points the correct direction for the revolutionary literary and art workers. It is Comrade Jiang Qing, courageous standard-bearer of the great Cultural Revolution, who persists along Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in literature and art and leads the proletarian revolutionaries in these fields in creating model revolutionary productions for the stage."⁸⁸

One well-publicized exhibition of the period was "Long Live the Victory of Chairman Mao's Revolutionary Line," which opened at the Chinese National Art Gallery on October 1, 1967, and subsequently toured the nation. Sixteen hundred works were exhibited, of which 60 percent were by workers, peasants, and soldiers.⁸⁹ Presumably, then, 40 percent of the works were by professionals. *Chairman Mao's Heart Beats as One with the Hearts of the Rev-*

olutionary Masses (fig. 110), an oil painting prepared for this exhibition, is believed to have been painted primarily by CAFA faculty and students aligned with the Revolutionary Alliance/Red Flag group.⁹⁰

An event that proved unexpectedly significant for artists nationwide was "Mao Zedong's Thought Illuminates the Anyuan Worker's Movement" (*Mao Zedong sixiang guanghui zhaoliang Anyuan gongren geming yundong*), a didactic exhibition that opened in October 1967 and for which the Cultural Revolution icon *Chairman Mao Goes to Anyuan* was painted (fig. 116).⁹¹ The exhibition was organized at the Museum of Revolutionary History by the national labor union. Most of the historical displays were prepared by professors of party history and students from People's University and Beijing University. A small group of artists was invited to prepare paintings of the seven journeys Chairman Mao made to Anyuan. These artists have been associated with the Sky faction of CAFA and CAAC by participants and observers sympathetic to that group.

The political purpose of this activity was more explicit than in the preceding exhibition, for the show was part of an intensified campaign to discredit Liu Shaoqi. As *Art Storm* indicated some months earlier, the purge of Mao's chosen successor meant that history paintings such as Dong Xiwen's *Founding of the Nation*, with its prominent image of Liu Shaoqi, and Hou Yimin's *Liu Shaoqi and the Anyuan Coal Miners* were inappropriate for display. The exhibition in fact sought to redefine the iconography of China's revolutionary history by replacing Liu with Mao as the primary organizer of the important 1922 coal miners' strike.

Many of the most enthusiastic Red Guard were not yet mature artists, and the tasks they set themselves were sometimes quite difficult. Yet because most of the works were collaborative, in the collective spirit of the time, assistance from professionals was usually available. In many cases, an older, more experienced artist would advise a Red Guard artist. The vast majority of works published during this period, like Weng Rulan's placard and the posters by Sun Jingbo and Jiang Tiefeng, did not even bear the artists' names. Personal reputation was considered unimportant in the idealistic fervor of the time.

One remarkable exception to the convention of anonymity was Liu Chunhua's oil painting *Chairman Mao Goes to Anyuan* (fig. 116). Liu Chunhua, a college student at the Central Academy of Arts and Crafts, had graduated from the Lu Xun Academy of Art middle school in Shenyang. Although not trained as an oil painting specialist, he was thoroughly schooled in the fundamentals of drafting and color and had received some recognition for his pencil drawing while still in middle school. He was assigned to prepare one of the seven portraits of Mao for the historical exhibition, depicting the young Mao's earliest visit to Anyuan in 1921.

The paintings for the exhibition were created in a collective studio set up

in the museum. A fellow participant has described with some sympathy Liu's intense anxiety as the exhibition date drew close and he remained unsatisfied with his image. Indeed, he was still working in the gallery when the exhibition opened, and later complained that spectators stepped on his palette. It is widely rumored that Liu's work was collaborative, having been heavily retouched by older artists, especially one Soviet-trained professor. The alleged ghost-painter, who was then working in the museum on a mural project organized by the State Council, emphatically denies such stories, pointing out that Liu's middle school art training was completely adequate to his task. And in fact, although the young artist received a great deal of advice from fellow artists and exhibition organizers, the painting was entirely executed by his hand.⁹²

The painting's pedigree would not inspire such interest if it were not for the official response it received. Jiang Qing saw a photograph of the work in 1967 as part of an application to publish it. She requested that a viewing be held at Zhongnanhai, after which she decided it was a suitable model for Cultural Revolution art. The following year, *People's Daily* distributed a color reproduction nationwide. Parades and festivals were organized to commemorate the publication, with pretty girls in new blue overalls dancing in front of multiple reproductions of the picture.⁹³ By the fall of 1968 it was institutionalized as a model painting and copied by aspiring artists throughout China. Interestingly, very few artists outside the artist's Red Guard faction and the rather small group then employed on projects in the historical museum recall seeing the painting at the time it was first exhibited. With the publicity blitz of 1968, however, almost every Chinese with even the remotest interest in art became aware of *Chairman Mao Goes to Anyuan*.⁹⁴ The artist believes that nine hundred million copies were eventually printed.⁹⁵

Chairman Mao Goes to Anyuan appears to express the young artist's veneration for Chairman Mao. At any rate, it became a useful contribution to his cult, for it possesses clear devotional appeal. The radiant, youthful Mao Zedong stands contemplatively on a mountain path, looking as though his destination was St. Peter's Pearly Gates rather than a coal mine. Indeed, the classically schooled artist claims to have taken his inspiration from a Raphael Madonna. The practical business of revising the standard historical account by replacing Liu Shaoqi with Mao Zedong as the mastermind of the famous strike might present difficulties even if the young artist believed, as he did, in the ideological accuracy of the newly simplified history. This work avoids concrete problems concerning who did what when by severing the genre of history painting from its mundane ties to an identifiable physical setting. It doesn't matter where Mao is or what he is doing, for the transcendent nobility of his cause and character are clear.

A more immediate source for the composition than Raphael might have been contemporary Chinese oil painting in the Soviet manner. The artist Jin

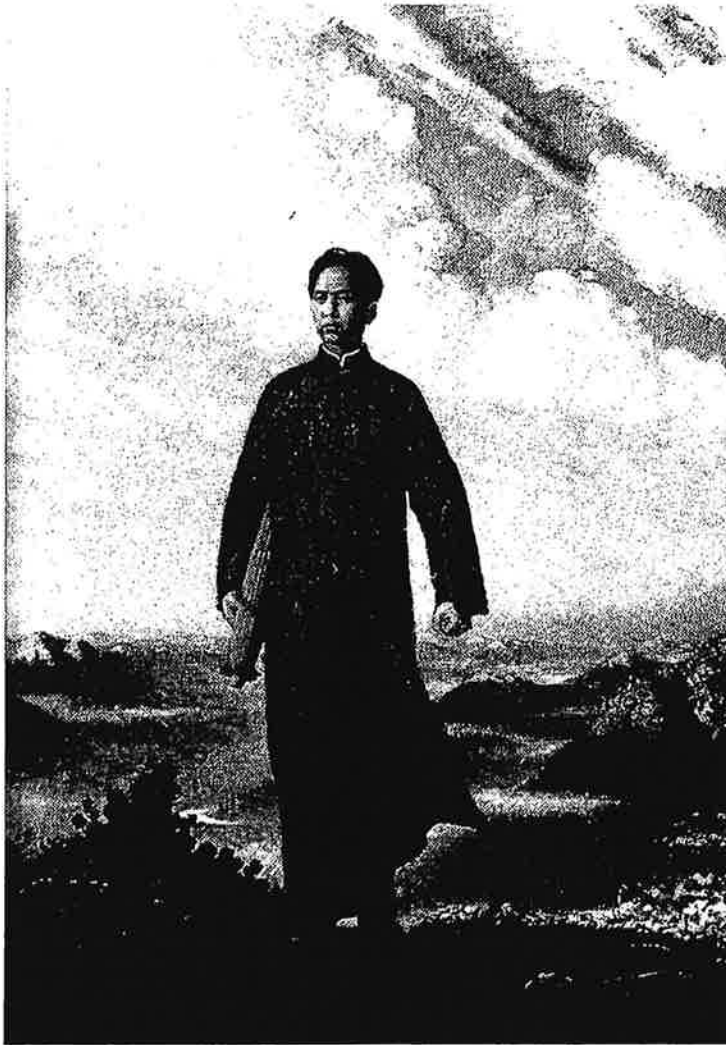


FIGURE 116

Liu Chunhua, *Chairman Mao Goes to Anyuan*, ca. 1967, oil on canvas.

Shangyi had earlier adapted the portrait genre to the demands of history painting with his *Mao Zedong at the December Conference* of 1961 (fig. 75), in which Mao appears against a plain red background. His *Long March* of 1964 similarly portrayed Mao against an extremely generalized landscape ground.⁹⁶ *Long March* was widely exhibited and studied by young artists until, on the eve of the Cultural Revolution, it was criticized and suppressed for its inadequately bright colors. In the spring of 1966, Jin completed another portrait, *Chairman Mao at Lu Shan* (fig. 117),⁹⁷ commissioned for an exhibition in Albania. The work was widely reproduced and copied during the early years of



FIGURE 117
Jin Shangyi, *Chairman Mao at Lu Shan*,
1966, oil on canvas.

the Cultural Revolution. As in Liu's work, Mao is depicted alone, against a panoramic landscape. Thus, although Liu Chunhua's composition and concept may have sources in European and Soviet art, they are most closely related to those of such well-known Chinese artists as Jin Shangyi.

Although *Chairman Mao Goes to Anyuan* was affirmed by Cultural Revolution authorities as an icon of the new art, its links to earlier academic art stand out more than do its innovations. Features of Liu's work that became characteristic of Cultural Revolution art include Mao's exaggerated eyebrows, his smooth face, and the artificially arranged clouds, which allow nature to

echo Mao's movements.⁹⁸ Yet all these may be found in earlier art. Characters in *Railroad Guerrillas* (fig. 47), for example, have similar fierce eyebrows, Jin Shangyi's portraits have equally smooth surfaces, and *The Founding of the Nation* has kindred artificial cloud formations. As Zhang Shaoxia and Li Xiaoshan note, it is a rather ordinary picture,⁹⁹ though fairly successful for a student work.

By the end of the Cultural Revolution, it had become conventional to speak of portraits and pictures of Chairman Mao in religious terms, as though they actually embodied a god. Zhang and Li refer sarcastically to Liu Chunhua's picture as a "divine image" (*baoxiang*). An elderly in-law of mine was severely criticized for having lined a chicken cage with a newspaper image of Chairman Mao.¹⁰⁰ To remove a formal portrait from the wall was referred to as "inviting the portrait of Chairman Mao to descend."¹⁰¹ The festivities surrounding publication of Liu Chunhua's painting in 1968 appeared to deify the *image* of Chairman Mao, that is, to treat it as though it were inhabited by the divinity himself. In one of the many ironies of artistic life in China, Wu Guanzhong, a French-trained professor at the Central Academy of Arts and Crafts, was required to "improve" his art and ideology by copying *Chairman Mao Goes to Anyuan*, a work painted by one of his students.¹⁰²

As Maurice Meisner has observed, by 1968 the cult of Mao had shifted from the iconoclasm of the Red Guard movement, here exemplified by the work of Weng Rulan, to the production of icons.¹⁰³ Liu Chunhua's *Chairman Mao Goes to Anyuan*, so prominently published in the second half of 1968, was the most important pictorial manifestation of this trend.

The nature of art exhibitions in the capital reveals a similar development. According to Red Guard recollections, in 1967 there was an exhibition called "The Accomplishments of the Military Struggles of the Red Guard" (*Hongweibing zhandou chengji zhanlan*). The subjects of the displays included Red Guard ransacking people's homes, Red Guard criticizing and humiliating people for political incorrectness, and Red Guard expressing solidarity with the third world, including pictures of Red Guard with Africans and people of other nations. Other exhibitions were held to criticize specific government leaders. By early 1968, when a show referred to as the "Red Sun" Exhibition was held at the Chinese National Art Gallery, the subject had shifted decisively to heroic moments in the biography of Chairman Mao.¹⁰⁴

Labor Reform

The chaos of 1967 and 1968, which threatened the nation with civil war, led to a crackdown against activism. The art world Red Guard had split decisively

over the leadership of the newly formed revolutionary committees. In July 1968, Mao personally asked Red Guard groups to disband. Those that failed to comply with his request were soon crushed by the army. On July 28, 1968, armed strife at CAFA was finally ended by a work team of soldiers and workers who were sent to occupy the academy. The factionalism was by that time irreversible.¹⁰⁵ The campus remained under military control until the mid-1970s.

The earlier street battles were soon attributed to an antigovernment plot organized by the shadowy May 16 Corps. Red Guard activists, including some artists from CAFA and CAAC, were arrested, detained, and investigated on the pretext of May 16 partisanship.¹⁰⁶ With this turn of affairs, young artists were, like their teachers, prevented from painting. In 1968 and 1969, all high school graduates were sent to labor in the countryside.

By March 1969, the CAFA middle school students were assigned to a labor camp in Yuxian, northern Hebei, not far from the Beijing suburbs. They worked a five-and-a-half-day week, but most found that they could spend at least part of one day painting. The soldiers who ran their camp did not understand art; even so, they had not been instructed to prohibit it. Within the constraints of their rural isolation, therefore, the art students were relatively free. One high school student describes this time as the greatest artistic freedom he had ever experienced, for there were no teachers to prohibit his experiments in forbidden styles.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, this was private art, for the former Red Guard were now largely excluded from public discourse.

Some older artists also found the disorganized late 1960s and early 1970s a time for private art. The Shanghai *guohua* painter and administrator Cheng Shifa, for example, painted a beautiful landscape album in his long hours at home before he was sent to labor camp (fig. 118). The pictures were small, so that they could be hidden quickly if someone came to his door. Indeed, the remarkable development of Cheng's work during this period appears to be a result of his forced idleness. Such art was an art for personal appreciation, painted secretly and, beyond its size limitations, without thought of bureaucratic constraints and standards. It has been recognized as one of the artist's best works.¹⁰⁸

On May 9, 1970, Zhou Enlai ordered art and literature workers to military camps in the countryside. Although some CAFA faculty members, such as Ye Qianyu, remained imprisoned in Beijing, most CAFA professors and staff members were sent on May 20 to two villages in Cixian, Hebei, where they were rigorously supervised by the 1584th Army and were not permitted to paint. They were also prohibited from speaking to local peasants, who therefore came to believe that the artists were convicts. Students had been sent the preceding year to a similar camp at Zhangjiakou. A skeletal staff under Zhang Qiren's direction was left to watch over the empty campus.¹⁰⁹ If Beijing artists



FIGURE 118

Cheng Shifa, *Views from Diancong Mountain*, "Leaning Pine Tree," album leaf, ink and color on paper, 24.1 cm × 17.7 cm, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

were typical, most professional artists were thus removed from the art world. One wonders who was expected to create the icons of the new age.

The problems that the central government had brought upon itself, including the partial destruction of the very framework of government, returned the art establishment to a relatively primitive stage. Indeed, the art world of the late 1960s resembles in some ways that of the period immediately following the Communist victory. Were it not for the seriousness of the Cultural Revolution's effects on individual lives, one might even view it as a parody of the

1949 revolution. The old art establishment and its bureaucratic structures were pushed aside. Artistic activity, as in the early liberation period, was often organized on an ad hoc basis, and was devoted entirely to propaganda. Most artists spent their time in thought reform and had little leisure to paint. Soon, however, special commissions and directives from above gave the politically privileged an opportunity to emerge.

Moreover, as had been the case in the early 1950s, disorganization yielded flexibility. As long as a young artist could avoid being singled out for political condemnation, many opportunities for artistic activity and recognition were available, particularly in regional centers. In the late 1960s, for example, there was a nationwide movement to build shrines to Chairman Mao. Oil painters were sought to create hagiographic images for the new historical museums, which were constructed on the sites of Mao's important biographical moments.¹¹⁰ Eventually the movement was expanded to include revolutionary martyrs, including the Canadian physician Norman Bethune,¹¹¹ who had perished while helping Chinese Communist troops.¹¹² Artists known to be capable of such work would be "borrowed" from their own work unit, which was usually at labor in the countryside, and given food and housing for the duration of the project. While most such works were displayed and published anonymously, the identities of the creators of successful paintings were well known within the art community.

Gradually, governmental structures were reestablished to fulfill the functions of those that had been destroyed. Many newly appointed officials were young. In Hangzhou, Zhang Yongsheng, a student in the printmaking department of the Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts, had organized the largest rebel faction of Red Guard in the province. On this basis, he became the vice-director of the Zhejiang Provincial Revolutionary Committee and the director of the Revolutionary Committee of ZAFPA. In these roles, he held a high position in the new provincial government and became de facto director of the academy. He met Jiang Qing in 1968, which resulted in collaboration between the school and the central Cultural Revolution authorities, as we will discuss further in the next section.¹¹³

The Shanghai Art World

There were profound regional differences in arts administration during the unsettled period before 1971. In Shanghai, propaganda publications and newspapers dominated artistic activity. When the Shanghai Art College was closed in 1965, the students were transferred to the Handicrafts Institute, administered by the Bureau of Light Industry. The Oil Painting and Sculpture Studio

(OPSS), similar to the institution Jiang Feng's supporters had demanded in 1957, was established as the new work unit for the school's faculty and graduates. The studio, like all other institutions, divided into Red Guard and ox-demons/snake-spirits in 1966. Young artists, like their colleagues in Beijing, painted posters, murals, portraits of Chairman Mao, and large compositions for Red Guard exhibitions. As part of the free travel available to the Red Guard in 1966, many journeyed to Beijing to see Chairman Mao and around the country to exchange accounts of their experiences.¹¹⁴

Older artists, like those in Beijing, were persecuted. One of the three primary Red Guard targets in the Shanghai art world was the Catholic sculptor Zhang Chongren, then working at OPSS, who received a severe beating.¹¹⁵ Red Guard from the studio also participated in or observed attacks on the Shanghai Chinese Painting Institute, which had supplied *guohua* instructors for the Shanghai Art School. The militants forced the reclusive prewar director of the Hangzhou academy, Lin Fengmian, whose painting technique was considered unusual, to paint in front of a public audience. Although the event was organized to humiliate Lin, one former Red Guard artist confesses to somewhat opportunistic and unrevolutionary motives: he was intensely curious about the old man's painting methods.¹¹⁶ The third focus of Red Guard persecution was another prominent art educator, painter, and rightist, Liu Haisu.

As in Beijing, artists from the Oil Painting and Sculpture Studio who were not in prison were sent, by 1969, to labor at the May Seventh Cadre School, as their labor camp in the Shanghai suburbs was called.¹¹⁷ They stayed in the suburbs for most of the period 1969–1971, but the majority of artists found opportunities to visit the city. With the administrative structure somewhat streamlined by the collapse of the art bureaucracy, the studio came under the administration of the Art Creation Office of the city's Propaganda Small Group, organizations that had replaced the municipal branch of the Chinese Artists Association and the Municipal Propaganda Bureau, respectively.¹¹⁸

Although art periodicals had ceased publication, the major Shanghai newspapers, which were also administered by the Propaganda Small Group, continued to function. Some young artists used their trips to town to cultivate editors at the newspapers. Before long, the papers began to seek revolutionary paintings for reproduction in their pages. In 1969, for example, a young amateur named Xu Chunzhong was commissioned to paint a gouache illustration in black and white for an important article in *Jiefang ribao* (*Liberation Daily*) about the heroic death of a Shanghai student, Jin Xunhua, who had been sent to labor in Heilongjiang. Jin died while attempting to prevent timber from being swept away in a flood. Whereas it might have been more appropriate to launch an occupational safety campaign, instead it was considered highly desirable that the Shanghai-born Jin be depicted as a martyr by another Shanghai-born rusticated youth. Xu was assisted in his task by a young profes-

sional artist from the OPSS, Chen Yifei, and the work was published under the pseudonym Yi Zhong (fig. 119). According to Chen Yifei's colleagues, it was decided by top Cultural Revolution administrators to promote Jin Xunhua as a national model of selfless sacrifice. The newspaper's former art editor recalled in 1990 that the aim of Zhang Chunqiao, who controlled the paper (and who was later castigated as one of the Gang of Four), was to create a second model painting to compete with Liu Chunhua's *Chairman Mao Goes to Anyuan*. After Yao Wenyuan, another Cultural Revolution leader, saw the new Shanghai image printed in *Jiefang ribao*, he took the unusual step of publishing a color reproduction of it in *Hongqi* (*Red Flag*), a national ideology magazine. For this purpose, the black-and-white image was tinted by the publisher. The two artists later recreated it in oil for publication as a poster (the form reproduced here), which ensured them a measure of celebrity in artistic and party circles.

Shanghai artists believe that promotion of the work had a strong element of local chauvinism and that Shanghai authorities hoped to create a national model similar to Beijing's *Chairman Mao Goes to Anyuan*. In fact, although the image never attained the status of Liu Chunhua's iconic portrait, it was one of the best-known works of the new revolutionary martyr genre. In this reconstitution of an old formula, the heroes were urban youths who had sacrificed their lives for the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

Artists in Shanghai frequently refer to recognition of this sort as an artist's "political capital," which might be used to protect him in future political movements and to promote his career. A similar work was published soon after by Liu Borong, a Shanghai student who had been sent to farm in Jiangxi. He obtained a commission on one of his home leaves to depict eleven students who were killed while cultivating tea in Anhui. The artist's "political capital" subsequently garnered him an appointment as a professional artist in the People's Liberation Army.¹¹⁹ He was very active in exhibitions of the 1970s.

The two Shanghai newspapers, *Wenhuibao* and *Jiefang ribao*, similarly competed for official recognition with increasingly ambitious commissions. Artists were "borrowed" from the May Seventh Cadre School campus and housed for about a year in the newspaper facilities while they completed revolutionary commissions. *Wenhuibao* conceived the idea of an "oil painting revolution," which meant that artists would create paintings based on scenes from Jiang Qing's model operas. About ten artists were recruited for the model opera series;¹²⁰ three were graduates of the Shanghai Art College, four more were young professors at the Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts,¹²¹ and two were amateurs. Their works were originally intended to be collaborative, but the artists soon discovered that the results of a ten-man collaboration were inevitably poor. They then divided the work, each artist painting in a mutually agreed-upon style. Eventually, it became possible for one artist to receive credit



FIGURE 119
Yi Zhong (Chen Yifei and Xu Chun-
zhong), "Chairman Mao's Red Guard
Study the Model Revolutionary Youth,
Comrade Jin Xunhua," 1969, poster.

for a piece, as occurred with *Red Detachment of Women*, painted by the Soviet-trained Quan Shanshi.

Art staffers of *Jiefang ribao* similarly commissioned a series of images based on Jiang Qing's favorite piano concerto, *Yellow River*. Artists in this group also included graduates and students from the Shanghai Art College. Participants are explicit about their goals during the period: they aimed to please the leadership. For art, that leadership was controlled by Jiang Qing and her extremist allies. Unfortunately for the *Yellow River* artists, the timing of their project's conclusion found the leadership preoccupied with other artistic activities, and the series failed to receive much critical notice, even with its 1973 exhibition at the Chinese National Art Gallery in Beijing.¹²² Although these works have had little lasting significance, they were extremely important as cultural propaganda in their time, for they were among the very few officially sanctioned paintings produced between 1967 and 1971. They provided evidence, such as it was, that the Cultural Revolution had not eradicated pictorial art completely.

Reconstruction of the National Bureaucracy

The Ministry of Culture, the Central Propaganda Department, and the Chinese Artists Association, the party and government organizations responsible for art before 1966, were abolished by the Cultural Revolution. By about 1970, their functions were assumed by a culture group under the State Council. Jiang Qing, as director of this group, was the highest authority on cultural matters. Art activities were directed by Wang Mantian, one of the ten directors of the cultural group. Wang, who is reported to have killed herself when Jiang Qing was arrested in 1976, remains a shadowy figure. She is believed to have been a relative of Wang Hairong, who served for many years as Mao's English interpreter, and to have studied art at the Lu Xun Academy of Art in Yan'an.¹²³ She served before the Cultural Revolution as a member of the Tianjin Municipal Party Committee.

In 1970, as the reconstruction of government began, plans for national exhibitions were made. Artists recall that works for a national military exhibition were prepared in Wuhan during the summer and fall of 1971. For this purpose, professional artists and curators were summoned to the city. Plans were somewhat disrupted by the mysterious disappearance of Mao's successor, Lin Biao, on September 13, 1971, although painters were not told the reason for sudden orders to cease work on his portraits.¹²⁴ Much later, China's citizens learned the official story: his plane had crashed as he attempted to flee to the Soviet Union.

At about the same time, Wang Mantian began planning for a 1972 exhibition to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of Mao's Yan'an Talks. Perhaps influenced by Jiang Qing's favorable reception of Zhang Yongsheng, the ZAFRA Red Guard who had risen to great political heights,¹²⁵ she held a meeting at the Zhejiang academy to discuss procedures for organizing the exhibition. A young oil painting instructor, Gao Jingde, came to her attention. Soon after, Wang began assembling an administrative team to structure the show. She transferred Gao Jingde, along with a man from the Shanghai publishing industry and a naval administrator, to Beijing as administrators. By 1971 the Shanghai man had departed, and Gao was promoted to direct a newly established art group, which reported directly to Wang Mantian and the culture group of the State Council. Assistants, most of whom were young graduates of CAFA, were assigned to work with Gao.

Gao Jingde visited all provinces and major art institutions in the country with the goal of assembling an unprecedented national exhibition to promote the thought of Chairman Mao. Although worker-peasant-soldier art remained extremely important, Gao sought high technical standards, in contrast to the spontaneous and disorganized artistic activity of the 1966–1970 period. A 1960 graduate of the oil painting department of ZAFRA, Gao had attended lectures taught by the visiting Soviet artist A. A. Myl'nikov and was an enthusiast of Soviet socialist realist oil painting. Jiang Qing's deep aversion to traditional *guohua* made it natural that an oil painter would be chosen to administer the new art.

That Gao and his assistants were products of the national art academy system strongly affected the direction taken by Chinese painting in the 1970s. The 1972, 1973, and 1974 exhibitions were dominated by a narrowly defined academic style. The oil painting that Gao promoted under orders from Wang Mantian was a synthesis of the Soviet-influenced academic painting of the art colleges and the more restrictive requirements developed by Jiang Qing for the model operas. The *guohua* that emerged was similarly based on the new *guohua* figure painting developed in the academies.

A former official has described a very straightforward chain of command in which Gao was empowered by Wang Mantian and the central authorities to organize artistic activities nationwide.¹²⁶ Rather than the dual government-party structure that had been developed during the 1950s, in which political give-and-take might affect policy formulations in the art world, the governmental structure of the Cultural Revolution period was decidedly top-down. Gao, in Beijing, issued directives to provincial or municipal authorities, who conveyed and enforced them through cultural offices under their control.

In the period between his 1970 appointment and the jurying of the national exhibition in the spring of 1972, Gao met with local cultural officials throughout China. In most provinces and cities, the old Cultural Bureau still

existed, though sometimes under a new name. The Cultural Bureau was administered by the highest local organ of government, usually the provincial Cultural Revolution Committee. Gao approached each provincial committee to organize submissions for the 1972 exhibition.

His task was initially difficult, because most artists and local art experts were incarcerated or laboring in the fields. To reconstitute the national arts administration, he needed to find capable managers and educate the local authorities. He explained the goals and standards of the forthcoming exhibition and often requested the participation of specific local artists whose work was known to him from earlier periods. In many cases, Gao found that local authorities were unwilling to take responsibility for allowing professional artists to participate, for fear that such lenience might later be punished. Yet if Gao specifically requested the participation of a professional artist, his authority obliged local authorities to comply. Such artists included the *guohua* figure painter Liu Wenxi in Xi'an, who had been Gao's schoolmate at the Zhejiang academy;¹²⁷ Li Shaoyan and Niu Wen in Sichuan; Ya Ming, Qian Songyan, and Song Wenzhi in Nanjing; and Guan Shanyue, Li Xiongcai, and Yang Zhi-guang in Guangzhou. Many of these men had been mentioned unfavorably in Red Guard tracts, but no evidence was ever produced to convict them of crimes.

The guidelines Gao established for professional participation specified that artists who had not been formally convicted of crimes should be allowed to paint. On this basis, the many artists who were incarcerated as a result of inconclusive investigations were liberated. Naturally, the situation varied a great deal from region to region depending on the zeal with which the local art world and local officials had assembled political charges against famous artists. A great many artists in Beijing had been formally convicted of political crimes and thus remained banished. In Guangzhou, on the contrary, established artists such as Guan Shanyue and Li Xiongcai were free to participate in the exhibition.

The former Red Guard painter Sun Jingbo, for example, a graduate of the CAFA middle school, was imprisoned for two years on suspicion of "May 16 partisanship." The investigation into his case was concluded in his favor just in time for him to participate in the exhibition. The picture Sun Jingbo painted upon his release from incarceration was *A New Axi Song* (fig. 120). In this image, minority girls in a remote part of Yunnan happily sing as they transplant their rice sprouts. While the picture appears to be a standard example of socialist realism, Sun recalled that the optimistic tone was entirely genuine, an expression of his happiness at returning to art after his prolonged interrogation. His joyful depiction of the subject matter and local landscape was based on observations made during his daily labor. While the choice of female agricultural laborers was appropriate as a subject, given Jiang Qing's strident



FIGURE 120

Sun Jingbo, *A New Axi Song*, 1972, oil on canvas, collection of the artist.

feminism, it is entirely possible that less political motives may have spurred this young artist's interest in pretty girls.

As the preceding account suggests, artists were expected to depict subjects that glorified the Cultural Revolution but that were related to their personal experiences. This trend was not new, for the graduates of Maksimov's class, as we have seen, tended to choose politically appropriate subjects of which they had some personal knowledge as well. Nevertheless, it appears that such guidelines received relatively strict interpretation during the Cultural Revolution.

The greatest number of paintings exhibited under Wang Mantian's administration were executed by amateurs. Many of these artists had been assigned to manual labor as part of a program in operation between 1968 and 1976 to send educated urban youth down to the farms and factories. Most high school graduates left home to work as manual laborers. As opposed to young art cadres like Sun Jingbo or Chen Yifei, who engaged in temporary labor reform, the rusticated urban youth anticipated permanent careers as peasants or factory laborers.

For many of those who had sufficient skill to render the ubiquitous portraits of Chairman Mao, it was clear that painting was less strenuous than

farm labor. When the Cultural Revolution authorities announced in 1971 the forthcoming exhibition to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the Yan'an Talks, some amateurs began avidly painting in their spare time. Apparently, when word was sent out that all units should gather submissions from workers, peasants, and soldiers, it was stressed that works glorifying the patriotic contributions of rusticated urban youth were particularly welcome. The dairy farmer Tang Muli will serve as our first example. For although he qualified for the exhibition because of his rural job, he was a most atypical peasant.

Rusticated Youth and the National Exhibitions

Like many artists in China, the Shanghai-born Tang Muli began painting as a child. From the age of six, Tang attended extracurricular art classes at a local children's palace. Children's palaces, established for the supplemental education of elementary school students, were one component of a system intended to broaden China's cultural activities, followed by youth palaces for middle school students, worker's cultural palaces for industrial and other workers, and cultural halls for the masses in general. They were organized by the municipality—in Tang's case, Shanghai—or by the local urban district. Tang studied for a total of six years in these institutions, first at the local children's palace and then at the youth palace. Most of the children represented in local, national, and international exhibitions of children's art were children's palace students. Tang Muli recalls that one of his watercolors was exhibited in Australia when he was in fifth or sixth grade.¹²⁸

Tang decided during middle school that he wished to become a physicist and began doggedly studying mathematics and English. He dropped his extracurricular art classes in order to prepare for the difficult college entrance examinations. He sought to enter Qinghua University in Beijing, an appropriate step for a student graduating from Shanghai's most prestigious high school. Unfortunately for his scientific career, the launching of the Cultural Revolution the spring he was scheduled to graduate led to the cancellation of the college entrance examinations.

Tang Muli's father, a prominent film director, was attacked early in the movement. Like many young people, Tang was afraid to return to his family's apartment when his school was closed, for his home had been invaded and ransacked by the Red Guard, who then beat and incarcerated his father. The faculty and staff of his school had largely disbanded, leaving Tang and his classmates unsupervised on campus. They took over the classrooms as living quarters and, for the next year and a half, passed their days in political study,

which included practicing the calligraphy and painting with which they copied the poems of Chairman Mao and rendered pictorial images of his life and work.

In 1968, workers were sent into China's schools to restore order. It was decided that all schools should arrange manual labor in the countryside for their graduates. All over the country, educational institutions, individual administrators, and the students themselves vied to display their loyalty to Chairman Mao by executing the policy as quickly and comprehensively as possible. Tang Muli was sent to work as a laborer on a dairy farm in the Shanghai suburbs, a position that was intended to be permanent.

He worked six days a week shoveling fodder, which had been dumped on the ground by a delivery truck, into a wheel barrow for transport to the barn. At first the aspiring scientist made suggestions for improving the efficiency of the laborious procedure, such as dumping the fodder in more convenient locations. Such ideas, however, were viewed as the product of a lazy and insufficiently Maoist mentality; he soon learned that to be judged a success, he must simply work longer and harder than those old farm hands who were supposed to judge him. The primary goal of his job, namely, was not high productivity, but the reform of his ideology through physical labor. In addition to a full six-day workweek, he, like all farmers, spent four evenings a week in Communist political classes and one Sunday a month on extra labor duty. As political movements came, one after the other, people spent an enormous amount of energy simply trying to understand them in order to avoid being attacked. During this period Tang's only free hours were his three Sundays a month and the two evenings a week when political classes were not held.

Tang's scientific ambitions collapsed with his lifetime assignment as a fodder shoveler, but he began to analyze possible ways to escape the monotony of his daily routine. He ultimately decided that painting would be a good way to enrich his life; moreover, it had some potential as an alternative career. Although he had abandoned his formal art studies some years before, he still retained much of his interest and basic training. Art had two further advantages: it required no state support—pencil and paper was all he needed to begin—and it was relatively unperilous. Tang reasoned that in visual art, unlike literature, it was possible to avoid expression of potentially dangerous personal opinions. And unlike music, which by virtue of its sound was unavoidably public in the communal living standards of the time, art could be practiced with relatively little outside interference.

Every morning and evening Tang worked on his basic technique. He drew still lifes in his dormitory and studied textbooks used at CAFA. He emulated the Russian academic drawings of V.I. Surikov (1848–1916) and analyzed successful contemporary Chinese paintings to extract their technical methods. On Sundays he visited old classmates from the youth palace who had become

professional artists. He heard from them about Cultural Revolution art classes on the correct method of painting portraits of Chairman Mao. From his classmates he learned the new technical requirements: pure red should be used to paint the face, burnt sienna for shading, and yellow ochre for highlights. He was warned that blue and green must never be used on the face and that the paint squeezed on one's palette should be organized in a specific order, with cool colors in the least accessible spot. Mao's face was to be divisible into three equal sections, and his pigmentation to follow the chromatic sequence on a color chart issued for that purpose.

During the next several years, Tang spent most of his spare time making drawings of his own hands and face in order to improve his rendering. In 1971, he submitted his first oil painting, *Milk Maid*, to be juried for the 1972 national exhibition (fig. 121).¹²⁹ The cultural leadership particularly encouraged the exhibition of works by peasant, worker, or soldier artists that related to their jobs. Tang Muli, now a peasant, depicted a healthy dairy farmer surrounded by cows.

Once Tang's artistic talent had been recognized by the acceptance of *Milk Maid* in the preliminary local exhibition, the Municipal Art Creation Office, the highest art agency in the city, requested that the dairy farm loan Tang out for other art projects. The farm declined on the grounds that his labor was needed. Soon, though, it asked him to replace the weathered billboard inside the farm's entrance with a new portrait of Chairman Mao. He scraped the billboard down to bare metal, then applied a rust-protective primer, and finally, with several assistants, began snapping powdered strings on the surface to create the grid necessary for enlarging the standard photograph of the Great Helmsman.

As Tang Muli grew more comfortable with the scale of such work, he began looking for ways to improve his efficiency. He learned that he could dispense with the time-consuming step of applying the grid if he attached his brush to a long pole and painted freehand. With this innovation he no longer needed to rely on assistants for this basic preparatory step and could begin work more quickly. His unorthodox method was fascinating to the peasants, and he soon began attracting crowds of spectators. The factory next door requested that he paint a new portrait for their billboard; soon other work units in the neighborhood followed their lead. Tang prided himself on painting quickly, normally completing a billboard within a week. He was not paid for his work, but was freed from farm labor and received three free meals a day for the duration of a project. His speed and reliability were appreciated by the meal-providing units. As his reputation spread, he was "borrowed" by all twelve dairy farms in the system, and then by chicken farms and other agricultural units in the same administration. He ultimately spent an entire year painting huge portraits of Chairman Mao, with occasional variations, such as



FIGURE 121
Tang Muli, *Milk Maid*, 1971, oil on
canvas.

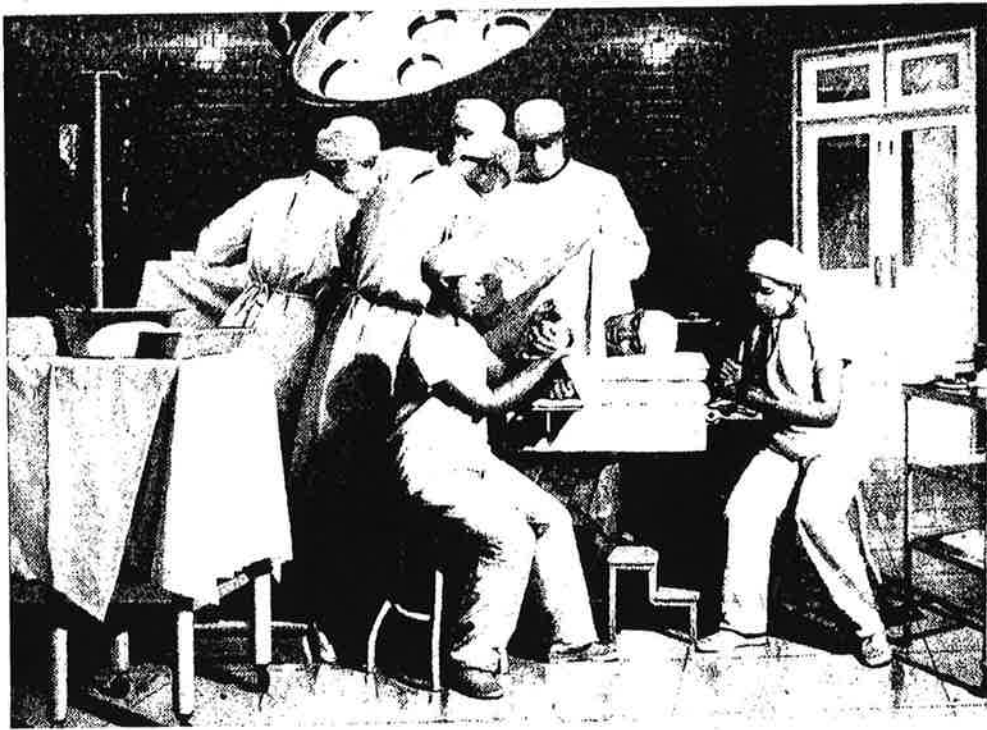


FIGURE 122

Tang Muli, *Acupuncture Anesthesia*,
1972, oil on canvas, 165 cm × 229 cm

enlargements of *Chairman Mao Goes to Anyuan* and other officially recognized model pictures. Tang Muli's chief reward for his painting was respite from backbreaking physical labor and better meals than his small monthly salary allowed him to purchase.

In 1972, Tang was commissioned by the health service to prepare a picture about acupuncture's usefulness as an anesthetic in surgery. The preceding year, a health worker had submitted a painting on this topic for exhibition in the same show Tang Muli had entered with *Milk Maid*. Although art officials were pleased with acupuncture as a subject, they found the picture to be technically inept. When the hospital was unable to find anyone on its own staff who could do better, guidelines were waived to allow Tang Muli, the dairy farmer, to paint a picture of health workers. The dairy farm objected, again on the grounds that Tang was needed to load fodder. Tang ultimately agreed to paint at the hospital in the evenings, after completing his daily farm work. He usually slept at the hospital and went to the farm early every morning.

The final version, *Acupuncture Anesthesia* (fig. 122), was a relatively successful product of the "unity of the three." In such collaboration, a worker was

expected to evaluate the correctness of the revolutionary statement, a cadre would speak for the bureaucracy, and a doctor would guarantee professional accuracy. Tang's picture involved at least five decision makers, for the hospital worker who made the first version and Tang Muli himself participated in the discussions as well. Every aspect of the composition was thus approved by the entire group, with Tang, as the artist, simply the mechanism by which the collaborative work came to fruition.

Some issues were very straightforward. The model for the main figure, the nurse, was expected to be the most politically correct worker on the staff rather than the most aesthetically pleasing, and was chosen by the hospital administration. It was decided that the theme would be lung surgery and that the patient would smile to indicate the efficacy of acupuncture as an anesthetic.

Surgical regulations contradicted the standards expected in Cultural Revolution art and made other decisions more difficult. One problem was how to depict the carefully selected model nurse. Artistic conventions required that she smile to show her enjoyment of her work, but hospital regulations decreed that she must wear a surgical mask. It was decided to omit the mask—thus weighting political concerns more heavily than professional ones. Professional regulations presented practical problems as well, for they prohibited the use of sketchpads in the operating room. Tang was given permission to work from photographs, which was normally frowned upon by arts leaders. A similar problem arose over the questions of Mao buttons and political posters, all of which were prohibited as unhygienic in the operating room. Normally, one would not venture out in public without a Mao button pinned to one's jacket and Mao's little red book visible in one's breast pocket. It was suggested that Mao buttons be added to the surgical scrub suits in Tang's painting, for even though scrub suits were not worn in public, the artwork was intended for public display. In the end, however, the group decided to omit the Mao buttons and political slogans from the painting. This victory for professionalism over politics yielded a relatively uncluttered, cool, and precise composition. It was considered very daring by the art world of the time.¹³⁰

Acupuncture Anesthesia was well received when exhibited in Shanghai in the spring of 1972. At this point, the higher authorities succeeded in borrowing Tang from the dairy farm so that he could work full time on a final version to be shown in the national exhibition in the fall of 1972. The process by which this painting came into being was standard for the period. Many works eventually exhibited in the national exhibition involved collaboration not only in applying the paint but also in developing the ideas. The most scrupulous local officials attached the name of a work unit rather than an individual to the painting. The pseudonym Qin Wenmei, for example, was used for many collaborative works produced by artists in Xi'an, Shaanxi.¹³¹

In 1973, Tang's artistic success led to his transfer from the dairy farm to

another work unit in the agricultural system, the Shanghai Agricultural Exhibition Hall. Although this move allowed him to leave the farm and to assume duties parallel to those of a commercial artist in the West, he was still technically classified as a worker rather than as a cadre, the higher status granted to most professional artists. In this new position he was responsible for making political posters, illustrations, leaflets, and portraits of Chairman Mao. He worked at this job until 1978, when he sat successfully for the graduate oil painting examination at the Central Academy of Fine Arts and became a professional artist.

National Exhibitions of 1972–1975

The 1972 exhibition, the first official exhibition of the Cultural Revolution, was unprecedented in both organization and the nature of the works exhibited. Beginning in 1971, Gao Jingde visited the local art centers twice, first for the difficult task of initiating exhibition submissions and later to survey progress. As a result of his discussions with local leaders, artists were returned from farms and factories to their studios to prepare submissions. Many recall that the revival of official sponsorship for art, restrictive though it was, and the liberation of artists from their years of manual labor led artists to work diligently and even enthusiastically on their paintings. By the time works were shipped to Beijing in March 1972, Gao Jingde was confident that his standards would be met.

A jury of well-known professional artists, including the printmaker Gu Yuan, the illustrator Shao Yu, and the cartoonist Ying Tao, was formed to make the final selection from the large numbers of pictures submitted by provincial authorities. However, the dual mandate of high technical standards and “serving the people” led to an odd combination of professional and amateur works. Despite Gao’s efforts to include some professional artists, the Cultural Revolution’s emphasis on proletarian art by workers, peasants, and soldiers ensured that most of the successful submissions were by amateurs.

The inherent contradiction between the technically weak but politically correct entries of workers, peasants, and soldiers, on the one hand, and Gao’s mandate to seek high standards, on the other, was resolved by forming “painting correction groups.” In this system, a prominent young oil painting professional accompanied the paintings submitted by each major geographic region when they were shipped to the capital. When an amateur work that might have interesting subject matter but was poorly painted was criticized by jury members, officials, and other artists, the professional from the artist’s own region would “correct” it, simply repainting problematic sections. If the officials

still found the work inadequate, artists from other regions might complete the repainting. Among the professionals selected for this task were the most highly skilled realists of the younger generation. They included, from Beijing, Jin Shangyi, a young oil painting professor at CAFA trained by Maksimov; from Shanghai, Chen Yifei, who had studied at the Shanghai Art College; from Wuhan, Tang Xiaohu, a graduate of the Hubei Art Academy; from Kunming, Sun Jingbo, a graduate of the CAFA middle school; from Guangzhou, Chen Yan'ning, a graduate of the Guangzhou Academy of Arts; from Qinghai, Zhu Naizheng, a talented CAFA graduate; and from Shenyang, Guang Tingbo, from the Lu Xun Academy of Art. Several other Beijing artists were tapped for special assignments. Most of the artists were recalled from labor camps or prison to participate in the exhibition.

It was widely accepted among Cultural Revolution-era artists that images of Mao should be "red, smooth, and luminescent." Many of these conventions were developed during the Red Guard art movement and go beyond any oil painting conventions imported from the Soviet Union. While Soviet socialist realism is still the most evident stylistic source for such compositions, details of color and texture may also be related to the more elegant of preliberation new year's pictures. Cool colors were to be avoided; Mao's flesh should be modeled in red and other warm tones. Conspicuous displays of brushwork should not be seen; Mao's face should be smooth in appearance. The entire composition should be bright, and should be illuminated in such a way as to imply that Mao himself was the primary source of light. If Mao were in the center of a group of people, all surfaces that faced him should appear to be illuminated. In this way, slogans such as "Mao is the sun in our hearts" could be made tangible.

He Kongde's *Gutian Meeting* (fig. 123), which was prominently hung in the oil painting section of the 1972 exhibition, does not specifically fulfill all the requirements of the "red, smooth, and luminescent" formulation, for the artist, unlike many graduates of Maksimov's class, never abandoned the loose, textural handling of paint common to many Soviet-trained Chinese artists. Nevertheless, he was particularly favored by the art administrators because he combined two important qualities: as a member of the People's Liberation Army, he could be considered a worker-peasant-soldier, but he was, at the same time, a professionally trained history painter. In *Gutian Meeting*, the artist made few concessions to Cultural Revolution styles: he did not banish cool colors from his palette, modify his rough brushwork, or employ irrational sources of illumination. Even so, the work does not contradict the underlying aesthetic of the Cultural Revolution, for red tonalities dominate, Mao is the most brightly lit figure in the composition, and the oil painting correction group repainted Mao's face so that it is more smoothly rendered than the rest of the painting.



FIGURE 123
He Kongde, *Gutian Meeting*, 1972, oil
on canvas, 186 cm × 360 cm, Chinese
People's Revolutionary Military
Museum.

The emphasis on rusticated urban youth, particularly in the 1972 oil painting exhibition, left the final selection of paintings sent to Beijing with comparatively few portraits of Chairman Mao. He Kongde's *Gutian Meeting* was prominently hung in the main room of the gallery in the 1972 oils show. A monumental work by the young Wuhan artists Tang Xiaohe and Cheng Li depicted Mao Zedong on the occasion of his famous 1966 swim in the Yangzi near Wuhan (plate 10). This theme became a mandatory decoration for all China's swimming pools. Gao Jingde also commissioned another, more explicitly political portrait, *We Must Implement the Proletarian Cultural Revolution to the Finish* (fig. 111).¹³² In the interest of quality and speed, he managed to free a group of professional artists from nearby labor camps—Hou Yimin, Deng Shu, Jin Shangyi, Zhan Jianjun, Luo Gongliu, Yuan Hao, and Yang Lin'gui—to execute this reworking of a Red Guard composition discussed earlier in this chapter (fig. 110). All but one of these artists were trained in the Soviet mode and was a teacher or alumnus of CAFA. The painting lacks the fervor of the original version, but it is far more consistent in technical

quality. A major iconographic change is that the Cultural Revolution leadership has been removed from the composition so that Mao crosses the bridge alone. Zhou Enlai reportedly insisted that his own image be removed from the painting, which may have precipitated the revision. Most artists who participated in the 1972 exhibition testify to their great joy at being allowed to paint, even under such peculiar circumstances.

National exhibitions were conducted annually between 1972 and Mao's death in 1976. In 1973, the national exhibition of serial pictures and *guohua* was held by the State Council. Organizing the *guohua* section of the exhibition proved more difficult than the preparatory work for the oil painting show the previous year. First, local authorities generally believed that *guohua* was part of the "four olds" to be eradicated by the Cultural Revolution. Only after Gao received explicit authorization from Wang Mantian to permit *guohua* painting was he able to persuade local art circles to submit such works. As was the case with oil painting, a painting correction group was assembled to help prepare the exhibition. It, too, consisted of academically trained *guohua* painters from each of China's major regions, including: from Hangzhou, Fang Zengxian, a *guohua* figure painting professor at the Zhejiang academy; from Xi'an, Liu Wenxi, a graduate of the ZAFPA *guohua* figure painting program; from Guangzhou, Wu Qizhong, a graduate of the Guangzhou academy; from Shenyang, Xu Yong, a professor at the Lu Xun academy; and from Beijing, Zhou Sicong, a graduate of the *guohua* figure painting program of CAFPA.¹³³

Faulty sections of a work painted in permanent ink on paper could not be overpainted, of course, as they might be in paint on canvas. The correctors were thus required to make new paintings based on the amateurs' compositions. Zhou Sicong, for example, recalls being assigned to fix a painting by a worker in a shoe factory. The amateur artist had attempted to depict the actress of a model opera trying on her new ballet slippers at the factory. The theme was appealing to authorities at all levels: not only did it flatter Jiang Qing and her model operas, but it also documented how the shoe factory was contributing to the Cultural Revolution. Unfortunately, the subject was difficult for an amateur to paint with any semblance of anatomical accuracy. Zhou therefore completely repainted the work, based on the worker's composition, and it was exhibited under the worker's name. The relatively few flower paintings in the exhibition had to fulfill strict iconographic requirements: because Wang Mantian found boulders, the conventional companion for blossoms in Chinese painting, unrevolutionary, their absence from Cultural Revolution *guohua* paintings is almost total.

The most beautiful *guohua* exhibited were relatively traditional: Guan Shanyue's plum painting (without rocks) and coastal landscape; and Yangzi River landscapes (with power lines or steel bridges) by the Nanjing painters



FIGURE 124
 Shaanxi Municipal Art Creation Group,
*The Hearts of Yan'an's Children Turn
 Toward Chairman Mao*, 1973, ink and
 color on paper.

Song Wenzhi and Wei Zixi.¹³⁴ Most typical of the period, however, was a collaborative figure painting by the Shaanxi Municipal Art Creation Group entitled *The Hearts of Yan'an's Children Turn Toward Chairman Mao* (fig. 124). The work bears the unmistakable stylistic traces of Liu Wenxi (b. 1933), a Xi'an artist who had been two classes ahead of Gao Jingde in art school and who served on the painting correction group, even though Liu states that it is largely the work of a little-known painter named Zhou Guangmin (b. 1938).¹³⁵ It depicts Mao receiving a group of peasants who have come to the capital from Yan'an. Since Yan'an themes were considered part of the regional

territory of Xi'an artists, the work combines two desirable subjects: a portrait of Chairman Mao and a scene based on the artist's life experience.

Trained in the *caimohua* socialist realist figure painting program at the East China campus of CAFA, Liu Wenxi went on to develop a personal style more closely related to the crisp *nianhua* aesthetic than to the *xieyi* aspirations of Shanghai and Hangzhou *guohua* painters. His *guohua* figures are carefully modeled with rich flesh tones and achieve a pronounced three-dimensionality. Such features are evident in figure 124. Moreover, as in Liu's own work, the garments are less heavily shaded than they might be in an oil painting, but are outlined with thick, black lines and have a similar volumetric quality. Although principles of Western perspective dominate the interior setting of figure 124, the background is paler and plainer than it might be in an oil painting. Liu was, in the heyday of this style, one of China's most technically competent socialist realist *guohua* figure painters, and if this painting does not come from his hand, it certainly shows his influence among Xi'an painters.

In October 1974, a large exhibition at the Chinese National Art Gallery celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the PRC. On this occasion Jiang Qing, then involved in a power struggle with the cancer-stricken Zhou Enlai, stepped up her personal involvement with the visual arts. She personally inspected the gallery before the opening of the exhibition (she did not do so for the 1972 exhibition) and spent most of one night studying the display. Members of the Politburo attended the opening, thereby giving unprecedented political importance to the event.¹³⁶

Shen Jiawei's painting *Standing Guard for Our Great Motherland* (fig. 125) reportedly won Jiang Qing's enthusiastic approval.¹³⁷ Shen was, like Tang Muli, a rusticated urban youth, but because his job was on a military farm in Beidahuang he was considered a soldier. Born in 1949 in Jiaxing, Zhejiang, Shen was one of the four hundred thousand middle school graduates sent in 1968 to farm in Heilongjiang. He was assigned to the second regiment of the fourth division of the Heilongjiang Production and Construction Corps, which had its headquarters in Jiamusi. His farm, with a population of ten or twenty thousand demobilized soldiers, rightists, and rusticated urban youths, was located near the Muleng River in the eastern corner of Heilongjiang, an area of continual border conflicts with the USSR. Among the many young people in Heilongjiang were some who had aspired to enter art academies before the colleges were closed, including about thirty graduates of the CAFA middle school.

With the national leadership's decision to sponsor national art exhibitions, the authorities in Heilongjiang, like those elsewhere, began organizing painters. Hao Boyi, a young oil painter and printmaker who was himself trained by Chao Mei during the first great population influx of the Great Leap Forward,



FIGURE 125
Shen Jiawei, *Standing Guard for Our
Great Motherland*, 1974, oil on canvas,
collection of the artist.

was assigned to recruit and supervise the young soldier-artists. In 1971, he ordered a select group of young farmers to attend an art creation class in Jiamusi.

Hao Boyi taught printmaking in the Beidahuang style, and at least one of his pupils has gone on to become a professional printmaker.¹³⁸ Students who wished to work in other media experimented and taught one another. The program continued for the next five years, with artists dividing their time between art work in Jiamusi and manual labor on their farms. Heilongjiang prints were shown in most major exhibitions of the 1970s, and many were published in *Chinese Literature* and other magazines for distribution abroad. Shen Jiawei entered the group in 1973 and produced his vision of a heroic border guard during the next year. Because he was singled out by Jiang Qing, Shen Jiawei had an experience similar to that of Liu Chunhua. Rocketed to fame on the basis of his first major painting, he remained a celebrity for two years. After Jiang Qing's arrest, however, his reputation now tarnished, he spent most of the rest of the decade trying to prove to the art world that he really did have some artistic talent.¹³⁹

In 1975, the leading national art magazine of the late Cultural Revolution period, *Meishu ziliao* (Art Material), published an article in which Shen explained how he had come to create *Standing Guard for Our Great Motherland*.¹⁴⁰ The overall theme of his painting, he wrote, was suggested by a patriotic song widely heard during the period. In 1973, he participated in a class for amateur artists, where he was given an opportunity to visit the Wusuli River. There he was permitted to climb a watchtower where soldiers were defending the Chinese border against the Soviets. The spectacular natural scenery reinforced the importance of the soldiers' patriotic duty.

Upon his return to the military camp, his sketch of the scene was approved by local authorities, who gave him permission to collect more material during a future visit to the site. His composition was guided further by principles of Chairman Mao, such as: "Our requirement is the unification of politics and art, the unification of contents and form, the unification of revolutionary political contents and the most perfect artistic form," and "The life reflected in artistic and literary works can be and should be loftier, more intense, more concentrated, more typical, and more ideal than ordinary actual life, thus it will be more universal [*pubian*]." ¹⁴¹ Shen claims additional inspiration from the study of revolutionary model operas, which emphasized heroic characters. Classmates, further, suggested that one soldier could be made more prominent by placing him against an empty sky. His height was emphasized by lowering the railing and by aligning his head and feet with the lines of architectural recession. This construction was indeed perfectly in keeping with one of Jiang Qing's revolutionary aesthetic principles, known as the "three prominences." As discussed in *Meishu ziliao* in 1973, the three prominences required that, in

figures, artists emphasize the positive; that, in positive figures, they emphasize the heroic; and that, in heroic characters, they emphasize the central figure.¹⁴²

The official art of the Cultural Revolution was stylistically and thematically uniform. The rather limited taste of Jiang Qing, to whom all art authorities ultimately answered, was the primary reason for this weakness. The standards set by the 1972, 1973, and 1974 exhibitions dominated the Chinese art world until 1979, where we will end our narrative. Artists who mastered the Cultural Revolution style, moreover, found it extremely difficult to shake off in later years. Several oil painters have complained that their eyes were ruined by the red-hued palette they used throughout the decade. Many of the figure paintings and landscape studies painted in the 1980s by professors at CAFA, for example, represent the artists' efforts to retrain themselves to paint colors as they see them.

Some artists, particularly those in pragmatic Shanghai, have confessed that their primary goal in painting was to please the leadership. Tang Muli, a well-educated, thoughtful boy from an artistic family, viewed painting as an art free of the dangers of self-expression; such was the dire intellectual and spiritual state of painting in China in the mid-1970s. The official exhibitions, nevertheless, did demonstrate high levels of technical accomplishment—a fact attributable to the training provided by the national art academies in the 1950s. Gao Jingde was a product of this system, and within the thematic limitations imposed upon him he promoted academic technical standards throughout the nation.

Jiang Qing, apparently unaware that her Cultural Revolution art was actually a form of the academic painting she had earlier castigated, set about reorganizing the national art academies in 1973. On orders from the Culture Group of the State Council, she was appointed director of the newly created May Seventh College of Arts. The art school was to be on the former CAFA campus and to employ some of its professors. A temporary party administrative team was appointed. Zhong Qiuyuan directed the team; Sun Zixi, a teacher at the middle school, was vice-director. Other team members included former administrators Gu Yuan, Zhang Qiren, Wu Biduan, Li Yiran, and Liu Wei.¹⁴³

In November, many art professors returned to a strangely reconstituted institution. The new curriculum was three years in length, students were required to be children of poor workers, peasants, or soldiers, and all instruction was to incorporate manual labor with the practice of art.¹⁴⁴ The first class entered, without examination, in March 1974. Jiang Qing's experiment was later considered a massive failure, although one of the students from that class, Xu Bing, became a star of the late-1980s avant-garde movement. Meanwhile, artistic activity of a very different sort was occurring under the auspices of Zhou Enlai and the Administration of Foreign Trade.

The Black Painting Exhibitions

Zhou Enlai, always sensitive to China's world image, requested in 1971 that the hotels and railway stations defaced by Red Guard slogans and pictures be redecorated.¹⁴⁵ The foreign visitors who were invited to China during the diplomatic thaw of the 1970s were to be shown an elegant, orderly image. The paintings should be in national, contemporary styles. They were to display China's ancient cultural history and artistic standards and to be both simple and bold. For these purposes, landscape painting was not to be considered one of the "four olds."¹⁴⁶ Similar works were to be prepared for export, to earn needed foreign exchange. To this end, talented older artists were to be freed from captivity.

In Shanghai, artists produced almost two thousand such paintings. According to a leading Shanghai arts administrator, Cultural Revolution leaders Wang Hongwen, Zhang Chunqiao, and Yao Wenyuan personally inspected and approved the results.¹⁴⁷ Art organizations nationwide began similar projects. Shi Lu, for example, provided thirty paintings to the Tianjin Foreign Trade Administration for export.¹⁴⁸ Yan Han produced a lovely series of flower prints in the multiblock *shuiyin* technique for the Beijing Hotel and the International Club (fig. 126).

The following year, 1972, many artists who had been condemned by the Red Guard as counterrevolutionaries were rehabilitated.¹⁴⁹ This liberation, after six or seven years of inactivity, yielded an outpouring of high-quality paintings. Stimulated by the thaw, *guohua* artists such as Shi Lu and Li Keran painted some of the most beautiful landscapes of their careers. Shi Lu's *Mount Hua* (fig. 127), depicting a famous site of his region, is a superb example; Li Keran's *Landscape of the Pure River Li* (fig. 128), painted three years later, is nevertheless typical of a new style that dominated his work of the period. The oil painter Pang Xunqin produced a lovely, rather decorative still life (fig. 129). Tragically, however, the artists once again became the victims of political factionalism. As Zhou Enlai grew ever weaker from cancer, Jiang Qing and her allies sought to position themselves for the succession battle. An ideological campaign against Confucius was launched in late 1973, its real target being Zhou Enlai.

In every part of the cultural world, a nationwide target was selected for the Anti-Confucius campaign, which attacked Western values as well as the ancient Chinese classics.¹⁵⁰ The cinema establishment, for example, singled out an insufficiently flattering documentary about China by the Italian filmmaker Michelangelo Antonioni, who had been invited to visit the country in 1972, as an object for virulent attack.¹⁵¹ Yet Gao Jingde and his assistants failed to find such a target in the art world, which was, after all, under their own direction.

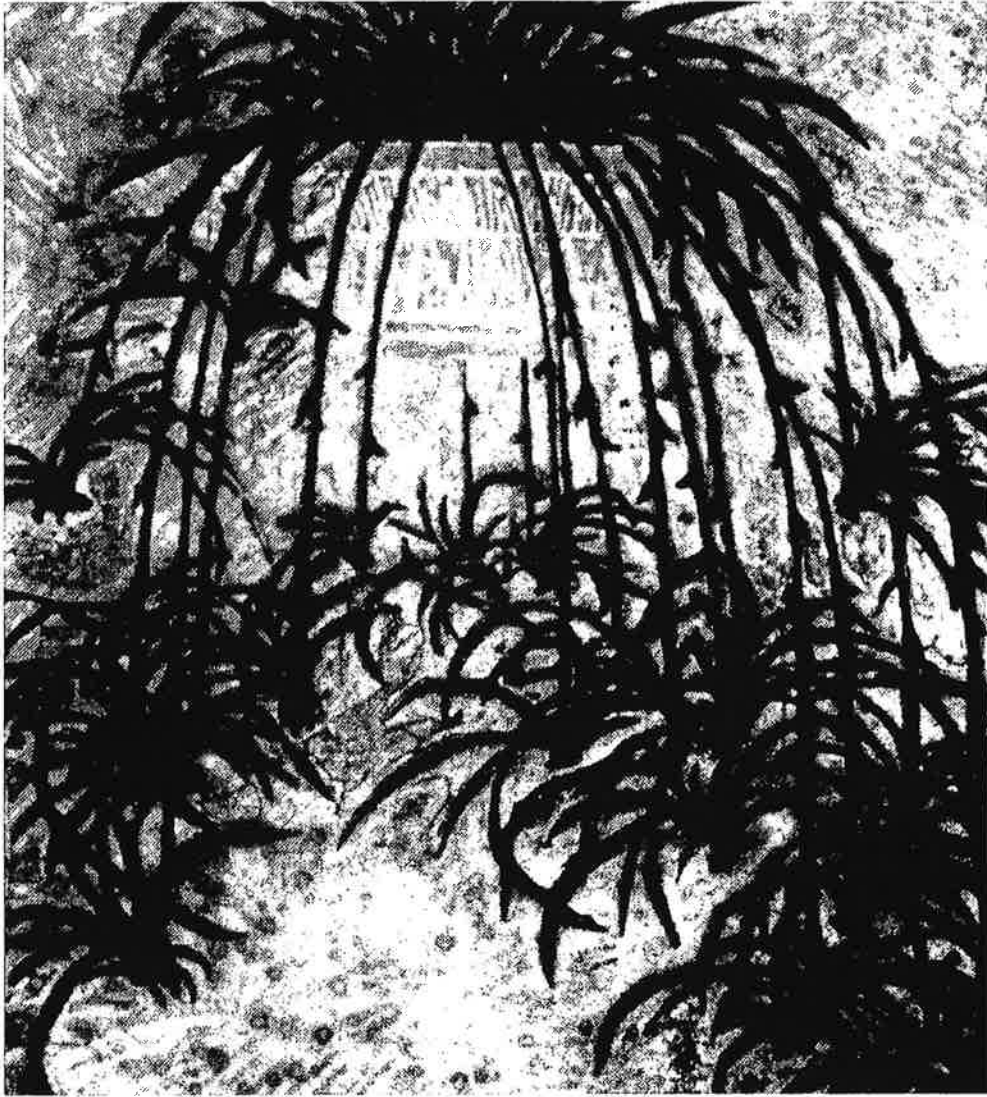


FIGURE 126
Yan Han, *Spider Plant*, 1972,
polychromatic woodblock print, collec-
tion of the artist.

No convenient foreigner was at hand. According to an anti-Jiang Qing article of 1977, which may have been written by Gao's repentant assistants, in late 1973 Wang Mantian wrote a secret letter to Zhang Chunqiao, Jiang Qing, and Yao Wenyuan reporting on the artistic activity in the fields of foreign trade and foreign affairs.¹⁵² Another knowledgeable source maintains that

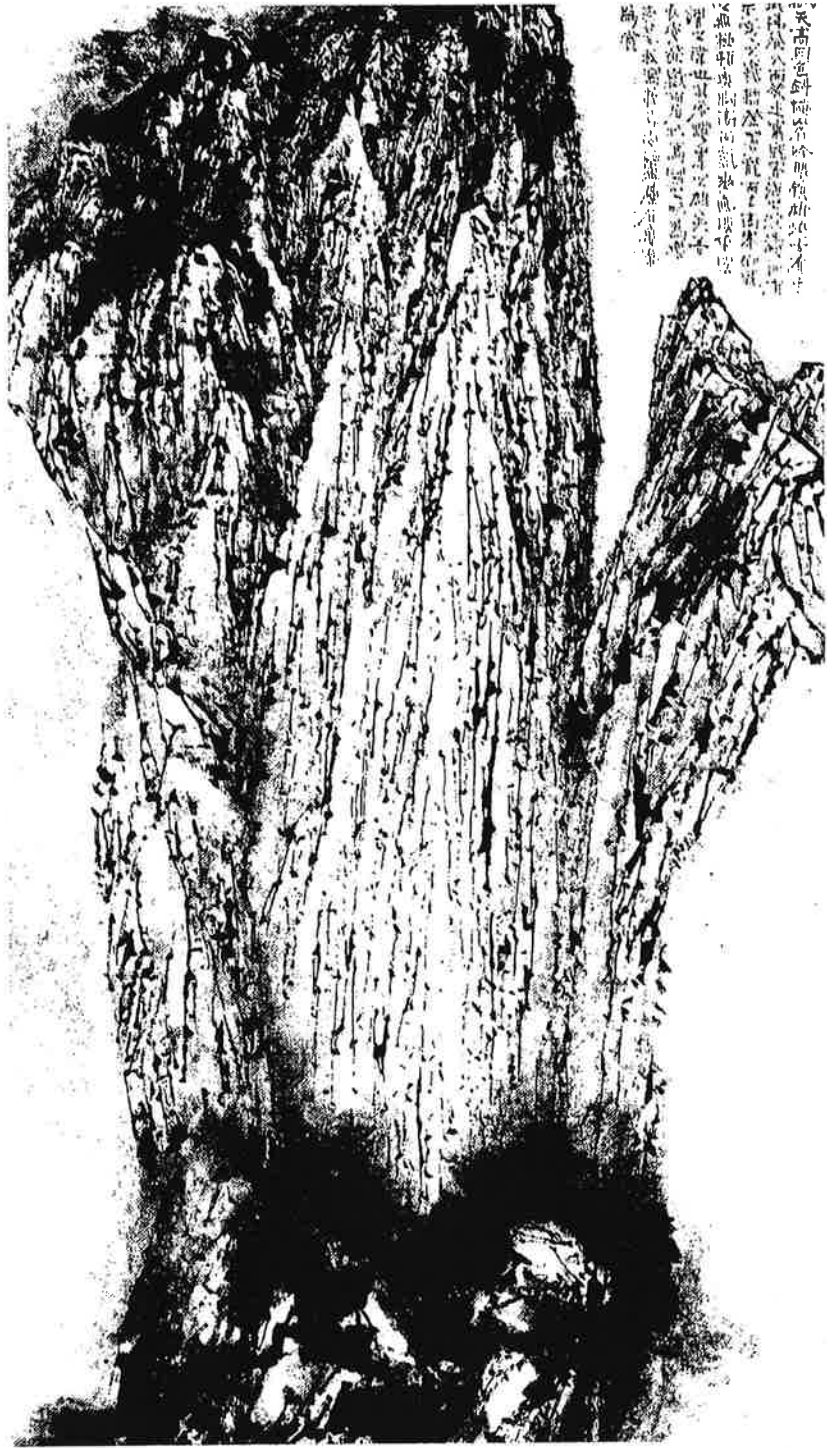


FIGURE 127
Shi Lu, *Mount Hua*, 1972, ink on paper,
courtesy of Cemac Ltd.

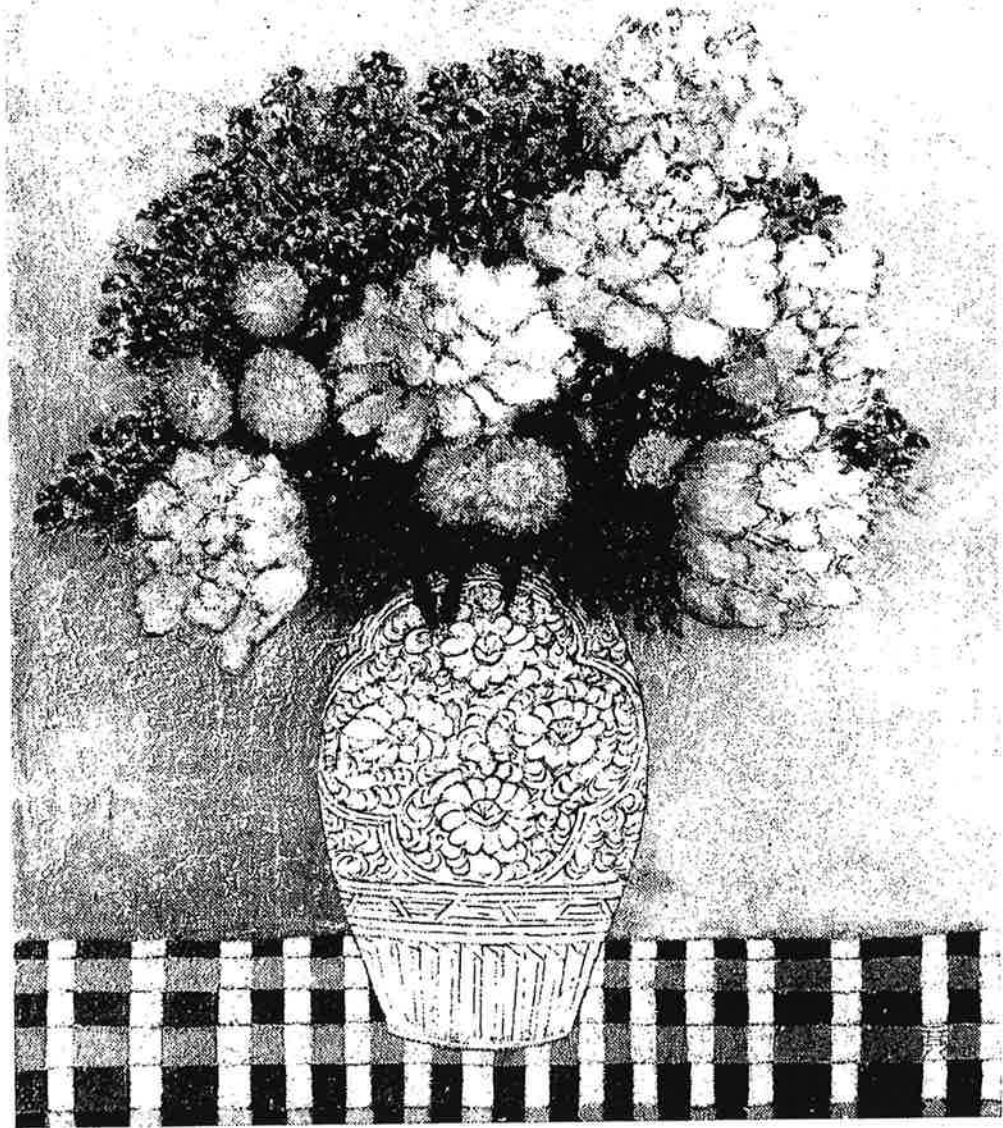


FIGURE 129
Pang Xunqin, *Still Life*, 1973, oil on
canvas, 61 cm × 50 cm, Chinese National
Art Gallery.

Yao Wenyuan himself supplied the target for the art world.¹⁵³ In any event, the art leadership's initial inability to find a target for the Anti-Confucius campaign was overcome, thanks to intervention from higher up.

At an expanded meeting of the Shanghai Municipal Party Committee held on January 2, 1974, Yao attacked a catalogue published by the Shanghai Foreign Trade Administration.¹⁵⁴ The pamphlet, *Zhongguohua* (Chinese Paintings), contained nonpolitical paintings by Lin Fengmian, Li Keran, Pan Tian-shou, Cheng Shifa, Fu Baoshi, Ya Ming, and many other famous *guohua* painters, as well as some pre-1949 paintings. Yao cited one example as particularly dreadful, a 1973 painting of a rooster entitled *Welcoming Spring*.¹⁵⁵ The rooster's bulging eyes and upraised tail were, to Yao, clear evidence of its anger—anger directed against the socialist system.

After further investigation, this heinous publication was linked to the interior decoration of the Beijing Hotel and International Club. Wang Mantian gathered many of the works in Beijing for a black painting exhibition and series of criticism meetings held in February and March. The preface to the exhibition stated, "The production of these black paintings received the open encouragement and support of certain people"¹⁵⁶—an outright attack on Zhou Enlai. The leadership extremists interpreted the paintings in ways that made them appear actively dangerous rather than simply apolitical. Li Kuchan's picture of eight ragged lotus leaves, for example, was attacked as a criticism of Jiang Qing's eight model operas. The movement, once launched, was expanded to include unpublished works. Huang Yongyu was reported to authorities in Nanjing for a painting of a winking owl he gave to his friend Song Wenzhi.¹⁵⁷ His image was interpreted, probably with justification, as a display of dissatisfaction with the regime.¹⁵⁸ It was confiscated and sent to Beijing for the exhibition. As the Black Painting Movement proceeded, the masses were encouraged to express ever more far-fetched criticisms. Yan Han's print of a spider plant (fig. 126), or *diaolan* (hanging orchid) in Chinese, allegedly accused the Cultural Revolution of "hanging the gentlemen." This bizarre theory was derived from traditional symbolism in which the orchid represented the upright educated gentleman.¹⁵⁹

The totalitarian means by which Jiang Qing maintained artistic orthodoxy may be seen in Yan Han's experience, which makes sense only if one assumes that Yan had been a subject of investigation for some time. He recalls that one spring day, soldiers from the art academy, of which Jiang Qing was then director, arrived at his door to bustle him off to the academy for a *neibu*, or restricted, exhibition of black paintings. Two other old artists were present, Li Keran and Wu Zuoren. All three were required to read lengthy confessions, and articles about the traitorous artists were subsequently published in major newspapers.¹⁶⁰

A former official recalls that he advised Wang Mantian to limit the scope

of the movement.¹⁶¹ Indeed, he said, an expansion might well reflect on their own leadership if local authorities found black artists among those they had previously exhibited. Local art authorities, however, oblivious to the real target of Yao Wen Yuan's attacks, continued to jump on the bandwagon. Although some artists in Shanghai believe that local authorities acted on their own initiative, many of the latter claimed afterward that the late and little-lamented Wang Mantian made them do it.¹⁶² Official accounts report that she sent underlings to eight or nine provinces and cities, including Shanghai, Nanjing, Xi'an, and Ji'nan, to organize their activities.¹⁶³

The Shanghai black painting exhibition was organized by the propaganda department of the Municipal Party Committee soon after the Beijing show. In late February, party authorities attacked the pamphlet *Zhongguohua* as satisfying the needs of imperialism, revisionism, and counterrevolution. On March 6, the policy of promoting nonpolitical *guohua* was attacked as fawning for foreign exchange. On March 20, the Shanghai newspapers *Jiefang ribao* and *Wenhui bao* began what was to be a two-month assault on the catalogue.¹⁶⁴ It was against this background that the exhibition was held.

The organizers of the *neibu* exhibition cast their net widely; they included paintings by artists of various ages and specialties, ranging from Zhu Qizhan, Feng Zikai, Lin Fengmian, and Wu Dayu, all elderly artists from the Shanghai Painting Institute (formerly known as the Shanghai Institute of Chinese Painting), to the nineteen-year-old Han Xin, an amateur oil painter who had been reported to the authorities by a cultural palace administrator. In one particularly ironic example, the monumental oil painting project commissioned earlier by *Jiefang ribao* to win Jiang Qing's favor, the *Yellow River* series, now backfired. When exhibited in Beijing in 1973, the paintings, disappointingly, had attracted only moderate interest. Now, one of the works, by Xia Baoyuan, a young Shanghai Art School graduate, was ruled to be a black painting, because the faces of the figures were too white, like those of dead people. At the other extreme, the unemployed Ha Ding, who had made his living producing factory paintings for cheap Hong Kong galleries since the forced closing of his private studio, was mortified to have his potboilers publicly exhibited and criticized for their lack of political content.

Guohua painters were particularly vulnerable. Pan Tianshou was attacked posthumously for a painting he had given to a Shanghai official. Chen Dayu's rooster, *Welcoming Spring*, was displayed prominently near the entrance to the black painting exhibition. An important focus of criticism was Cheng Shifa, for he exemplified everything the movement aimed to destroy. His work was not only apolitical, but it also sold well abroad. Calendar pages from Hong Kong and other reproductions of his paintings in foreign hands covered the walls of the exhibition. At the criticism session, he was attacked for unhealthy inscriptions, for formalistic images, and for catering to foreign buyers. While the



FIGURE 130

Cheng Shifa, *Girl and Deer* (dedicated to James Cahill), 1973, ink and color on paper, James Cahill, Berkeley, California.

sweet picture of a girl playing with a deer that we reproduce (fig. 130) was presumably unknown to his attackers, it is typical of the Cheng Shifa work that Jiang Qing found unhealthy. The painting, which is similar to one published in the infamous *Zhongguohua* catalogue, was given to an American professor in 1973.

In March, Wang Mantian's representatives arrived in Xi'an to organize a black painting exhibition. According to one report, they found their work much easier than it had been in Beijing, for the Xi'an artists naively wrote inscriptions on all their paintings. Held in late March, the Xi'an exhibition included sixty revisionist and counterrevolutionary paintings by twenty artists. Zhao Wangyun, Shi Lu, He Haixia, and Fang Jizhong were prominent targets. After a criticism meeting in which a thousand people participated, every locality was ordered to continue criticizing black paintings. Newspapers published many articles laying out charges against the counterrevolutionary artists. He Haixia was attacked for a painting called *Moonlight at Yanling*, which was in-

scribed as having been painted on a trip with Shi Lu and Li Qi. Zhao Wangyun's paintings were castigated as "black mountains and black streams."

Denunciations of Shi Lu became particularly pronounced once a cache of thirty export paintings was found in Tianjin. A team was immediately organized to investigate him, and the old charges of his leading a "wild, weird, chaotic, and black" school of painting were revived. His feisty poem of 1963 (see p. 296) had been seized by the Red Guard and was now declared by Wang Mantian to be a "Counterrevolutionary Manifesto." Only recently liberated to serve as a consultant for local submissions to the national exhibition, he was once again labeled a counterrevolutionary.¹⁶⁵

The fundamental issue behind the Black Painting Movement was Zhou Enlai's contention that China should have two standards for art, one for domestic and one for foreign consumption. This view was not new, for Zhou had long served as a bridge between the CCP and the outside world; the double standard in art was in fact a natural extension of his United Front policy, with which he sought to maintain a highly civilized and moderate facade for the Chinese Communist party. Given such a formulation, Jiang Qing and Wang Mantian were left to hold their annual socialist realist art exhibitions for the masses, while institutions under Zhou Enlai's direction would produce mildly nationalistic or pleasantly apolitical paintings for the rest of the world. While such an approach has its own political logic, to Jiang Qing it appeared that Zhou Enlai had usurped the only territory over which she had unquestioned authority: the cultural sphere. The paintings were not commissioned through the culture group of the State Council; instead, Zhou simply activated the foreign affairs and foreign trade bureaucracies to carry out his ideas. Attacks against him, however, focused not on this power struggle, but on his fundamental policy. Jiang Qing and her allies simply rejected the need for dual artistic standards.¹⁶⁶

For most black artists, the years after 1974 were difficult. Daily self-criticism sessions at their work units were mandatory. Because the artists had been branded as criminals, all but their most faithful friends shunned them. When their protector, Zhou Enlai, died of cancer on January 8, 1976, Mao sent no condolences to his widow.¹⁶⁷ A demonstration held to commemorate him in April drew hundreds of thousands of people; nevertheless, it was put down and condemned, allegedly because bad people had taken control. Mao Zedong himself lived until September 9, 1976; within weeks of his passing, the Gang of Four—Jiang Qing, Yao Wenyuan, Wang Hongwen, and Zhang Chunqiao—were arrested. The great exhibition of Cultural Revolution art planned for the fall of 1976 did not take place.

298. Ahn, *Chinese Politics and the Cultural Revolution*, p. 161.
299. Ibid., p. 173.
300. Ibid., p. 161.
301. Interview with NC. The works were exhibited in 1964.
302. Wang, Zhao, and Zhao, "Zhongyang meishu xueyuan lishi, fulu," p. 103.
303. Although former students described CAFA as an "experimental site," it is difficult to see how CAFA activities differ from rectification campaigns conducted in other cultural units in Beijing, some of which were run by the same officials who organized the CAFA rectification. See Ahn, *Chinese Politics and the Cultural Revolution*, pp. 173-181. The difference, if one existed, might be the way in which students were urged to attack the leaders. Student activism, of course, foreshadows the Cultural Revolution, but was an important part of the Anti-Rightist campaign and earlier rectification movements.
304. *Meishu fenglei*, no. 3 (1967): 25-26.
305. Ahn, *Chinese Politics and the Cultural Revolution*, p. 214.
306. Interviews with JJ and AN.
307. Interview with BB and OO.
308. *Meishu fenglei*, no. 3 (1967): 26.
309. Information from H.
310. *Meishu fenglei*, no. 3 (1967): 26.
311. Ibid.
312. Ahn, *Chinese Politics and the Cultural Revolution*, p. 177, citing RMRB, June 4, 1967, and *Guangming ribao*, June 2, 1967.
313. *Meishu fenglei*, no. 3 (1967): 28.
314. Wang, Zhao, and Zhao, "Zhongyang meishu xueyuan lishi, fulu," p. 103.
315. Interview with HH.

6. The Cultural Revolution

1. Some Western historians, such as Maurice Meisner, use the term "Cultural Revolution" to refer to the period between 1966 and 1969 only; see *Mao's China: A History of the People's Republic* (New York: Free Press, 1977), pp. 311-339. We follow the convention used by historians in China, as exemplified by Gao Gao and Yan Jiaqi, *Wenhua dageming shinianshi* (A history of the decade of the Cultural Revolution) (Tianjin: Tianjin People's Press, 1986), that it refers to the last ten years of Mao Zedong's life. An English version of Gao and Yan's book, Yen Chia-chi and Kao Kao, *The Ten-Year History of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, was published in Taiwan in 1988 by the Institute of Current China Studies and is cited in some of the references to follow.

2. Interview with I, who reports having helped his teacher destroy the paintings. The washboard method of destroying paintings was used by other terrified artists who feared that burning them would attract attention. See *Guan Liang huiyi lu* (Guan Liang's reminiscences), ed. Lu Guanfa (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 1984), pp. 116-117.

3. Zhang Shaoxia and Li Xiaoshan, *Zhongguo xiandai huihuashi*, p. 287.

4. Land reform teams used techniques such as hanging landladies by their thumbs and summary executions of landlords as part of their "thought reform." Interviews with H and WW.

5. An outline history of this period appears in Meisner, *Mao's China*, pp. 360-383.
6. Laing, *Winking Owl*, pp. 58-61, summarizes doctrinal questions we will not discuss here.
7. Hong Yung Lee has argued that the Cultural Revolution can "be best described as Mao's attempt to resolve the basic contradictions between the egalitarian view of Marxism and the elitist tendencies of Leninist organizational principles"; see *The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: A Case Study* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), p. 3.
8. *Meishu fenglei*, no. 3 (1967): 28-29. It is rumored that this very thorough chronology was compiled by professional art historians from CAFA. Some analysts, including Gao Gao and Yan Jiaqi, date the beginning of the Cultural Revolution to an attack published by Yao Wenyuan on November 10, 1965, against the play *The Dismissal of Hai Rui*. This event was reportedly masterminded by Jiang Qing and Zhang Chunqiao against proponents of mild liberalization. See Yen and Kao, *Ten-Year History*, pp. 2-11.
9. For reproductions of this work see Laing, *Winking Owl*, fig. 60.
10. For discussion of the two conflicting documents see Ahn, *Chinese Politics and the Cultural Revolution*, pp. 198-202.
11. *Meishu fenglei*, no. 3 (1967): 29; Yen and Kao, *Ten-Year History*, p. 17.
12. Ahn, *Chinese Politics and the Cultural Revolution*, pp. 210-211, 313-316.
13. *Meishu fenglei*, no. 3 (1967): 29.
14. Ibid.
15. Yen and Kao, *Ten-Year History*, p. 20.
16. *Meishu fenglei*, no. 3 (1967): 29.
17. Ahn, *Chinese Politics and the Cultural Revolution*, p. 215; Meisner, *Mao's China*, p. 312.
18. Ahn, *Chinese Politics and the Cultural Revolution*, p. 219.
19. Ibid., pp. 219-220.
20. Meisner, *Mao's China*, p. 313.
21. Ibid., p. 314. This event was commemorated by many Red Guard paintings. One such anonymous *guohua*, executed in a style derived from that of Jiang Zhaohe or Li Qi (see figs. 50 and 66), was probably painted by an art student at CAFA or one of the major art academies. See *China Reconstructs*, 1968, no. 2, front cover.
22. Ahn, *Chinese Politics and the Cultural Revolution*, p. 207.
23. RMRB, Sept. 12, 1966, as summarized in CNRP, no. 139, p. 2.
24. *Meishu fenglei*, no. 3 (1967): 27.
25. Interview with the artist, Beijing, 1990.
26. Laing, *Winking Owl*, pp. 63-64, cites attacks on Qi Baishi, Huang Binhong, Jiang Feng, Shao Yu, Wo Zha, Huang Miaozi, Ye Qianyu, Zhang Ding, Hu Kao, Zhang Guangyu, Zhang Zhengyu, Yu Feng, Ding Cong, Wu Zuoren, Guo Weiqu, Pan Tianshou, and Chen Banding.
27. RMRB, Jan. 11, 1967, as summarized in CNRP, no. 154, pp. 4-5. For further discussion of the charges against Huang, Cai, and Hua, see Laing, *Winking Owl*, pp. 63-64.
28. Other key images of the movement were model operas, developed under Jiang Qing's supervision, and propaganda photographs. See Jiang Qing's own photographs, published under her pseudonym, Jun Ling, in *China Pictorial*, 1971, nos. 7-8, pp. 3, 22-23, 41.

29. Interview with a member of the East Is Red painting team (XX). A color photograph of Jinggang Mountain Red Guard making a room-size poster appears in *China Pictorial*, 1967, no. 11, p. 16. Groups bearing this name were found at other institutions, including Qinghua University, Beijing Normal University, and the Beijing Conservatory of Music; see Lee, *Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, pp. 210-212, 215-217.

30. At least three of the students who participated have become successful painters in China and abroad; interview with LL.

31. Interview with QQ.

32. An excellent discussion of the debate, with emphasis on the pro-bloodlines faction, may be found in Gao Gao and Yan Jiaqi, *Wenhua dageming shinianshi*, pp. 101-106. Lee, *Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, pp. 68-84, analyzes the complex political undercurrents to the debate on class origin.

33. *Laozi yingxiong zi haohan; laozi fandong zi hundan*; translation modified from Lee, *Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, p. 72.

34. Gao and Yan, *Wenhua dageming shinianshi*, p. 103.

35. Interview with HH. Both CAFA and the Central Academy of Music are located in central Beijing, not far from Tiananmen Square, and make convenient staging areas for mass mobilizations.

36. Interview with HH.

37. *Sing Tao Daily*, Nov. 16, 1966, as summarized in CNRP, no. 147, pp. 6-7.

38. Meisner, *Mao's China*, p. 316; Ahn, *Chinese Politics and the Cultural Revolution*, p. 228.

39. Laing, *Winking Owl*, p. 65, lists several 1967 exhibitions in Beijing and Shanghai, including "Long Live the Victory of Chairman Mao's Revolutionary Line," "The January Revolution," "Long Live Mao Zedong's Thought," "The Red Sun," and a Red Guard exhibition at People's Art Press.

40. Information supplied by H.

41. Interview with AA.

42. Interviews with HH, AA, and OO. Drawing the nude human figure, another important part of the curriculum, had already been banned as part of the Socialist Education Movement of 1965. The records on this are somewhat confused. Strong efforts to ban the practice were made in July 1965, on the grounds that it isolated students from the workers, peasants, and soldiers. The *Meishu fenglei* account (no. 3 [1967]: 28) states that the controversy was presented to Mao, who deemed the practice acceptable in spite of its drawbacks. Wang, Wang, and Zhao, "Zhongyang meishu xueyuan lishi, fulu," p. 104, report that it was banned in 1965. The question became moot once the schools were closed.

43. Those who did not join the movement, referred to as the *xiaoyaopai* (care-free faction), passed their days idly with their hobbies, in specialized self-study, or engaged in other private amusements after their schools closed. Many children were left unsupervised after their parents were taken away.

44. For photographs of some such groups, see *China Reconstructs*, 1967, no. 2, p. 7.

45. Interview with KK.

46. Interview with WX.

47. Lee, *Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, p. 165.

48. Although they undoubtedly survive in private hands, Red Guard periodicals

from other Beijing arts groups have not yet come to light. The two competing factions at the Central Academy of Arts and Crafts are reported to have each published its own newspaper.

49. See chapter 2, note 32, for the source of this name.
50. *Meishu fenglei*, no. 1 (1967): 1.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
53. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19. The painting is reproduced in *MS* 1965, no. 2.
54. *Meishu fenglei*, no. 1 (1967): 12-13.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 20. I have not seen *Meishu zhanbao*, if copies survive.
56. *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.
57. The group was referred to as Erliutang; *ibid.*, p. 21. See also Laing, *Winking Owl*, p. 63.
58. The Wenshiguan system protected old scholars of exceptional talent. For discussion of artists who worked in the Wenshiguan, see Silbergeld, *Contradictions*, pp. 59-63; and Sullivan, *Chinese Art in the Twentieth Century* (forthcoming rev. ed.).
59. *Meishu fenglei*, no. 2 (1967): 5-8.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
62. For the formation of the new art group, see *ibid.*, outside pages; for Zhou Yang, see no. 3, p. 33.
63. *Meishu fenglei*, no. 3 (1967): 33.
64. Interview with KK.
65. *RMRB*, Mar. 3, 5, 1967, reported that ten thousand Red Guard representatives assembled in the Great Hall of the People on February 22 to form a Peking University and College Red Guard Congress; summarized in *CNRP*. Zhou Enlai attended the event, which reportedly united three groups of revolutionary Red Guard; see "Congress of Red Guards Formed in Peking," *South China Morning Post*, Mar. 3, 1967, as reproduced in *CNRP*.
66. See Hong Yung Lee's excellent discussion of these battles, *Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, pp. 204-222.
67. Interview with KK.
68. Wang, Wang, and Zhao, "Zhongyang meishu xueyuan lishi, fulu," p. 103.
69. Lee, *Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, pp. 222-229.
70. The most gruesome example combines the political with the personal. According to a classmate, one CAFA graduate who worked at the National History Museum and his wife, a musician, joined different political factions. When the graduate became involved with another woman, his wife threatened to report his personal and political activities. He responded by murdering her and their baby and was subsequently executed himself.
71. *South China Morning Post*, May 16, 1967, as reported in *CNRP*, no. 170; Lee, *Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, p. 217.
72. Interviews with HH and QQ.
73. Interview with AA.
74. *CNRP*, no. 160, p. 5.
75. *South China Morning Post*, Feb. 24, 1967, as reproduced in *CNRP*, no. 159. The report is attributed to the Peking correspondent of the *Sankei Shinbun*.
76. The attribution to Weng Rulan was made by former colleagues and classmates and has been verified by the artist. It has been widely reproduced in the West. See

Chi Hsin, *Teng Hsiao-ping—a Political Biography* (Hong Kong: Cosmos Books, 1978); Rius and Friends, *Mao for Beginners* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980); and the front cover to *China Spring*, no. 21 (Mar. 1985).

77. The version reproduced here was given to Weng Rulan by Nathan Sivin, who received it free with a book purchase.

78. Interview with the artist, Philadelphia, 1987.

79. Her painting, *Goodbye, Uncle Peasant*, is reproduced in *Zhong-Su shaonian ertong tuhua xuanji* (Selected Chinese and Soviet youth and children's paintings) (Beijing: People's Art Press, 1956), p. 4.

80. Some students seem to have been admitted irregularly, because the former director, Ding Jingwen, reports that the standard curriculum for the Soviet program was seven years and for the Chinese version four years; interview, 1990. The two artists we mention here attended for six and five years, respectively.

81. It is possible that the curriculum changed between the two artists' tenures at CAFA, but its general outlines seem to have remained constant.

82. Interview with LL.

83. Stanley Karnow, *Mao and China: Inside China's Cultural Revolution* (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 242; Union Research Institute, *CCP Documents of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, 1966-1967* (Hong Kong: Union Press, n.d.), pp. 31-32.

84. Karnow, *Mao and China*, pp. 326-331, describes a Red Guard inquisition on April 10, 1966, at which she was forced to wear the infamous garments.

85. See Gao Gao and Yan Jiaqi's discussion of the origins and demise of the United Action Committee (Liandong), *Wenhua dageming shinianshi*, pp. 101-119.

86. Karnow, *Mao and China*, pp. 257-258.

87. Gao Gao and Yan Jiaqi, *Wenhua dageming shinianshi*, p. 119.

88. "Art that Serves Proletarian Politics," *China Reconstructs*, Feb. 1968, p. 25.

89. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-20, 25. Also see Laing, *Winking Owl*, p. 65.

90. Information supplied by H.

91. Interviews with CL and LL. Ellen Laing's version, based on published sources, generally agrees with eyewitness accounts; see *Winking Owl*, pp. 67-70.

92. Interviews with CL and BK. At least two English-language versions of an article by Liu Chunhua appeared in the fall of 1968: "Singing the Praises of Our Great Leader Is Our Greatest Happiness," *Chinese Literature*, 1968, no. 9, pp. 32-40; and "Painting Pictures of Chairman Mao Is Our Greatest Happiness," *China Reconstructs* 17, no. 10 (Oct. 1968): 2-6. In the former (p. 32), he lauds the painting of portraits: "What workers, peasants, and soldiers and young Red Guards in their hundreds of millions keenly want is that brushes and paint should be used to delineate the noble image of our great leader Chairman Mao." He further makes an explicit comparison (p. 39) between Jiang Qing's model ballets and his oil painting, since both use a foreign art form to serve China.

93. A photograph of this peculiar spectacle, which took place at the Peking Foreign Languages Printing Press, was reproduced on the back cover of *China Reconstructs* 17, no. 10 (Oct. 1968). Liu's painting is reproduced on the front cover of the same issue.

94. Actually, its widespread reproduction on objects for daily life, such as mirror backs, and on billboards made it familiar to people with no interest in art.

95. A number of different reproductions of the painting have been mentioned to me in interviews, but I have not had access to most of them.

96. *Long March* has been destroyed, but it is reproduced in *Jin Shangyi youhua xuan*.

97. Interview with ND. Reproduced in *China Pictorial*, July 1967, front cover.

98. The clouds and mist in the background of the painting were a source of conflict among the exhibition organizers, some of whom felt that bright sunlight was more appropriate to the image of Mao Zedong. The highlit face and fist eventually sufficed. Interview with CM.

99. Zhang Shaoxia and Li Xiaoshan, *Zhongguo xiandai huihuashi*, p. 294.

100. Interviews with X and WW.

101. Interview with SS and X. One anecdote is alleged to have been overheard at a public telephone station but sounds suspiciously like a joke. A local functionary was instructed to take down the portrait of Chairman Mao. He reported to his superior in some agitation that the “portrait of Chairman Mao was invited but won’t come down [*qing bu xialai*]”—that is, it was too firmly attached to be removed without damage. Zhang Shaoxia and Li Xiaoshan, *Zhongguo xiandai huihuashi*, p. 294, use the same terminology, however.

102. Interview with NE.

103. Meisner, *Mao’s China*, p. 335.

104. My information about this show is sketchy. According to Shanghai artists, an exhibition of the same title was held in Shanghai. Although Ellen Laing, *Winking Owl*, pp. 64–65, has outlined some of the major exhibitions of the period, the limited documentation on this activity makes it difficult at present to understand fully its dynamics. Participants in important exhibitions who are willing to discuss them are often unable to recall when they occurred. Moreover, the factionalism of the period led to increasingly splintered activity. For example, most artists with personal knowledge of the Anyuan exhibition were associated with the Sky faction and are unfamiliar with many activities of the Earth faction. Surprisingly, former Red Guard artists often have no knowledge of exhibitions prominently published in English-language propaganda publications.

105. Wang, Zhao, and Zhao, “Zhongyang meishu xueyuan lishi, fulu,” p. 103; “Zhongyang meishu xueyuan jianshi,” p. 28.

106. Interviews with KK and RR.

107. Interview with LL. For this artist, the forbidden style was pointillism.

108. According to the artist in a 1990 interview, he later gave the set of twelve paintings to a friend. Ten leaves ended up for sale in a bookstore, where the album was purchased by an American scholar who informed us that he obtained the album in Hangzhou. The collector later consigned it to an auction at Sotheby’s, where it was purchased by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. See Sotheby Parke Bernet, “Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art, Modern and Contemporary Chinese Paintings” (sale catalogue), New York, March 12, 13, 1981, lot no. 328, for a reproduction of the whole.

109. “Zhongyang meishu xueyuan jianshi,” p. 28; Wang, Zhao, and Zhao, “Zhongyang meishu xueyuan lishi, fulu,” p. 103; interview with OO; and information from H. In a paper entitled “Painting by Candlelight During the Cultural Revolution: An Examination of Cheng Shifa’s Album Series at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston,” delivered at Cornell University on April 3, 1993, Shelley Drake Hawks argues persuasively that this and similar works contained hidden expressions of defiance and protest.

110. A key site was Mao’s birthplace at Shaoshan, which was written up in *China Reconstructs* 17, no. 8 (Aug. 1968). A large oil painting is visible in a photograph of the exhibition hall.

111. Photographs and paintings of Bethune are reproduced in *China Pictorial*, 1967, no. 6, pp. 4-5, among other places.

112. The revolutionary heroes genre of literature was not a creation of the Cultural Revolution, but its artistic manifestation flowered during the mid-1960s. See Robert Rinden and Roxanne Witke's study of the Hongqi piaopiao collection, which was published between 1957 and 1961, in *The Red Flag Waves: A Guide to the Hung-ch'i p'iao-p'iao Collection*, China Research Monographs, no. 3 (Berkeley: University of California, Center for Chinese Studies, Aug. 1968).

113. *Yishu yaolan*, p. 36.

114. Interviews with AL, X, and NF.

115. Interview with AL.

116. Interview with AL.

117. These labor camps were set up in response to Mao Zedong's instructions issued on May 7, 1966. See Jack Chen, *Inside the Cultural Revolution* (New York: Macmillan, 1975). According to K. S. Karol, the first announcement of this institution appeared in the *People's Daily* on October 5, 1968, and immediately led to an exodus of cadres to the countryside; see *The Second Chinese Revolution*, trans. Mervyn Jones (New York: Hill & Wang, 1974), pp. 338-339.

118. Interviews with X.

119. Liu Borong's gouache painting was entitled *The Eleven Young Heroes of Huang Shan*. He was asked to convert it into a large oil painting in 1972 for the national exhibition. A graduate of the Shanghai Art College, Xia Baoyuan, was enlisted to help. They painted two versions, one for Beijing and one for Shanghai. Interview with FF.

120. Interview with AL.

121. The three Shanghai graduates were Wei Jingshan, Shao Longhai, and Qiu Ruimin; the young professors were Quan Shanshi, Cheng Shouyi, Wu Guoting, and Lü Hongren.

122. Interviews with X, FF, and HZ.

123. This information comes from an official who served as her subordinate. She is more commonly believed to be a niece of Mao Zedong, as reported in Laing, *Winking Owl*, p. 73.

124. Interviews with AB and AC.

125. See above, p. 345. Participants in a meeting Zhang organized on May 19, 1968, with Jiang Qing and Yao Wen yuan criticized Pan Tianshou and the previous ZAFPA administration. Current publications refer to a Gang of Four in the art world consisting of Wang Mantian, Zhang Yongsheng, Jiang Qing, and Yao Wen yuan. See *Yishu yaolan*, p. 36; and Laing, *Winking Owl*, p. 64n.38. Zhang was imprisoned after Jiang Qing's demise.

126. Interview with AI.

127. Liu was criticized by Jiang Qing; see *Meishu fenglei*, no. 3 (1967): 26.

128. Interview with AG.

129. Published in English as *The New Generation*, *China Pictorial*, 1972, no. 7, p. 35.

130. This "scientific" manner was emulated by artists in the late seventies who depicted the Four Modernizations.

131. *Qin* is the traditional name for Shaanxi, *wen* stands for *wenhua ju* (Cultural Bureau), and *mei* stands for *meishu chuanguozu* (Art Creation Group). Laing, *Winking Owl*, p. 171, lists Qin Wenmei as an individual artist. Qin Wenmei, according to participants, did not have a large permanent staff of artists, but organized local talent as necessary for specific projects. Among the most notable participants were Zhan Beixin,

a 1953 CAFA graduate trained by Maksimov, and Liu Wenxi, a *guohua* painter who had studied with Fang Zengxian in Hangzhou.

132. MS 1976, no. 1, pp. 24–25.

133. Interviews with EA and AQ.

134. Works from this exhibition are widely reproduced. Selections appear in *Zhongguo huaxuan: yijiu qisan nian quanguo lianhuanhua zhongguohua zhanlan zuopin* (Selected Chinese paintings: works from the 1973 National Serial Picture and Chinese Painting Exhibition) (Beijing: People's Art Press, 1974). For the works mentioned, see nos. 46, 44, and 42.

135. Interview, Xi'an, 1990.

136. This account is based on recollections of an official who organized the exhibition.

137. Interviews with X, AG, and AF.

138. The artist is Wang Lan, Shen's wife, subsequently a member of the printmaking faculty at the Lu Xun Academy of Art in Shenyang.

139. Liu Chunhua fared better. At the time of this writing, he is director of the Beijing Chinese Painting Institute, and now paints in the traditional media.

140. Shen Jiawei, "Suzao fanxiu qianshao de yingxiong xingxiang—youhua 'Wei women weida zuguo zhangang' chuanguo guocheng" (Modeling the heroic image of the antirevisionist advance guard—the process of creating the oil painting *Standing Guard for Our Great Motherland*), *Meishu ziliao*, no. 9 (July 1975): 32–36. The editors of this magazine, published by Shanghai People's Art Press, were anonymous, but Shanghai artists believe that they were associated with the Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts in Hangzhou.

141. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

142. "Xuexi 'santuchu' chuanguo yuanze—buduan tigao chuanguo zhiliang" (Study the creative principle 'the three prominences'—ceaselessly raise creative standards), *Meishu ziliao*, no. 3 (Oct. 1973): 34–35. According to Laing, who first discussed in English the three prominences as applied to painting, the earliest articulation of the theory appeared in 1968; see *Winking Owl*, p. 72.

143. Wang, Zhao, and Zhao, "Zhongyang meishu xueyuan lishi, fulu," p. 103.

144. *Ibid.*, p. 104.

145. Ellen Laing was the first English-language writer to discuss the Hotel School and Black Painting exhibitions, respectively; see *Winking Owl*, pp. 85–87. The Jiang Qing–Zhou Enlai conflict that Laing describes dominated Chinese literature on the subject as early as 1977. The term "Hotel School," however, seems to have been coined by Hong Kong or foreign writers.

146. "Pi heihua shi jia, cuan dang qie guo shi zhen" (To criticize black painting is false, to usurp the party and nation is true), by the Art Research Center of the Literary and Arts Research Institute, MS 1977, no. 2, p. 7.

147. Shen Roujian, "Zhou zongli yongyuanhuo zai yiwan renmin xinzhong" (Premier Zhou lives forever in the hearts of a billion people), MS 1977, no. 2, p. 16.

148. Ye Jian, "Yongxin xian'e de yichang naoju" (An intentionally evil drama), reprinted from *Shaanxi ribao*, June 10, 1978, in MS 1978, no. 5, p. 15.

149. *Ibid.*, pp. 14–16, 35–36.

150. Interview with AH.

151. The movement against Zhou Enlai and his opening to the West also incorporated attacks on Western "bourgeois classical music," especially that of Beethoven and Schubert; see Spence, *Search for Modern China*, pp. 636–637. See also Richard C. Kraus, "Arts Policies of the Cultural Revolution: The Rise and Fall of Culture Minister

Yu Huiyong," in William A. Joseph, Christine P.W. Wong, and David Zweig, *New Perspectives on the Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), pp. 230-232.

152. "Pi heihua shi jia," p. 7. Speculation on the authorship is based upon the article's by-line, Art Research Institute, where one of Gao's most active assistants worked.

153. Interview with AI.

154. The catalogue entitled *Zhongguohua* that I have seen was acquired by Han Xin during the black painting exhibition and was actually published by the China National Light Industrial Products Import and Export Corporation, Shanghai Arts and Crafts Branch, n.d.

155. Reproduced in Laing, *Winking Owl*, fig. 98, and discussed p. 85.

156. Shen Roujian, "Zhou zongli yongyuanhuo zai yiwan renmin xinzhong," p. 16.

157. Interview with AJ.

158. See Laing, *Winking Owl*, p. 86, for an excellent discussion of the painting's possible meaning.

159. Interview with AL.

160. "Pi heihua shi jia," p. 8.

161. Interview with AK.

162. See, for example, Shen Roujian, "Zhou zongli yongyuanhuo zai yiwan renmin xinzhong"; and Ye Jian, "Yongxin xian'e de yichang naoju."

163. "Pi heihua shi jia," p. 8.

164. Shen Roujian, "Zhou zongli yongyuanhuo zai yiwan renmin xinzhong," p. 16.

165. Ye Jian, "Yongxin xian'e de yichang naoju," p. 35.

166. See Laing, *Winking Owl*, pp. 85-87.

167. Spence, *Search for Modern China*, p. 643.

7. The Transition to "Artistic Democracy"

1. Spence, *Search for Modern China*, pp. 646-648.

2. Ibid., p. 643.

3. Gao Jingde, "Jianchi meishu lingyu de wenyi geming; buxu wei heihua fan'an" (Resolutely maintain the literary and arts revolution in the art world; it is not permitted to reverse the black painting cases), *MS* 1976, no. 1, pp. 11-12.

4. *MS* 1976, no. 3, pp. 30-31, 46. Other artists included Wan Qingli, Lou Jiaben, Xu Xi, Lu Chen, Lei Dezu, and Ye Xin.

5. *MS* 1976, no. 4, pp. 40-42.

6. Interview with AH. Richard C. Kraus, in "Arts Policies of the Cultural Revolution," analyzed the career of Yu Huiyong, who became Minister of Culture in 1975. Among the many parallels between the worlds of art and music are Yu's promotion of national music during the Anti-Hu Feng campaign, pp. 221-222.

7. Zhang Shaoxia and Li Xiaoshan, *Zhongguo xiandai huihuashi*, p. 309.

8. *Qingzhu zhongguo renmin jiefangjun jianjun wushi zhounian: Meishu zuopinzhalan tulu* (Pictorial catalogue of the Art Exhibition to Celebrate the Fiftieth Anniversary of the People's Liberation Army) (Beijing: n.p., 1977).

9. *MS* 1977, no. 1, front cover.