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Mao Tse-tung as a political leader: Political skills, transformative thinking and the Chinese Communist political system

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MAO TSE-TUNG AS A POLITICAL LEADER: POLITICAL SKILLS, TRANSFORMATIVE THINKING AND THE CHINESE COMMUNIST POLITICAL SYSTEM

by

ESTHER KUO

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Department of Political Science
and the Graduate School of the University of Oregon
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

August 1991

Approved: Richard Kraus

Dr. Richard Kraus

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Esther Kuo for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Political Science to be taken August 1991

Title: MAO TSE-TUNG AS A POLITICAL LEADER: POLITICAL SKILLS, TRANSFORMATIVE THINKING AND THE CHINESE COMMUNIST POLITICAL SYSTEM

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Why did Mao Tse-tung order the establishment of people's commune, the Great Leap Forward, and Cultural Revolution? Why is the People's Republic of China unique as the only major communist nation in which there arose such an erratic, virtually utopian movement to transform society so quickly? Which analytical framework is best suited to examine leadership roles and influence in communist political system, particularly the Chinese Communist Party?

This study tries to consider the key aspects of the problem, weighing both ideological and behavioral factors by examining three dimensions of Mao's leadership: his ideas, his political skills, and his interaction with other individuals, particularly intellectuals. Two periods, 1893-1921 and late 1950s-1966, are used to review the paradox. My

argument is: Mao was a quintessential politician. He had extraordinary Machiavellian skills that enabled him to mobilize others to do his bidding. His crucial combination of political skills and transformative vision was already evident in his early, formative years in Hunan. Moreover, his transformative approach was not unique to him. It was in fact part of a widespread trend in China since K'and Yu-wei, a utopian reformer, in late nineteenth century.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Posing the Problem

Since ancient times, powerful leadership has almost invariably been fundamental to China's political structure, but never more so than after 1949, when mainland China established a Marxist-Leninist state. Scholars agree that until his death Mao Tse-tung (1893-1976), the most powerful leader of the People's Republic of China (PRC), was a charismatic leader with enormous influence over China's political development. Mao forged the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) into a political instrument with the awesome military power required to unify China. Having helped to defeat first the Japanese and then the Nationalist armed forces, Mao and the CCP established the PRC in 1949, and by 1955 they had destroyed the traditional ruling elite in China. With party and state working as one, the CCP had total control over Chinese society, and Mao reigned supreme. Under him, the mainland's entire socio-politico-economic cultural structure was radically altered.

And then something went wrong. Within two years, Mao pushed for a series of new policies, the "Three Red Banners

Campaign" or "Great Leap Forward,"[1] that spawned tremendous opposition within the CCP leadership and left the national economy in ruins.[2] The results were horrendous. Mao's actions created the first serious split within the top party leadership since the Tsunyi Conference of 1936. As that rift widened, certain other party leaders managed to shear Mao of some of his power and seized for themselves a more active role in policy formulation. This splintering and its curbs on Mao's power changed radically the course of Chinese Communist history, culminating in 1966 in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

Mao had moved between 1959 and 1966 from a position of unquestioned legitimacy and enormous power to one in which his legitimacy was seriously challenged and his power was closely circumscribed. After several years of factional strife, infighting and political maneuvering within the CCP, Mao managed to overcome his adversaries and launched the infamous Cultural Revolution, which by 1969 had wrought

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[1]The "Three Red Banners" were people's communes, the Great Leap Forward, and the Socialist General Line.

[2]After Teng Hsiao-p'ing ousted Hua Kuo-feng, Teng and his colleagues ordered an independent inquiry to reassess party successes and failures since 1949. This inquiry committee published a report in 1981; it was circulated, revised and finally endorsed at the sixth plenum of the Eleventh CCP Committee on June 27, 1981 as representing the correct party position. The report, drafted by Liao Kai-lung, candidly acknowledged a number of party errors, including the "Three Red Banners" campaign, during which twenty million Chinese died of starvation.

havoc on Chinese society.

This ten-year period (1959-69) in the development of the CCP under Mao's leadership raises some questions. Why was Mao's leadership style so effective during the revolutionary period, yet so inadequate to the task of building a successful communist state and society? Which of Mao's leadership traits led him to establish agricultural communes and to initiate the Great Leap Forward, the Socialist Education Campaign, and the Cultural Revolution? What was it about Mao's policies that led to party factionalism so intense that Mao determined to destroy the CCP and rebuild it from the ground up?

These questions flow from a central paradox: Why did Mao himself eventually decide to destroy the party that he himself had build and to gamble the safety of all China on the Cultural Revolution, a campaign that looked to most outsiders like a last, desperate fling? Why is the PRC the only major communist state to have formulated so erratic and virtually utopian a movement, bent upon so swift a societal transformation? Which analytical framework is best suited to examining leadership roles and influence in communist political systems, particularly the PRC?

Previous Studies

Although many interpretations have been advanced, no

studies to date have satisfactorily resolved this paradox. For example, in his History and Will, Frederic Wakeman, Jr. posited that since his youth Mao had viewed the historical process as inherently contradictory.[3] Men die, nations disappear and civilizations perish, yet those who know how to analyze changes can act in accord with them, move at the right time and emerge supreme. Believing he grasped the necessary, objective laws of this self-contradictory process of societal transformation, Mao believed he could mobilize society in conformity with those laws to revive the Chinese communist revolution. Thus, he thought, will can shape history. Moreover, he believed, though an individual revolutionary may die, he lives on in the minds of the masses, whose will can overcome the setbacks of history.

Wakeman may have shed light on the ideological basis of Mao's leadership, but his book fails to apply this abstract argument to the concrete context of the PRC's politics.

Robert Lifton sees the origins of the Cultural Revolution differently. In his view, the Cultural Revolution represented Mao's last effort to revitalize the great Communist Revolution when he began to sense his mortality.[4] Somewhat akin to Lifton's interpretation of

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[3]Frederic Wakeman, Jr., History and Will (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973).

Mao's political behavior in the 1960s is that of Paul J. Hiniker, who viewed Mao and his followers as extremely frustrated by their failures in the late 1950s and early 1960s. As they came to perceive that the Communist Revolution was being subverted by its enemies, they took action. Both to compensate for previous failures and to save the Communist Revolution, Mao and his followers became more eager to remove opponents from the CCP.[5]

Others have tried to resolve the above-mentioned paradox by interpreting the Cultural Revolution in terms of ideological struggle, power struggle, or a mixture of both. Franz Michael claimed that the CCP manifested "two divergent communist lines," one of them espoused by Mao, who wanted political power to lead China along the "correct path" to socialism. Plotting to recover the power he had lost after the August 1959 Lushan Plenum, Mao viewed the groups around Liu Shao-ch'i as taking a revisionist road that sidetracked the Chinese revolution.[6]

Certain scholars have urged that interpretations of the Cultural Revolution seriously consider Mao's stated

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[4]Robert Lifton, Revolutionary Immortality: Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Cultural Revolution (New York: Random House, 1968), chaps. 4 and 5.

[5]Paul J. Hiniker, "The Cultural Revolution Revisited: Dissonance Reduction or Power Maximization?" China Quarterly, no. 94 (June 1983), pp. 283-303.

[6]Franz Michael, "The Struggle for Power," Problems of Communism 16:3 (May/June 1967): 18-20.

ideology. Harry Harding, Jr. has insisted that the political violence of the Cultural Revolution represented not merely a power struggle or policy differences but "instead, an idealistic and visionary program, designed to reverse trends towards inequities in China's economic system, and toward rigidities in her political institutions."[7]

Scholars like Gene T. Hsiao and Charles Neuhauser subscribe to the argument that Mao was greatly influenced by Krushchev's destalinization speech. Further, Mao opposed party cadres whom he regarded as corrupt, inept individuals interested only in bureaucratizing the CCP in the early 1960s. For these two reasons, they contend, Mao tried to seize power and turn back the rising tide of socialist revisionism.[8]

Other research findings point to the conflict in the early 1960s between Mao and the intellegentsia, both within and outside the CCP, as a major cause of the Cultural

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[7]Harry Harding, Jr., "China: Toward Revolutionary Pragmatism," Asian Survey 11:1 (January 1971): 51. John B. Starr also pointed out that Mao's transformative ideas were the powerful motive force behind his political actions: John Bryan Starr, "Conceptual Foundations of Mao Tse-tung's Theory of Continuous Revolution" Asian Survey 11:6 (June 1971): 610-28.

[8]Gene T. Hsiao, "The Background and Development of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," Asian Survey 7:6 (June 1967): 381-404; Charles Neuhauser, "The Chinese Communist Party in the 1960s: Prelude to the Cultural Revolution," China Quarterly, no. 32 (October/December 1967), pp. 3-36.

Revolution. Writers like Wu Han and Teng T'o sharply criticized Mao for his policies in the late 1950s and for his demotion of P'eng Teh-huai. Outraged by these attacks, Mao, aided by the People's Liberation Army (PLA), finally purged those intellectuals and seized control of the CCP in 1966.[9]

The German scholar Jürgen Domes and various China watchers in Taipei have interpreted the Cultural Revolution as the result of a titanic struggle for political power. Warren Kuo, for example, has emphasized that the so-called "two-line struggle" over policies and strategies was nothing more than camouflage for a major power struggle out of which Mao sought only political power.[10]

Useful as these studies are, all can be criticized for two reasons: None accounts for all of the Cultural Revolution's key behavioral and ideological features, and all fail to make use of certain valuable sources.[11]

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[9]See, for example, Harry Gelman, "Mao and the Permanent Purge," Problems of Communism 15:6 (November/December 1966): 2-14; Byung-joon Ahn, "The Politics of Peking Opera, 1962-1965," Asian Survey 12:12 (December 1967): 1066-81.

[10]Warren Kuo, "Possible Outcome of Recent CCP Intra-Party Struggle," Fei-chin-yuen-pao 19:12 (June 1977): 8.

[11]For example, the full text of Hsiang-chiang ping-lun [The Hsiang River Review], the most important writing of General Mao's youth, remained unavailable to the West until 1980. A great deal of additional material by and about Mao has been published since the sixth plenum of the Eleventh CCP Central Committee in June 1981.

Methodology

This study is intended to shed light on the problem in four new ways. First, I use hitherto uncited material, including newly published writings by and about Mao. Second, I try to consider all of the problem's key aspects, weighing both ideological and behavioral factors. Third, I focus on the interaction between the leader's personality and the nature of the communist political system; neither necessarily implies the other, yet both were central to the developments of 1959-69. Finally, like Wakeman, I reject the explanation that Mao's behavior during those ten years was some kind of aberration, believing rather that it flowed logically from philosophical convictions and behavioral patterns already well developed in Mao's youth.

My analytical framework examines leadership in terms of political ideas, political skills, and the leader's interaction, both formal and informal, with other individuals and groups.

Turning first to ideas, I consider Mao's revolutionary thought with reference to Thomas Metzger's distinction between transformative and accommodative thinking.[12] "Transformative thinking" is used to describe the complexes

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[12]The terms "transformative" and "accommodative" are discussed at length in the last two chapters of Thomas A. Metzger, Escape from Predicament (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977).

of (utopian and Manichaean) ideas that aim at the complete elimination of evil in society. The transformative approach seeks to instill in people new values and norms that will lead to new, morally purified forms of social action and interpersonal interaction. Those ideas are to implemented by a state or ruling elite that imposes on society new organizations, institutions and standards of behavior.

Accommodative ideas are those that seek to effect gradual improvement in society, recognizing that imperfections and moral deficiencies cannot be completely overcome. A slow, learning-by-doing process of education and social experimentation is used to achieve progress bit by bit. Such policies presuppose the gradual routinization of laws and rules so as to give society enough time to adapt and conform.

Virtually all of Mao's thought was of a transformative nature. As Wakeman, Metzger and others have suggested, this transformative aspect had important roots in traditional Chinese as well as Western thought. Mao's transformative thinking was, in fact, heir to a widespread trend that began in China in the late nineteenth century with K'ang Yu-wei, a utopian reformer. Thus, Mao's political ideas must be examined in the context of modern and premodern Chinese political thought.

Beyond the question of ideas, Mao was a consummate

politician with extraordinary--indeed, Machiavellian--skills that enabled him to mobilize others to do his bidding. This latter dimension of Mao's leadership will be analyzed as follows. First, I will describe Mao's skill in building the strong coalitions he used to attack his opponents and supplant all competing factions. Second, I will demonstrate Mao's consistent pattern of splitting his enemies into stronger and weaker groups, then molding the weaker factions into strong coalitions. Third, I will emphasize Mao's keen sense of political timing, which allowed him to muster his forces and attack his opponents at the critical moment. After lulling his adversaries into complacency, Mao summoned his forces to topple them and seize their power, a Machiavellian stratagem that enabled him to overcome opponents who enjoyed temporary political advantage.

This crucial combination of political wiles and transformative vision was already evident in his early, formative years in Hunan, even before he became a communist.

Third, Mao's leadership role must be examined in the context of the Chinese communist political system. It would be unwise to ignore the variety of power struggles implicit in that system, but we definitely cannot understand it without due emphasis on the special, traditional role of intellectuals and on Mao's response to

their activities. This point requires some clarification. Most officials of the imperial Chinese bureaucracy were recruited from among the literati. Those scholars, however, typically saw themselves as followers of Confucius (551-479 B.C.) and so felt obligated to criticize the ruler and exhort him to morally transform himself and society by carrying out the "eight steps" of the Ta hsüeh [The Great Learning], one of the core works of neo-Confucianism, the leading ideology of the late imperial period.[13] The literati appointed themselves to monitor the monarchy according to certain established norms. Under the terms of this subtle relationship, rulers sought the intellectuals' support to legitimate their rule but also had to face the criticism and mordant satire that greeted their unwelcome policies. Powerful monarchs were not afraid to severely punish intellectuals they believed to have spoken out incorrectly or brashly. Even so, members of the intelligentsia who had paid with their lives for their courageous admonition of their emperors were installed in the national pantheon and venerated for generations. Thus, the relationship between ruler and intellectuals has always been a distinctive feature of Chinese political history.[14]

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[13]Those eight stages are: thorough study [ke we], following broadening knowledge to its utmost [shih shih], sincerity [cheng i], honesty [cheng hsin], moral cultivation [hsiu shen], governing one's family [ch'i chia], governing the nation [chih kuo], and governing the whole world [ping tien hsia].

This tension between intellectuals and the political center certainly continued after the end of the monarchy in 1912. Moreover, it affected Mao's leadership pattern, for, despite his frequent hostility to the intelligentsia, Mao himself was an intellectual, and his vision was that of an intellectual. From the early years when he began to believe that Chinese society needed to be transformed and that he was the revolutionary capable of that transformation, he developed a contempt for intellectuals, a contempt bordering on hatred. True, he was perfectly content to use members of that class so long as they shared his ideas, yet he also recognized their power to undermine his ideology and policies. From the intelligentsia, too, might spring competitors who might someday seize power and use it in ways of which Mao would disapprove.

If we are to understand Mao's unique "rectification" campaigns, first in the early 1940s and later during the Cultural Revolution, we must examine his interaction with the intelligentsia.

To sum up, I will examine three dimensions of Mao's leadership: his ideas and policies, his Machiavellian political skills, and his interaction with other individuals, particularly intellectuals. Analyzing in terms of these three dimensions the political system formed

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[14]Chou Yang-san, ed., The Intellectuals and China (Taipei: China Times Culture Press, 1980), pp. 201-220.

by Mao, the CCP, and others during the 1950s and 1960s, I will propose a new interpretation of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. Rather than focusing on one or two aspects of Mao's behavior and their effects on China and the CCP, I will take a multicausal approach that incorporates all three of the dimensions listed above.

Although this work focuses primarily on the early days of the Cultural Revolution, the most dramatic period of Mao's long and unique career, I believe its methodology will serve to make sense of any phase of Mao's whole political career.

Presenting the Argument

I begin by examining the character of the young Mao, his socialization, his already transformative thinking, and the roots of his rebellion against society and authority. Based on this brief, analytical account, I then describe key behavioral traits that remained with Mao throughout his life. I stress that Mao's transformative approach was not unique to him but, instead, was founded on a transformative current among the Chinese intelligentsia since K'ang Yu-wei in the late nineteenth century.

Having sketched the key behavioral traits of the young Mao, I will use the period between the late 1950s and 1966-67, probably the most critical period in Mao's

lifelong pursuit of a socialist society, to examine the major paradox and related questions discussed above. Chapters III and IV combine a narrative account with an analysis of Mao's political ideas and the major leadership decisions, tactics and maneuvers that led first to the Great Leap Forward and later to the Cultural Revolution. I will systematize the narrative by referring from time to time to the organizing concepts delineated above.

Chapter V concludes this short study by linking Mao's leadership behavior during the decade under review with my account of the young Mao, his transformative thinking and his political skills. I will propose a new interpretation of Mao's crucial decisions in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

It should be noted that there is nothing deterministic in my argument. What I have tried to present are characteristic modes of behavior and relatively consistent attitudes that make it possible to marshal the available evidence--Mao's ideology, political skill, and political behavior toward the intelligentsia--within an analytical framework. This three-dimensional representation is neither complete nor especially detailed, but I have tried to extract from the few available facts about Mao's life the essential features that might explain his behavior during the crucial decade under investigation.

CHAPTER II

THE YOUNG MAO AND HIS MILIEU, 1893-1921

Social psychologists believe that childhood experiences help establish the lifelong patterns of an individual's relationship with other individuals and with his society in general--which would include patterns of political influence.[1] Might not Mao's ideology and behavior have had their roots in his adolescent and early adult years? Let us, then, look at the young Mao and his world by reviewing the events of his youth, the personality, behavior and possible influence of his parents, and other relationships and circumstances that might have helped shape his ideology and behavior.

Growing Up in Shao-shan

Mao was born on December 26, 1893 in Shao-shan, a small village some thirty miles from the county seat of Hunan's Hsiang-tan county and another forty miles from Hunan's capital, Chang-sha. What were the people like among whom Mao grew up?

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[1] J. C. Davies, "Political Socialization: From Womb to Childhood," in Handbook of Political Socialization, ed., S. A. Renshon (New York: Free Press, 1977).

Historically, Hunan province has been celebrated for its "heroes and bandits." Hunan's special reformist tendencies go back to about the late seventeenth century.[2] Since 1853, when Tseng Kuo-fan's Hunan army regulars [hsiang-chun] helped suppress the Taiping Rebellion, the Hunanese have served with distinction in both political and military circles. Hunanese were important leaders in the 1867-94 movement to modernize China, activists in the 1898 Hundred Days Reform Movement, and adherents of Dr. Sun Yat-sen's first Nationalist revolutionary efforts.[3] Hunan was also a melting pot where Chinese and Western ideas commingled. The Hunanese, sometimes called "Hunan mules" in tribute to their stubborn, iron-willed strength, are celebrated in proverbs: "Hunanese are either your closest friend or your most dangerous enemy; they never

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[2]The great scholar Wang Shuan-san (1619-92), also known as Wang Fu-chih, challenged the accepted wisdom and criticized scholars' dependence on tradition. His scepticism and his courageous challenge to tradition had a profound influence on late Ch'ing and early Republican intellectuals, particularly in Hunan.

[3]For example, the famous reformer T'an Ssu-t'ung (1865-98) was a Hunanese. T'an died in an abortive coup attempt during the Hundred Days Reform Movement, in which a group of reformers tried to overthrow Empress Dowager Tzu Hsi in order to further their reform proposals. Another Hunanese reformer, T'ang Tsai-ch'ang (1863-91), formed a revolutionary Independence Army [Tzu-li-chun] after the failure of the 1898 Hundred Days Reform Movement. He was soon captured and executed by the Ch'ing governor, but his activities had substantial influence on subsequent attempts to overthrow the Ch'ing dynasty, including Dr. Sun's. Moreover, a number of the leaders of Dr. Sun's revolution, including Huang Hsin and Sung Chiao-jen, were from Hunan.

compromise"; "China can ony be conquered when all of the Hunanese have been killed."[4] Thus, the Hunanese have always been crucial to China's political fate.

Mao's father, Mao Shun-sheng, began life as a poor farmer but became a wealthy grain merchant in later years. Mao clashed often and violently with his father, who beat him and his brothers. From all available evidence, Mao's relationship with his father, a man he considered coldhearted, harsh, and irascible,[5] was a most unhappy one. Mao would later say, "The dialectical struggle in our family was always evolving."[6] We must view this relationship in the context of Chinese familial traditions and the socialization of Chinese children. Little research has been done on how Chinese children become adults, but Richard Wilson has noted the existence of certain acquired norms common to the majority of Chinese children. Those norms, in both traditional and modern times, have contributed to dependency on authority and robust compliance with it.[7] Chinese children have always been

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[4]Chiang Mon-lin, Hsi ch'ao [Western Tide], 16th ed. (Taipei: The World Books, 1980).

[5]Edgar Snow, Red Star over China, 1st Evergreen ed. (New York: Random House, 1973), p. 132.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Richard Wilson, Learning To Be Chinese: The Political Socialization of Children in Taiwan (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1970), chap. 2. Also Richard Wilson, "Moral

instructed to be filial and respectful toward their parents, particularly their fathers. Young Chinese, having internalized these norms, would be extremely hesitant to publicly denounce their fathers, whatever their behavior. Mao, however, had not only rebelled against his father at a very early age, but, as he revealed, had decried him and talked incessantly about the acrimonious warfare between them:

> My dissatisfaction increased . . . . When I was about thirteen, my father invited many guests to his home, and while they were present, a dispute arose between the two of us. My father denounced me before the entire group, calling me lazy and useless. This infuriated me. I cursed him and left the house. My mother ran after me and tried to persuade me to return. My father also pursued me, cursing me at the same time that he commanded me to come back. I reached the edge of a pond and threatened to jump in if he came any closer. In this situation, demands and counter-demands were presented to end the civil war. My father insisted that I apologize and kou-tou as a sign of submission. I agreed to give a one-knee kou-tou if he promised not to beat me. Thus, the war ended and from it I learned that when I defended my rights by open rebellion my father relented, but when I remained meek and submissive he only cursed and beat me more.8

We can see certain traits of the young Mao's personality in this scene: cursing his father in front of

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Behavior in Chinese Society: A Theoretical Perspective," in Moral Behavior in Chinese Society, ed., Richard Wilson, Sidney Greenblatt, and Amy Wilson (New York: Praeger, 1981).

[8]Ibid., pp. 132-33.

his parents' guests required great audacity and courage in a thirteen-year-old child of that period; running away from home showed his powerful will and determination to break with his family if the need arose; his threat to take his own life in order to escape his father's wrath was an act of clever and self-willed determination. Such threats of destruction to himself and terrible vengeance on those around him would be repeated many times throughout his life, as when he purged P'eng Teh-huai in 1959,[9] competed with Liu Shao-ch'i in 1966 for control of the Communist Party and the state,[10] and protected his wife, Chiang Ch'ing, during the Cultural Revolution.[11] But perhaps the

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[9]At the eighth plenum of the CCP's Eighth Congress, held in August 1959 in Lu-san, Defense Minister P'eng Teh-huai, one of Mao's strongest supporters, submitted a memorandum that reviewed CCP policies regarding the Great Leap Forward and the disastrous nationwide results of that campaign. Aware that most of his comrades shared P'eng's views, a furious Mao threatened the committee, "If the PLA [People's Liberation Army] chooses to follow P'eng Teh-huai, I will go back to Ching-kang Shan [Mount Ching-kang] and organize guerrilla bands." ("Mao Tse-tung's Speech at the Eighth Plenum of the CCP Eighth Congress on August 16," Mao Tse-tung ssu-hsiang wan-hui [Long Live Mao Tse-tung Thought] (n.p.: Red Guards, 1967), p. 59; reprint ed., Taipei: Institute of International Relations, 1973, pp. 82-83.

[10]Most scholars agree that his attempt to regain control of the party and the state was Mao's primary, if not his exclusive, motive in launching the Cultural Revolution (see chap. 3).

[11]In February 1967, a number of vice-ministerial Party cadres, led by Vice Premier Tan Chen-lin, gathered at Hui Jen Hall in Peking to ask Mao to punish Chiang Ch'ing and the Red Guards for their mistreatment of old party cadres.

most interested aspect of this example is that, even after his father had agreed to a compromise, Mao continued to bargain with the old man, agreeing only to the pro form submission of a one-knee kou-tou. The behavior of the later Mao was in some ways foreshadowed by that of the adolescent: His incomplete submission allowed him to save face while giving the impression of conciliation and agreement (see Wilson). Mao's ability to gain the greatest possible advantage by pressing his adversaries to the very limit would be applied throughout his life with remarkable success.

Learning from his continual struggle with his father, Mao became more skillful at handling his opponents. He discovered, for example, that he could partially mollify his father by quoting from the classics. When his father berated him, Mao argued with him and refused to yield. Once, when his father accused him of laziness and unfilial conduct, Mao cited several classical passages that urged old people to be kind and affectionate toward their children and to set them an example by working harder than

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Refusing their request, Mao shouted that he would "leave Chiang Ch'ing for your fellow to kill" if they did not accept his decision. Three months later, Tan was branded a "traitor, KMT agent, and counter-revolutionary," and he and other participants in the Hui Jen Hall incident were purged. See A Comprehensive Collection of Chinese Communist Terminology (Taipei: Institute of International Relations, 1978), p. 154.

their offspring.[12]

He also learned to cooperate with other family members in opposing his father. "There were two parties in the family," he told Snow. "One was my father, the ruling power. The opposition was made up of myself, my mother, my brothers and sometimes even the laborers." But differences of opinion sometimes arose in that "united front." His mother, a woman who respected Chinese tradition, advocated a mild opposition. "She criticized any overt display of emotion and attempts at open rebellion against the Ruling Power. She said it was not the Chinese way."[13]

In Mao's eyes, his mother was kind, generous and sympathetic. A devout Buddhist, she opposed violence of any sort. "She pitied the poor and often gave them rice when they came to ask for it during famines. But she could not do that when my father was present."[14] Mao remembered her as a mother with duties like those of other rural women: cooking, rearing children, collecting fuel, spinning, mending, and laundering clothes.

Mao was distressed by his mother's helplessness and repelled by the great inequality between husband and wife. These feelings, according to Emi Siao, "sowed the seeds for

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[12]Snow, Red Star over China, p. 132.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Ibid.

his later all-out rebellion against the oppressive character of the feudal, patriarchal system."[15]

"I hated Confucius from the age of eight," Mao once confided in a friend. "There was a Confucian temple in the village, and I wanted nothing more than to burn it to the ground."[16]

As he grew older, Mao began to read whenever he could spare the time, but his father forced him to work in the fields. Both Siao Yu and Hsiao San have stated that Mao hated farming, and he quarrelled frequently with his father over his right to read.[17] Mao, who acknowledged his keen interest in reading,[18] clearly pined for the life of the intellectual, a highly respected class of Chinese society, and abhorred that of the farmer.

His favorite books were The Water Margin, The Romance of the Three Kingdoms, and stories of the Sui and T'ang periods. He particularly liked "those about revolts and uprising." The old novels "had a deep effect on me," Mao would later say.[19] Throughout his political life, Mao

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[15]Emi Siao [Siao San], Mao Tse-tung: His Childhood and Youth (Bombay: People's Publishing House, 1955), p. 16.

[16]Robert Payne, Mao Tse-tung, Ruler of Red China (New York: Henry Schuman, 1950), p. 30.

[17]Siao Yu, Mao Tse-tung and I Were Beggars (New York: Syracuse University, 1959), chap. 3; Emi Siao, Mao Tse-tung, chap. 2.

[18]Snow, Red Star over China, pp. 132-35.

would often throw out quotations from or references to The Romance of the Three Kingdoms and The Water Margin. For instance, during the Kiangsi Soviet period, he once ordered his troops to study the tactics and strategies contained in The Romance of the Three Kingdoms.[20] Before and during the Great Leap Forward movement, Mao made numerous public mentions of the story of Chang Lu in The Romance of the Three Kingdoms. Chang Lu, a regional leader of that time, established several public mess halls offering free meals to the needy. Mao, who had probably yearned for such a gesture since his childhood, likened the people's communes to Chang Lu's public mess halls.[21] This was no coincidence. It appears that Mao derived many of his ideas about life and warfare from these literary works.

Mao's first political emotions were stirred by the nationalism problem. In the early 1900s, turbulent events were coming to a head in China, and peasant uprisings and urban unrest swept across the country. The T'ung-meng-hui, a revolutionary society headed by Dr. Sun Yat-sen, formulated three principles to remedy the nation's

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[19]Ibid.

[20]Warren Kuo, Chung kung shih lun [The History of the Chinese Communist Party] (Taipei: Institute of International Relations, 1969), vol. 3.

[21]Shih Chung-ch'uan, Mao Tse-tung te chien-hsin k'ai-t'uo [Mao Tse-tung's Arduous Exploration of the Socialist Road] (Peking: CCP Party History Publishers, 1990), pp. 237-38.

problems: Nationalism (overthrowing the Manchu dynasty), Democracy (establishing a republic), and the People's Livelihood (egalitarian land rights). The intellectual life of the Chinese of that period was influenced primarily by such national-domestic ideology.

Little word of the outside world reached backwaters like Mao's hometown of Shao-shan, and most of that came by word of mouth. Thus, when Mao heard of the 1904 Chang-sha revolt, in which the young revolutionary Huang Hsing led an attack on the provincial governor's residence, the news burst on him like a bombshell. That winter, he had stumbled upon a pamphlet that had deeply impressed him. The opening sentence, "Alas, China will be subjugated!," depressed him enormously. The pamphlet went on to describe the Japanese occupation of Korea and Formosa and China's loss of control over Indochina, Burma, and other areas. Reading this tract, Mao considered it the duty of all Chinese people to save their country.[22] The pamphlet's powerful influence on Mao attests to the great importance the events of the time held for young, idealistic Chinese.

Shortly after the Chang-sha uprising, a member of a secret society began to litigate a dispute with a Shao-shan landlord in the county court. Because he was a local magnate, the judgment went in the landlord's favor. The

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[22]Snow, Red Star over China, p. 136.

secret society member physically assaulted the county magistrate and several officials, then fled with other group leaders to a nearby mountain, which they fortified against a possible attack. The local authorities promptly dispatched troops, captured the gang and summarily beheaded its leader. In Mao's eyes, the executed man was a hero.[23]

It was events like these that began to turn the young Mao toward politics. Other events also proved catalytic. Harvest failures caused frequent and widespread hunger, and Mao had more than one opportunity to see wandering bands of starving people and to witness food riots in which swarms of people attacked officials and tried to force open the local granaries. Mao came to wonder why innocent people had to lose their lives to the very officials responsible for their welfare. Why was the life of farmers and laborers so miserable, he asked? Already disgusted with Confucianism and dubious about Buddhism, he began to doubt that any religion could provide an answer to the tragedy of the ordinary people around him. Sheltered by his family's wealth from the turbulence that was destroying so many around him, he began to experience a sense of guilt that he and his relatives should be so fortunate while so many other people suffered. Even the satisfaction he had found in his daily reading began to ebb.[24]

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[23]Ibid., pp. 135-36.

A New Life in Hsiang-hsiang

By the time he was sixteen, Mao and his father were almost completely estranged. In 1910 he defied him for the last time and left home. In so doing, he cut himself almost completely off from his family ties and the traditional rural culture he had found so repugnant. Mao was so relieved at the chance to leave for the Tung-san Primary School in Hsiang-hsiang county, Hunan, that he refused to say goodbye to his father.[25]

Entering Tung-san Primary School proved to be a turning point in Mao's life. The news that circulated in the bustling market city of Hsiang-hsiang opened a new world to him. At school, Mao soon noted the stratification of Chinese society. As the son of a well-to-do peasant merchant, he was caught in the middle: He did not mix with peasant children, but was not really accepted by the children of landowners. Many of his schoolmates were the sons and daughters of wealthy families that owned vast tracts of land in the countryside, and they wore only the finest clothes. Mao had only one suit of homemade and plain clothing: a pair of pants and a blue cloth jacket. "Many of the richer students despised me because usually I was wearing my ragged coat and trousers," Mao would tell

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[24]Ibid.

[25]Siao Yu, Mao Tse-tung and I Were Beggars, p. 12.

Snow many years later.[26]

Many of his fellow students despised him because he was not a "native of Hsiang-hsiang,"[27] and because his education had been interrupted by so many years of work on his father's farm, he was six or seven years older and much bigger than most of the other students in his class. We can imagine this tall, ragged village youth becoming the butt of his classmates' laughter.[28] Mao confessed many years later that he had constantly felt "spiritually very depressed."[29]

Mao entered a new cycle of unhappiness and frustration. He felt as out of place at school as he had during the period when his relationship with his father had made his life miserable, and he probably identified his new situation with the odious village life he had fled from. Being stronger than his fellow students, Mao soon became their leader, but he remained acutely aware of his background and character. It is very likely that the sense of personal inadequacy he felt during this period helped to form his intense hatred for the old society and his strong desire to completely eradicate it.

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[26] Snow, Red Star over China, p. 137.

[27] Ibid.; also Emi Siao, Mao Tse-tung, p. 18.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

Despite his unhappiness, Mao made good progress in his studies. At the same time, his views on China's social and political conditions slowly began to take form in his mind. He read every pamphlet and newspaper that fell into his hands and he expressed his outrage, typical of the patriotic, idealistic youth of his age, at the humiliations China had suffered at the hands of foreign imperialists. Among his readings, Hsin min ch'ung pao [New People's Journal], edited by Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, a reformer and one of the leaders of the Hundred Days Reform Movement, captured Mao's interest the most. Reading contributions in the Journal by Liang and his teacher, K'ang Yu-wei, Mao hailed their authors as "most respected ones."[30] Mao also tried to imitate Liang's "new literary style,"[31] By 1911, Mao longed to go to Chang-sha, the political center of Hunan.

Learning Politics in Chang-sha

Mao's admission to the Hsiang-hsiang Middle School in Chang-sha in the spring of 1911 began a new phase in his life. For the first time, he had access to the Min-li-pao

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[30]Li Jui, Mao Tse-tung te tsao-ch'i k'e-min huo-tung [Mao Tse-tung's Early Revolutionary Activities] (Ch'ang-sha: Hunan People's Publisher, 1980), p. 11.

[31]Ibid., p. 65. Liang's unique literary style was welcomed by young students but harshly criticized by most established intellectuals as "the murmuring of a wild fox" [yeh-hu-ch'an].

[People's Independence Daily], a newspaper financed and published by Sun Yat-sen's Allied Society [T'ung-meng-hui]. Mao was deeply moved by an article about the 72 martyrs who had sacrificed themselves in Canton in an armed revolt against the Ch'ing administration,[32] and he was so impressed by the political platform Sun advanced in that publication that he wrote an article himself and posted it on the school bulletin board. Mao's paper proposed that Sun be recalled from Japan as the president of the new government and that K'ang Yu-wei and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao be appointed prime minister and foreign minister, respectively.[33] Although his political judgment was still too immature to tell him that Sun's, K'ang's, and Liang's ideas were not entirely consistent with each other, this incident does indicate Mao's deep concern for China's future and his resentment of the Manchurian administration.

A few days after Sun's followers staged their October 10, 1911 uprising in Wuchang (Hunan was the first province to claim independence after the Wuchang uprising), Mao decided to join the revolutionary army in Chang-sha. Within five months, Sun had established the Nationalist government in Nanking and the revolution was over. Mao left the army and returned to his books.

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[32]Snow, Red Star over China, p. 139.

[33]Ibid., p. 140.

Mao had not fought in any major battles, but his brief military experience must have proved interesting. According to Siao San, it "had led him to the conclusion that in China the army was the key to political power."[34]

He had also broadened his social contacts by making friends among the lower classes. The soldiers apparently liked and respected him as a young man of "great learning,"[35] and Mao must have enjoyed his new status as an intellectual adopted by the illiterate soldiers around him. As Mao later recalled, soldiers were supposed to bring water from outside the city, but Mao spent most of his wages buying water from peddlers because he "could not condescend to carry" water, a task beneath his dignity as a student.[36] This episode suggests that Mao still entertained the same hope of becoming an intellectual that he had cherished on his parents' farm--a stark contrast to Mao's incessant attempts after 1949 to suppress the intellectuals and send them "up to the mountain and down to the countryside." Were these attacks on the intelligentsia related to the dreams of a young man who had so desperately wanted to become an intellectual? We can only wonder. It was also in the army that Mao first heard the term

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[34]Emi Siao, Mao Tse-tung, p. 30.

[35]Snow, Red Star over China, p. 142.

[36]Ibid.

"socialism." That "new thing" interested him, but he had little chance to learn about it.[37]

On his return, he registered to enter a police school and then a trade school for soap-making; he even planned to enter a law school, and sometime later he actually enrolled in a commercial school. He attended classes for about a month but quit because "the courses were taught in English," of which he then understood very little.[38] He finally enrolled in the First Provincial Middle School in Chang-sha, where he studied the traditional classics and history, but he found the curriculum too narrow and the rules too harsh.[39] Deciding that he could make better progress reading and studying on his own, Mao spent the next six months reading in the Hunan Provincial Library.

In the spring of 1913, Mao entered the Fourth Provincial Normal School (which later merged with the First Normal School). The five years he spent there pursuing both classical and Western curricula were important in his development. His Chinese essays were usually posted as models, and he received good grades in writing, history, and ethics, but he did poorly in English and the natural sciences. "I was opposed to the required courses in

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[37]Li Jui, Mao Tse-tung te tsao-ch'i k'e-min huo-tung, p. 14.

[38]Snow, Red Star over China, p. 143.

[39]Ibid., p. 144.

natural sciences . . . . I did not study them," Mao would say later.[40] One day he took a geometry exam but did not know the answer. He drew a big circle because "it was geometry," he later reflected.[41]

Mao's dislike of these subjects may be worth noting. Feng Hsien-ch'ih, who was in charge of Mao's personal library and his reading and writing during 1960-66, observed that Mao was very fond of reading. Chinese history and classical literature were his favorites, and Mao seldom read Western books. With the exception of a few translated literary works, Feng recalled, Mao read almost no Western works on economics or management.[42]

Mao made friends with other students who shared his interests and ambitions. Some of the friends he made in Chang-sha later became his comrades in arms and followed Mao until his armies were victorious in 1949. Siao Yu and Tsai Ho-sen, who shared the distinction of being grouped with Mao by their instructor, Yang Ch'ang-chi, as the three brightest students in their school,[43] were perhaps the closest to Mao. Ironically, neither of them was at Mao's

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[40]Ibid., p. 145.

[41]Mao Tse-tung ssu-hsiang wan-sui.

[42]Kung Yu-chih and Feng Hsien-ch'ih, eds., Mao Tse-tung te tu-su sheng-huo [Mao Tse-tung's Reading Life] (Peking: Life, Reading, and New Knowledge Publishers, 1986), pp. 10-20.

[43]Siao Yu, Mao Tse-tung and I Were Beggars, p. 41.

side in his hour of victory. Tsai Ho-sen lost his life in 1925 in a battle with the Nationalist army, and Siao's changing political beliefs made him Mao's bitter enemy.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of Mao's years at the First Normal School was the active role he began to take in its student organizations. His experiences there provided him with ideal training for his later career as a political activist. He displayed his genius for organization from the very outset. During their nightly exchanges on social and cultural issues, Mao always listened to his fellow students "with his head slightly inclined, often confining himself to monosyllabic answers like 'um' or 'yes,'" remembered Emi Siao. "Afterwards he would make an orderly analysis, picking out the important points and then summing up the problem at hand, all with an economy of language. His remarks were always to the point and very inspiring. People often came to him with their problems. After a brief talk with him, things seemed to become clear and eventually straightened out in a marvelous way."[44]

Mao must have taken to these activities like a duck to water. "There are two kinds of people in the world," he told one of his classmates, "those who are good at individual things and those who are good at organization.

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[44]Emi Siao, Mao Tse-tung, p. 42.

There are more of the former than the latter. However, everyone has his strong points. He should be encouraged to develop and put to good use these strong points, however limited they may be."[45]

Mao quite obviously considered himself good at organization and frequently compared himself to Liu Pang, founder of the Han dynasty. Mao remembered Liu's role as the first nonmilitary person to overthrow a tyrannical ruler. He condoned Liu's brutality to his friends after he had seized power by pointing out that if he had not done away with his friends, his throne would have been in constant danger and he would not have been emperor for long. Besides, it was impossible for a ruler to be too strong or too strict: "I firmly believe that people are the sheep and the government is the shepherd . . . . The cows (or sheep) have to be kept in order. The man has a whip, and he must use it to beat them."[46] Mao once borrowed Biographies of Great People from Siao San (Emi Siao). When he returned the book, Siao found the pages about Napoleon, Peter the Great, and Wellington annotated in black ink. Mao said to him, "China must have people like them. It must be rich and have a strong army. Only then will we avoid what happened to Indochina, Korea, and Formosa."[47]

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[45]Ibid.

[46]Siao Yu, Mao Tse-tung and I Were Beggars, pp. 139-40.

Mao's political doctrine at this time was still a mishmash of clichés and dogma culled from Chinese translations of Western works. He confessed later, "I had a mild passion about nineteenth century democracy, utopianism, and old-fashioned liberalism."[48] The mélange of ideas floating through his mind must have been a strange concoction of admiration for great Chinese revolutionaries and growing appreciation of certain Western ideas, but his "anti-warlordism and anti-imperialism"[49] were unswerving.

Mao was deeply influenced by his teacher, Yang Ch'ang-chi, also called Yang Huai-chung. Indeed, Yang exerted a powerful influence on all his students and guided some of their academic interests and eventual careers. He had studied in England and Japan and was equally comfortable with the Chinese classics and the philosophical writings of Kant, Spencer, and Rousseau. He rejected most Chinese traditions and advocated a new society modeled after the democratic and technological principles of the West. Rather than a thoroughgoing Westernization, however, Yang favored a set of Western ideas and institutions

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[47] Emi Siao, Mao Tse-tung, p. 47. It is worth noting that Siao Yu and Siao San were brothers who later adopted different political beliefs and became enemies. Siao Yü served as the Nationalist vice-minister of agriculture and minerals; Siao San was Mao's follower throughout.

[48] Snow, Red Star over China, p. 149.

[49] Li Jui, Mao Tse-tung te tsao-ch'i k'e-min huo-tung, p. 98.

carefully selected for their compatibility with Chinese society.

Yang admired Wang Ch'uang-san's audacious revolt against Confucian authoritarianism, particularly the "three bonds in human relationships" [san kang].[50] T'an Ssu-t'ung's Jen hsüeh [The Learning of Humanity] was highly recommended by Yang, too. A former student of T'an, Yang was particularly insistent on his theory of "willpower" [hsin li]. According to T'an, human ability was limited, but willpower, once fully developed, could accomplish anything. Such matured willpower would break all bonds--bonds of clichéd thought, bonds of wealth and position, bonds of family ties, bonds of religion, etc. Willpower, T'an held, is the primary force at work in the evolution of human history. Yang had written in his diary: "After studying various schools of thought for more than a decade, I found nothing but difficulty in trying to expand my vision. Then I read T'an Ssu-t'ung's Jen hsüeh, and suddenly the problem became clear . . . . Willpower is marching forward. Aligned with its strength, my will is strengthened a hundredfold."[51]

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[50]Those bonds are between prince and minister, father and son, and husband and wife, all of which are dominance relationships that require the subordinate to obey the dominant party.

[51]Yang Ch'ang-chi, Ta-Hua-chai je-chi [Diary in Ta Hua Room] (Chang-sha: Hunan People's Publications), p. 165;

Mao, like others of Yang's students, was deeply impressed by his "willpower" doctrine. In an essay titled "The Power of Will," Mao expressed his conviction that an alliance of willpower and physical force can overcome any obstacle. The essay was so well written that Yang gave him full score.[52]

Believing in equal access to education, Mao was dissatisfied with the existing educational system. Immediately after his election in 1917 as secretary of the student society, Mao played a pivotal role in establishing an experimental evening school run by his teachers and classmates for illiterate Hunanese, mainly workers from nearby factories.

Yang believed that one should learn about life through hard work and frugality. He had no use for breakfast and urged his students to engage in exercises like deep breathing, meditation, and year-round cold baths. Mao and others patterned their lives after Yang's recommendations. They tramped through fields, climbed mountains and forded streams and rivers. If it rained, they took off their shirts and "bathed in the rain." Mao would later inform Snow that this training might have "helped much to build

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quoted in Li Jui, Mao Tse-tung te tsao-ch'i k'e-min huo-tung, p. 65.

[52]Snow, Red Star over China, p. 147.

the physique which I was to need so badly later on in my marches back and forth across South China, and on the Long March from Kiangsi to the Northwest."[53]

Like Yang, Mao believed in hard work and learning from the real world. In his study notes at the First Normal School, he wrote, "Learning must be sought in reality" and "The learning that one obtains behind closed doors is useless." The notes continue:

> If one does not perform agricultural work, then one will not understand the difficulty of sowing and reaping. If one does not weave silk, then one will not understand where clothes come from.54

These statements show an inclination toward asceticism and hard work, a quality that would be greatly reinforced by years of living in the hills as a guerrilla organizer. Unlike other future Communist leaders like Liu Shao-ch'i and Chou En-lai, Mao had not grown up in warm, comfortable surroundings, and he was not eager to forget the privations of his years in the countryside trying to seize national power. Given his fondness for a spartan, disciplined life, Mao would be only too quick in his later years to impose that lifestyle on his comrades and the other people of China when he urged them to build a new nation. Prepared

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[53]Snow, Red Star over China, p. 147.

[54]Mao Tse-tung, "Notes on Ethics, 1917-1918," quoted in Liu Jen-jung, "Mao's Ideological Transition," Hunan Shih-yuan hsüeh-pao [Hunan Normal School Journal], no. 1 (1981), p. 78.

throughout his life to make harsh demands on himself, Mao would demand only too ardently that the youth of China make great sacrifices for their country and not "be afraid of bitterness or even death."[55]

The inequities of tradition became even more apparent to Mao at this time. He began to consider Confucian and Mencist ethics the greatest "evils in the entire world."[56] These evils, Mao would write to a friend, "have existed for five thousand years. They have become deeply embedded in Chinese society, and the only way to eradicate them is to rebuild the very foundations of society."[57] Already Mao was beginning to think in absolutist terms about the task of restructuring or transforming society. In a note to another friend, he decried the evils of Chinese society and pronounced the need to "destroy them and rebuild society, just like giving birth to a new baby."[58] In the same letter, Mao stressed, "Destruction does not necessarily imply annihilation, nor does inauguration imply birth. Only one change is required . . . change the political system, change the quality of people, change the society . . . there is no reason for us to be apprehensive. Various

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[55]Ibid.

[56]Ibid.

[57]Mao's letter of Li Chin-hsi, August 23, 1917, quoted in ibid., p. 77.

[58]Mao Tse-tung, "Notes on Ethics," ibid., p. 78.

people have started many different revolutions. It [society] must be washed clean and dyed anew."[59]

Mao began making contacts outside his school. "Feeling expansive and the need for a few intimate companions," he told Snow, "I one day inserted an advertisement in the Chang-sha newspaper, inviting young men interested in patriotic work to make contact with me."[60] Diffidently, he signed himself "The Twenty-Eight-Stroke Student" [Erh-shih-pa-hua-sheng], a reference to the written form of his own name. His advertisement received "three and one-half replies." One was from Liu Chiang-lung, who would join the Communist Party and later defect, and the other two were from Chang-sha students who later became "ultra-reactionaries," recalled Mao.[61] The "one-half" reply was from a noncommittal youth, Li Li-san, who would later become an important figure in the Chinese Communist Party.

As his correspondence with students and friends in other Hunan cities expanded, Mao began to realize the importance of forging a close-knit organization of his own. In 1915, Mao and Siao Yu founded the New People's Study

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[59]Ibid.

[60]Snow, Red Star over China, p. 146.

[61]Ibid.

Society [Hsin-min-hsüeh-hui]. "New people" meant "renewed people," as the society's chief aims were academic reform, self-discipline, and the improvement of popular customs. Its youthful members also swore to commit themselves to Five No's: no hypocrisy, no laziness, no waste, no gambling, and no visiting brothels. Obviously, Mao and his young friends already hoped to remake society and had decided to do it through stern moral discipline. The New People's Study Society was an important precursor of the Chinese Communist Party, and more than half of its members ultimately joined the Communist Party and became leaders in the communist movement. Mao worked hard to organize the society and expand its activities.

In the summer of 1916, Mao and Siao Yu set out on a walk through Hunan, each equipped with only empty pockets and an umbrella. They walked as beggars through five counties, noting the manners and customs of villagers and inquiring how tenants paid their rent to landlords. They noted the pervasive poverty and the hard life of those who had to labor for others because they had no land of their own. Siao Yu was impressed by Mao's opinions on capitalism and the influence of the imperialist nations on China.

Mao told Siao Yu that political power is greater than money power. "The money power of the capitalist is nothing more than the accumulated blood and sweat of the workers."[62] When Siao replied that people should be chary

of playing political power games because power corrupts and depends upon evil, Mao jeered,

> [Your theory] is much too profound for most people to understand and appreciate. You seem to be far above us common folk; you seem, in fact, to be speaking out of the sky, and unless you speak in a voice of thunder, the people on earth will not be able to hear you.[63]

Mao also criticized moral behavior as "only good in principle" and pointed out, "It won't stop people from starving to death."[64]

When they returned to Chang-sha, they quarrelled with a ferryman at the West Gate because they had no money to pay their fare or to keep their promise to pay him for their outbound fare. Siao suggested that they pay him, but Mao disagreed: "That is all past and finished now" and "There is no need to drag that matter up again."[65] Even at that age, Mao was quite willing to twist the truth.

When Mao and his friends learned about a commune-building project the Japanese were promoting, they drafted plans to build a new village in the area around Yueh-lu Mountain and traveled around the market towns and rural communities looking for an appropriate site for their utopian settlement. For reasons that are unclear, the plan

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[62] Siao Yu, Mao Tse-tung and I Were Beggars, p. 148.

[63] Ibid., p. 150.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid., p. 159.

was forgotten until Mao recalled the idea in 1919:

> Building a new society means having new families. In this new society, everyone will be equal. There will be no oppression or exploitation. . . . There will be public nursery schools, homes for the aged, public schools, libraries, banks, farms, work halls, and cooperatives.66

Like many other youths, Mao harbored dreams of a utopia where all organizations would somehow be run for the people, and poverty, injustice, and inequality would not exist. He would try to create that society in the late 1950s and again in the late 1960s.

One day, Siao Yu warned Mao that communism would require forcing people to behave differently than they would like, in order for the party leaders to retain their power. Mao replied without hesitation, "Oppression is the very essence of politics. If you are successful at maintaining oppression, that means your politics are good. In the final analysis, political influence is simply the art of maintaining oppression."[67] Mao went on to argue that a leader should have absolute power: The greater his power, the more easily he could carry out his political purposes.

> In order to reform a country, one must be hard on oneself, and it is necessary to victimize many people.68

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[66]Mao Tse-tung, "The Task for Students," Hunan chiao-yu yueh-k'an [Hunan Education Monthly] 1:2 (December 1919).

[67]Siao Yu, Mao Tse-tung and I Were Beggars, p. 192.

Siao Yu listened patiently, then advised Mao to be prudent and take the course of gradualism. "Communism is an excellent principle in theory . . . but to enact it will take time," Siao warned. Mao replied, "I cannot wait even ten years. I want us to achieve our aims tomorrow."[69] He concluded, "I like to see things happen before my very eyes. Frankly, your ideas do not appeal to me at all."[70]

During his final year at school, Mao worked with Siao, Tsai, and others to promote a "work-and-study scheme" for Hunan. This plan, sponsored by the Sino-French Education Association, was intended to help Chinese students combine work and study in France. Chinese students were encouraged to find jobs in French factories and use their earnings to pursue their studies. They would receive financial assistance for the journey to and from France. The New People's Study Society that Mao had helped found in 1915 was the key organization in promoting this program throughout Hunan.

But when Mao's mother died that same year, he had to remain at home, and thus lost interest in the program. After graduating from the First Normal School in the summer of 1918, he traveled to Peking with Siao, Tsai, and other

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[68] Ibid., p. 194.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

Hunanese students bound for France. Unlike those students, however, Mao decided not to study abroad.

Adversity in Peking

According to Siao Yu, there were several reasons why Mao preferred to remain in Peking. He did not have the money to pay for part of his travel; he hated foreign languages so intensely that he refused to learn French; he wanted to recruit members for the New People's Study Society and serve as liaison for that organization's French branch; and he believed political activity was far more important than academic. "In a word," said Siao Yu, "he did not have an interest in going abroad merely for reading's sake."[71]

Emi Siao points out that Mao had other motives as well. He wanted to make "contact with the leaders of the Renaissance Movement in the North" because he was interested in that development, having already participated in the movement in Chang-sha.[72] In other words, Mao wanted to enter the mainstream and learn for himself what was taking place. Li Jui confirmed that Mao had a "burning desire to go to Peking and make contact with the new revolutionary personages there."[73]

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[71]Ibid., p. 170.

[72]Emi Siao, Mao Tse-tung, p. 66.

Mao's classmate at the First Normal School, Chou Shih-chao, explained that Mao chose not to go to France because he thought he should understand China first. Only after he thoroughly understood China would he be able to compare China and the West and to distinguish the appropriate, beneficial views of various Western schools of thought.[74] Mao himself later explained that he did not know enough about his own country, a deficiency he hoped a long stay in Peking would help correct. Further, in the capital he could help organize the "work-and-study scheme." And, as he later pointed out, "I had other plans."[75] Mao never spelled these plans out, but it seems from correspondence with his friends that he intended to pursue self-education at Peking University; help recruit members for the New People's Study Society; make contact with Renaissance Movement leaders like Hu Shin, Chen Tu-hsiu, Li Ta-chao, and Lo Chia-lun; and perhaps participate in that movement himself.

Mao's plan did not work out well. After a five-month stint as an assistant librarian at Peking University, he returned to Chang-sha in February 1919. His five months in Peking appear to have been very unhappy. He later

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[73]Li Jui, Mao Tse-tung te tsao-ch'i k'e-min huo-tung, p. 156.

[74]Ibid., p. 59

[75]Snow, Red Star over China, p. 152.

described them:

> I lived in a place called San-yan-ching, in a small room which contained seven other people. When we were packed together on the k'ang (a bed heated with coals underneath and used throughout north China), there was scarcely room enough for any of us to breathe. I used to have to warn the people on each side of me when I wanted to turn over.76

It does not appear that Mao was able to recruit new members for the New People's Study Society, either. Nor did his self-education plan work out, according to Siao Yu. "Mao wrote me saying that those famous students like Fu Sse-nien, Lo Chia-lun, and Tuan Hsi-p'ung disappointed him; they were not as excellent as we expected in Chang-sha."[77]

Mao described his experiences as follows:

> My office was so low that people avoided me. One of my tasks was to register the names of people who came to read newspapers. Among those who came to read, I recognized the names of Fu Sse-nien, Lo Chia-lun, and others in whom I was intensely interested. I tried to begin conversation with them on political and cultural subjects, but they were very busy men. They had no time to listen to an assistant librarian speaking in a southern dialect.78

It seems, too, that Mao wrote nothing during this period, for the intellectual journals of the period contain no contributions from him. Perhaps the difficulties of his life at the time discouraged him from taking up his pen.

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[76]Ibid., p. 152.

[77]Siao Yu, Mao Tse-tung and I Were Beggars, p. 172.

[78]Snow, Red Star over China, p. 151.

Before leaving for Peking, Mao had expressed a great eagerness to participate in the Renaissance Movement, which he believed he was eminently qualified to join. But he was never able to win acceptance in that circle, and he felt rejected, perhaps even despised, by the Peking intellectuals. Poor and without social connections, Mao was apparently unable to meet any of the movement's leaders or to have his writings published in the journals they managed.

In Chang-sha he had been well known and highly respected; in Peking he was a nobody. In Chang-sha his talent for organization had been given full play; in Peking no one recognized his abilities or sought his advice. Mao's Peking sojourn must have caused him great embarrassment and shame, for he refused to talk much about it in later years. Proud, tough, and unwilling to ask for help, he preferred to take a menial job in a library and live in a rooming-house where he shared quarters with seven other people.

Yet Mao did manage to join the Philosophical Society and the Journalism Society. In those organizations he met fellow students like Chen Kung-po, who became a top Kuomintang official but later defected, and Chang Kuo-t'ao, one of the founders of the Chinese Communist Party. Mao read extensively on anarchism and seems to have been influenced by its ideas, though we cannot say precisely

how. His interest in politics grew, and his general philosophy seems to have become increasingly transformative.

Certainly Mao must have come away from his experience in Peking with considerable contempt for Peking University life and all it represented. Perhaps his hatred of formal education and his idea that "the uneducated should overthrow the educated" were nourished by his rejection by that world. Throughout the rest of his life, he never spoke well of academics, calling professors "the stinking old ninth class." Nor would he have any compunction in later years about making intellectuals suffer the rigors of life in the countryside.

Becoming a Revolutionary

Mao returned to Chang-sha in March 1919, "back to the life that meant having one frugal meal of beans and rice each day."[79] But poverty did not bother him, for at last he was back in his familiar and congenial Chang-sha. That city was as much his political base as it was his home. In Chang-sha were the New People's Study Society and friends who respected him and deferred to him. He could give free rein to his intellectual and organizing talents, and people would take him seriously. Mao began to devote more and

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[79]Ibid., p. 153.

more of his time to student politics. He was active in organizing the Hunan Students' Association and became editor of its journal, the Hsiang River Review [Hsiang-chiang ping-lun]. That journal became Mao's first forum for expressing himself in written form and circulating his ideas and observations to a wider audience. Unlike Peking, Chang-sha invited him to enter a new world of literary and political debate. The premier issue of the Hsiang River Review appeared on July 14, 1919; four issues followed, and a fifth was confiscated at the printer's, with a "supplementary" issue taking its form. As Chinese Communist writings attest, Mao's journal was in the mainstream of Marxist doctrine and the proletarian revolutionary doctrine of the day. Ho Kan-chin states in his History of Contemporary Chinese Revolution that the "Hsiang River Review . . . praised the victory of the October Socialist Revolution and disseminated the theories of Marxism."[80]

But a careful reading of that journal's articles, especially those contributed by Mao, clearly indicates that Mao's political ideas were still largely inchoate. In fact, he was still groping for a doctrine that provided both a means of organization and an explanation of events in the real world. It is not surprising, then, that the

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[80]Liu Jen-jung, "Mao's Ideological Transition," p. 78.

young Mao vacillated between Marxism and anarchistic and liberal concepts. He agreed with Kropotkin that "mutual aid," an important and "moderate" approach, should be promoted. In another article, Mao would support parliamentary debate, pragmatism, and even nonviolent, democratic revolution.

Mao related his vision of how most societies have evolved:

> As for religion, it was a revolution in religion that brought about the freedom of belief. As for literature, it was ordinary literature, contemporary literature, and dramatic literature, rather than aristocratic literature and classical literature, that mattered. As for society, modern society has become happier where people can freely express their own minds. As for education, it is public education that now exists. As for the economy, we now have equality. As for ideology, there is now pragmatism. As for the international order, there are now international alliances.81

We can see here that Mao clearly held to a linear view of history, with mankind progressing from one stage to another, always to a higher state of development. In this context, however, there was the problem of power and those who wielded it. How were the bastions of power to be overwhelmed so that society's teleological progress could continue?

> There are two approaches: one is radical and the other moderate . . . . If we adopt the radical approach and try to overthrow might with right, the result is often self-defeating . . . . Therefore, we should first make

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81"The Announcement of the Inaugural Issue," Hsiang River Review, no. 2 (July 21, 1919).

> a thorough study, unhampered by the old traditions and superstitions, to search for the truth. In the stage of human affairs, our goal is to achieve unity of the masses and adopt a campaign of sincere advice to those who hold power. We also must seek any kind of revolution through appeals: an appeal for bread, freedom, and equality, but all through a revolution without bloodshed. We advocate the creation of neither great chaos nor a futile revolution by using bombs and spilling blood.82

This statement does not contain any radical ideas about the removal of despotic powers blocking the forces of progress. Mao definitely seemed to favor moderate change and an appeal to enlightened authority to initiate good governance. In other words, he believed Chinese society should be reformed, not overthrown by bloody revolution.

Perhaps the most important essay Mao published in the Review was his "The Great Union of the Masses," in which he proposed that a nation or a people under attack had no choice but to struggle for a great union of power.[83] He introduced the concept of class struggle between those who held power and all other classes in society:

> The great unity should come from a mix of small groups, each formed on the basis of occupational and social interests.84

For Mao, the peasantry was the most important group,

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[82] Ibid.

[83] "The Great Union of the Masses. Part I," Hsiang River Review, no. 3 (July 28, 1919), pp. 11-14.

[84] Ibid.

because they were "the largest contingent among China's common people."

> Only those who cultivated the land could reflect the interests of the peasantry and know how to deal with such issues as how landlords treat their peasants, collect rents, impose taxes, and make food available to them.85

The next stratum was the workers, followed by students, and then women. Mao was infuriated by women's current role--being good wives and mothers and not rocking the boat: "O God of Liberty, where are you?"[86]

The Hsiang River Review projected a powerful spirit of rebellion, liberalism, and even anarchism, and the common people and youth read it avidly whenever they could find copies. Hunan's warlord, Chang Ching-yao, was enraged by its contents and promptly confiscated all copies after the August 4, 1919 issue appeared. Mao then became editor of another student journal, the New Hunan Weekly, and continued his sharp attacks on the brutal rule of Chang Ching-yao. This weekly, too, was suppressed, but Mao was not deterred. He kept up his bitter criticism of the conditions of the day in essays he offered to Chang-sha's Ta-kung-pao.

Mao's reaction to an incident that occurred on November 14, 1919 shows his steely determination and his

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[85]Ibid.

[86]Ibid.

disgust with the traditional Chinese family system. A Hunan student, a certain Miss Chao, having failed to dissuade her parents from forcing her to accept a man she did not want to marry, slit her throat as she rode in her bridal sedan chair. When the Chang-sha papers splashed this tragedy across their front pages the next morning, Mao saw an opportunity.

He published his first comments on the incident on November 16 and encouraged pubic discussion of it.[87] During November 16-28, Mao published thirteen articles in the Ta-kung-pao attacking the traditional Chinese social and cultural system from a variety of angles. Countless intellectuals and celebrities joined in the debate. Many blamed the bride's family, and others the groom's family, for pressing the unhappy marriage. But only Mao insisted that society had murdered the unfortunate woman, referring to the bridal sedan as a "prisoner's cart." He pointed out that Miss Chao had been the victim of a world not of her making; death had been her only means of escape. "The real evil is society," Mao argued. Because "this society could cause the death of Miss Chao, it also would be responsible for the death of Miss Chien, Miss Sun, and Miss Li. Society would victimize all women, and it would also destroy and murder young men."[88] The trouble with the

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[87]Mao Tse-tung, "Critique on Miss Chao's Suicide," Ta-kung-pao (Chang-sha), November 16, 1919.

contemporary age was the mortmain of tradition on society. Life would remain hopeless unless it was possible to "remold society with a revolutionary spirit."[89] Mao greatly admired the courage of women like Miss Chao, but he insisted that it was better to die fighting the forces of the old society than to kill oneself. Even if one's dream could not be realized, it was better to fight and perish like a piece of broken jade.

This example of Mao's sympathy for women is yet another instance of his growing conviction that society had to be fundamentally restructured if the evils of the past were to be eradicated.

The warlord Chang Ching-yao had become the principal target of Mao's attacks on all that was evil and feudal in Hunan society. Since October 1919, Mao had been involved in a popular movement to have Chang removed from power. He attacked that formidable personage fearlessly, and his writings continued to criticize Chang. Mao adopted a strategy to have Chang demoted.

First, he persuaded the Hunan Student Association to call a student strike. Second, he tried to build a "united front" by asking leaders in other provinces like Wu Pei-fu and Feng Yu-hsiang to mobilize their forces against Chang

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[88]Mao Tse-tung, "Miss Chao and the Evil Society," Ta-kung-pao (Chang-sha), November 21, 1919.

[89]Ibid.

Ching-yao. Third, he organized the "Expel Chang Delegation," a group made up of representatives of various Hunan schools. Some members of this delegation went to Peking, others to Shanghai and Canton, to obtain petitions from famous people that Chang resign his post. Mao himself led the delegation to Peking in December 1919 and stayed on in that city until April 1920.

Mao's second trip to Peking proved most eventful. The October Revolution had just broken out in Russia, and a flood of information about the Bolsheviks poured into Peking. Mao recalled those days in Peking:

> During my second visit to Peking, I had begun to read a great deal about the events in Russia, and I searched everywhere for what few books could be found about Communism then written in Chinese. Three books made a most powerful impression upon my mind and strengthened my faith in Marxism. When I accepted that doctrine, I realized it was the correct interpretation of history, and thereafter I never wavered. By the summer of 1920, I had become, in theory and in action, a Marxist.90

It is not entirely certain that Mao had really become a Marxist by that time. We know, for example, that before he returned to Chang-sha, he stayed in Shanghai between April and June. There he met Chen Tu-hsiu for the second time, and they apparently discussed Marxist writings, as Mao would later recall:

> At that transitional period of my life, Chen's strong beliefs in Marxism had a powerful influence upon me.91

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90 Snow, Red Star over China, p. 155.

Chang Ching-yao was removed from office in June 1920, and in July Mao returned to Chang-sha. He turned his energy to organizing the "Independence Movement of Hunan" and set about preparing propaganda with his customary zeal. Between September 3 and October 3, the Chang-sha Ta-kung-pao carried ten essays by Mao calling for political autonomy for Hunan. Still, he refrained from publicly declaring his new-found faith.

At the same time, certain of Mao's old schoolmates wrote him from France and related their impressions and ideas. Ts'ai Ho-sen wrote frequently, espousing communism and raising the possibility of establishing a communist party to change Chinese society. In August 1920, Mao received letters from Siao Yu and Ts'ai Ho-sen. Both of his friends mentioned the New People's Study Society meeting at Montargis, near Paris, during July 5-10, 1920, at which several Society members had debated whether to form a communist party. Ts'ai had proposed that such a party be established, with the aim of creating a proletarian dictatorship to reform China and the world.[92] Siao Yu had disagreed with the proposal, pointing out that it was wrong to make the majority in society happy at the

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[91] Ibid., p. 154.

[92] "Ts'ai Ho-sen's Letter to Mao Tse-tung, August 13, 1920," reproduced in Marxism yen-chiu tsun-kuo tse-liao [Reference on the Research of Marxism], no. 81 (February 1981), pp. 7-10.

expense of the minority. He argued that China should not enact socialist reforms by aping the Russian model.[93] Ts'ai obviously, was already dedicated to Marxism, but Siao argued for caution and gradualism. Both of them asked Mao's opinion.

Ts'ai's long letter stressed, "There were four powerful weapons for creating a proletarian revolution." First, the party had to be led by a vanguard. Second, a strong revolutionary army and impregnable revolutionary organizations had to be established, each with its own economic production base. Third, all economic organizations had to be based on cooperative forms and oriented toward the goal of revolution. Finally, political organization in the form of a Soviet had to be created after the proletarian revolution had broken out.

Ts'ai went on to explain why the proletariat had to exercise dictatorship over society. The economic system, he said, could not be reformed under existing conditions, with the bourgeoisie owning most of the property. Unless the proletariat held all political power, the revolution could not be protected, and the defeated class would try to reassert its power. Ts'ai concluded, "Your task is to prepare for China's October Revolution."[94]

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[93]"Siao Yu's Letter to Mao, August 1920," ibid.

[94]"Ts'ai's Letter to Mao, August 13, 1920," ibid., p. 8.

On September 16, 1920 Ts'ai wrote another long letter to Mao. He excoriated Mao's anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist ideas and derided them as totally impractical. Ts'ai believed a socialist revolution in China was only a matter of time, but it could be sped up by the efforts of a communist party. Ts'ai advised Mao, "The key was to be united with the people, but this requires understanding completely the important role of propaganda in all of its various forms."[95]

On December 1, Mao wrote a letter to Ts'ai and Siao in which he declared his intention of siding with internationalism against nationalism and supporting Marxism in its struggle against anarchism. He wholeheartedly endorsed the formation of a Chinese communist party to reform both China and the world. As for the methods to bring socialism to China, Mao wrote, he could not agree with Siao's moderate approach even though in theory it appeared to make good sense.

Mao explained his line of reasoning to Siao: A peaceful, gradual revolution based on education of the masses would not really change China's power structure or social stratification. He ended his letter by adopting Ts'ai's proposal that a party with membership rules and defined goals should be established.[96]

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[95]"Ts'ai's Letter to Mao, September 16, 1920," ibid., p. 19.

On January 21, 1921 Mao wrote another letter to Ts'ai. He agreed that the philosophical foundation of the new communist party should be materialism, and he repeated forcefully his repudiation of anarchism. He assured Ts'ai, "The ideas expressed in your letter were so correct that I did not object to even a single word."[97] By early 1921, then, Mao was an ardent Marxist who looked forward to setting up a communist party in China. Prior events had certainly demonstrated his predisposition to Marxism, but his correspondence with his good friend Ts'ai Ho-sen marks the period of his conversion. In July of that same year, Mao would join thirteen other self-proclaimed Marxists in the First Party Congress and help establish the Chinese Communist Party. Mao had finally become a dedicated revolutionary.

The Contemporary Chinese Political Milieu and Ideology

In consequence of Western expansionism, Chinese intellectuals had been faced since the nineteenth century with challenges to China's society and polity. First there had been the Opium War of 1840, then the Anglo-French Expedition in 1860, then the defeat by Japan in 1895, and

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[96]"Mao's Letter to Ts'ai and Siao, December 1, 1920," ibid., pp. 2-5.

[97]"Mao's Letter to Ts'ai, January 21, 1921," ibid., p. 14.

most humiliating, the united foreign suppression of the Boxer Rebellion in 1900.

Awakened to their country's tragedy, most Chinese intellectuals began to explore the reasons for China's weakness and the ways in which it might be able to protect itself from future insult and predation from abroad. That intellectual ferment was not, however, engendered solely by the disintegration of the social and political order, but also by a disruption of the traditional universe of meanings, to the extent that basic Chinese orientational symbols were questioned and challenged. In searching for methods to strengthen China, sensitive minds naturally felt the need to formulate world-views that would restore cognitive and moral coherence to the world around them. That need was much in the minds of most Chinese intellectuals of the day.[98]

On the much-debated nationalism question, there was nearly universal agreement on one point: China's inability to defend itself against Western expansionism was due primarily to its failure to mobilize its human and material resources. The obstacles to effective mobilization were rooted in existing social and political barriers, among

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[98]Hao Chang, Chinese Intellectuals in Crisis: The Search for Order and Meaning, 1889-1911 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987, chap. 1; also Wang Fan-sen, Ku-ssu pien yun-tung te hsin-ch'i [The Rise of the Movement to Critically Study China's Past] (Taipei: Yun Cheng Publishing Co., 1987), chaps. 1 and 2.

them nationwide clannishness, the ascendancy of social stratification, the bonds of the three relationships [san kang], and the segregation of government from the masses. To break down these barriers, therefore, was a common goal among the intelligentsia. As the presumptive origin of these barriers, Confucianism became their target.

As the crisis deepened, such intellectuals became even more radical. After China's defeat by Japan in 1895, K'ang Yu-wei, T'an Ssu-t'ung, Liang Ch'i-chao, and other influential thinkers not only scored tradition but proposed to destroy and replace it. T'an Ssu-T'ung, for example, emphasized "destruction" [p'o] and "destroying all the knotted nets" [ch'ung-p'o lo-wang]. To T'an's mind, only by destroying all those tangled barriers could Chinese society achieve an "unobstructed flow" or breakthrough [t'ung] between top and bottom, between in and out, between men and women, between self and others. "That condition (t'ung) is one of equality."[99] Liang Ch'i-chao praised "destruction" in his famous essay "On the New People" [Hsin min shuo]: "Alas, how happy I am! Destruction, a blessing! Destroy!"[100]

Surprisingly, a great number of these radical

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[99] T'an Sse-t'ung ch'uan chi [Collected Works of T'an Sse-t'ung] (Taipei: Hua Shih Publishers, 1977), p. 6.

[100] Chang T'ung, Wang Jen-chih, eds., Selected Writings on the Current Situation Ten Years Before the 1911 Revolution. 2 vols. (Hong Kong: San Lien Books, 1963), vol. 1, p. 151.

reformers were devoted to the traditional, classical studies. On one occasion, Chinese literary master Liu Shih-p'ei, under the pen name "Number One Radical" [Chi-lien Te-i-jen], wrote of "the goodness of radicalism."[101] The great scholar Huang K'ai swore that if the country could not be transformed into an egalitarian society, they would "turn China into a gigantic tomb."[102] Another follower of the Chinese literary tradition, Chang T'ai-yen, went so far as to advocate militarism because he believed that China could be saved only if it acted like a battle unit.[103] In Chang's view, China's social and political structure should be totally annihilated, then rebuilt. A transformed China would operate like a single, well-designed, tightly-controlled machine in which individuals were free from the bonds of family, society, and state.

Militarization was only one of the options considered for transforming Chinese society. The younger reformers Chen To-hsiu, Li Ta-chao and, later, Mao Tse-tung took socialism as the key to making China wealthy and powerful. Dr. Sun Yat-sen and his adherents launched the Nationalist revolution to overthrow the Manchu government, then applied the "Three Principles of the People" as the blueprint for

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[101] Ibid., pp. 887-89.

[102] Ibid., vol. 2, p. 790.

[103] Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 405-6.

restructuring China. The leaders of the May Fourth Movement, on the other hand, considered "democracy" the panacea for China's ills.

Despite their different approaches, all these reformers shared the belief that their proposals were both realistic and feasible. Because they believed it possible to transform China, many tried their hands at implementing their methods. "Making China an association" was one of those experiments, particularly in the first decade of the 1900s. Various associations sprang up, calling themselves "new villages," "associations," and "corporations." Relationships among the members of these new associations were artificially structured, and they tended to share certain features. First, they denounced traditional family ties and sought to replace them with ties within their organizations. Second, they believed that the wealth and property of their members should be shared; thus, unselfishness was considered an important prerequisite to this new, shared life. Third, a belief in objective moral values was widely held by these reformers, who commonly set up certain moral criteria and regularly held public criticism; those who had made mistakes would be criticized by their fellows or would criticize themselves. Finally, all these associations aspired to rebuild China along the lines of their own experiments, if successful.[104]

Historians of Chinese political thought have observed

one common feature of these movements: their transformative, utopian nature. Wang Fan-sen has pointed out that, unlike Confucians, who deemed modesty essential, these reformers, whatever the differences in their approaches, held transformative rather than accommodative ideals. Accordingly, "destruction" was viewed favorably, in the belief that a new society could promptly be constructed to replace the recently demolished one. Wang noted that, although most traditional intellectuals found it extremely painful to denounce the old values and accept Western ones (namely, democracy), China's security from humiliation and Western expansionism was more important than their dignity and traditions. Thus, it was necessary that their traditional roots be severed in the interests of a far more important purpose.[105]

Yet their acceptance of Western ideas was limited and superficial. Benjamin Schwartz has shown that Chinese intellectuals embraced Western-style democracy only as a means to the creation of a strong and wealthy China. Thus, the essential spirit of democracy--freedom, human rights and the process of compromise--was largely ignored.[106] Thomas Metzger has perceived striking continuities with

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[104]Chang Yun-ho et al., eds., Wu-ssu te she-t'uan [The Associations of the May Fourth Movement] (Hong Kong: San Lien Books, 1979).

[105]Wang Fan-sen, Ku-ssu pien yun-tung te hsin-ch'i, chap. 1.

Chinese tradition in the convictions of these thinkers. On balance, he considers Western tradition to have had only a very limited influence on the modern Chinese intellectual scene, an expedient adopted only as an instrument to fulfill the basic goals and values inherited from tradition.[107] Metzger and Hao Chang have stressed that both Nationalist reformers such as Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek and Marxists like Mao and Liu Shao-ch'i were deeply indebted to tradition, largely as represented in the thought of K'ang Yu-wei, Liang Ch'i-chao, and T'an Ssu-t'ung.[108]

Moreover, Metzger's interpretation of modern Chinese political ideology has shown that these thinkers were remarkably similar in their assumptions about the goals of the political process, about the kind of heroic figure needed to attain those goals, about the nature of that hero's cosmic and historical environment, and about the kind of knowledge his quest required.[109] The overarching goal of that hero's life was to realize a wealthy and powerful China and, eventually, an ideal world of universal

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[106]Benjamin Schwartz, In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964).

[107]Thomas A. Metzger, Escape from Predicament (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), pp. 191-253.

[108]Ibid.; Hao Chang, Chinese Intellectuals in Crisis.

[109]Thomas A. Metzger, Escape from Predicament.

unity [ta t'ung]. To reach this goal, the moral hero had to fill himself with a fiery zeal, to act in a spirit of total selflessness and, above all, to be fearless in his defiance of immoral authority figures. Equally important, this hero saw in the world around him a partly latent historical force that he could hope to tap. This mix of common assumptions, Metzger concluded, formed the core of Mao's "voluntarism." Mao differed from other transformative thinkers "not in his voluntarism" but "in his identification of the moral hero with the actual, concrete sovereign authority of the state."[110]

Conclusion (Observation)

Between Mao's early childhood in Shao-shan and his correspondence with Ts'ai at the age of eighteen, we can observe his gradual but steady transformation into a revolutionary committed to the violent overthrow of Chinese society and all of its basic organizations and rules. Mao's relationships with his relatives, friends, teachers, and adversaries--in short, with his milieu--gradually crystallized his attitudes and determined the course his life would follow. These relationships, in their intricate context of local, national, and international events,

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[110]Thomas A. Metzger, "Chinese Communism and the Evolution of China's Political Culture: A Preliminary Analysis," Issues and Studies, August 1979, p. 58.

reinforced his beliefs and prejudices, nudging him down the road to revolution. Let us examine certain aspects of his character, his ideas and attitudes, and his political skills at organizing his allies and withstanding enemies more powerful than he.

Time and again, Mao demonstrated his powerful will, courage, and audacity. His stubborn resistance to his father and his intransigence toward his early teachers testify to his ability to oppose authority. Mao proved himself capable of enduring tremendous physical hardship and constantly asserted his preference for asceticism over luxury. He undertook fieldwork to gather first-hand information about local conditions and the life of the common people, but he had no interest in the natural sciences, never traveled abroad, never really mastered a foreign language, and never spent much time among the intellectual notables of the great metropoles of Peking and Shanghai. Thus, he was sceptical of Western influences, although he discussed in depth many of the Western ideas that had made their way into China.

From an early age, Mao had witnessed the oppression and injustice around him, particularly in the treatment of women and rural sharecroppers and laborers. Notwithstanding his sympathy for the poor and abject, Mao did not adopt Western ideas about political liberty or democracy to any significant extent. Like most reformers

of the time, he dabbled superficially in Western liberalism and anarchism, but his very Chinese mind probably did not grasp the true significance of these concepts for Western thinkers.

At the same time, Mao had steeped himself in Chinese literature and classical thought. He was extremely well-read, and his capacious memory enabled him to impress his listeners with insightful and stunningly apposite quotations.

With the exception of his student friends and a single middle-school teacher he had briefly revered, Mao had not developed any close, lasting ties with the leading thinkers of his day. He had met several prominent writers like Chen Tu-hsiu and had some opportunity to exchange views with them, but Mao was probably very uneasy in their presence. Thus, he never had to rebel against either Western ideas or the dominance of a Chinese mentor. And he had rebelled against Chinese tradition long ago.

Marxist doctrines found fertile soil in this resourceful, inquiring mind caught up in a utopian vision of the ideal Chinese society. Thus, when Mao began reading about Marxism during his second stay in Peking and exchanging opinions with Chen and Ts'ai, he was receptive to a new vision of history and the policies necessary to transform China under a communist party. For Mao, Marxism would provide both ideology and the policies for

transforming Chinese society and culture. It is little wonder, then, that by the time he was thirty, transformative concepts had captured his loyalty.

Mao had displayed his remarkable talent for organization again and again. In his own family, he had learned how to win the backing of his mother and other family members to counter his father's efforts at control. After he left home, Mao demonstrated on many occasions his uncanny ability to persuade his fellow students to form organizations, undertake strikes, hold demonstrations, and publish journals and newspapers. Meanwhile, Mao wrote tirelessly for local papers and journals, some of which he himself edited. He already knew how to combine action and theory to manipulate others to agree with him and support his efforts.

Mao never backed away from a powerful enemy. In fact, he seemed to thrive on opposition. No matter what the power and backing of an adversary, Mao always found some way to counterattack, striking at the weakest link in his enemy's armor. He evened the odds--or better--by forging alliances with any group of individuals who were receptive.

Finally, Mao consistently indicated his willingness to exert power if he ever had the chance. He took a hard line in his arguments with his friends about accommodative versus transformative approaches and the application of political power once the current authorities had been

overthrown. Power should be used to suppress one's enemies. Certain ends justified any means. And if a few had to be sacrificed for the betterment of the many, that made no difference to Mao.

CHAPTER III

MAO, FRUSTRATED AND HUMILIATED

Transformative vs. Accommodative

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) entered Peking on January 22, 1949, thus ending the long struggle of Mao and his Marxist followers against the Nationalist government. Mao was now in a position first to transform, then to rebuild China as he had earnestly desired since his youth.

He ordered the promulgation of a new Marriage Law in May 1950 that laid down equal rights for both sexes and banned arranged marriages, concubinage, polygamy, and interference in the remarriage of widows. One month later, the Land Reform Law was put into effect; under that law, the land of landlords was to be confiscated and given to peasant associations for distribution to poor peasants. In January 1951, Mao issued guidelines for the "suppression of counterrevolutionaries," including those hidden in society, the army, and intellectual circles, calling for a nationwide campaign to eliminate corruption, waste, and bureaucratism (the so-called "Three-Anti's Movement"). That campaign was soon expanded to Five Anti's, adding a struggle in industrial and business circles against

bribery, tax evasion, theft of government property, cheating on government contracts, and stealing economic information for private speculation. China first five-year plan for national construction began on January 1953. In August of the same year, Mao Tse-tung laid down the CCP's "General Line for the Period of Transition to Socialism" as the basis for industrializing the country and achieving over a fairly long period of time the socialist transformation of agriculture, handicraft, and capitalist industry and commerce. In October 1955, the Agricultural Cooperativization Law was endorsed by the CCP. On March 13, 1956, a People's Daily editorial first introduced the exhortation, attributed to Mao and later used constantly, to undertake socialist construction "more widely, faster, and more economically" [tuo, kuai, hao shen].

The construction of a socialist state seemed to be underway. Mao had repeatedly expressed to his foreign visitors and his close friends that he was happiest about, not the 1949 victory, but the agricultural cooperativization taking place in 1955, with millions of peasants participating. Mao was now really quite content.[1]

As scholars have noted, however, there has been ideological disagreement among party leaders since the PRC's inception. Differences appeared as early as 1950,

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[1]Shih Chung-ch'uan, Mao Tse-tung te chieh-hsin k'ai-t'uo, p. 210.

during the land reform campaign. Observing resentment among the peasantry, various party leaders, including Liu Shao-ch'i, became more cautious and pragmatic in their pursuit of socialism.[2]

We can never know with any certainty what began the acrimony and distrust between Liu Shao-ch'i and Mao Tse-tung, but we do know that they held divergent views.[3] Mao's views had begun to diverge from Liu's as early as 1954. For example, Mao had contended that socialist and private forms of ownership could not coexist without fostering imbalances between the private and public sectors. Although Mao was confident that private ownership of the means of production would eventually disappear, he believed that without state intervention it would persist far too long. He believed that only Party-led policy efforts in cooperation with activist rural elements could completely socialize rural China.

Accommodative leaders like Liu Shao-ch'i held a different view. In Liu's opinion, China's vast countryside

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[2]Yin Ts'ing-yao, "On the Progress of the Cultural Revolution," Fei-ch'ien yueh-pao [Monthly Journal on the Chinese Communist Situation, FCYP] 10:1 (February 1967): 16-18; also Li Min-hua, "The Conflict Between Mao Tse-tung and Liu Shao-ch'i over the Socialist Education Movement," FCYP 11:11 (February 1968): 45-48.

[3]See Stuart R. Schram, "Mao Tse-tung and Liu Shao-ch'i, 1939-1969," Asian Survey 12:4 (April 1972): 275-93; Wang Chang-ling, "A Comparison of the Ideologies of Mao Tse-tung and Liu Shao-ch'i," Issues and Studies, 4:12 (September 1968): 22-30; ibid., 5:1 (October 1968): 19-30.

should be socialized gradually, with the Party and state fine-tuning policies in response to differing local conditions.

Thus, when the question of whether the production of agricultural machinery should be expanded to induce farmers to join cooperative enterprises, Mao and Liu seem to have violently disagreed. Mao agreed that China need not industrialize before it abandoned mutual-aid team farming and village collectives. He was confident that the party and its rural activists would persuade even the most sceptical farmers of the advantages of collective farming. Liu, on the other hand, did not believe that farmers could be convinced of the wisdom of that course unless they could cheaply buy the modern equipment to produce greater harvests. He estimated that China would need twenty or thirty years of industrialization before it could supply enough villages with modern farm machinery.

Other issues divided Mao and Liu. Liu believed that class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie would end after the capitalist class had been dispossessed of its property. According to Liu, China's capitalist class had been displaced by 1956. As the party no longer had a class enemy to fear at home, developing the country's backward economy should be its top priority. Mao felt otherwise. He maintained that class struggle persisted in society even after the rich had been ousted and their

property confiscated. Although no longer rich, those same people would plot to acquire power and obstruct the activities of the Communist Party and the state.

Mao's judgment of human nature was a harsh one. The moral values and behavior of the Chinese people must be changed, and the sooner the better. In this, too, his opinion differed from Liu's.

Their differences, however, were not too serious, as they represented only disagreement about the speed of socialist construction, never about its goals. Even so, policy differences began to emerge in the party. Mao and his backers emphasized voluntarism, believing that society could be transformed faster with radical means. Other party leaders who opted for pragmatic and cautious measures to solve those same problems of social construction supported Liu Shao-ch'i. As these differences widened, an adversarial relationship began to emerge between the transformative radicals and the accommodationist moderates. We cannot determine exactly when this relationship turned confrontational, but it was apparent in early 1956 and worsened by the time of the CCP Eighth Party Congress in September 1956.

As Roderick MacFarquhar's discussion of intraparty ideological differences in the mid-1950s has noted, accommodationist leaders sometimes had their way. For instance, in late 1955 and early 1956 certain provincial

leaders recklessly pushed the speed of agricultural cooperativization, raising production targets, increasing investment, and expanding infrastructure construction. Party leaders like Liu Shao-ch'i, Chou En-lai, Ch'en Yun, and Li Hsien-nien worried that such radical demands would jeopardize socialist construction, and they expressed their concern and dissatisfaction on various occasions, urging Mao to proceed more cautiously. Attached to his radical, transformative approach to state-building, Mao rebuffed their warning and countered it with a proposal to allocate another 2 million renminbao (RMB) to expand infrastructure construction.[4]

On June 20, 1956, a People's Daily editorial titled "Anti-Conservatism and Anti-Radicalism, Too" urged more modest methods for promoting socialist construction. That statement, reviewed by Liu and submitted by the Political Bureau to Mao for his approval, so enraged Mao that he wrote on the document, "I don't want to read it!"[5]

Chinese Communist Party historians have commented on the significance of the early 1956 dispute, which they say marked the first time Mao had suppressed a dissenting Party opinion since the establishment of the PRC.[6]

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[4]Roderick MacFarquhar, The Origins of the Cultural Revolution: Contradictions Among the People, 1956-1957 (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), chap. 7.

[5]Shih Chung-ch'uan, Mao Tse-tung te chieh-hsin k'ai-t'uo, p. 212.

During September 15-27, party moderates (i.e., accommodationists) succeeded in curbing Mao's power, at least temporarily. The first of the several steps the Congress took to do that was deleting the following passage from the General Program for Party Construction:

> The Communist Party takes the theories of Marxism-Leninism and combined principles derived from the practical experience of the Chinese revolution--Mao Tse-tung Thought--as the guiding principle for all its work.

In rejecting Mao's thought as the basis of the party line, the accommodationists were telling him and his backers that his writings would not be considered incontestable dogma.

Second, the new Party Constitution stressed the role of "collective leadership" and opposed a "personality cult." There was to be a new Standing Committee within the Political Bureau of the CCP Central Committee. This new committee would consist of Mao, Liu, Chou En-lai, Chu Teh, Ch'en Yun, and Teng Hsiao-p'ing.

Third, the Congress increased the membership of the Political Bureau from thirteen to seventeen, an important step toward broad-based decision-making.

Fourth, the position of Chairman of the Office of the Central Secretary of the CCP (the Secretariat), which Mao held, was eliminated. Even more important, the

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[6]Wang Nien-i, "Evaluating the First Phase of the Cultural Revolution," Materials for the Study of CCP History [T'ang-shih yen-chiu tzu-liao] (Ssu Shuang: People's Publisher, 1985), p. 778.

Secretariat, which Mao had controlled, was subordinated to the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau.

Fifth, the Congress increased the number of vice-chairmen of the CCP Central Committee and filled those new positions with Liu Shao-ch'i, Chou En-lai, Chu Teh, and Ch'en Yun, further diluting Mao's power and strengthening CCP collective leadership.

Finally, the Congress drafted Article 37 of the new constitution to read: "The CCP can establish an honorary chairman within the Central Committee whenever the situation requires it."

It has been pointed out that the CCP's Eighth Party Congress was strongly influenced by the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU in Moscow, at which Krushchev had sharply criticized Stalin. Whatever its antecedents, the Eighth Party Congress clipped Mao's power. Collective party leadership was established, and Mao's thought no longer served as the leading doctrine. Finally, Mao lost the Secretariat, which was placed under the control of the new Standing Committee.

Before the Congress, Mao had been able to issue orders and directives through the Secretariat with only pro forma approval by the Political Bureau. As the Political Bureau's Standing Committee now controlled the flow of information out of the Secretariat, Mao could no longer count on that source of power.

Finally the constitution's new Article 37 designated a new honorary chairmanship, a position Mao could occupy only after his retirement.

Even after these shake-ups, Mao still had great power and status. He was still chairman of the People's Republic of China, chairman of the CCP, and chairman of the Military Commission of the CCP Central Committee. From these posts of party power, Mao retained his links with the party's provincial secretaries and key military regional commanders.

We do not know what Mao's public response to the Eighth Congress was. Undoubtedly he was dissatisfied and frustrated by the measures taken by the Congress, and he now worried about the loss of his supreme authority and the slackening of socialist construction.

Four months after the Eighth Congress, Mao criticized certain party cadres for excessive caution. "Radicalism is good," said Mao. "Those who are afraid of radicalism are in fact pushed by the rightists." They were, according to Mao, only "fifty meters to the right!"[7] Mao stressed the continued need to mobilize the people. War had mobilized them once; socialist construction would mobilize them again. Conservative cadres had no reason for fear. "Are industry and agriculture more fearful than war?"[8] When Mao

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[7]Shih Chung-ch'an, Mao Tse-tung te chieh-hsin k'ai-t'uo, p. 212.

criticized his communist colleagues as "rightist opportunists" and counseled them "not to be afraid," he was firmly convinced that socialist construction should be accelerated, not postponed.

The Great Leap Forward

In May 1958, roughly eighteen months after these events, Mao launched the Great Leap Forward campaign, which together with the Socialist General Line and the people's commune movements made up part of the Three Red Banners campaign. That campaign called for building socialism more rapidly and demanded that producer cooperatives be amalgamated into rural urban communes, each with its own common dining hall and living quarters. Through these communes the Party hoped to organize the population along military lines into larger organizations that could produce more coal, iron, and steel than the developed industrialized countries. Mao assured his colleagues that the living standards of the Chinese people would rise substantially and that China's industrial production would surpass that of the United Kingdom and the U.S. within three to five years. Convinced that the people's communes would soon lead to a universally egalitarian, communist society that would provide for everyone's daily needs, the

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[8] Ibid.

entire population was mobilized.[9]

Why did Mao launch this incredible campaign? How was he able to convince his comrades to take part? Where did Liu stand on the issue? To be sure, Liu had demonstrated his support for Mao by announcing the Socialist General Line strategy in his address at the fifth plenum of the CCP Eighth Central Committee in May 1958, but there is no other evidence that Liu was a firm believer in the new policy.

As mentioned above, Mao's political influence in the party was still enormous. Records show that between November 1957 and May 1958, Mao traveled throughout eleven provinces in east, south, southwest, and northeast China. On these visits he convened at least four meetings, at Hangchow, Chengtu, Chengchow, and Nan-nien, and participated in an undisclosed number of Party meetings at the local level.[10]

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[9]A common slogan of that time was: "Communism is paradise; the people's commune is the bridge to it." A song popular among militia peasants ran:

My farm field is my battlefield.
I dig ten thousand mou with my spade,
And I drill with rifles to defend my country.
Should American imperialists dare to invade,
I vow to destroy them without delay!

"Militarizing All the Populace and Combining Labor and Force," People's Daily, September 13, 1958.

[10]Mao inspected Hangchow, Nan-ning and Canton in January 1958: People's Daily [Jen-min jih-pao], January 28, 1958; Chen-chiang jih-pao, January 24, 1958; New China News Agency, January 23, 1958. He traveled to Shen-yang, Fushun, and Ch'ang-ch'un in February: People's Daily, April

Reviewing the reports of those travels, we note that Mao used his inspection tours as forums for his radical policies, which insisted that China should utilize both Chinese and Western methods [t'u-yang ping-chü]. This fact and the number of important personnel changes at the fifth plenum of the Eighth CCP Central Committee in May 1958 strongly indicate that Mao had been trying to mobilize officials to support his policies for dealing with the serious economic shortages that had begun to plague China.

In addition, new personalities were being moved into positions of power so as to make their influence available to Mao. At the fifth plenum, for example, Lin Piao was elected to the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau and the vice-chairmanship of the Central Committee. Three new members were added to the Political Bureau: K'e Ch'ing-shih, Li Ching-ch'uan, and T'an Chen-lin. All three supported Mao's Three Red Banners campaign, and it seems safe to assume that they backed Mao's attempts to gain

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13 and 29, 1958. In March he visited Ch'en-tu, Ch'ung-ch'ing, Kuan-hsien, Pei-hsien, and Lung-chiang: People's Daily, April 11 and 27, 1958. He was in Ch'ang-sha and Canton in April: People's Daily, April 22, 1958; Ta-kung pao (Hong Kong), April 30, 1958. See also Ssu-ma Ch'ang-feng, The Beginning and the End of the Cultural Revolution (Hong Kong: Pai Yeh Books, 1976), pp. 19-20; Republic of China (ROC), Bureau of Investigation, "Review of Recent CCP Local Party Meetings," Fei-ch'ing yueh-pao 1:2 (March 1958): 97-108; ROC, Bureau of Investigation, "An Analysis of Mao Tse-tung's Recent Inspection Activities," ibid.F, 1:5 (June 1958): 43-54.

Political Bureau approval for the movement. Most of the 25 newly elected Central Committee alternate members came from regions that Mao had recently visited. More important, Li and Li Hsien-nien, both ardent champions of the Great Leap Forward campaign, had been appointed secretaries of the CCP Central Secretariat. Taken together, these personnel shifts explain how Mao garnered the support he needed for his radical policies.

Mao's continued power and influence involved other factors than his political skill. First, many party leaders were proud of the 1949 Communist victory and the transformative policies (the Three Anti's, the Five Anti's, the First Five-Year Plan, etc.) that followed. As agricultural cooperativization advanced, they grew impatient and eager to achieve a socialist society even faster. T'an Chen-lin, a member of the Political Bureau and Mao's loyal backer during the Great Leap Forward campaign, later confessed that after socialist education had ended in 1956 "a lot of us became complacent and reckless . . . . We were eager to build up our socialist economic superiority."[11]

Even some intellectuals, including economists, shared Mao's transformative vision and believed that their utopia

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[11]T'an Chen-lin, "Tzai tang-chung-yung lin-tao-hsia ch'eng-sheng chui-chi]" [Fight Along with the Victory Led by the Party Central Committee], Red Flag 1981:13 (1981): 56.

might arrive sooner if given a little push.[12]

Second, Mao's personality cult and his supreme power over the party, state, and army intimidated his colleagues, who feared to challenge him. After the Three Anti's, Five Anti's, and Hundred Flowers campaigns, their silence deepened. Chang Wen-t'ien, a member of the Political Bureau and vice foreign minister during the Great Leap Forward campaign, disagreed in 1958 with Mao's idea of class struggle, but he dared confide that view only to his diary.[13] According to Teng Hsiao-p'ing, Mao's unchallengeable authority had long ago made party cadres believe in Maoism and trust Mao. Teng once told his colleagues that once Chairman Mao had considered a matter, "we don't bother to worry about it."[14]

Third and most important, Mao's transformative ideas and his voluntarism were the heart of the new campaign. The public mess halls established by Chang Lu during the Three Kingdoms period represented Mao's dream for a new China, a dream he had never forgotten during his

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[12]Lo Keng-mo, "Kuan-yu wo-kuo chi-hua ching-chi te hsin-cheng chi-ch'i fa-chan kuo-cheng te feng-hsi" [An Analysis of the Formation and Development of Our Planned Economy], Ching-chi yen-chiu 1981:2 (1981): 42.

[13]Chang Wen-t'ien, Chang Wen-t'ien hsuan-chi [Selected Works of Chang Wen-t'ien] (Peking: People's Publisher, 1985), p. 516.

[14]Teng Hsiao-p'ing, Teng Hsiao-p'ing wen-shuan [Selected Essays of Teng Hsiao-p'ing] (Peking: People's Publisher, 1983), p. 132.

revolutionary years. In 1958, Mao often praised Chang Lu and urged his colleagues to read the story about him.[15]

The people's communes represented the belated fruition of the abortive "new village" project that Mao and his young friends had formulated some forty-three years earlier. The concept of a peasant militia recalled the transformative proposal of the early 1900s that China sever virtually all traditional ties and unite itself through a militarization that would make all China a single battle unit. In fostering a China intended to surpass the U.K. and the U.S., was Mao searching for an escape from the Western exploitation that had afflicted China since the late nineteenth century?

On the one hand, he believed it was his leadership and ideology that had enabled the PLA to prevail in its war with the Nationalists. For the first decade after the founding of the People's Republic, most of his transformative policies had been enacted despite some minor intraparty disputes. The first five-year plan had ended with decisive improvement in the national economy, the state budget was balanced, and commodity prices were stable. China seemed prepared to leap over the transitional period toward a socialist society.

On the other hand, some party cadres had become

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[15]Shih Chung-ch'an, Mao Tse-tung te chieh-hsin k'ai-t'uo, pp. 237-238.

bureaucrats, corrupt, and content with the good life they now enjoyed--the same situation those same revolutionaries had once sought to destroy! Mao believed he needed to take vigorous action to keep the communist revolution on the right track before it was too late. China must be strong and rich. By combining will power and hard work, the country could achieve those goals.

Schurmann and Schell have called the Three Red Banners campaign "the magnificent madness."[16] Indeed, it represented an extraordinary plunge for Mao and his followers, one that greatly changed CCP history. We can discern in this campaign the workings of Mao's transformative plan to lead China into rapid industrialization and greater collectivization. He meant to transform China into an authentically communist nation of large-scale organizations under which the ordinary people would work selflessly, energetically, and heroically for the good of the motherland and the socialist state. As Mao cajoled his apprehensive colleagues to back him, he must have felt enormous satisfaction at having the party's

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[16]Franz Schurmann and Orville Schell, The China Reader, Vol. 3: Communist China (New York: Random House, 1966), pp. 401-2. According to their interpretation, the "magnificence" derived from the vision of a vast technological transformation achieved by and for ordinary human beings. The "madness" they referred to was the assumption that the intellectual and mechanical requirements of technology were subservient to human will alone.

support in leading the people into a bright future.

Retreat: Frustration and Anxiety

But that confidence would not last long. Within six months, reports began drifting to the capital that all was not well in the provinces. At the sixth plenum of the CCP Eighth Central Committee in Wu-ch'ang in November 1958, some of Mao's colleagues began to suggest alternative policies. The accommodationists, this time led by Liu himself, ordered a halt to the construction of new commune dormitories. They wanted farmers to own some land privately and to own their own dwellings, small animals, and pets. These steps were taken as a blizzard of alarming reports began to spread news of widespread suffering and starvation, serious demoralization among party and military cadres, and even armed resistance to Party policies in some provinces. It is now believed that perhaps as many as twenty million people starved to death between 1959 and 1961.[17]

Nor was this all. Gross national product fell from an all-time high in 1958 by 20 or 30 percent in 1960-61. Industrial production may have declined by as much as 40 to 45 percent.[18] The demoralization and suffering inflicted

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[17]Richard L. Walker, "The Human Cost of Communist in China," Issues and Studies 7:12 (September 1971): p. 28.

on the nation and the regime were appalling. Mao's vision of entering swiftly into a new stage of human development had turned to ashes. In 1959, Mao began to experience great sorrow. For seven months he refused to eat any meat.[19] China had retrogressed to conditions resembling those of the early 1920s or perhaps even the late years of the Ch'ing regime. How did Mao perceive all this, and how did he view his failure? More important, how did his colleagues feel? Robert J. Lifton has noted that the "earlier confidence in China's revolutionary immortality must have been severely undermined even among those closest to Mao who had in the past shared most enthusiastically in his vision."[20]

A unique CCP document, Kung-tso t'ung-hsun [Bulletin of Activities], stressed the disastrous consequences of the Great Leap Forward, which had brought about a nationwide decline in military and party morale and an incipient crisis in the party leadership.[21]

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[18]Barry Richman, Industrial Society in Communist China (New York: Random House, 1969), p. 613.

[19]Ch'uan Yien-shih, Hung-ch'iang nei-wai [In and Out of the Red Wall] (Peking: Kunlun Publisher, 1989), pp. 83-102.

[20]Robert J. Lifton, Revolutionary Immortality: Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Cultural Revolution (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 22.

[21]This bulletin, circulated among party cadres, was first obtained by National Intelligence and interpreted by J. Chester Chang, The Politics of the Chinese Red Army

Mao's depression and embarrassment were evident. According to his bodyguards, he had been excited at the beginning of the campaign, but he soon realized that some production reports were exaggerated or false. He ordered his bodyguards to return to their home towns and report the real situation to him directly. On October 26, 1958, Mao himself toured Hsiao Kang county in Hupei province without notifying local officials. When he learned that the county's production was only one-third the reported amount and that peasants were beginning to starve, Mao started to cry.[22]

At the final session of the Eighth CCP Congress' sixth plenum, Mao announced that he would not be a candidate for chairman of the Republic. Perhaps to mollify his colleagues, he conceded that future party work should be carried out by two groups, one headed by Liu Shao-ch'i and Teng Hsiao-p'ing, and the other by Mao himself. We cannot determine whether Mao resigned freely or under serious pressure, but some observers have claimed that he did not really abandon the chairmanship of his own volition.[23] The

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(Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1966).

[22]Shu Yung et al., eds., Mao Tse-tung i-wen-lu [Anecdotes Regarding Mao Tse-tung] (Hefei, Anhwei: Fa Lu Publisher, 1989), pp. 216-22.

[23]Gene T. Hsiao, for example, believes that Mao relinquished his state chairmanship "not entirely on his

official CCP version is different: Mao was relieved of his chairmanship responsibilities to "make it possible for him to devote more time to the theoretical work of Marxism-Leninism."[24] Other China watchers, however, claim that Mao's resignation was nothing but a ruse to allow him more time to mobilize his forces to recover his lost power.

> Mao's resignation is probably a strategy of pretending to retreat in order to advance [i-t'ui wei-chin]. He resigned in order to soften the people's resentment over the failure of the Three Red Banners campaign. He was only waiting for another opportunity to attack his enemies.25

Whatever the real reasons behind Mao's resignation, the plenum promptly approved it. After he had pressed his party colleagues so hard only a year earlier to adopt his bold policies, the appalling consequences of those policies had gained Mao nothing but resentment and new enemies. Taking the unprecedented step in his political career of relinquishing a post of high authority and power in the party must have left him with a keen sense of frustration and abject humiliation.

There were other grounds for frustration. First, Mao

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own choice." Gene T. Hsiao, "The Background and Development of the Proletarian Cultural Revolution," Asian Survey, June 1967, p. 395.

[24]Quoted in Lowell Dittmer, Liu Shao-ch'i and the Chinese Cultural Revolution (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

[25]Issues and Studies 3:10 (January 1959): p. 67.

still considered that his policies appropriate but believed they had not been properly implemented. Whether he blamed other Party officials for delaying or sabotaging those policies is beside the point. Mao simply had never lost faith in his transformative policies and their utopian vision of a new, socialist China. Mao's plans were only vaguely outlined on paper at that point, but they were probably clearly etched in his mind. He might not have formulated any concrete strategies, but he still believed that only transformative policies could ensure China's progress. For example, when he tendered his resignation at the Wu-ch'ang plenum, Mao had said:

> Some comrades within the Party have criticized the Campaign for being launched in great haste . . . . These late-viewers and debt-accounters are making malicious criticism. It has been more than 100 years since the Lenin October Revolution and more than thirty years since the establishment of our party, and the CCP has had a national victory for nine years. The conditions are ripe [for socialist construction].26

Thus, Mao does not appear to have lost faith in his transformative approach. All that was needed, he believed, were different instruments and new organizations to carry out that effort.

Another reason was Mao's dwindling confidence in his

26"Mao Tse-tung's Speech at the Sixth Plenum of the CCP Eighth Party Congress, December 9, 1958," Hsüeh-hsi wen-hsuan [Mao's Collected Works for Learning]. 2 vols. (n.p.: Red Guards, 1967), vol. 2, p. 251.

closest colleagues. He could not be certain that they had correctly implemented his policies over the past few years. By the way they were reacting to the nation's current disasters, Mao believed they did not share his convictions and wanted to backtrack to a non-socialist economy and society. A memorandum submitted by P'eng Teh-huai at the eighth plenum of the Eighth CCP Congress, held in Lushun, gave him a clearer understanding of what some of his colleagues were thinking.

P'eng stated, "In the nationwide steel refining campaign, we constructed too many small furnaces and wasted too many resources (materials, money, and manpower). The loss was tremendous . . . we paid a very high price (2 billion RMB)." P'eng went on to note sardonically that the "mistakes of the Campaign" had their origin in a "fad for exaggeration" and a "petty bourgeois mania."[27] Bluntly as it condemned the campaign and its effects, P'eng memorandum gingerly avoided assigning blame, but the tone of his criticism left Mao with only two choices: confront P'eng, or tacitly acknowledge that the campaign had been an inept and horrendous failure. Thus, P'eng Teh-huai's statement posed a serious challenge to the moral basis of Mao's claim that his policies had always been appropriate and should

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[27]"P'eng Teh-huai's Memorandum to Mao Tse-tung," Classified Chinese Communist Documents: A Selection (Taipei: Institute of International Relations, 1978), pp. 131-33.

still be followed. What made matters even more uncomfortable for Mao was that a majority of the members of the Political Bureau now agreed with P'eng's assessment.

We cannot know Mao's exact state of mind at this time, but he was not accustomed to being singled out for criticism by one of his supporters, particularly a subordinate he had occasionally helped. Mao lashed back at his critics by labeling them with humiliating class epithets. He charged that the Campaign had failed not because the basic policies were flawed but because the "capitalists" within the Party had raised obstacles. Two weeks after P'eng's memorandum, he declared, "The current struggle at Lushan is a class struggle. It is a continuous class struggle between capitalists and proletarians. Such a continuous class struggle has existed ever since our socialist revolution, and it will continue for still another ten or twenty, maybe even fifty or a hundred, years."[28]

Nor did Mao stop there. He branded the P'eng memorandum "anti-Party rightist opportunism" and characterized it as "by no means an accidental or individual error, but planned, organized, prepared, and purposeful,"[29] and began to treat the P'eng criticisms as a

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[28]"Mao Tse-tung's Speech at the Eighth Plenum of the CCP Eighth Central Committee on August 16," Mao Tse-tung ssu-hsiang wan-sui, p. 59.

personal attack. According to one report, he shouted at his comrade, "You have all refuted me but not my name." He went so far as to threaten the Standing Committee: "If the PLA [People's Liberation Army] chooses to follow P'eng Teh-huai, I will go back to Ching Kang Shan [Mount Ching Kang] and organize guerrilla bands."[30] This avowed willingness to gain his point even at the cost of destroying the party and dismembering the nation was a foretaste of the Cultural Revolution Mao would launch in 1965.

Mao's comrades must have reacted with dismay and fear. Realizing that Mao was fully capable of splitting the party, the Standing Committee worked out a compromise. The committee singled out P'eng, Huang K'e-ch'eng, Chang Wen-t'ien, and Chou Hsiao-chou for special criticism, labeling them an "anti-Party clique" and dismissing them from their high state positions."[31] Because his critics were still allowed to retain their party posts, however,

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[29]Ibid.

[30]Ibid.

[31]"Resolution of the P'eng Teh-huai Anti-Party Clique Made by the Eighth Plenum of the CCP Eighth Central Committee," Jen-min jih-pao, August 16, 1967. Huang K'e-ch'eng was then a member of the CCP Political Bureau, chief of the General Staff of the PLA and vice-premier of the state; Chang Wen-t'ien was an alternate member of the CCP Political Bureau, a secretary of the CCP Secretariat and vice-minister of foreign affairs; Chou Hsiao-t'ien was fifth secretary of the Hunan CCP Provincial Commission.

Mao's victory was far from complete. The party, not the state bureaucracy, was still the de facto power in China. The loss of unswerving Political Bureau support for his ideas and policies became painfully apparent in December 1959 when Liu Shao-ch'i formally replaced Mao as chairman of the People's Republic. The party had decided Mao's fate at the end of 1958, and Mao was obviously enraged at being shoved aside.

Between December 1959 and February 1960, Mao spent two months studying the Soviet textbook Political Economics. He even conducted a study group to examine that book. Mao, for whom it was unusual to spend so much time reviewing socialist economic theory, concluded that the defective element in his Three Red Banners campaign had been neither the Great Leap Forward nor the establishment of people's communes. Rather, it had failed because party cadres and the masses lacked sufficient faith in the commuist revolution. They had failed to carry out his policies thoroughly, and they had retreated as soon as they encountered difficulties.[32] China watchers observed that even after 1959, Mao still insisted on building a socioeconomic system in which every member would be

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[32]Shih Chung-c'uan, "Mao's Talks on the Soviet Textbook Political Economics," in Kung Yu-shih, Feng Hsien-shih, and Shih Chung-ch'uan, eds., Mao Tse-tung te tu-shu sheng-huo [Mao Tse-tung's Reading Life] (Peking: San-lien Book Co., 1989), pp. 148-78.

completely equal, production of consumer goods would be limited, and monetary exchange would be eliminated.[33]

But few paid any attention to Mao. In the following days, Mao became alarmed at the growing power of the accommodationist faction. Liu had boldly moved to repair the calamitous damage to the economy by urging that material incentives be restored in both factories and communes. He asserted that socialist modern economic growth would be impossible without more trained specialists and professionals, and he denigrated the importance of their participation in the party and in political work. The gist of his new program can be seen in the following statement of May 5, 1960:

> We must set up a suitable system of rules; we must organize production in a suitable manner, for it is only in this way that the activism of the masses can be elicited. If no system exists, the masses will not pay any attention to production.[34]

Soon afterward, the CCP drafted a secret "Urgent Directive on Rural Work," also called the "Twelve Articles," for distribution to cadres at all local levels. It restricted the power of commune leaders and made the brigade the

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[33]Hsi Huan, "The Cultural Revolution and Egalitarianism," Tang shih tung hsun [Party History Communications], no. 10 (October 1986), pp. 22-27.

[34]Liu Shao-ch'i tui-k'ang Mao Tse-tung ssu-hsiang han-pai-lu [Liu Shao-ch'i Confronts Mao Tse-tung Thought], Huang-tai-hui Peking t'ien-tao hsuen-yuan hung-ch'i kung-she she-hui tou-p'i-kai lien-ko-tien, April 11, 1967, pp. 49 and 51.

operational unit of planning, production, and accounting. In March 1961 there appeared the "Draft Regulations Concerning the Rural People's Communes," or the "Sixty Articles on Agriculture," which contained provisions to delegate power to low-level units. Drafted by Teng Hsiao-p'ing and P'eng Chen and approved by a Central Work Conference, this document became the blueprint for reorganizing the countryside and managing agriculture.

On January 1, 1962 Liu pointed out in a speech before 7,000 Party cadres that the Socialist General Line of simultaneously increasing output and achieving higher quality and greater efficiency was flawed. Noting that only 30 percent of the Three Red Banners campaign's failures could be blamed on natural disasters, "human error" being responsible for the rest, he called the campaign a "historical lesson."[35]

At the same time, Liu and his followers reintroduced free rural markets and permitted communes to sell their products at higher, profitable prices. Cadres who had been purged by Mao were rehabilitated.[36] All of these actions

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[35]"Pa Liu Shao-ch'i chiu-ch'u-lai shih-chung" [Seizing Liu Shao-ch'i to Show to the Public], Ching-kang-shan (Peking), April 11, 1967; also "Ch'ang-kuan-lo fang-ke-min shih-chien te ch'ien-ch'ien-ho-ho" [Events of the Ch'ang-kuan Building Auto-Revolutionary Activities], Tung-fang-hung (Peking), April 20, 1967.

[36]For example, Huang Ke-ch'eng, who had been purged along with P'eng Teh-huai at the Lushun plenum, was rehabilitated

represented a major retreat from the system of collective farming that Mao had favored.

It is worth noting that at the 7,000-cadre conference where Liu's accommodationist policies won overwhelming support, Lin Piao and Chou En-lai defended Mao. Lin argued that, because this had been the first time in history that a communist party had tried to establish a socialist society by means of anything like the Three Red Banners campaign, mistakes had been inevitable. "This is the price we have to pay," said Lin.[37] At the same conference, Chou En-lai praised Mao's contributions.[38]

Mao was undoubtedly angered by Liu's statements and policies, which were returning the rural order to its pre-1958 state. When Mao attacked Liu Shao-ch'i in early 1967, numerous published statements charged Liu with plotting against Mao Tse-tung and rehabilitating the rightist opportunists at the 7,000-cadres conference of January 1961.[39]

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as vice-governor of Shansi province; P'ang Fu-sheng, a former first secretary of the CCP's Honan Provincial Commission whom Mao had purged in 1958 for balking at the Great Leap Forward, was appointed first secretary of the CCP's Heilungchiang Commission; Teng Tsu-hsu, removed in 1955 as minister of CCP Agricultural Works for criticizing Mao's adventurist line, was promoted to vice-chairman of the National Planning Commission.

[37]"Ch'ang-kuan-lo fang-ke-min shi-chien te ch'ien-ch'ien-lo-lo," Tung-fang-hung (Peking), April 20, 1967.

[38]Ibid.

The party spent the next two years ridiculing Mao's policies. Liu, not Mao, was on the lecture circuit, speaking out at Party meetings, conferences, etc.; Liu's photograph began to appear alongside Mao's; Liu, not Mao, hosted ceremonies and met with foreign dignitaries. Mao, on the other hand, made virtually no public statements during the same period.

Liu's essay "How to Be a Good Communist" was revised and published in August 1962 by the Party organ Red Flag, which devoted its entire fifteenth and sixteenth issues to reprinting it. Peking People's Publications published it in pamphlet form in September 1962. The CCP Central Propaganda Department and the CCP Secretariat touted it, saying that the book "further upgrades the standard of Marxism-Leninism of the Chinese Communists . . . . It is certainly of great significance."[40] CCP cadres were required to read the book, and the news media continually commented on it. In only three months of 1962, 4.7 million copies were published; by July 1966, 18.4 million copies

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[39]To cite just a few examples, "Pa Liu Shao-ch'i chiu-ch'i-lai shih-chung," Ching-kang-shan (Peking), April 11, 1967; "Ch'ang-kuan-lo fang-ke-min shih-chien te ch'ien-ch'ien-lo-lo," Tung-fang-hung (Peking), April 20, 1967; "Chien-ch'uan 'Hsiu Yang' san-tsu ch'u-ling te tai-ying-mo" [Disclose that the Great Conspiracy of the Publication of 'How to Be a Good Communist' Is the Guiding Line of Revisionism to Oppose Mao Tse-tung Thought], Kuang-min jih-pao, April 8, 1967.

[40]"Dispose of the Conspiracy of 'How to Be a Good Communist,'" People's Daily, June 5, 1967.

had been printed.[41]

Liu altered the style and changed certain parts of his text to advance his own theoretical doctrine of proper communist behavior and ethics. The new version, which omitted entirely the history of the CPSU, went so far as to criticize "the cult of personality," "continued power struggle," and "arrogance" as qualities that Party leaders should scrupulously avoid. To be sure, Liu was careful to add seven quotations by Mao, but these were deliberately selected to convey arguments that readers would readily understand as supportive of Liu's viewpoint and not necessarily endorsed by Mao under all circumstances. Liu criticized a number of Maoist excesses in the late 1950s:

> There are people who, when studying Marx and Lenin, fail to get to the essence of Marxism-Leninism, but only learn its terms and phrases superficially . . . . They are content to learn isolated principles and conclusions by rote, and then even style themselves as "genuine Marxist-Leninists," and their actions and methods are diametrically opposed to Marxism-Leninism.42

> We have had not a few people of this type in the Chinese Communist Party. We had certain representatives of dogmatism at one time who were even worse . . . . They regarded themselves as "China's Marx" or "China's Lenin" . . . required that our party members should support them as "the leaders" without being chosen, climbed into positions of authority, issued orders to the party like patriarchs, tried to lecture our party, abused everything in the party, willfully attacked

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[41] Ibid.

[42] Liu Shao-ch'i, How to Be a Good Communist (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1964), p. 13.

and punished party members and pushed them around. Those people had no sincere desire to study Marxism-Leninism or fight for the realization of communism--they were just careerists in the party, termites in the communist movement.43

Conceit, the idea of individualistic heroism, ostentatiousness, etc. are still to be found in the minds of quite a few party comrades . . . . They like to show off and to have people sing their praises and flatter them. They are ambitious, like to cut a dash, claim credit for themselves and to get into the limelight. They like to keep everything in their own hands, and they lack a democratic style of work . . . . They are arrogant, and whenever they accomplish something they throw their weight around, become overbearing and try to dominate . . . . They try to dress themselves up as "great men" and "heroes" in the communist movement, and they stop at nothing to gratify their desire.44

Anyone who styles himself a leader or reaches after leadership can never become a leader in our party. The rank and file of our party will not make leaders of people who are prone to conceit, individualistic heroism, ostentatiousness, personal ambition, and vanity. No member of our party has any right to demand that the rank and file should support or keep him as a leader.45

People . . . believe that inner-party struggle must be launched under any and all circumstances . . . . They magnify every trifle into a matter of "principle" and brand every tiny fault with such labels as political opportunism.46

The "left" opportunists were clearly wrong in their attitude toward inner-party struggle . . .

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[43]Ibid., p. 14.

[44]Ibid., pp. 59-60.

[45]Ibid., p. 62.

[46]Ibid., p. 80.

> these almost hysterical people . . . deliberately hunted out targets, dubbed some comrades "opportunist" and set them up as "straw men" to shoot at in the inner-party struggle.47

There is no evidence that Liu's actions were intended to denigrate Mao, but it is likely that the first two of the quotations above were meant to puncture Mao's dogmatism and criticize his failure to observe Party procedures. The third quotation called attention to the Maoist personality cult that had flourished during the 1950s. The next quote served notice to Mao that the party was greater than any individual member and that no-one was allowed to set his own will above its dictates. In other words, Mao was to accept his current status of sharing power with others and to comply with the Party's new policies--in essence, to adhere to the new line being pushed by Party accommodationists. The final two quotations were intended to score Mao's tactic of branding his critics and to expose the left-wing, adventurist, confrontational factionalism he used to provoke needless intraparty conflict.

This new version of Liu's book must have further humiliated and outraged Mao, for the reprinted essay was condemned as one of Liu's "crimes" during the Cultural Revolution: "Why did you reprint the book in 1962, which in

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[47]Ibid., p. 89.

fact is a book against Mao Tse-tung Thought? How to Be a Good Communist is a huge, poisonous weed that talks about the corrupted capitalist world view."[48]

Mao was now in the position of having to share power with Liu and other party accommodationists. As Liu's policy changes gathered momentum, Mao must have asked himself whether the power he shared with Liu was not being steadily diminished. And what about Liu? Had he formulated any political stratagem to depose Mao entirely? He must surely have realized that Mao was not a politician to be relegated so early to the green pastures of retirement, especially after he had championed policies he considered sound even after their failure.

If we look several years ahead to the months immediately before the Cultural Revolution, we note Mao's public admission that the Party had "two headquarters" [liang-ke ssu-ling-pu]. Further evidence of the diminution of Mao's power and his resentment at the abrupt turn of events in 1959 surfaced at the CCP Central Work Conference held in Peking in October 1966, at which Mao directly accused Liu and Teng of establishing an "independent kingdom" [tu-li wang-kuo]. Mao complained aloud, "Since 1959, Teng Hsiao-p'ing has never come to see me."[49] Mao

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[48]Ch'i Pen-yu, "Patriotism or Treasonism?" Red Flag, no. 5 (March 1967). This article was promptly reprinted in People's Daily, April 1, 1967, p. 1.

would later state that during the decade before the Cultural Revolution he had been treated like a corpse at his own funeral.[50] Stuart Schram has observed that Liu's attitude toward Mao changed during this same period: "Liu had been treating Mao somewhat as Mao at one time treated Stalin, namely by trying to go along outwardly, but in fact transforming the substance of Mao's policies by applying them in a manner which Liu regarded as rational."[51]

Other observers have noted that during the same years the "tendency to shelve Mao was steadily permeating the Chinese Communist Party."[52]

Thus, we find that by 1962 Mao was extremely frustrated. He had been forced to share power with those he had increasingly come to distrust and even despise, and he worried about the course of the Chinese Revolution. After all, Mao had been the revolution's principal steward,

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[49]"Mao's Speech at the Central Work Conference on October 24, 1966," Hsueh-hsi wen-hsuan (Peking: n.p., 1967), p. 119; also "Mao Tse-tung tuei wen-ke chi-shih hui-pien" [A Collection of Mao Tse-tung's Directives During the Cultural Revolution], Tsu kuo [China Monthly] (Hong Kong) 1:66 (September 1962),: 46.

[50]Big-character poster in Peking, quoted in Yomiuri shimbun (Tokyo), January 7, 1967.

[51]Stuart R. Schram, "Mao Tse-tung and Liu Shao-ch'i, 1939-1969," Asian Survey 12:4 (April 1972): p. 292.

[52]Tokyo shimbun, December 21, 1966, quoted in Lowell Dittmer, Liu Shao-ch'i and the Chinese Cultural Revolution: The Politics of Mass Criticism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), p. 53.

and he could not allow rivals like Liu and Teng to derail it entirely.

Mockery by the Intellectuals: Humiliation and Further Frustration

As we have previously noted, Mao not only distrusted intellectuals, but he had enormous contempt for them. To be sure, he used then when it suited his purpose, just as he used the Party, but he could not rely on intellectuals to build socialism in China. That fact became bitterly apparent in late 1961. That year marked the appearance of a series of academic writings and mordantly satirical literary essays that pointedly criticized Mao and his policies without naming him directly. The policies that received the most vitriolic contempt were those that had been used to justify and support the Three Red Banners campaign.

Here are some examples. In 1962, Chien Po-tsan, vice-president of Peking University and a well-known Party historian, stressed that the actions of past emperors to alleviate the hardships of the rural people should serve as noble precedents in the formulation of current CCP policies, and he castigated the tyrants who had brought ruin down on the country by forcing farmers to overextend themselves. A few months later, Lu Ting-i, the CCP's

propaganda minister, published his Biography of Wei Chen. Lu's study of Wei Chen, a T'ang official celebrated for his honesty, his fearless courage, and his well-meant but blunt admonitions to the emperor, T'ang T'ai-tsung, was interpreted as hailing those Party members who had been punished for speaking out against Mao's policies. Then came a series of Peking operas based on Chinese folk tales about honest officials who had admonished their despotic rulers even though their frankness courted banishment and even death. Those operas included Hsieh Yao-huan by Tien Han, Li Hui-niang by Meng Chao and Ten Critics of Yen Sung by Hua Chia. Moreover, there was Wu Han's The Dismissal of Hai Jui, which touched off the explosion known as the Cultural Revolution.

The author, Wu Han, had long been known as a non-communist activist in the pre-1949 Democratic coalition. A noted historian, he was currently the vice-mayor of Peking. His article "Hai Jui Scolded the Emperor" appeared in the June 6, 1959 issue of People's Daily and was later adapted to Peking opera. The story portrayed Hai Jui, an honest Confucian official of the late Ming who had been dismissed twice and even imprisoned by the emperor for his candor. Wu Han prefaced his play,

> The key point of this play is Hai Jui's directness and perseverance . . . . Hai Jui was dismissed, but he was neither disillusioned nor afraid because the common people supported him for his brave acts . . . . His story is especially worth studying and learning from even today.53

The reader must ask himself why Wu Han would have written that play at that time. Indeed, anyone who understands the conditions that existed in Communist China after the Great Leap Forward must also recognize the state of mind of many intellectuals and their resort to allegory to comment on the conditions around them. Wu Han was referring indirectly to the injustices Mao had meted out to P'eng Teh-huai for criticizing the Three Red Banners campaign. He compared P'eng to the brave Confucian official who had stood up for the poor Chinese farmers of the late Ming dynasty. Just as Hai Jui had become the spokesman for the poor, P'eng had become the champion of the ordinary people of China, who had suffered so much from the follies of the Great Leap Forward.

Mao got the message. His followers complained later in 1967,

> Liu Shao-ch'i's clique was mobilizing the public opinion of counterrevolution by stirring up their cattle-ghost-snake-devils [niu-kiu-she-shen]. Wu Han, a writer of the American Chiang Kai-shek and guest of the capitalist headquarters, was the first to scream the challenge. In the huge poisonous weed called The Dismissal of Hai Jui, Wu Han grieved for P'eng Teh-huai.[54]

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[53] Wu Han, "The Dismissal of Hai Jui," Peking wen-yi [Peking Literature], January 1961.

[54] "From the Failure of P'eng Teh-huai to the Bankruptcy of the Chinese Krushchev," Red Flag, no. 13 (1967); the People's Daily aired a similar accusation on p. 1 of its

P'eng himself acknowledged in 1962 that he had felt so much sympathy for the farmers in 1959 that "I could not remain silent any longer. I wanted to be a Hai Jui."[55]

Still other essays reproved Mao. Night Talks at Yen Mountain and Notes of Three-Family Village singled out Mao's thought and policies for scalding criticism and even held Mao's personality and behavior up to sneering ridicule. A passage in Teng T'o's Night Talks at Yen Mountain alludes to the damage Mao's policies had inflicted on a country already poor and backward, and taxed the Great Leap Forward as "breaking that only egg that is the property of the family by one who merely engages in empty-headed thought."[56] Maoist utopian policies were ridiculed as the "politics of stupid men." "Some of our comrades are good for nothing. They are holding everything in their hands and hustling about every day doing nothing. What is the meaning of these 'politics of stupid men' except to provide them with self-gratification . . . . Now they are talking about how to augment the work of political

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June 11, 1967 issue.

[55]"P'eng Teh-huai ti kung-tse" [Peng Teh-huai's Confession] (Hong Kong: Chung-kuo wen-yi yen-chiu so, 1969), p. 112; also Chronological Crimes of P'eng Teh-huai, the Big Conspirator, Ambitionist and Warlord, ed., Shou-tu hung-ta-hui, Ch'ing-hua University Ching-kang-shan tuan, November 1967.

[56]"The Property of Only One Egg," Peking Evening News, June 18, 1961.

ideology. They do not know what political ideology means, nor do they know what the masses really need. We should do something to cool down these comrades and to abolish the 'politics of stupid men.'"[57] Another essay, "From Three to Ten Thousand," poked fun at Mao's conceit and arrogance:

> That crazy fellow who believes he can learn everything overnight will soon take a beating . . . . He has just learned ABC and 1,2,3 and already is so arrogant.58

The essay "Are Tricks Reliable?" echoed a similar theme:

> Some people indulge in foolish boasting, scorn the masses, and always hold half-baked ideas. These people should be made aware of their wrongdoings and try to correct their errors quickly. Otherwise, they are going to be disappointed in the future.59

Written jointly by Teng T'o, Wu Han, and Liao Mo-sha under the pen-name Wu Nan-hsin, the essay "Notes on Three-Family Village" also heaped scorn on Mao and his radical ideas. Teng T'o was secretary of the Peking CCP Commission and editor-in-chief of the Party-controlled magazine Ch'ien hsien; Liao Mo-sha was minister of propaganda of the Peking CCP Commission. Both were close to P'eng Chen and Liu Shao-ch'i. Notes on Three-Family Village appeared serially

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[57]"Abolishing the Politics of Stupid Men," People's Daily, May 11, 1957.

[58]"From Three to Ten Thousand," Peking Evening News, June 8, 1961.

[59]"Are Tricks Reliable?" Peking Evening News, February 22, 1962.

in Ch'ien hsien between 1961 and 1964, and devote much space to disparaging the policies of the Great Leap Forward and discussing their disastrous consequences.

It is likely that the following selection from one of these essays, "Antidote for Amnesia," was meant to imply that Mao, infatuated with his romantic, utopian ideas, had failed to see the real situation in China. For China's purposes, he was nothing but a bungler.

> A person suffering from amnesia does not even know his own home or recognize his wife. He is forever stumbling in his speech and never knows how to behave himself . . . . How does one deal with such a person? There are two ways that come to mind: first, spray his head with some dog's blood; second, hit him right on the head with a big stick.60

Another essay in the series, "The Great Empty Talk," took obvious pleasure in mocking Mao's political clichés:

> There was this kid in our neighborhood who always liked to copy the great poets, even when he tried to write a poem himself. Here is one of his masterpieces:
>
> The sky is my father,
> The earth is my mother,
> And the sun is my nursemaid;
> The east wind is my benefactor,
> And the west wind is my enemy.61

This passage seems meant both to belittle Mao's proclivity

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60 Wu Nan-hsing, "Antidote for Amnesia," Notes of the Three-Family Village (Peking: People's Literary Press, 1961), p. 61.

61 Wu Nan-hsing, "The Great Empty Talk," Notes of the Three-Family Village, p. 8.

to writing poetry and to ridicule his political slogan "The east wind suppresses the west wind," a cliché the Party had used to highlight China's reliance on the Soviet Union.

There is no way to measure the psychological impact of these satirical writings on Mao, but they must have galled him immensely, judging by an angry statement he made sometime in early 1964:

> I will exile those opera singers, poets, dramatists and literateurs out of the cities. I will send them into the farms and factories. If they refuse to go, no meals![62]

As it is in so many societies, satire is a traditional tool of Chinese politics. China, however, had developed that form extensively, and Confucian officials were famous for their tongue-in-cheek essays on the evil or misguided behavior of their monarchs. Communist Party officials reserved the same right to use satire to insult and poke fun at their leaders in hopes of influencing their behavior. That this tactic was not always successful does not seem to have averted the taunts and insults of those highly moralistic and self-righteous officials.

It was not self-evident at the time that these articles were instigated by the Party's leaders, Liu Shao-ch'i, Teng Hsiao-p'ing, and P'eng Chen, rather than flowing spontaneously from the pens of Teng, Wu, and Liao.

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[62] Literary Red Flag (Peking), no. 5 (May 30, 1967).

A few years later, however, Red Guards would accuse Liu, Teng, and P'eng of fomenting those public attacks, apparently not without cause.[63]

It is nonetheless isclear from these writings, however, is that certain Party officials were taking the opportunity to attack a leader once all-powerful and still tremendously influential. Their aim, clearly, was to denigrate Mao and mobilize public contempt for him, at least in official and intellectual circles. That same mutual hatred between Mao and the Party intellectuals had flourished in the mid-1950s when he had used the harsh Anti-Rightist Campaign to abruptly suppress the Hundred Flowers Campaign. Mao must have felt that the Revolution was being derailed by the intellectuals. If they could not be counted on to hold high the banner of communist revolution, who could be? A new plan to ensure the revolution's continued progress began to take form in Mao's mind, and that vision did not hold a place for the intellectuals.

The Revival of Revolutionary Impulses

By 1963 or 1964, Mao had been irritated by several events. He realized that his Three Red Banners campaign

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[63]For evidence of P'eng Chen's incitement of Teng and others, see Rudolph G. Wagner, The Contemporary Chinese Drama: Four Studies (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

had failed. He had been forced to share power with former subordinates. And then Liu Shao-ch'i, a man he had never greatly admired, had initiated policies diametrically opposed to those Mao believed essential to the Revolution. Last but not least, the Party's intellectuals had mocked him. Abroad, other changes threatened to undo his life's work. In Hungary the people had rebelled, demanding Communist Party reforms and an end to Soviet influence. In Moscow, Krushchev had denounced Stalin and mocked his spirit. When Mao himself had allowed the intellectuals to speak out about their difficulties, he had been met only with vehement criticism of the Party and himself. He must, therefore, have realized how difficult it would be to adhere to the revolutionary road he believed was the only route to the society of his dreams.

He must also have asked himself how it was possible to depend on long-standing Party colleagues who were so quick to betray him and reverse his policies. The sacred Revolution to which he had dedicated his life could be advanced only by men with his own spirit and commitment, and he did not see many such men in the high ranks of the Party in 1963 and 1964. Instead, he saw Party functionaries only too ready to sacrifice the Revolution to their own interests.

In an interview with Edgar Snow on January 9, 1965, Mao said that he was "getting ready to see God very soon."

Although he was prepared for it, "death just did not seem to want him." What troubled him, however, was that he did not know "if the revolutionary work will endure." Mao saw two alternatives for China: a continuing development of the Revolution toward communism; and an emasculated revolution in which his comrades would "make peace with imperialism, bring the remnants of the Chiang Kai-shek clique back to the mainland and take a stand beside the small percentage of counter-revolutionaries still in the country."[64] It is clear from his remarks that the 74-year-old Mao feared that the noble Communist Revolution he and his generation had so firmly believed in would be neglected, abused, and allowed to die.

It is possible, of course, that Mao may have exaggerated his own role. Perhaps he deluded himself in believing that he alone was capable and responsible enough to prevent the gains of the Revolution from being squandered. Believing that the Party factions he saw combining to reverse his policies had no idea of how to carry on the Revolution, he labeled them right-wing opportunists and scoffed at their puny efforts to accomplish what was necessary for China and the Revolution. Shortly after P'eng's criticism at the Lushan Conference, Mao wrote:

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[64]Quoted in Robert J. Lifton, Revolutionary Immortality: Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Cultural Revolution, p. 19.

> A small group of rightist opportunists who attacked the Party's Socialist General Line, the Great Leap, and the people's communes are just like tiny insects trying to attack a giant tree. The louder they shout, the happier I will be. Let them shout for even fifty years, and then we will see who will be the real winner or loser. This is my answer to those SOB's.65

Mao, who identified himself so closely with the Revolution, must have confused his personal frustration and humiliation with the difficulties of the Party's desperate historical experience. Similarly, as Lifton observed, Mao's state of mind prior to the Cultural Revolution had been "a misplaced faith in his own psychic state--a substitution of his own psychic history for history at large."[66]

Why did Mao begin to conceive of a Cultural Revolution? Why eliminate Liu Shao-ch'i? Why did Mao shift his attack from "class enemies" to "those in authority"? We have no evidence to indicate when he decided that Liu had to go,[67] but the conflict between them

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[65]"Mao Tse-tung's Letter to Editors of Shih-kan on September 1, 1959," Mao Tse-tung ssu-hsiang wen-sui, p. 19.

[66]Robert J. Lifton, Revolutionary Immortality, p. 95.

[67]As increasing numbers of authoritative CCP works on the Cultural Revolution have become available, more and more China watchers have observed that Mao first resolved in 1965 to destroy Liu--i.e., to eliminate him as his successor. Wang Nien-i, "Evaluating the First Phase of the Cultural Revolution," p. 780; also Chin Ch'un-min, "Several Points Regarding Instruction in Party History During the Cultural Revolution," Chien-nan hsüeh-pao 1982:4 (July

began in the early 1950s and grew inexorably until it reached a level at which an actual confrontation was unavoidable.

Mao had persisted in identifying his goals with those of the socialist, transformative policies of the Three Red Banners campaign. As a result, his frustration, humiliation, and anger at the "counter-revolutionary forces" around him continued to grow. At the same time, Liu and his supporters realized that they could preserve their positions and ensure the future of their accommodative policies only by curbing Mao's power. When the inevitable collision occurred, Mao and his followers argued for revitalizing the Revolution and demanded that those in power--Liu and his adherents--be totally destroyed.

Mao's anxiety for the sacred Communist Revolution combined with his personal frustration and humiliation to set the stage for a "second leap"[68] to save the Revolution and reassert his own power.

1982): 2.

[68]The Three Red Banners campaign, his first leap into the communist future, had failed. The Cultural Revolution seems to have been a second leap toward his utopian dreams.

CHAPTER IV

MAO, ASCENDING TO POWER

As the accommodative policies adopted after the Lushan Plenum began to take effect, most CCP cadres likely began to sense that P'eng Teh-hui had been right. Although they did not dare to express their doubts, they must have been troubled by certain recent events: Why had Chairman Mao, who had established the party and led it to victory against the Nationalist forces, ordered such ruinous policies? Indeed, why had Mao's leadership, so effective during the revolutionary period, been unequal to the task of building a communist state and society?

Some scholars have argued that a confused Mao transformed revolution from a means to an end in itself: He had grown so infatuated with communist ideals during his revolutionary years (the "Yenan experience") that he was blind to China's real social, political, and economic situation in the 1950s. Thus, at a time when the Chinese people needed political stability and better living standards, Mao was still offering them struggle in place of reconciliation and mass movements rather than improved technology and management skills.[1]

William A. Joseph has observed that the CCP's

ideological conflicts were never really resolved, a fact that had a profound effect on the party's political development. That ideological conflict was rooted in the endless debate regarding the essence of socialism--i.e., the conflict between "pure ideology" and "practical ideology."[2]

Byung-Joon Ahn has discussed the "crisis of integration" in Maoist doctrine. Lacking an operational ideology, Maoism failed to reconcile the party's ends with its means. According to Ahn, by the time of the Cultural Revolution, Mao's ideology was goal-oriented, not operational.[3]

Richard C. Kraus pointed out that, from the 1950s on, Mao and other CCP leaders had suffered from a cognitive inability to integrate Marxist-Leninist theory and practice. Consequently, the party's top leadership failed to reach consensus on such issues as building socialism and

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[1]Stuart R. Schram, "The Party in Chinese Communist Ideology," China Quarterly, no. 38 (April-June 1969), p. 25; also Peter Van Ness and Satish Raichur, "Dilemmas of Socialist Development: An Analysis of Strategic Lines in China, 1949-1981," in Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars, ed., China from Mao to Teng (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1983), pp. 78-79.

[2]William A. Joseph, The Critique of Ultra-Leftism in China (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984), pp. 12-21.

[3]Byung-Joon Ahn, "Internal Adjustment to the Great Leap Forward," in Chalmers Johnson, ed., Ideology and Politics in Contemporary China (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973), pp. 258-60.

dealing with the new capitalist class.[4]

China watchers in Taipei characterized the two-line conflict as moderate vs. radical or, to use Metzger's terms, accommodative vs. transformative. Yin Ch'ing-yao and Tseng Yung-hsien agreed that the CCP leadership had long been perplexed about how to reach consensus on such issues as agricultural cooperativization, the anti-rightist movement, the Three Red Banners campaign, class struggle, re-educating intellectuals, and relations with the CPSU. These "line" differences represented ideological disagreements within the party. The party leadership's insistence on a given "line," therefore, led to the factionalization of party cadres, and power struggle became unavoidable.[5] Affirming Yin and Tseng's view, Hsu Kuan-san emphasized that the ultimate cause of these cognitive differences lay in disagreements about the value of Mao and Maoist thought, and the role of class struggle.[6] In the final analysis, CCP "line" conflicts came down to a matter of epistemology: How well did the top leaders really

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[4]Richard C. Kraus, "Class Conflict and the Vocabulary of Social Analysis in China," China Quarterly, no. 69 (March 1977), pp. 65-73.

[5]Yin Ch'ing-yao, "The Process of the Cultural Revolution," Fei-ching yu-pao [Journal of Communist Affairs] 10:1 (February 1967): 16-18; Tseng Yung-hsien, "The Political Purge of the CCP," ibid., 9:6 (July 1966): 8-11.

[6]Hsu Kuan-san, "Some Explanations of the Cultural Revolution," Ming-pao 1:13 (January 1967): 4.

understand the nature of the instruments at their disposal to remold society?

As long as Mao continued his vehement insistence on utopian ideals, a split in the party leadership was inevitable. In the following year, Mao watched Liu Shao-ch'i further expand and consolidate his control of party and state. The grating mockery of the intellectuals also convinced Mao that, having lost control of the Party, he had forfeited control of its ideological organs, the "pens." And the situation, in Mao's eyes, had the potential to deteriorate even further. Soon after the intellectuals began to satirize him, Mao said, "In overthrowing a regime, the first step is always to develop public opinion and to lay the ideological foundations. Revolution requires this preparation, and so does counterrevolution."[7] That statement clearly indicates Mao's suspicion that Liu and other revisionists in Peking wanted to get rid of him.

The Sino-Soviet split and trends in Eastern Europe intensified Mao's anxiety about damage to his revolution. Now in his early seventies, Mao no longer had the luxury of remaining detached and optimistic; now able to count the days before his death, he also worried about the death of

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[7] People's Daily, August 9, 1966, quoted in Chao Ts'ung, An Account of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (Hong Kong: Union Research Institute, 1971), vol. 1, p. 47.

the revolution he had so painstakingly forged and fostered. This revolutionary, who had so often broken through the "knotted nets" that constrained him, now determined to summon his energies to rend them yet again.

Working Within the Power Structure

Mao selected three potent instruments for his struggle. First, ideological preparation: He would mobilize public opinion to support his authority and that of his thought. Second, he would forge a new alliance with key leaders of the PLA. Third, he would flank his own party and use his non-Party backers in Shanghai and the Red Guards to attack.

Before examining Mao's efforts in more detail, let us once against establish the macro-political context within which he operated. It is very likely that Liu and his colleagues met privately on a frequent basis to discuss policy matters and various measures to keep Mao and his radical ideas in check. This same group also held formal meetings whenever the Political Bureau's standing committee convened. We do not know how often they met, but presumably Mao attended some of their sessions, though we can infer from his later remarks that the committee frequently met without him.

Mao probably missed out on many sessions of the

Political Bureau as well, but he seems to have been present whenever the Central Committee met. In order to have his policies implemented, he had to convince the Political Bureau to endorse them and recommend them to the Central Committee, which would mobilize the Party to carry out those policies. Within this context, therefore, it is likely that Liu was often able to influence the Political Bureau and the Central Committee to do his own bidding. Tensions between Liu and Mao, then, would inevitably intensify, so that these two powerful figures very likely began avoiding each other.

Mao's first public allusion to this trend came at a party Central Work Meeting in Pei-tai-he in August 1962. He complained that Central Committee members, particularly those in charge of economic and financial affairs, had not consulted with him about important economic matters since 1959. He charged that, isolated from top Party leaders, he was "even aware of John F. Kennedy's intentions, but innocent of what was now taking place in Peking."[8]

At the same time, he continued to defend himself against references to the embarrassing disasters that the Three Red Banners campaign had brought on the nation. For example,

The real Socialist Revolution began only in 1953. But

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[8]"Mao's Speech at the Pei-tai-he Party Central Work Meeting, August 9, 1962," Hsüeh-hsi wen-hsuan [Selected Essays on Learning], vol. 3, p. 311.

> there was still something amiss: Production goals were exaggerated, and we moved blindly. However, all this was just a matter of misunderstanding, not a problem of two competing lines. For good fellows to make mistakes is very different from [the errors of] those who take the Capitalist Road. It is fundamentally different when mistakes are made by those Feudalists who have long pretended to be members of our party.9

Mao became more shrill when he referred to the "Party bourgeoisie within the Party." To carry out a true Socialist Revolution, he asserted, "We will have to engage in class struggle for ten thousand years. Otherwise we will merely become like the Kuomintang or the Revisionists."[10] We do not know what impact Mao's comments had on his listeners, but they must have indicated to many the growing rift between themselves and Mao. And Mao kept hammering away at the same themes.

One month later, at the tenth plenum of the Eighth CCP Party Congress in September 1962, Mao again proclaimed the need for endless class struggle, urging all Chinese Communists "to recognize the everlasting condition of class and the necessity of class struggle." He went on to argue that "the reactionary classes may return to power at any time. We should remain alert . . . . From now on, we should always be talking about class struggle--every day, every month, and every year."[11] Using these arguments, Mao

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[9]Ibid., p. 309.

[10]Ibid., p. 310.

persuaded the Political Bureau and eventually the Central Committee to launch the Socialist Education Campaign, also known as the Four Cleans Campaign, which was designed to purify political, economic, and ideological behavior as well as party-state organizations.

Looking more closely at the ingredients of the Socialist Education Campaign and the policies later encapsulated under the Cultural Revolution, we note many similarities. Both broad campaigns flowed from the essential Maoist concept of the need for endless class struggle in which the populace would be mobilized to attack authority figures who were not acting as true revolutionaries. In fact, the following words appear in the "Resolutions Concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" (also known as the Sixteen Directives), officially approved by the eleventh plenum of the Eighth Congress on August 1966:

> The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution strengthens and upgrades the Socialist Education Campaign. These two great movements should be combined . . . . In those rural and urban areas where the Socialist Education Campaign has been carried out properly and satisfactorily, organizations now in place will be allowed to remain untouched. Do not destroy them. But in all other areas we must use the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution as the basic line to do what the Socialist Education Campaign tried to do: purify politics, ideology, organizations, and the economy.12

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[11] Ibid., p. 313; also "Disclose the Great Conspiracy of 'How to Be a Good Communist'," People's Daily, April 12, 1967.

The Socialist Education Campaign subsumed all the goals that represented Mao's transformative thinking: alter political behavior to develop selfless, committed, loyal, and hard-working Party cadres; change organizations to make them as sensitive to redistributive goals as to increasing production and surplus; mold the populace to adopt proper socialist sentiments, attitudes, and ethics. It has been disclosed that, in issuing the document that launched the Four Cleans Campaign, Mao stressed, "The major point of the campaign is to counteract the capitalist factions in the party." Liu Shao-ch'i suggested that Mao use the term "elements" [fen-tzu] instead of "faction" [pai] to avoid unfairly singling out numerous Party cadres, but Mao insisted on "faction."[13]

The Party, however, did not implement the Socialist Education Campaign as Mao had wanted and expected. Liu and his followers managed to subvert the movement, carrying it out in a perfunctory manner that was "left in appearance but right in essence" [hsing-tso shih-you].[14] Mao soon

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[12]"Resolutions Concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," issued by the CCP Central Committee on August 8, 1966, in Ting Wang and the Editorial Board of "Ming-pao yueh-k'an," eds., Documents on the Chinese Cultural Revolution (Hong Kong: Ming-pao Monthly Publications, 1967), vol. 3, p. 21.

[13]Su Yung et al., eds., Mao Tse-tung i-wen-lu [Anecdotes About Mao Tse-tung], p. 264.

[14]"Some Cadres' Capitalist-Reactionary Line Must Be

realized that the Central Committee and the provincial Party leaders were not committing any real effort to the campaign.

Unwilling to compromise, Mao struck again in early 1963 with a Central Committee document titled "Resolutions About Current Issues in Rural Work," also known as the "Former Ten Directives." In that document he maintained that the Socialist Education Campaign had been charged with three great, revolutionary tasks: class struggle, the struggle to increase production, and the struggle to expand scientific experimentation. Mao said:

> All three are essential to "guarantee that Chinese Communists will fight against bureaucratism, revisionism, and dogmatism. If not, the landlords, rich peasants, counterrevolutionaries, bad elements, and cattle-ghost-snake-devils will rise up and confront the cadres, who will still be ignorant of what was going on and too confused by their enemies. All this will occur in a short period of time, whether a few years, ten years, or even longer, so that some sort of nationwide comeback of counterrevolutionaries will inevitably take place. Our Marxist-Leninist party will then have become a Revolutionary party or even a Fascist party. Then, all of China will have changed color. Dear comrades, please consider how dangerous this will be.15

The tone of this document is rather odd. First, a blustering Mao conjures up a future of antirevolutionary

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Criticized," Red Flag, 1967:5 (1967).

15Editorial, "Never Forget the Class Struggle," PLA Daily [Chieh-fang chun-pao], May 4, 1966; "The Ideological Weapon for the Proletarian Dictatorship Revolution," Red Flag, 1967:10 (1967).

activity by elements whose latent evil he emphasizes by referring to the demonic supernatural. Then he suggests the horrifying prospect that the Communist Party may be transformed into something unrecognizable, a new and very different party, and he plaintively alerts his readers to the danger to the Revolution and to all who believe in that ideal.

How able was Mao to convince other Party leaders with rhetoric of this sort? Many certainly must have had their doubts. After all, the country had just survived the most difficult of times. The economy was returning to normalcy, probably at a level similar to that of the early 1950s. The country was back on track after a time of enormous suffering. The educational institutions were back at their jobs. Cultural affairs were reviving. Life was returning to normal, and more opportunities were opening to more people. Yet here was Mao, pleading for more revolution, for policies that reminded many of the late 1950s.

It is most likely that Liu and his colleagues were unimpressed by Mao's declaration; after all, their own programs were in place and working. Although they undoubtedly regarded Mao's directive as far too radical to take seriously, they could not ignore it or the challenge it posed, for it was fundamentally an attack on their policies to maintain routine and order--in essence, it was a call to institutionalize the massive organizational

changes introduced in the 1950s. Probably after meeting and conferring among themselves, they drew up a plan to counter Mao's "Former Ten Directives." Sometime in the fall of 1963, P'eng Chen drew up a document titled "Regulations on Certain Concrete Policies for the Rural Socialist Education Campaign." Drawing on P'eng's document, Liu drafted the "Directives for the Socialist Education Campaign," also called the "Latter Ten Directives."

The contents of these documents were similar, except that Liu's was more moderate. From the tenor of Maoist attacks on Liu and his followers during the Cultural Revolution, however, it is apparent that Mao interpreted the "Latter Ten Directives" of the Liu-P'eng "clique" as directly contradicting Mao's "Former Ten Directives." Indeed, the reference to a "clique" betrays the antagonism between the two underlying plans. One Red Guard publication charged:

> Capitalist roaders had skillfully taken out the essential parts of Chairman Mao's line and the policies inherent in the Socialist Education Campaign as stated in the "Former Ten Directives"--i.e., the struggle of two opposing classes and the struggle of two lines . . . . They have harbored by all means available the agents of the capitalist class within the party.16

Assuredly, Liu and his followers were now pitted against

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16 People's Daily, November 23, 1967; also Peking yung-hsiao hung-wei-ping-pao, March 4, 1967.

Mao in a major struggle over which set of policies and guidelines would set the course for the Communist Party and the state. Would it be the transformative ideas of Mao or the more accommodative ideas of Liu?

When Mao became aware of the P'eng and Liu documents, he must been furious. He certainly lost his temper in November 1963, when he drafted a note to the party's Cultural Department that included the following:

> They are all cattle-ghost-snake-devils [niu-kuei-she-shen]. There are too many backward-thinking panoramas of feudalism but very little expression about socialism. Most of the writings now being published are stories about emperors and their vassals. The Cultural Department should pay more attention to this matter and make corrections soon; [as matters stand], its name ought to be changed to the Department of Emperors and Vassals or the Department of Talented Men and Beautiful Women or perhaps the Department of Foreign Dead People.17

This was not the first time that Mao had voiced his resentment. In early 1962, he had criticized the Cultural Department as the "Department of Emperors and Vassals, of Talented Men and Beautiful Women."[18] The Party watchdog over artistic expression had grown lax and over-tolerant.

One month later, on December 12, he again berated the intellectuals and Party workers in his usual, earthy

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[17]"Mao's Critique of the Cultural Department," Hsüeh-hsi wen-hsuan, vol. 3, p. 341. "Dead person," sometimes rendered as "ghost," is a common Chinese pejorative term.

[18]Chao Ts'ung, An Account of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, p. 57.

language:

> These are many problems in the areas of such arts as drama, music, the fine arts, dance, movies, poetry, literature, etc. Social re-education does not seem to be taking place in these areas, which are still controlled by dead people. . . . Many communist cadres are eager to promote feudalist and capitalist arts, but they are disinterested in socialist arts. This is indeed preposterous!19

In venting his anger with the Party's Cultural Department, Mao was also giving definite warning to his adversaries that the struggle for revolutionary ideas was to be waged in the arena of arts and literature. If his forces could not prevail in the battle of ideas, then all was lost. In attacking the Cultural Department, Mao was also attacking Liu and his followers and putting them on notice that unless ideas were properly controlled and influenced by the Party, the Revolution would gradually be vitiated.

But Liu and his adherents did not take Mao's warning seriously. Liu convened a seminar on the arts, in which Chou Yang declared that only a few people had created capitalist or feudalist works. For most artists, such works were mere aberrations, merely a matter of identification.[20]

Perhaps there was still another reason why Mao had

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[19]"Mao's Note on the Report Made by K'e Ch'ing-shih, December 12, 1963," Hsüeh-hsi wen-hsuan, vol. 3, p. 341.

[20]"Disclosing Number One Ambitionist's Crime in Peking Culture and Arts," People's Daily, April 23, 1967.

begun to single out the intellectuals for special observation and criticism. Mad had been harshly censured and was still being criticized in the popular media. As indicated in the previous chapter, he had been insulted and ridiculed by various leading playwrights and art critics. By responding to the Cultural Department as he did, Mao undoubtedly hoped to still the acidulous pens of those critics. His allusions to "dead people" and "ghosts" surely referred to Liu and his coterie.

Still trying to work within the formal system of Party authority, Mao next drew up another document intended to revive the Socialist Education Campaign and denounce the policies of Liu and his supporters. In that document, "Certain Regulations of Party Central Regarding the Urban and Rural Socialist Education Campaign," or the "Twenty-Three Directives," Mao escalated his offensive with the assertion that the educational movement's purpose was to "purge the capitalist roaders within the Party." Such "capitalist roaders," he charged, included "those who are on the stage and behind the curtains . . . . Their followers exist at such local levels as the community, district, and town. Even at the provincial and central government levels, there are anti-socialists."[21]

Judging from the fact that he went so far as to

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[21]Editorial, "The Ideological Weapon for the Proletarian-Dictatorship Revolution," Red Flag, 1967:10.

identify his opponents in this manner, it is possible that Mao had begun to believe that counterrevolutionaries were so deeply entrenched in the Party that he could not eliminate them without first destroying the party. So far, his attempts to persuade Liu and his followers had failed, and Mao had never won enough support from the top, formal Party organs to see his policies, and not those of his rivals, properly implemented. On top of that, Party intellectuals still excoriated him in the public media. Chou En-lai would later reveal that "Chairman Mao had criticized and warned Liu Shao-ch'i [before he launched the Cultural Revolution]. His most severe warnings had come in 1964 and 1965 when he drafted the "Twenty-Three Directives" for the Socialist Education Campaign . . . . Chairman Mao had virtually given up on Liu."[22] We can probably assume, then, that the struggle between Liu and Mao had reached a new stage, one from which there could be no turning back. Mao realized that Liu had to go, even if it meant destroying the party he himself had helped to establish.

Even as he recognized the need for drastic action against Liu, Mao realized that most Party members very likely supported his adversary. Everywhere in the party, it seemed, people were acting to frustrate his efforts to

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[22]Chou En-lai's talk when he met with Canton Red Guards on November 4, 1967, as quoted in Ssu-ma Ch'ang-feng, Wen-ke shih-mo [The Beginning and End of the Cultural Revolution] (Hong Kong: Pai-yeh Books, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 37.

put teeth into the Socialist Education Campaign. If Mao could not count on his Party comrades, whom could he count on? He would have to look outside the Party.

Seeking Allies Outside the Communist Party

Intraparty struggle has always characterized communist parties, whether engaged in making revolution or in ruling over monolithic states. Mao had certainly experienced his share of such conflicts. What was distinctive about his activities in the 1960s was that his influence and prestige in the Party had slipped notably. Not only had he been virtually excluded from the inner circle of Party leaders, but those same leaders, rankled by his loud blustering for class struggle and "carrying high the revolutionary banner," wanted to keep him out. After all, Liu and his followers had worked valorously to repair the tremendous damage that Mao had inflicted on both the Party and the national economy. Having weathered that crisis, Liu certainly did not want a repeat of Mao's policies of the late 1950s. He must have seen in those transformative policies the seeds of upheaval and chaos, conditions which he and the others who had sacrificed so many years in seizing power and running the machinery of the Chinese state could hardly believe necessary.

Precisely when Mao decided there was no chance of

enacting his transformative policies through the formal mechanisms of the Party, we cannot say. What we do know is that he had decided by 1963 or 1964 to forge a new alliance with key factions and leaders in the military, with which he had established good relations in the 1950s. The Mao-Lin Piao coalition became even closer in 1959 when Mao promoted Lin to replace P'eng Teh-huai as minister of defense.

Since that time, Lin had consistently sung Mao's praises and extolled his ideas for transforming society and realizing communism within a single generation. Even in the early 1960s Lin had issued various directives to his officers stressing the importance of the political and ideological work reflected in Mao's writings and ideas. In October 1960, for example, he had proposed the "Four Firsts" campaign, urging his troops to adopt the "Three-Eight" military style.[23]

Lin had rendered other support as well. He constantly urged the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to study Chairman Mao's writings and thought. He instructed each PLA member

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[23]The "Four Firsts," one of Mao's older clichés, refers to four "first priorities": in human relations, political work, ideological education, and thought (i.e., Mao's thought). "Three-eight" military style, as first used by Mao in the late 1930s, comprised three statements (correct political goals, a diligent work style, and flexible tactics) and four two-word phrases (t'uan-chieh [unified], chien-chang [alert], yen-su [serious], and ho-p'o [energetic]).

to be "Chairman Mao's good pupil" at a time when Liu Shao-ch'i and his supporters were revising and republishing Liu's How to Be a Good Communist. (That work, it will be recalled, exhorted everyone to be a "good pupil of Marxism-Leninism.") Two contending schools of Marxist thought were competing in China during this period, but, except among the armed forces, Lin and Mao seem to have had little success in broadening support for Mao's ideology. Statements during and after the Cultural Revolution indicate that Liu and his supporters "intended to use the cliché of 'being a good pupil of Marxism-Leninism' as a means to oppose the slogan being pushed by Marshall Lin of 'being Chairman Mao's good pupil.'"[24]

By the beginning of 1964, however, Mao appears to have made another move toward marshalling his forces to return to power. In January he issued a directive ordering that "industry learn from Ta-ch'ing and agriculture learn from Ta-chai; the entire nation learn from the PLA; and [that] political work be strengthened." (These guidelines, which provided a neat summary of Mao's ideas for transforming China, will be discussed below.) Mao's proposal that the nation be structured along the lines of the PLA--militarized and ready to march to the drum of Mao's ideology

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[24]"Chung-p'ao mung-hung Liu Shao-ch'i" [Bombing Liu Shao-ch'i], Shou-tu hung-wei-ping, January 1, 1967; also "Liu Shao-ch'i chuei-chuang" [Liu Shao-chi's Crimes], ibid., February 22, 1967.

--foreshadowed what the Chinese people had yet to expect. For the moment, however, it merely symbolized Mao's alliance with Lin.

An editorial, "The Entire Nation Should Learn from the PLA," published in the February 1 PLA Daily [Chieh-fang chun-pao], urged the nation to "read Chairman Mao's writings, do as Chairman Mao says, work according to Chairman Mao's directives, and be Chairman Mao's good warriors."[25] Lin had launched a new movement within the PLA. In March, the PLA Daily serialized Mao chu-hsi yu-lu [The Sayings of Chairman Mao]; a copy of that work was issued to every PLA soldier. In June, the People's Publication house printed Selected Works of Mao, Edition A (for Party cadres and intellectuals), and Youth Publications issued Edition B of the same work for soldiers, workers, farmers, and youth. In July, Mao began to talk about choosing an appropriate successor to continue the Proletarian Revolution. In doing so, Mao certainly had a purpose. According to one Maoist source, the first requirement for that successor was to be "a real Marxist-Leninist, not a revisionist carrying the banner of Marxism-Leninism like Krushchev."[26]

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[25]"The Entire Nation Should Learn from the PLA," PLA Daily, February 1, 1964.

[26]"Grasping the Major Contraditions and the Direction of Struggle," Red Flag, 1967:7 (1967).

That same source went on to say that the purpose of "raising this issue now is to fight against modern revisionism and guarantee the leadership of the proletarian class, to ensure the Socialist Revolution and the victory of communism. That is to say, we must prevent our party and our nation from changing their colors . . . . In the history of the international communist movement, there have been setbacks due to carelessness in choosing an appropriate successor. In such cases, the revisionists seized control. We must learn this lesson." Finally, "a person who does not devote himself to the Socialist Revolution and to Socialist Construction can never be a successor to the Proletarian Revolution, no matter how senior he is, no matter how long he has been a Communist, and no matter how much he has contributed to the Party."[27]

Thus, in initiating a debate over who should continue the Revolution, Mao was trying to stimulate general intellectual discussion of the ideas suitable for guiding and developing China. And he was taking great pains to announce that the pool of qualified candidates could not include the Party cadres who were effecting the accommodationist policies he so strongly opposed. In forcing a discussion of the requirements for leading China,

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[27]An Tzu-wen, "Cultivating the Successors to the Revolution Is a Strategic Mission of the Chinese Communist Party," Red Flag, September 23, 1967.

Mao was trying to touch a responsive chord in the youth as well, encouraging them to criticize Party authority and dedicate themselves to the Revolution. May he not have even been thinking of the Red Guards at this time?

One event from that time is worth noting. Sources during the Cultural Revolution record that when Lin Piao began to wave the red banner of Mao Tse-tung Thought and shout that the "entire nation should learn from the PLA," the chief of the General Staff, Lo Jui-ch'ing, initiated his own movement, the "PLA Great Military Competition." That movement stressed that military work should come first and military skills should be given first priority. Lo's campaign featured three slogans ("The Military First," "Skill First," and "Combat First"), all of which contradicted the slogans that Lin had lifted from Mao's writings, such as those urging the sacrifice of all available human energy for the Revolution. Thus, Lo's movement "deliberately opposed Vice-Chairman Lin Piao's directive to learn from Chairman Mao's works."[28] Preoccupied with the thirteen military exercises held during January-October 1964, the PLA had had little time to devote to the study of Mao's thought. Indeed, in calling for so many military maneuvers, Lo provoked a heated

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[28]"The Great Military Competition Is Lo Jui-ch'ing's Conspiracy to Overthrow the PLA and the Party," People's Daily, August 28, 1967.

argument with Lin Piao. Considering Lo's continual opposition to Lin, it is little wonder that when the Cultural Revolution broke out, Lo became the first target of Mao and his supporters and was immediately purged.[29]

On January 1, 1965 the PLA Daily issued another editorial, "Raising the Great Red Banner of Mao Tse-tung Thought to Further Fulfill the Campaign to Establish the Four-Good Battle Company." This editorial stressed the great importance of political and ideological work in the military. The same paper subsequently published a series of editorials urging the study of Mao's thought and emphasizing the importance of contradictions between classes, class struggle, the Proletarian Revolution, and the dictatorship of the proletariat--all Maoist concepts, and all significant to the dissemination and implementation of Mao's transformative policies.[30]

As Mao had once pointed out, the first step in overthrowing a regime is always to develop public opinion and carry out ideological preparation. Thus, it is very clear that Mao's and Lin's propaganda tracts throughout

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[29]The Maoists' first target after the Cultural Revolution was formally launched, Lo Jui-ch'ing was captured by the Maoists in early March 1966 and purged a month later on April 13.

[30]For example, "How to Emphasize Politics," PLA Daily, February 23; "Swelling and Broadening the Tide of Learning Mao Tse-tung's Works," ibid., March 18; "Emphasizing Politics Is Mao Tse-tung's Thought in Command," ibid., July 14.

1964 were intended for just that purpose: working to shape and influence public opinion, first in the military and later in society at large.

Mao would fire his first, but abortive, shot at the Liu-P'eng faction at a formal meeting of the Political Bureau's Standing Committee in September 1965. At that meeting Mao presented to the group a directive to purge the party of "capitalist-reactionary thought," and he asked P'eng Chen point-blank to criticize Wu Han.[31] His request, however, met only with outspoken resistance from other Standing Committee members. P'eng declined to carry out Mao's order, and it was clear that other Party leaders at the meeting resented what Mao was trying to do. Mao later admitted that when he proposed criticism of Wu Han in September 1965, "many comrades did not even read that document. They showed little interest in my directive."[32] The Standing Committee's response must have been the last straw. Mao realized that he would have to make his move indirectly, launching an attack on the intellectuals to disguise his real target, the top leadership of the Party itself.

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[31]"On the Key Points of Propaganda Education in the Cultural Revolution," PLA Daily, June 5, 1966.

[32]Quoted in Chao Ts'ung, "An Account of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," pt. 7, Tsu-kuo [China Monthly] (Hong Kong), no. 52 (July 1968), p. 19.

Making Moves

Aware of his enemies' advantage in confronting him on their own turf in Peking, Mao retreated to Shanghai sometime in late November 1965. After that withdrawal, the political situation in China began to change very quickly. A number of important events occurred between November 1965 and June 1966: the publication of Yao Wen-yuan's article criticizing Wu Han; the purge of Lo Jui-ch'ing, chief of the PLA General Staff, and Lu Ting-i, director of the Propaganda Department; the rescission of the "February Outline"; and the promulgation of the "May 16 Circular."

What was Mao's real motive in moving to Shanghai? Mao himself gave the answer:

> Peking was tightly controlled by the revisionists: Water could not slip in, and needles could not penetrate. In this red city, I was unable to launch an attack on Wu Han's "The Dismissal of Hai Jui." I had no choice but to go to Shanghai.33

But why focus specifically on the Wu Han play? Of all the attacks on him by Party intellectuals, that piece of satire had doubtless rankled Mao the most. The play minced no words in relating events of the Ming to the 1950s, when P'eng Teh-huai had criticized Mao and then been sacked.

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33 From Mao's speech when he received a Albanian military delegation on August 31, 1967 in Peking, Chung-kung wen-hua-ta-ke-min chung-yao wen-chien hui-pien [A Collection of Important Documents on the Chinese Cultural Revolution], ed. 2 (Taipei: Institute for the Study of Chinese Commuist Problems, 1979), p. 235.

And Mao knew who had put Wu Han up to it, or at least he thought he did: He suspected P'eng Chen and perhaps even Liu Shao-ch'i were the real culprits. Liu and P'eng had turned Peking into an "independent kingdom" shielded from criticism by Mao and other Party members. Wu Han would have to go; after that, it would be singularly easy to attack the others.

Therefore, Mao prepared his next moves in secret collaboration with Lin Piao; Chiang Ch'ing, Mao's wife; Chang Ch'un-ch'iao; Ke Ch'ing-shih, first secretary of the Shanghai CCP Municipal Commission; and other backers in Shanghai. On November 10, 1965, Mao authorized Yao Wen-yuan, the little-known but soon to be notorious editor-in-chief of a regional newspaper, to severely criticize Wu Han's play in the Shanghai Wen-hui-pao. Mao would later say that the Cultural Revolution had begun with Yao's article.[34] This literary salvo, then, was the beginning of Mao's return to total power, but Liu, P'eng, and their adherents seemed unaware of that development. And Mao had taken some careful precautions to disguise his intentions. He had also reviewed Yao's article at least three times and made a series of changes before it was finally published.[35]

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[34] Ibid.

[35] "Two Confronted Documents," Red Flag, 1967:9 (May 1967). Ch'i Hsin, a Hong Kong China watcher, revealed that Mao actually reviewed Yao's article seventeen times and that

Reading this essay, of course, does not convey the tensions that must have afflicted its authors. The article criticized Wu Han for his sympathetic portrayal of the landlord class and for downplaying the role of class struggle at that point in Ming history. It imparted no further political meaning to the play beyond condemning it as a "poisonous weed," yet it implied that the play was somehow related to P'eng Teh-huai's resignation. Nonetheless, Yao's essay made no effort to label Wu Han an anti-Party counterrevolutionary, nor did it propose how Wu and his play should be treated. The matter was merely recommended for "further discussion."[36]

Perhaps Mao hoped the Yao article would prompt nationwide criticism of the play's connotations. In any event, "those in authority" in Peking were apparently unaware of the identity of Yao Wen-yuan's "backstage backer," for immediately after Yao's article was published, P'eng Chen had some of his people call Shanghai to learn who had given permission to attack Wu Han without first consulting the Propaganda Department at Party Central in Peking.[37]

Mao himself drafted its major arguments. Ch'i Hsin, "In and Out of the Gang of Four," The Seventies (Hong Kong), no. 83 (December 1976), p. 5.

[36]Yao Wen-yuan, "Critique of the New Historical Play 'The Dismissal of Hao Jui,'" Wen-hui-pao, November 10, 1965.

To Mao's surprise, the article sparked little attention. Two weeks after the Yao essay, Mao ordered the Shanghai CCP Municipal Commission to telegraph Hsin-hua Books in Peking, ordering that the same editorial be issued in pamphlet form. There was no response.[38] That omission is easily explained, however, when we know that the national communication networks were then under the complete control of Lu Ting-i, director of the Propaganda Department, and P'eng Chen. Certainly, Lu and P'eng had learned about the telegram.

On November 29, Mao broke the deadlock by having the Yao article republished in the PLA Daily along with a provocative editorial note condemning the Wu Han play as "a big, poisonous weed." The note had this to say of the author:

> The author attempted to extol feudal class control, and he advocated the idea of non-revolutionary harmony. He did all this by twisting history and satirizing current policies . . . . It is obvious what his intentions were.39

This last editorial aside, of course, was to pour oil onto a burning fire. The Peking Daily, the mouthpiece of P'eng Chen, reprinted the editorial that same day, but inserted

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[37]Jen Li-hsin, "The February Outline Is the Black Outline of Capitalist Dictatorship," People's Daily, June 11, 1967.

[38]"Ch'ang-kuan-lo fang-ke-min shi-chien teh ch'ien-ch'ien-ho-ho."

[39]PLA Daily, November 29, 1965.

it into its academic criticism column in an effort to strip the article of its political and ideological attributes by focusing discussion on its academic merit. The People's Daily, then also under P'eng Chen's control, followed suit the next day with an editorial call by P'eng for dispassionate, academic discussion of the play. Fourteen of the region's thirty-five newspapers subsequently reprinted his note, while only the Canton Daily adopted the PLA Daily commentary. No other papers took any notice whatever.[40]

Although P'eng Chen's skillful editorial handling of Yao's critique of the Wu Han play had won him the first round with the Maoists, according to later Red Guard materials he did not discount the gravity of Mao's challenge. He went to Shanghai in late December 1965 to persuade Mao that Wu Han's error was academic, not political.[41] P'eng met with Mao for a series of private talks during December 21-23 and emerged more relaxed from a meeting on December 23 to announce to all that "the Chairman said a conclusion of the Wu Han question would be realized in two months . . . . The Chairman agreed with my view that Wu Han is not a political issue."[42]

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[40]Chao Ts'ung, "An Account of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," pt. 8, Tsu-kuo, no. 53 (August 1968), pp. 10-12.

[41]"The Chronology of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," Chao Ts'ung, ibid., p. 13.

Judging from these remarks, P'eng had been misled by Mao, who may have feigned agreement with him during his Shanghai meetings in order to disarm him and entice him to make statements that would later be used to accuse him of counterrevolutionary behavior. Returning to Peking unaware of Mao's real intentions, P'eng Chen convened a session of Party leaders on February 2-5 to draft the "Outline Report on the Current Academic Situation," also called the "February Outline." That document was reviewed by Liu Shao-ch'i, approved by the Political Bureau's Standing Committee on February 12, and distributed to Party cadres in the name of the Central Committee.

The major theme of the "Outline" was a call to end debate on all but the academic merits of the Wu Han play; political exegesis should cease. P'eng even took Mao's possible reaction into account, hurrying off to Shanghai in mid-February to report to him directly about the "Outline." On February 18, P'eng was back in Peking informing his colleagues that Mao had agreed with the "Outline."[43]

P'eng would, of course, later be accused by the Maoists of having twisted Mao's remarks on the "Outline" into agreement on his part. There was, however, no overt indication at the time that Mao objected to the "Outline,"

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[42]Ibid., p. 14.

[43]Ibid.

but the document would later come under harsh attack by the Maoists as a "most anti-Party, anti-Maoist conspiracy."[44]

Why had Mao remained silent about the "Outline" when, in fact, he obviously was disgusted with its contents? Two answers are possible. First, Mao may have felt that it was not the right time to express his hostility to the document. Second and more important, he was very likely already plotting his attack on the revisionists in Peking. His next move was to convene a forum which produced a tract called "Summary of the Forum on the Work of Literature and Art in the Armed Forces." Convened by Mao's wife, Chiang Ch'ing, at the behest of Marshal Lin Piao, that forum was held February 2-20 in Shanghai, at almost the same time that P'eng and his colleagues were preparing the "Outline" in Peking.

The "Summary of the Forum" began by stating that for the past sixteen years, literary workers had refused to obey Mao's directives. In other words, the community of artists had too long been obsessed with pursuing the wrong aims, which the "Summary" called a "black line." In order to launch a "great Socialist Cultural Revolution on the battlefield of literature and art," the document argued, "it had become necessary to erase this 'black line'." The document ended by calling on PLA forces to "play an

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[44]"Two Confronted Documents."

important role in the Great Socialist Cultural Revolution."[45]

The virtually simultaneous publication and circulation of the "Summary" and the "Outline" had at long last pitted those in authority against the Maoists and their PLA supporters. It is, therefore, safe to say that "two centers" of political and ideological gravity had now emerged in China: one in Shanghai, the other in Peking.

Even the Maoists later declared that these two documents "represented two very different directives issued from two headquarters of two different kinds of classes . . . . The struggle between the "February Outline" and the "Summary of the Forum" has become a heartbreaking clash between the Marxist-Leninist line led by Chairman Mao and the revisionist line led by the greatest capitalist-roader in power, Liu Shao-ch'i."[46]

Mao did not find the outcome of that "heartbreaking clash" to his immediate satisfaction. As already stated, when the "February Outline" was issued on February 12, it bore the Central Committee's approval, an advantage which the "Summary of the Forum" did not enjoy. Mao re-issued the "Summary" in March, but only "after breaking through a

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[45]"Summary of the Forum on the Work of Literature and Art in the Armed Forces," Peking hsin-wen-i, May 18, 1967; also Red Flag, 1967:9 (May 1967).

[46]"Two Confronted Documents."

number of difficulties."[47]

The "difficulties" he alluded to undoubtedly originated from the individuals who held power in Peking. Mao took the occasion of the "Summary's" re-issue to openly denounce Lu Ting-i and P'eng Chen and to make the following threat:

> The Propaganda Department of Party Central is the headquarters of the king of Hell [yen-wang-tien]. We should overthrow the king of Hell and liberate the little devils . . . . If the Peking Municipal Commission and the Propaganda Department continue to harbor these bad people, then they should be disbanded.48

The interesting question here is, how was Mao able to "break through" the blockade in late March and issue his "Summary"? After remaining quiet throughout February, why had he suddenly erupted and become so confrontational? One important factor in this alteration was a drastic change in Peking since late March. All of the following events occurred in March: P'eng Chen and Lu Ting-i disappeared in mid-month; Lo Jui-ch'ing was arrested and interrogated; and Liu Shao-ch'i departed on a state visit to South Asia. It would seem that the Liu-P'eng faction had begun to suffer a series of major setbacks.

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[47]Editorial, "An Important Document for the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," People's Daily, May 29, 1967.

[48]"Chronology of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution."

Mao's Machiavellianism

The turning point came with two events: the purge of Lo Jui-ch'ing and Liu Shao-ch'i's visit to South Asia. Lo's arrest by Mao and Lin is certainly one of the great mysteries of this period. To date, no official or private document has been found that mentions the specifics of Lo Jui-ch'ing's detention. Not a trace of the Lo affair appears either in Red Guard publications or in the big-character posters of the time. We suspect for the following reasons that Lo was taken into custody sometime before March 12, perhaps outside Peking or even Hangchow.

First, a Central Committee work team reported on April 13, 1966 that Lo had submitted to self-criticism on March 12.[49] Therefore, Lo must have been picked up and detained around this time. Second, Lo, who had long been head of the Public Security Bureau and was also the secretary-general of the CCP Military Commission and chief of the PLA General Staff, had a solid network of control over the public security system and the armed forces in Peking. Thus, it is unlikely that the Mao-Lin faction could have arrested him in Peking; in all probability, the Maoists had lured him outside Peking and had struck while he was

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[49] May 16, 1966 CCP Central Committee document on the Central Work Team's report on Lo Jui-ch'ing's mistakes, quoted in "Documents on the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" (Peking: Hua-kang hsüeh-yuan Mao Tse-tung ssu-hsiang hsuan-ch'uan-yuan, May 1967), vol. 1.

inspecting Hangchow, where Mao was living.

Lo was probably duped into writing his self-criticism: The Mao faction had very likely threatened Lo, promising leniency if he would agree to write his self-criticism. Having no option, Lo submitted to this self-humiliation on March 12. The Maoists, however, did not keep their word: They detained him in Hangchow, probably under house arrest, then used his written statement as evidence of his crimes against the Party and state.

Humiliated and swindled, Lo reportedly committed suicide on March 18 by leaping from the building where he was kept under guard. Having removed Lo Jui-ch'ing, the most important military backer of the Liu-P'eng faction, the Maoists found their way clear to encircle and destroy Liu, P'eng and their supporters. Lo must have realized what was taking place after he realized he had been duped. Liu Shao-ch'i, too, must have understood the meaning of these events and their profound implications for his power. But if so, why had he still left on March 26 for a 25-day state visit to Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Burma? Even now, scholars have advanced no adequate explanation of these puzzling events.

What is apparent, however, is Mao's shrewdness and the adroit application of his political infighting skills to destroy the "independent kingdom" of Liu Shao-ch'i. Mao struck while Liu was out of the country. He had

successfully removed an important lever of power for the leaders of the "independent kingdom" by arresting Lo Jui-ch'ing. Most remarkably, he managed to accomplish all this without arousing the suspicions of Liu and P'eng.

Some experts have speculated that Liu was the victim of an ingenious Maoist plot to whose successful evolution Mao's frequent supporter, Chou En-lai, was crucial. After all, it was Chou, then head of the State Council, who had arranged for Liu to be out of the country on an official tour.[50] Yet other experts have argued that Liu simply "misread the current situation."[51]

Ssu-ma Ch'ang-feng has offered the following observations. First, Liu and P'eng had managed to mute the force of Mao's first two salvos, the Yao article and Chiang Ch'ing's "Summary of the Forum." The essay criticizing Wu Han had ultimately been downplayed by relegating it to arid academic debate, not a full-scale political rectification campaign. The "Summary" had been pigeon-holed, while the Liu-P'eng "February Outline" was circulated for study by Party cadres. Liu very probably believed that the conflict had been resolved, at least for the time being.

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[50]For Chou En-lai's role in the Cultural Revolution, see Thomas W. Robinson, "Chou En-lai and the Cultural Revolution in China," in Robinson, ed., The Cultural Revolution in China (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), pp. 165-293.

[51]Ssu-ma Ch'ang-feng, The Life and Times of Mao Tse-tung, pp. 65-66.

Second, Liu and P'eng were still in control of the Party power structure and the chief organizations at the Party's apex. Their accommodative policies--blending market activity with a planned economy and downgrading political movements--were no doubt welcomed by most Party members and state officials. From their perspective, then, they must have believed that they had the Party membership's support. For these reasons, they were relatively confident of their ability to deal with Mao's challenges and to hold him at a distance from the Party apparatus.

Third, Liu and P'eng had obviously been misled by Mao's zigzag tactics into interpreting his actions as merely an attempt to launch an ideological rectification movement. P'eng had twice met with Mao, in December 1965 and in February 1966, and he believed he had obtained his "verbal agreement" or at least his tacit approval of the proposals for resolving their delicate political disagreements over the Wu Han and "February Outline" matters. To be sure, Mao had outflanked them on the Wu Han matter by having his document widely circulated, but very likely both Liu and P'eng were lulled into a complacent belief that nothing further would come of Mao's scheming.

These assessments await further confirmation, but they make good sense. Moreover, they support the central argument of this chapter, that Mao was using his political

skills to outmaneuver his opponents and eventually remove them from power. Mao had the capacity to make his chief rivals feel secure even while he was conspiring to attack them from a different direction, to isolate and encircle them, and then to eliminate them completely.

He gave further proof of this ability at midnight on January 13, 1967 when he sent his secretary to invite Liu to the People's Hall for a talk. (Liu and his wife, Wang Kuang-mei, had already been subjected to Red Guard criticism and investigation.) Mao began the conversation by inquiring after the health of Liu's children. After admitting that he had made mistakes, Liu asked Mao to approve two propositions: first, Liu would assume all responsilibity if Mao would free those Party cadres who were detained or under criticism; second, he had decided to resign as chairman of the Republic, member of the Political Bureau, and chairman of the editorial committee for the Selected Readings from Mao Tse-tung in order to return to Yenan or Hunan with his wife and children. Mao kept smoking and made no response to Liu's proposals. After several minutes, he smiled and suggested that Liu read the works of several German authors. When Mao accompanied him to the door, said goodbye and urged him, "Study well and take good care of your health," Liu assumed that he had just passed the critical test. Unknown to him, however, Mao had just 35 days earlier secretly constituted a task

force to investigate Liu.[52]

By somehow conveying that all was quiet in the south, Mao encouraged Liu to go abroad even though Lo had already fallen into the hands of the Mao-Lin faction. As soon as Liu was safely out of the country, Mao launched a variety of searing attacks on his literary-intellectual critics, purged Lu Ting-i and P'eng Chen, and all but eliminated his Peking opposition. Liu would certainly not have left China on his state tour, had he been more alert and aware of Mao's real intentions. In that event, the Cultural Revolution might have been a very different story.

Two days after Liu's departure, Mao had one of his followers, K'ang Sheng, secretary of the CCP Central Committee Secretariat, convey the following denunciation to P'eng Chen:

> The Peking Municipal Commission has been confusing right and wrong, striking the leftists, abusing the masses, and harboring wicked people. If it does not reorganize itself, it should be disbanded.53

Mao certainly had no authority to "disband" the Peking Municipal Commission, but in making that threat he was, in effect, declaring open war on one of the strongest bastions of the revisionist leadership.

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[52]Su Yung et al., eds., Mao Tse-tung i-wen-lu.

[53]"The Criminal, Black Meeting in April: Reveal the Conspiracy of the Liu-P'eng Anti-Party Clique," T'i-yu chan-pao (Peking), no. 22 (April 21, 1967).

How did Mao's enemies respond? After all, this was a critical moment in the power struggle between Peking and Shanghai. P'eng Chen had to consider three circumstances very carefully. First, Liu was out of the country. It would be inadvisable to launch a pitched battle against Mao in Liu's absence; it would be far wiser to temporize and await Liu's return. Second, P'eng had successfully fended off Mao's two past challenges; very possibly he believed he could baffle this new threat as well. Third, even if P'eng could afford to ignore Mao's new challenge, it still might precipitate a serious crisis. Why not, therefore, conciliate Mao and hope that some sort of compromise could be reached after Mao cooled down?

If these were the ideas that ran through P'eng's mind, then the actions he took make a great deal of sense. After about a week, P'eng convened a meeting on April 5 at which the decision was reached to criticize the "Three-Family Village Group"--i.e., Wu Han, Teng T'o, and Liao Mo-sha. Then on April 16, the Peking Daily (controlled by P'eng) published an essay criticizing those who had written the attacks on Mao titled "Critique of the 'Notes of the Three-Family Village' and 'Night Talk at Yen Mountain.'"

P'eng obviously hoped that this concession would diminish the tensions between Peking and Shanghai. In fact, the action boomeranged and hastened his downfall. A Cultural Revolution document later revealed the reaction in

Maoist circles to the April 16 essay: "P'eng Chen has dropped a stone, only to hurt his toes."[54]

Mao and his supporters clearly relished P'eng's response, realizing that he was gradually being drawn into their trap. After all, Wu, Teng, and Liu were all close colleagues of P'eng. The acknowledgment of their guilt in P'eng's Peking Daily merely provided the evidence Mao needed to denounce P'eng and brand him a leading counterrevolutionist. Moreover, Mao could interpret the essay as an open admission that P'eng had once suppressed Mao's criticism of Wu Han and opposed the "Summary of the Forum." P'eng was slowly stifling in the cocoon he himself had spun.

Mao now displayed his shrewdness, hurriedly convening a Political Bureau Work Meeting in Hangchow only two days after the Peking Daily article had provided him with the evidence he needed.[55] On April 20, Mao issued seven documents presenting abundant evidence of all of P'eng Chen's crimes, and he ordered the Peking Municipal Commission to disclose the full extent of P'eng's errors.

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[54]Editorial, "Attacking the Bandits Further," Peking Daily, April 16, 1967.

[55]The exact dates of the Hangchow meeting are uncertain, but it is generally agreed that it began on April 16 or 17 and ended in mid-May after few days of adjournment between late April and early May. See Chao Ts'ung, An Account of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (Hong Kong: Union Research Institute, 1971), pp. 172-98; also Ssu-ma Ch'ang-feng, The Life and Times of Mao Tse-tung, pp. 74-76.

These actions were taken with such suddenness that they took the P'eng faction in Peking completely by surprise. P'eng was even then in Hangchow trying to arrange an audience with Mao to clear up the misunderstanding.

Judging by a remark he made, Liu Jen, second secretary of the Peking Municipal Commission, was puzzled by Mao's order, asking one of his colleagues, "Chairman Mao has issued seven documents to us. What does he intend to do?"[56] It is very probable that P'eng himself was shocked by the suddenness of Mao's maneuver and the virulence of his attack.

An editorial titled "Raising the Great Banner of Mao Tse-tung's Thought Even Higher and Participating in the Great Socialist Cultural Revolution" appeared in the PLA Daily on April 18, after P'eng Chen had been purged and while Liu Shao-ch'i was exchanging toasts in Rangoon, Burma. Ordinarily, so important a statement should have appeared in Peking's People's Daily, the voice of the party. The last paragraph of that editorial ran:

> A mass movement called the Great Socialist Cultural Revolution is now emerging. The great tide of revolution will create a new epoch of proletarian literature about socialist classes by cleaning up all of the dirty literary thoughts now held by the old capitalist class.57

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[56]"The Criminal, Black Meeting in April: Reveal the Conspiracy of the Liu-P'eng Anti-Party Clique."

In this important editorial, Mao presented his central message of the 1970s. The great political movement he was launching would be called the "Great Socialist Cultural Revolution."[58] China would never be the same again. This revolution was to be a mass movement of incredible scope, for it signalled the emergence of the infamous Red Guards, and it signified a formidable assault on those in power who had resisted the new revolutionary tide. Even though many of those who attended the Hangchow meeting naturally opposed the new political movement, they were helpless and too divided to take any direct action to stop it. With Liu Shao-ch'i still out of the country, Mao undoubtedly intended his statement to demonstrate to all his enemies that he enjoyed the full backing of the powerful People's Liberation Army.

The drama then intensified. Immediately after his return from Burma on April 19, Liu Shao-ch'i flew directly from K'un-ming to Hangchow, but the trip proved to be too late to patch up the feud. The fates of Liu and P'eng had already been sealed.

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[57] Editorial, "Raising the Great Banner of Mao Tse-tung's Thought Even Higher and Participating in the Great Socialist Cultural Revolution," PLA Daily, April 18, 1966.

[58] First called the "Socialist Cultural Revolution," the movement was later termed the "Great Cultural Revolution."

The Cultural Revolution Begins

The Hangchow meeting produced the following resolutions. First, there would be a massive reorganization of the Peking Municipal Commission; P'eng Chen was thereby removed and replaced by Li Hsueh-feng. Second, the Central Propaganda Department was also to be restructured; T'ao Chu immediately replaced Lu Ting-i as director. Third, the "Five-Man Team of the Cultural Revolution," headed by P'eng Chen, was disbanded. Chen Po-ta was made the leader of an entirely new team, with Chiang Ch'ing, Wang Jen-chung, Liu Chih-chien, and Chang Ch'un-ch'iao as vice-leaders. Fourth, that work team would compile a report explaining the purge of Lo Jui-ch'ing. Fifth, the famous "February Outline" was to be withdrawn from Party use and replaced by the "May 16 Circular."

It should be noted at this juncture that Li Hsueh-feng and T'ao Chu were both still regarded as Liu's supporters. Mao's proposal to initiate a mass movement in which the masses would be allowed or persuaded to participate was vetoed at this meeting. This odd development can be explained only by the fact that most of the meeting's participants were very averse to so massive a social campaign. Furthermore, there seems to have been enough latent sympathy for Liu and his faction that the new roles of Li Hsueh-feng and T'ao Chu were endorsed. Finally, it

would appear that the members of the Political Bureau who attended this meeting simply did not agree that the radical mass movement Mao so urgently sought was either desirable or necessary.

On May 18, two days after the "May 16 Circular" was issued, the PLA Daily criticized a People's Daily editorial of April 14, 1966 as "ridiculous."[59] This was the second time that the PLA Daily, the organ of the armed forces, had taken issue with the Party's central newspaper (the first time had been on April 18). On that same day, Lin Piao spoke at a meeting of the Political Bureau that included more than the Bureau's usual members. Lin explained Mao's instigation of the Cultural Revolution as an effort to "avoid a coup in the palace." Lin also admitted that in order to forestall such a coup, he had "moved in troops and sent military officers." Further, he had taken steps to put the "military and public security systems" on alert. Lin ended by praising Mao, going so far as to call him a genius and the greatest Marxist-Leninist in the world. He gave the group an ominous warning that "whoever opposes Mao will be executed by the nation and the Party."[60]

Then on June 6, the People's Daily, which then was

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[59]Editorial, "To Emphasize Policies, Human Ideology Has to Be Revolutionized," PLA Daily, May 18, 1966.

[60]CCP Central Committee document, "Comrade Lin Piao's Speech at the Enlarged Political Bureau Meeting," Chung-king yen-chiu (Taipei) 4:5 (May 1970): 131.

being reorganized by the Maoist faction, suggested the need to "push the booming Cultural Revolution one step further."[61] Because P'eng Chen had just been purged, the "one step further" could only mean that Liu Shao-ch'i would be the next to fall.

With the full support of the PLA behind him, Mao again resorted to the tactics that had served him so well at the Lushan Plenum in 1959. Threatening those colleagues who still refused to support his call for a mass political movement, he warned that he would wage war if the situation required it. Realizing that such an action would destroy the Party, Liu and his supporters groped for some means to deal with Mao. If a war broke out within the Party, they were doomed, and all because one of their members had begun to show signs of madness. They must also have recognized that powerful colleagues--first Lo and then Lu and P'eng --had already been removed one by one. Liu must have realized that he was trapped and had little room to maneuver. Mao had written in the "May 16 Circular":

> The entire country should raise high the banner of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in accordance with Comrade Mao's directives to criticize anti-Party, anti-Socialist, and so-called "academic authorities" as well as capitalist reactionaries. The capitalist reactionary ideology in the ranks of the academics and of those in education, journalism, literature, and publishing should be criticized. Leadership positions in those cultural activities should be eliminated.62

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[61] People's Daily, June 6, 1966.

Such remarks probably succeeded in convincing Mao's enemies that he was mainly concerned with rectifying ideas, not with obtaining total power. But Mao did indeed want power, and he intended to use it to turn China upside down.

The Cultural Revolution Picks Up Momentum

On May 25, just nine days after the publication of the "May 16 Circular," the first large-character posters began appearing, and the mass movement demonstrations broke out. Over the next eight weeks, Liu Shao-ch'i and his supporters fought courageously against the onslaughts of the Maoist groups. They won some battles. For example, they sent more than four hundred work teams into the universities and related organizations to root out the Maoists, but these brutal attacks also cost them much public support.

Meanwhile, Mao was undoubtedly growing more confident in his ability to manipulate the complex chess game of power struggle then being played. While Liu Shao-ch'i was trying to mobilize public support for his group in preparation for the eleventh plenum of the Eighth Party Congress, Mao disappeared and swam the Yangtze River on July 16. The symbolism of this demonstration of his

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[62]"Circular Issued by the CCP Central Committee," May 16, 1966, Documents on the Chinese Cultural Revolution, vol. 1, p. 6.

physical prowess was lost on no one, and his conversations with young swimmers exuded his solicitude for youth.

Perhaps this episode, too, puzzled his rivals. How could Mao be out swimming when a major power struggle was under way? But Mao was back in Peking two days later, on July 18, ready to play his part in the Eleventh Plenum. It was at that meeting that Mao completely routed Liu and regained control over the Political Bureau.

The meeting was held sometime during August 1-12. At first, Mao fought bitterly with Liu Shao-ch'i and his adherents.[63] Mao would again find Lin Piao's help crucial in turning the tide in his favor. While the meetings were in session, Lin's troops had swarmed into Peking and begun occupying the buildings of important agencies.[64] Meanwhile, Mao relied on the tactic that had helped him so often in the past: lulling his opponents into complacency so that they let their guard down. He announced warmly, reasonably, that he had no intention of harming those comrades who had made mistakes. All he wanted, he smoothly assured them, was that the few colleagues who deserved it be punished to serve as a warning to everyone else. He

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[63] From Mao's speech when he received a Albanian military delegation on August 31, 1967 in Peking, Chung-kung wen-hua-ta-ke-min chung-yao wen-chien hui-pien, p. 235.

[64] Tsao Ts'ung, Account of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, vol. 1, p. 265; also Ssu-ma Ch'ang-feng, Beginning and the End of the Cultural Revolution, pp. 115-223.

soothed his opponents:

> We should give those comrades who have made mistakes a chance to correct themselves . . . . Our policy is to punish the wrongdoers for the purpose of warning others [ch'eng-ch'ien seh-ho], to cure the disease so as to heal the sick [chih-ping chiu-jen], to supervise them and help them to correct their errors [i-k'an erh-pang], and to unify, criticize, and unify [t'uan-chieh p'i-p'ing t'uan-chieh].65

Then on August 5, Mao wrote his first large-character poster, calling for "bombing the headquarters" [p'ao-ta ssu-ling-pu]. For a leader of Mao's stature to carry out such an act was rather astonishing--the Party's top leaders never engaged in propaganda production of this kind. It is likely that Mao's production of such a poster reflected a desperation that made him willing even to humble himself in order to vent his rage at Liu and his supporters. He demanded the group's full support in destroying the Liu faction in Peking. With this ominous development now known to all participants, there was little resistance to Mao's call for a Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, and the Plenum agreed to publish the important "Sixteen Directives." Two weeks later, Mao received swarms of Red Guards at Tiananmen Square. From that day onward, violence and anarchy spread throughout China as Mao's minions tried to disseminate his ideas.

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65 Mao's speech at the closing ceremony of the eleventh plenum of the Eighth Party Congress, Tsan-k'ao hsiao-pao (Canton: Chien-nan University), no. 4 (January 25, 1967).

Some Observations

The narrative analysis of Mao's ascent to power still leaves several questions unanswered. Why did Mao decide to destroy the party which he himself had helped to establish? Was the destruction of Liu and his Peking adherents Mao's real aim in launching the Cultural Revolution, or did Mao seek only to extend his power? Why did Mao organize the Red Guards, who eventually brought nationwide violence and lasting damage upon China?

As mentioned in the first chapter, a number of scholars have explained the Cultural Revolution in terms of factional conflict and/or policy (line) struggle. This study suggests that ideological incongruities in Mao himself and among the CCP leadership may have played a larger role.

First, Mao did not really lose his power after he resigned as chairman of the Republic in 1959. He was still chairman of the Military Commission of the CCP and chairman of the Party. In Communist China, as in most communist states, the party and the army are the most powerful bodies; chairmanship of the Republic is more significant for its symbolism than for its inherent power. A study of nearly all CCP documents issued before the Cultural Revolution has revealed that no Central Committee document setting forth domestic or international policy was issued

without Mao's approval.[66]

From the point of the CCP power structure, therefore, Mao had no reason to fear the diminution of his power or influence. From his personal standpoint, however, Liu's "revisionist" (i.e., accommodative) policies, combined with the mockery of the intelligentsia and the events in Eastern Europe and the USSR, might give Mao cause to suspect that he was losing his control both of the Party and of the direction of the communist revolution.

Second, if power had been Mao's only real aim, he would have ended the Cultural Revolution after Liu and his capitalist-roaders had been removed. Yet, far from ending it, Mao promised a reprise seven or eight years later to drive out the "cattle-ghost-snake-devils"; and "it will be launched again and again."[67]

Third, had greater power been Mao's only purpose, we would be unable to explain the transformative, radical policies enacted throughout China after the Ninth Party Congress in April 1969. (Liu had been expelled from the Party and dismissed from all his posts six months earlier, at the enlarged twelfth plenum of the Eighth Party Congress.) We may safely assume, therefore, that the Cultural Revolution was not directed at power alone. Mao

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[66] Ssu-ma Ch'ang-feng, Beginning and the End of the Cultural Revolution, p. 440.

[67] Mao's letter to Chiang Ch'ing, July 8, 1968.

had a wider, deeper vision for China and the communist revolution.

As for the Red Guards, they were probably Mao's last --but not uncharacteristic--option. Ever since his childhood, Mao had challenged authority. When he perceived himself as no longer that "authority," he led the masses to destroy his own party. After all, he had tried to maneuver within the Party structure: If the Socialist Education Campaign (the Four Cleans) had been carried out as he wished, there would probably have been no need for the Cultural Revolution. Thwarted, however, Mao had little hesitation in staking everything on a single throw of the dice, the mobilization of the Red Guards.

The complex socioeconomic environment of China in the early 1960s should also be considered. China was a society still torn by the radical upheavals of the 1950s. Party cadres had become corrupt bureaucrats, content with the advantages they now enjoyed, while many found life still harsh after the colossal failures of the late 1950s. Many who had grown disillusioned with communist ideals began to put their faith in a revitalized CCP under Mao's enlightened leadership. Many also felt frustrated by the rapidity of social change since 1949; particular animus was directed at various socialist-education campaigns, including the Three Anti's, the Five Anti's, and the Hundred Flowers Campaign. Under such conditions, Mao's

thought must have galvanized some to bold, heroic action to eliminate the Party bureaucrats and build the new society that some believed China truly needed. Such factors may explain why the masses heeded Mao's call to destroy the party he himself had established.

Mao attacked the Party by skillfully harnessing the contradictions in Chinese society and popular resentment toward the party. By emphasizing mass movement ("participation from below," "kick out the Party commissioners and rebel," "destroy everything"), he shrewdly roused the masses' indignation and distaste toward the party control they had so long endured.

Conclusion

Let us briefly retrace Mao's steps since the late 1950s, when the Three Red Banners campaign had backfired and China lay in economic ruin. He had lost his position of dominance in the Party. Year in and year out, he was to be criticized by Party intellectuals and ridiculed in the press. He saw his revolutionary policies relegated to oblivion. He saw former colleagues begin to snub him and ignore his arguments for reviving the Chinese Revolution. He watched new policies which he regarded as reactionary and anti-revolutionary spreading and flourishing throughout the country.

Try as he might to launch a new rectification campaign calling for the re-education of Party cadres (the Socialist Education Campaign), he saw that, too, fail as his old colleagues simply ignored his pleas and permitted his new directives to go unheeded in the provinces.

Realizing that without power he could never reorganize China and radically change its fundamental ideas and patterns of behavior, Mao began to scheme and plot to regain his power. He first tried to achieve this by working within the formal framework of Communist Party organs, but time and time again, this too proved futile. Growing older and more frustrated, Mao finally resorted to another tack.

He forged an alliance with Marshal Lin Piao, who could be counted on to do his bidding and who propagated Mao's ideas throughout the PLA. Without Lin's powerful backing, Mao could never have succeeded in destroying the Party's central leadership in Peking. Lin himself noted the two powerful instruments that launched the Cultural Revolution: "Chairman Mao's prestige and his thought, and the forces of the PLA. We dared to stir up the masses only when we possessed these two weapons."[68]

The PLA's role was vitally important, for the PLA represented the one force in the country which all other

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[68]Lin Piao's speech at the CCP Military Commission meeting on August 9, 1967.

groups felt powerless to confront. The Public Security Bureau, too, had achieved awesome power, but it operated under a cloak of secrecy, and few sensed or saw its presence. The PLA, on the other hand, was everywhere; many families had at least one member serving in the armed forces. The PLA's image was still untarnished; it had defeated the Nationalist forces and had creditably withstood fierce bombing and other attacks by American and U.N. forces during the Korean War. The PLA also assisted in many forms of economic construction. Consequently, when the PLA's leadership put its muscle behind a particular political faction to oppose another, people took it seriously.

There is little doubt, then, that the Mao-Lin alliance proved crucial in Mao's consolidation and recovery of his power. Chen Li-sheng has argued, in fact, that "without the support of the PLA, the Cultural Revolution" would only have been a 'cultural' revolution in name only, or simply another literary rectification movement."[69]

But we should not ignore other factors. Mao was exceedingly clever. He was able to take on one opponent at a time, while neutralizing all other rivals. He had the uncanny ability to know which opponent should first be isolated and removed. It was no accident that he selected

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[69]Chen Li-sheng, The Chinese Cultural Revolution and Political Struggle (Taipei: Li-min Books, 1974).

Lo Jui-ch'ing as the first to be purged. With Lo out of the way, the Party leadership in Peking had absolutely no support from the PLA.

Focusing next on the weak link in the chain, Wu Han, Mao was able to use a variety of issues to implicate his rivals and force them virtually to accuse themselves of counterrevolutionary crimes. By widening his net to ensnare other Party literary pundits, he could also include P'eng Chen and Lu Ting-i themselves, thus toppling in one stroke Liu's Shao-ch'i's most vocal and dependable supporters.

Finally, by mobilizing the Red Guard and unleashing them on the remaining Party power-holders, Liu and Teng Hsiao-p'ing, Mao was able to smash the Party's central leadership. But it took the presence of Lin Piao's troops in Peking to pull it off. Mao's opposition, it seems, never really knew when or from what quarter his next attack would come. Liu adopted a consistently passive stance, allowing his supporters to be chipped away, one by one. Naively hoping, perhaps, that he could compromise with Mao, Liu never fully realized that what Mao really sought was the power he himself held. And Mao wanted that power to carry out the most radical, transformative changes that any ruler in Chinese history has ever tried to introduce.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The analytical framework for understanding the process of political change in China since the 1950s has advanced substantially in recent years. Jürgen Domes, for example, argues that three major factors have interacted to influence the Chinese Communist polity: the struggle for political power among top CCP leaders, the factional conflicts that formed around that leadership power struggle, and the policy debates that flowed from those factional conflicts.[1] David Goodman offers his own three components: differing views on how to build socialism in China, the leadership factions that formed to support those different views, and the policies that evolved when their proponents were in power and could for a time implement their respective policies.[2] These approaches, however, do not satisfactorily answer the questions relevant to

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[1]Jürgen Domes, China After the Cultural Revolution: Politics Between Two Congresses, trans., Annette Berg and David Goodman (London: C. Hurst and Company, 1977), Introduction.

[2]David Goodman, "The Methodology of Contemporary Chinese Studies: Political Studies and the PRC," in Yu-ming Shaw, ed., Power and Policy in the PRC (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985), p. 343.

political change in the 1950s and 1960s which this study has tried to answer.

The CCP's paramount leader during these two decades was Mao Tse-tung. We must, therefore, begin with Mao's role in the political process of those years. What were Mao's salient leadership traits that influenced his decision to initiate the Three Red Banners campaign and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution? As this study has argued, the vital clue lies in Mao's transformative, utopian vision of the socialist China he hoped to build during his lifetime.

The second key question raised in this study is, why did Mao's leadership style prove so effective in the 1930s and 1940s when he and others were trying to build a revolutionary base to unify China under communist control, yet so deficient when he tried to build a modern state in the decades following the unification of China in 1949? The answer to this question lies in an understanding of the ideological crisis that beset the top CCP leadership when Mao's policies resulted in unprecedented calamity for Chinese society, gradually alienating more and more people from the Communist Party.

The third question this study has posed is, why did Mao decide to destroy the party he had worked so arduously to build, and why was he willing to take the high-risk gamble of promoting the Cultural Revolution? The answer

this study has given is that Mao believed his revolution was running out of steam; he opted to destroy the Communist Party in order to turn Chinese society back onto the revolutionary road he wanted it to follow, and to transform the thinking and lifestyle of the Chinese people.

The fourth question relates to why socialist China's process of political development was so different from those of other Marxist-Leninist states during the twentieth century. In no other states can we observe the erratic, utopian movements that Mao and his party used in their attempt to transform society. Again, the answer to this question can be found only in Mao's particular leadership style and in the radicalism of his ideas.

The analytical frameworks of Domes and Goodman do not provide satisfactory answers to these four questions. Political events before 1949, when Mao was building the Communist Party, are so different from events after 1949, when he used that party to try to transform Chinese society, that the latter period cannot be understood in terms of the Domes and Goodman analytical constructs. I have presented another approach, which has served to organize the information in the preceding chapters.

This study has examined Mao's leadership during two critical periods of his life: the young Mao in the years 1893-1921, and the aging Mao during 1956-66. The framework I have developed to analyze his thought and behavior in

these two key periods comprises the following components: the essential beliefs which he so fervently sought to effect; his leadership skills, including the brilliant manipulation of subordinates and the ability to eliminate his adversaries; and his attitudes toward and relationships with other groups, especially the intelligentsia. This triadic framework was applied to a large body of fresh, new historical information drawn from previously unused sources regarding Mao and the Cultural Revolution.

This framework has made it possible to understand not only how and why Mao thought the way he did, but why his thinking was so closely mirrored by his behavior. In addition, this same framework enables us to interpret the interactions of Mao's leadership personality with the Communist Party, with the political system that party produced, and with the Party leadership's influence on Party organization and behavior. Finally, this framework permits an explanation of Mao's motives in initiating such policies as the Three Red Banners campaign and the Cultural Revolution, which flow logically from the ideological convictions and behavioral patterns developed in Mao's youth.

The young Mao of the early twentieth century was very much a product of his time. His transformative thinking was representative of a trend common in the China of that day. Like other Chinese intellectuals, including Liang

Ch'a-chao, T'an Ssu-t'ung, Sun Yat-sen, and Ch'en Tu-hsiu, he wanted to rescue China from destruction by Western imperialism. In order to accomplish that, China's human and material resources needed to be mobilized and reorganized to oppose the predation of the Westerners and the connivance of their Chinese confederates. Peasants, workers, women, and other oppressed groups, however, could only be mobilized by changing their thinking and living habits. They would have to discard traditional ways and thoughts, which meant that the barriers of tradition would have to be broken down. If that could be done, Mao reasoned, China could be transformed into a new, egalitarian, and powerful society. That new society could operate like a single, well-designed, tightly-controlled machine, much like a unit on the battlefield, marching with military discipline. First, however, the old China had to be destroyed, and a new China rebuilt from its ashes. For Mao, it was as T'an Su-t'ung had once said: "All the knotted nets must be destroyed." Relationships among the citizens of the new China must be restructured, traditional family ties abandoned, wealth and property shared, and objective moral values applied (Mao's voluntarism). Mao firmly believed the country needed a moral hero who would act with fiery zeal, selfless, and fearless in his defiance of immoral authority figures. He saw the world around him as informed by partially latent historical forces that he

could hope to harness.

Although a product of his time and strongly influenced by the prevailing currents of thought about how China could be saved from foreign oppression, Mao was a very special kind of person. As this study has tried to prove, certain of his operative traits can be traced back to his early childhood. Mao bitterly opposed authority, particular that of Confucian tradition. His first challenge was to his father. As he grew into adulthood, he turned his opposition to the authority figures he encountered in the Chinese educational and social systems. As an adult, Mao continued to oppose authority, whether embodied in the Nationalist Party, the Soviet leadership, or the CCP diehards who resisted his ideas and wishes.

On the other hand, Mao expressed profound sympathy for the oppressed and poor, as demonstrated by his attitude and remarks about the peasants, workers, women, and the poor. He strongly believed that people should share their possessions and lead as simple a life as he had consistently done. The proper fulfillment of those goals was an egalitarian society, to be achieved through organizational structures such as the people's communes or the "May 7 Cadres Schools" of the Cultural Revolution years.

His attitude toward the intelligentsia, however, was more ambivalent--a love-hate relationship, in fact. While

he respected many writers and envied the fame of others, he viewed the intellectuals as spineless and unreliable in their thought and behavior: They were only good at carping and talking, but they accomplished nothing and were easily corrupted. As his power grew and he was more able to translate his beliefs into Party policy, Mao came increasingly to favor policies that limited the role of the intelligentsia. He insisted first on "thought reform," the use of various subtle techniques to isolate, humiliate, and finally compel victims to retract and change their principles; eventually, Mao and the Party would expand this practice and impose it on Chinese society at large. Second, Mao instigated endless campaigns of class struggle, mobilizing groups to attack other groups he believed represented the capitalist or bourgeois stratum; here, too, the intellectuals often bore the brunt of his scorn.

The young Mao's early experiments to establish a "new people's society" and night schools for workers were rather successful and later served as the prototype for building communes and "big schools" for mass education. Mao also had a remarkable talent for organization and an impressive panoply of other, more Machiavellian skills. When he set up the night schools for workers and the "new people's study societies", he called on his close associates for help. Similarly, he called on provincial officials he had recently met during his rural tours in 1955 to help him

launch the Great Leap Forward. During his struggle with Liu Shao-ch'i and others during 1962-66, Mao cultivated ties with PLA officers and carefully planned his moves against Liu and others; the acumen of his political timing and his tactic of dividing his enemies allowed him to maximize his own, lesser advantages.

In his battle to take over the Communist Party and lead China to a socialist ta-t'ung, Mao was blessed with a healthy physique and a great capacity to endure physical hardship. He had an iron will, daunting patience, and the stamina necessary to await the proper moment to attack his rivals. He was courageous and bold, and he never backed away from a powerful enemy.

Having briefly compared the salient traits of the young Mao and his older counterpart, we can better understand how his transformative thinking, personality, leadership skills, and policies could have so profound an impact on the Communist Party and its top leaders, eventually alienating most of them and setting the stage for a furious, factional power struggle.

In 1956-66, Mao took his first leap toward a socialist utopia by launching the Three Red Banners campaign in 1958. The failures of that campaign quickly produced adverse consequences for Mao. As early as the 1950s, some Party leaders had begun to oppose Mao's radical, transformative policies and arguments. That trend became overt after the

failure of the Three Red Banners campaign. Mao was finally forced to share power with Liu Shao-ch'i and others, and that setback was soon followed by essays and plays by Party intellectuals satirizing Mao's utopian, radical ideas and schemes. As the differences between Party leaders widened, an adversarial relationship began to take shape between the Party's transformative radicals and its accommodationist moderates. When the Hungarian uprising of 1956 was followed by Krushchev's revelation of Stalin's excesses, Mao probably feared that even in the USSR the socialist revolution could be reversed from within. Therefore, the fear began to grow in Mao's mind that the Chinese Communist revolution might be neglected, abused, and allowed to die. By 1960-61, Mao could see that many leaders held him responsible for all the difficulties China was suffering. The mockery of the intellectuals continued, and he believed his credibility was at stake. The Party's reversal of the "transformative dream" he had tried to realize with his Three Red Banners campaign was a bitter disappointment to a leader who had enjoyed such prestige as the head of the party that had unified China in 1949.

Mao's anxiety for the sacred Communist Revolution, combined with his personal frustration and humiliation, thus set the stage for a "second leap" to revitalize the revolution and reassert his power. Mao had retained the courage, intransigence, and dedication of his youth. He

now drew on those qualities as he slowly began to consider new means to counter the gradual, accommodative ideas of Party rivals like Liu Shao-ch'i: how to revitalize the revolution and oppose the new Party thinking so inimical to his own? Thus, Mao began to map a new strategy, a new campaign: the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

Precisely when Mao began to think in this way cannot be pinpointed from the historical records. In 1961-62 he tried to work within the formal Communist Party structure, pushing for the "Four Cleans" campaign, a socialist education movement that he hoped would find success in the countryside. If that campaign had been successful, perhaps Mao might have abandoned any idea of a Cultural Revolution. But the sabotage of that campaign by Liu and his followers compelled Mao to draw on his old leadership skills and seek an alliance with supporters in the military as a means to counterattack his opponents from within the Party. For that reason, Mao turned to Lin Piao and began to forge a new alliance to attack the party from outside rather than from within.

In this effort, Mao displayed his considerable tactical and organizational skills. He gradually promoted ideological work within the military and among the public. He attacked his enemies in the Party, and he waited for a favorable opportunity to oust the leaders who stood in the way of a real socialist revolution. To be sure, the newly

developed schisms in Chinese society helped his efforts. Many were bitter about the corruption and power-abuse of Party cadres. That bitterness extended to resentment at the Party's tight control and at stagnant living standards. These conditions provided the hothouse in which Mao would mobilize the masses and the Red Guards to attack Party organs throughout China.

After launching the Cultural Revolution, Mao continued to press for the new social, economic, and cultural order he had tried to promote with the Three Red Banners campaign. Recent research has considered Mao's "May 7 Directive" to be "the key to explain Mao's thinking about the Cultural Revolution."[3]

That blueprint for a new world order was similar to Mao's ideas for launching the Three Red Banners campaign. In his Directive, Mao described the "big schools" [ta-hsüeh-hsiao], whose members would both work in industry and agriculture [i-kung i-nung] and learn to read and study military affairs [i-wen i-wu]. Mao envisioned an economy without markets or payment of wages. The Directive also stressed such thought reform (rectification) measures as sending hundreds of thousands of students from cities to the countryside, re-educating Party cadres at new "May 7

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[3]Chang Hua, "On the Study of CCP History in the Period of the Cultural Revolution," Tan-shih yen-shiu [CCP History Studies], no. 5 (September 1988), p. 70.

Cadres Schools," sending teachers and technologists to physical labor, and having workers and peasants study and even teach at major universities.[4] All of these proposals were eventually introduced over the next decade, with results that proved fatal to China's modernization effort in the 1970s.

In summary, a cognitive crisis had been developing among the CCP leadership since the early 1950s. The impact of that crisis was felt in CCP politics at two levels. First, the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought upon which Party leaders had relied during the revolutionary period had become inadequate and irrelevant after the Republic was established. That cognitive dissonance was made even more apparent by Mao's repeated efforts to graft his utopian, transformative ideas onto an already crippled Marxist ideology, particularly after the failure of the Three Red Banners campaign. These cognitive difficulties led first to ideological differences, then to policy conflict and ultimately to factionalization and power struggles among the Party leadership. This set of factors--ideological, policy-related, and factional--can by itself shed some light on the course of Chinese Communist politics after 1949. Above all, however, the central, driving force of

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[4]The "May 7 Directive" was Mao's letter to Lin Piao on May 7, 1966. "The Whole Country Should Be One Big School of Mao Tse-tung Thought," People's Daily, August 1, 1966.

CCP politics after 1949 was Mao himself, his transformative thinking, his voluntarism, and his remarkable political skills.

It is difficult to conjecture how Mao might have evaluated the later progress of the Communist Revolution. Clearly, his Party colleagues held a different, more negative view in 1979, for they would reverse all of the policies and programs connected with that unique experiment. In his last few years, Mao became increasingly unhappy, frustrated, and worried.[5] It is impossible to know to what extent he could take solace in the new leadership that now flanked him--his wife, Chiang Ch'ing; Chang Ch'un-ch'iao; Yao Wen-yuan; and Wang Hung-wen--or whether he was optimistic about the future of the Chinese Revolution. But the aging Mao seems to have retreated into the past, perhaps deriving some consolation from past glories.

Mao's nurse, Wu Shu-chun, who had been with Mao since the mid-1950s, reported that he seldom watched movies during the last few years of his life. But early in 1976, shortly after the Chinese lunar New Year, he expressed a desire to see the movie Nan-wang te chan-to [Unforgettable Combat]. Mao wept while he watched the film that evening, and when he saw its footage of the Chinese people welcoming

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[5]Ch'uan Yen-shih, Hung-ch'iang nei-wai, p. 175.

the PLA's march into Peking, he cried aloud. Fearful that he might become overly agitated and suffer a stroke, his attendants removed him before the movie ended.[6] The era of Mao Tse-tung had clearly come to an end.

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[6]Ibid., p. 79.

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