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Mao, Maoism and Mao-ology

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# Mao, Maoism and Mao-ology

## A Review Article

*The Party and Lenin—of those twin brothers  
Which does Mother History treasure most?  
We say—Lenin, and mean—the Party,  
We say—the Party, and mean—Lenin.*

(Vladimir Mayakovsky, *Vladimir Ilich Lenin*)

WRITTEN SOME FORTY YEARS AGO in dedication to the founder of the Soviet state, these lines merely require a name substitution to fit the founder of the Chinese People's Republic and paraphrase the more prosaic slogans "without Chairman Mao there would be no Communist Party" and "without the Communist Party there would be no New China," so often heard in China in recent years. For in many respects, it was Mao's reconstruction of the Communist Party after 1935 and his adaptation of Marxism-Leninism to the conditions of China which made possible the victory of the Chinese Communist revolution. Further, Mao created a pattern of revolution which claims applicability to all of the non-industrialized areas of the world, in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In this sense, Mao Tse-tung may be considered the Lenin of China and the Lenin of our age. But this statement constitutes only a partial and a superficial characterization of the man and his achievements.

The contemporary growth of specializations has engulfed the field of modern Chinese history and with it the study of the Chinese Communist movement. A whole literature has made its appearance in recent years, but since no study of Mao's personality and career can be dissociated from the broad context of the revolution which he shaped, much of this literature is not redundant and sheds light on hitherto obscure facts in the history of the Chinese Communist Party. The authors differ not only on conclusions but also in approaches, areas of concentration and problems considered.

When Edgar Snow, the first Western reporter to make Mao Tse-tung's acquaintance, met him in the caves of Paoan in 1936, the Red Army had just accomplished the epic Long March; the Communist revolutionaries had lost their territorial bases in the South, as well as the bulk of their army. In the remote fastness of Northern Shensi, Mao was summing up the experience of the revolution, in preparation of a new start. We owe to Snow's journalistic resourcefulness a remarkably lively story of Mao's life, narrated by Mao himself, and yet unmarred by subsequent doctrinal accretions and

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revisions. Through *Red Star Over China*, the world at large for the first time learned who the Chinese Communists and their leaders were. At the time it was a sensational revelation and to this day it remains a uniquely entrancing historical record, inspiring in the student of Chinese Communism a certain nostalgia for those remote days when the revolution was "simple" and "pure."

A revised and enlarged edition of *Red Star Over China*<sup>1</sup> has now appeared. Although the bulk of the text remains intact, errors of past editions have been corrected and minor adjustments made for the benefit of the contemporary reader. The important changes are in the additions: a chronology of 19th and 20th century Chinese history, a bibliography, valuable biographical notes, and new documents, such as further interviews with Mao in 1936, which did not find a place in the original edition.

Three decades after the first edition of *Red Star Over China*, we find ourselves in presence of a score of works on Mao Tse-tung, most of them published in recent years. There are scholarly articles,<sup>2</sup> biographical chapters<sup>3</sup> and various books published in China and in the West. Furthermore, Mao's writings have been published time and again in various forms, translated in many languages and widely disseminated. There are the four volumes of Mao's *Selected Works* published in Peking,<sup>4</sup> individual works published in the form of brochures and topical anthologies of Mao's poetry,<sup>5</sup> writings on culture<sup>6</sup> or writings on military matters.<sup>7</sup> Last, but not least, there is the "little red book" *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung*, first prepared by the General Political Department of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, published and widely distributed in 1966 as the breviary of the Cultural Revolution.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> New York: Grove Press, 1968.

<sup>2</sup> e.g. Howard L. Boorman's excellent article, "Mao at Seventy," *China Quarterly*, 16, 1963.

<sup>3</sup> e.g. Donald W. Klein, ed., *Men and Politics in Communist China*, New York: Columbia University, 1960 (mimeo).

<sup>4</sup> International Publishers, New York, produced a 5-volume edition of Mao's *Selected Works*, ending in 1949; Lawrence and Wishart, London, produced in the years 1954 to 1956 a 4-volume edition of the *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, containing the material of the first 3 volumes of the Chinese edition.

<sup>5</sup> *Mao Tse-tung: Nineteen Poems* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1958).

<sup>6</sup> *Mao Tse-tung on Art and Literature* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1960).

<sup>7</sup> Mao Tse-tung, *Basic Tactics*. Translated with an introduction by Stuart R. Schram, with a foreword by Brigadier-General Samuel B. Griffith, Jr. (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966); see also *Selected Military Writings of Mao Tse-tung* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1966).

<sup>8</sup> In 1967 alone China printed 350 million copies of the "little red book," including several millions in scores of languages released by the Foreign Languages Press in Peking for distribution in 148 countries. China also printed in 1967, 86,400,000 sets of the *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, seven and a half times the aggregate total printed in the 15 years before the Cultural Revolution (*Peking Review*, 1, 1968). In addition, according to incomplete statistics, 845 unauthorized translations and editions of Mao's works in 65 languages have been published in 55 countries, including 802 editions of the "Quotations" (*Peking Review*, 49, 1967).

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The period of Mao's youth and formation is the one that has suffered the greatest amount of doctoring at the hands of orthodox interpreters in Peking today. These tend to make Mao appear somewhat like the legendary Lao Tzu, emerging from the womb already with a beard and full of wisdom. Thus, the official historian Hua Kang makes Mao appear as one of the leaders of the May Fourth Movement in 1919.<sup>9</sup> In view of this, laymen and scholars alike are indebted to Stuart Schram's painstaking efforts at reconstruction of the real Mao Tse-tung. Mr. Schram has accomplished the arduous task of collating present editions of Mao's works with the original texts and some of his revelations are startling.

The *Selected Works* published in Peking in Chinese beginning in 1951 and then translated into various languages, include only about half of Mao's writings. . . . Moreover the texts included in the *Selected Works* have been subjected to such numerous and profound changes by the author that one cannot even accept a single sentence as being identical with what Mao had actually written without checking it against the original version.<sup>10</sup>

Although, as far as I know, no systematic critical reconstruction and publication of Mao's *Selected Works* is being undertaken (outside of China, naturally) at the present time, Mr. Schram's words constitute a warning to all who desire to draw quotations from the wisdom of the "great teacher, great leader, great supreme commander and great helmsman." This leaves but little value to Anne Fremantle's *Mao Tse-tung: An Anthology of His Writings*,<sup>11</sup> because of her uncritical reproduction of texts from the *Selected Works*. John Rue further analyzes the Maoist reconstruction of party history and speculates on the reasons for Mao's revision of his writing.<sup>12</sup> He notes that the publication of the *Selected Works* began after Mao's return from Moscow in 1950, and expresses the belief that Mao wanted as much to establish his own version of the history of the CCP as to conciliate Stalin, by exonerating Stalin from responsibility for the blunders of his followers, like Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai, Wang Ming and others.

Mr. Schram, the most prolific writer on Mao Tse-tung, displays the most penetrating understanding of Mao's personality and thought. Of his two books in English—*The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung* and *Mao Tse-tung*<sup>13</sup>—the latter is an extensive biography, while the former is an compendium of substantial selections from Mao's writings grouped under topical chapters (such as "the Bourgeoisie," "Peasantry and Working

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<sup>9</sup> Hua Kang, *Wu-su Yüntung Shih* (History of the May Fourth Movement) (Shanghai, 1954).

<sup>10</sup> Stuart R. Schram, *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung* (New York: Praeger, 1966), p. 92.

<sup>11</sup> A Mentor Book (New York: New American Library, 1963).

<sup>12</sup> John E. Rue, *Mao Tse-tung in Opposition: 1927-1935* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), pp. 6-7.

<sup>13</sup> Pelican Books ("Political Leaders of the Twentieth Century"), London, 1966.

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Class Leadership," "Revolution, Dictatorship and Liberty," etc . . .) and preceded by a lengthy introduction, in which an outline of Mao's life and thought is presented against the background of contemporary events. In my view, Schram's arrangement of the text selections in the latter book appears to be of questionable value. It might have provided the reader with a clearer outlook on Mao's thought if such important essays as *On Practice*, *On Contradiction* or *On New Democracy* had been appended (verbatim and in chronological order) to the introduction, notes and prologue, instead of being arbitrarily fragmented, in order to fit—not always smoothly—under different topical headings. The difficulties which this arrangement imposes upon the reader are further aggravated by the absence of an index. Mr. Schram's book *Mao Tsé-toung*<sup>14</sup> is the French version of the *Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung*. In it, the author uses the official Communist *pinyin* system of transcription of Chinese names, which is commendable in view of the vagaries of the French transliteration system.

Schram's most valuable contribution is his documentation of the genesis and maturation of Mao's thought. His basic sources are Mao's own narration to Edgar Snow and the reminiscences of his childhood friends, the Hsiao brothers, especially the charming book of Hsiao Yu, *Mao Tse-tung and I Were Beggars*.<sup>15</sup> In his *Political Thought . . .*, Schram quotes hitherto virtually unknown early writings of Mao Tse-tung, which he translated himself. Most important among these is Mao's essay on the importance of physical culture, which Schram has elsewhere translated in its entirety into French and annotated,<sup>16</sup> and partially into English in the book discussed here. Schram draws a vivid panorama of the currents of ideas, which affected the mind of young Mao and partly reappeared in his "Sinicized Marxism" of later days. At the time of the May Fourth Movement, Mao Tse-tung had just graduated from Teachers' College in Ch'angsha and went for the first time to Peking, then the Mecca of the New Culture movement. His mind at the time was still a patchwork of Western and Chinese ideas, "a mixture of liberalism, democratic reformism and utopian socialism," as he told Snow. Schram further characterizes him as a vigorous individualist and a fervent nationalist, who did not find it contradictory to identify himself simultaneously with the popular rebels in Chinese history and their suppressors, whether Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty or Tseng Kuo-fan of the mid-nineteenth century.

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<sup>14</sup> Collection U, Armand Colin (Paris, 1963). Philippe Devillers has recently published a book entitled *Ce que Mao a vraiment dit* (Stock, Paris, 1968), which apparently also analyzes selections of Mao's writings in their historical context (*Le Monde*, weekly edition, June 13-19, 1968), but unfortunately the book is not at present available to the reviewer.

<sup>15</sup> (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1959); Emi Siao, *Mao Tse-tung, His Childhood and Youth* (Bombay: People's Publishing House, 1953).

<sup>16</sup> Stuart Schram, *Une étude de l'éducation physique* (Série: "Materiaux pour l'étude de la Chine moderne et contemporaine," Paris: Mouton, 1962).

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At Peking University, the father of Chinese Marxism, Li Ta-chao, who saw China and other Asian nations as proletarianized nations, oppressed by a handful of capitalist nations, propagated among his students the populist call to intellectuals to go among the people, especially among the peasantry, in order to raise it from obscurantism and oppression and awaken it to its collective creative potential. Li believed that the salvation of China lay in the emancipation of its peasantry.<sup>17</sup>

A case can clearly be made that, from the May Fourth Movement on, Li Ta-chao's teaching was the single most important influence in shaping Mao's ideological development. Li not only impressed Mao by his appeal to the intellectuals "to go into the masses" but also deepened his nationalism, making it possible for him to be both a Marxist-Leninist and a Chinese nationalist, and strengthening this voluntaristic inclination, which was to become so strikingly characteristic of Mao's approach to problems—an approach amounting in effect to a belief that "the subjective can create the objective."<sup>18</sup> Following Li Ta-chao, Mao rejected both Confucian conservatism and "all-out Westernization." Instead, he applied critical discrimination within both Chinese and Western culture, including Marxism:

"In his intellectual development, he leaped directly from tradition-oriented nationalism to revolutionary nationalism, without ever passing through the intermediate stage of radical Westernization. This is one of the traits that fitted him for the leadership of the Chinese revolution; conversely, men like Ch'en Tu-hsiu, insufficiently nationalistic in outlook, had little chance of prevailing in the struggle for power."<sup>19</sup>

In Mao's eyes, as in Li's, the teachings of Marx and Engels were of little relevance to China, because they tended to make man the passive object of blind historical forces: China's tragedy was that, unless revolutionary action consciously accelerated the rotation of the wheel of history, the nation could not survive and be regenerated. Mao was understandably more attracted to Lenin, who like himself, was essentially a man of action, concerned primarily with revolutionary strategy and the conquest of power. Lenin had furthermore discarded the traditional Marxist bias against the peasantry and recognized that in Asia the peasantry would constitute the chief force of the revolution.

In 1926-27 Mao Tse-tung began his activity among the peasantry of his native Hunan and produced his *Analysis of Classes in Chinese Society* and *Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan Province*. These are possibly the most revised of all the essays included in the *Selected Works*. Oddly enough, the early and immature essay, which the "Hunan Report" is, became the center of a controversy on Mao's originality.

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<sup>17</sup> See Maurice Meissner, *Li Ta-chao and the Origins of Chinese Marxism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967).

<sup>18</sup> Schram, *Political Thought . . .*, p. 80.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

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Dr. Karl A. Wittfogel quoted it to deny Mao all originality of thought and make him appear as a mere parrot of Lenin.<sup>20</sup> Schram quotes substantial extracts of the original version of the "Hunan Report" and these clearly show that in 1927 Mao had not yet fully mastered Leninist concepts. He attributed to the peasantry a degree of initiative in the direction of the revolution, which neither Lenin nor Stalin could have accepted. He was still ideologically eclectic, but as a social radical he was in disagreement with the CCP leadership, because of its irresoluteness toward the agrarian revolution.

In his other book, *Mao Tse-tung*, Schram dates the beginning of Mao's assimilation of basic Marxist-Leninist principles as late as the Wayaopao conference of the Politburo CCP in 1935, at which time he made a report on the tactics of fighting Japanese imperialism.

On the other hand, Mao's early preoccupation with organizational techniques and emphasis on the primacy of politics, is evidence of what Schram calls "natural Leninism." Schram considers the "Hunan Report" as essentially "a-Marxist" and aptly sums up Mao's debt to Lenin: the idea that political consciousness does not manifest itself spontaneously in the proletariat, the theory of imperialism, the idea of political alliance between the proletariat and certain other classes. But he also points out that Mao has transformed these borrowings into "something which is not only different, but has its own characteristic unity," going beyond Lenin in making it possible for the party to substitute itself for an almost nonexistent proletariat in leading a revolution:

"Lenin was a European primarily interested in world revolution. . . . Mao, on the other hand, is an Asian for whom nationalism is not a necessary evil, but an authentic value in itself. . . ."<sup>21</sup>

Having said this and abundantly documented elsewhere the synthesis of Marxism-Leninism with the Chinese tradition performed by Mao, Schram's conclusions appear to be perplexing, if not contradictory:

Everything considered, it is perhaps best not to use the term "Maoism," for although Mao's work for over the past quarter of a century contains original elements, Mao has never drawn those raw materials together in a complete synthesis that deserves a name of its own. He personifies a synthesis between Marxism-Leninism and traditional China; he has produced no intellectual synthesis on the same scale—though he may do so yet. . . .<sup>22</sup>

Nor is it quite clear exactly what Schram means when he writes: "His limitation lies in the fact that he has not produced a real synthesis of Marxist and Chinese ideas, but merely an amalgam."<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> See Karl A. Wittfogel, "The Legend of Maoism," *China Quarterly*, 1, 1960; and Benjamin Schwartz, "The Legend of the Legend of Maoism," *China Quarterly*, 2, 1960.

<sup>21</sup> Schram, *Political Thought* . . . , p. 79.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>23</sup> *Mao Tse-tung*, p. 325.

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Some other features in Mao's subsequent writings, should also be regarded as "non-Marxist." Whereas, for instance, Marx and Engels in true Hegelian fashion, conceived of a finality to the dialectical process of the development of society, which would be communism, Mao asserts that contradiction is eternal, albeit varying in form. In his utterances on the eve of the Cultural Revolution, he quoted Lenin to justify his novel belief that, even long after the establishment of a socialist society, capitalism can be restored because of the persistence in men's minds of "bourgeois" ideas. In other words, Mao has further "revised" Marxism by adding to it the possibility of historical regression. With the passing of years the voluntaristic element in Mao's ideology has increased. Gone is the sanguine confidence of the 1950s that socialism and even communism will be realised in the near future: Mao's optimism has now taken on a long-range dimension of almost Buddhist proportions, while in the short range his recent statements that the world revolutionary struggle progresses in waves, rather than in unilinear fashion, seem to carry something of the *yin-yang* fatalism. This long-range cosmic optimism is manifest in the almost light-hearted way in which Mao envisages that out of the cataclysm of atomic war the surviving peoples of the world would build on the ruins of imperialism a better and more beautiful civilization. Mao's imperviousness to the realities of the present age is intensified by his considerable ignorance of the world outside of China and particularly his inability to comprehend the situation in the industrialized nations of the West, which he (in Schram's apt phrase) "interprets . . . in terms of a combination of Marxist-Leninist stereotypes and the anti-foreign prejudices of a Hunanese nationalist." It could also be argued that the Thought of Mao Tse-tung does not provide a sensible solution for China's needs of today either, that (again in Schram's perceptive words) the "myth of the Long March" has become "as irrelevant . . . as the . . . myth of the lone frontiersman to the contemporary United States." (It is interesting to speculate, whether Schram would have altered his conclusions, had he been writing after the launching of the Cultural Revolution.)

Three other biographies of Mao Tse-tung have been published or reprinted in recent years. One, by George Paloczi-Horvath, *Mao Tse-tung: Emperor of the Blue Ants*,<sup>24</sup> is not devoid of interest and contains valuable information on the relationships between Stalin and the Chinese Communists in the years 1945-1953, but on the whole the book shows what pitfalls await even the most competent "Kremlinologist" when he attempts to apply his craft to the study of Chinese Communism without any deeper knowledge of the Chinese milieu. Paloczi-Horvath's appraisal of Mao Tse-tung is shallow, and he displays scant understanding of the internal mechanisms of Chinese Communism. Robert Payne's *Mao Tse-tung* re-ap-

<sup>24</sup> London: Secker and Warburg, 1962.



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peared in 1966 in a new edition including the addition of several pages to the concluding chapter.<sup>25</sup> Unlike Paloczi-Horvath, Payne is sympathetic to the object of his study, but his undeniable literary talent does not compensate for his ignorance of Marxism-Leninism. In the added pages Mr. Payne perceptively remarks that Mao's mind, once so "elastic, keen and malleable," has in the 1960s become closed to all outside ideas and imposed upon the Chinese people a stultifying dogma. But from there Payne goes on to say that Mao is no longer capable of improvising, he has lost contact with his people and seems uninterested in their fate. Recent events would tend to refute this, and it remains to be seen how history will treat Payne's final conclusion that "when Mao dies, the dictatorship must necessarily die with him."

The third and most important of the biographies is Jerome Ch'en's *Mao and the Chinese Revolution*.<sup>26</sup> It focusses on the Maoist pattern of revolution, therefore significantly ending its narration of Mao's life in 1949, whereas Schram stresses Mao's personality and the evolution of his thought. Schram's and Ch'en's books are complementary in certain areas. Ch'en's book, though published only shortly before Schram's works, came too early to draw upon the interesting material that appears in the reminiscences of revolutionary veterans published after 1960. A serious weakness is Ch'en's over-reliance on Chinese Communist publications, especially Mao's *Selected Works*, as edited after the Communist victory. A different weakness is his clumsy footnote system which makes the tracing of every reference a time-consuming and often frustrating endeavour; this is especially unfortunate since Ch'en lists a more abundant bibliography than Schram does in *Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung* (his second book, *Mao Tse-tung*, lists none).

Schram's well-documented scepticism about the reliability of the *Selected Works*, naturally causes him to disagree with Ch'en as to what policies Mao actually supported on various occasions. An interesting example is the dispute within the leadership of the CCP in the years 1937 to 1939 as to the nature of their "United Front" with the Kuomintang in the War of Resistance to Japan. Ch'en supports the orthodox version, according to which the Stalinist Wang Ming advocated a second "alliance from within" while Mao advocated an "alliance from without" in order to preserve the autonomy of the CCP and its armed forces. Now Schram indicates that Mao actually advocated an "Alliance from within."<sup>27</sup> It is unfortunate that Schram does not provide more substantial and convincing evidence for this reversal of a hitherto accepted view which tallied so well with Mao's overall record. Ch'en and Schram do agree, however, that Mao's revolutionary strategy did not mature until the late 1930s, that at the time of his "Hunan Report" he was

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<sup>25</sup> New York: Pyramid Books, 1966.

<sup>26</sup> London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1965.

<sup>27</sup> Schram, *Mao Tse-tung*, p. 202.

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still only groping toward Marxism-Leninism and that he did not become the supreme leader of the CCP until after the Tsunyi Conference (1935). This last point, which coincides with the orthodox version of the history of the CCP, is now generally accepted.

In his brilliant pioneering work *Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao*<sup>28</sup> first published some fifteen years ago, Benjamin Schwartz concluded that the transfer of the Central Committee from Shanghai to the Central Soviet territory of Kiangsi in 1932 marked the final passing of power in the CCP into the hands of Mao. This conclusion was disputed by Professor Hsiao Tso-liang in his analysis of the Ch'en Ch'eng collection of early Chinese Communist Documents.<sup>29</sup> Hsiao's outline has now been developed into a full-fledged interesting monograph by John E. Rue, *Mao Tse-tung in Opposition: 1927-1935*,<sup>30</sup> which, as the title indicates, demonstrates that Mao not only was not in control of the Chinese Communist movement when the Chinese Soviet territories were established, but was degraded and rendered powerless by the "Leftist" Central Committee headed by Wang Ming and Ch'in Pang-hsien, which condemned him for excessive leniency toward the rich peasants and for advocacy of guerilla tactics instead of positional warfare. This view is cautiously qualified by Schram who believes that Mao was allowed a certain autonomy in determining agrarian policies. Thus, the "Land verification movement" of 1933 bore a characteristic Maoist imprint and pre-figured the 1950 Land Reform by involving the peasants in an acute struggle with the landlords.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, on the whole, as Schram indi-

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<sup>28</sup> Cambridge: Harvard University Press, reprint, 1964.

<sup>29</sup> Hsiao Tso-liang, *Power Relations Within the Chinese Communist Movement: 1930-1934—A Study of Documents* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1961). Prof. Schwartz, in a 1958 preface, questioned his own earlier conclusions that Mao achieved leadership of the CCP in 1931.

<sup>30</sup> Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966.

<sup>31</sup> Schram. *Mao Tse-tung*, p. 166. Schram and Rue (the latter much more extensively) document the evolution of Mao's land policies from extreme radicalism in the Ching-kang Mountains to a more pragmatic policy of even tolerating rich peasants in Kiangsi. But, whereas Rue holds the view that the earlier radical policy of confiscating all land was imposed upon Mao by the Party center against his own better judgment (this is also the orthodox version), Schram writes that Mao then was himself much more radical than he now pretends to have been. As a matter of fact Schram's view that Mao in 1928 still was more radical than the Party center and the Comintern seems plausible; so is his conclusion that in the following year, after the loss of the Ching-kang base, practical considerations caused Mao to adopt more liberal land policies while Moscow, on the other hand, now adopted a much more radical stand, following the denunciation of Bukharin and the initiation of land collectivization in the Soviet Union. Rue also shows that Li Li-san, by his decision to hold land redistribution in abeyance, so as to avoid a premature revolutionary upsurge in the countryside before the cities were ready and while the anti-imperialist struggle was his primary consideration, held an even more "rightist" "rich peasant line" than Mao. This would lend partial support to Hsiao Tso-liang's view that Mao was temporarily in agreement with Moscow against Li Li-san in 1930. Rue with abundant documentation links developments within the Chinese Communist movement to what was happening at that time in the Comintern, which Stalin was transforming into an obedient tool of Soviet foreign policy by replacing original leaders with his own yes-men.

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catcs, Mao's success in extending the Red Army and bringing sizable territories under its control around 1930 was the source of his undoing: the work he had begun in the Ching-kang Mountains in 1927 was destroyed by the Party leadership in 1934 and the Red Army was forced out on its epic but costly Long March.

The Long March and Mao's role in it is best told by Jerome Ch'en,<sup>32</sup> who dwells, much more than Schram, on the details of Mao's military campaigns. Placing Mao in the framework of the 19th century "Self-Strengthening" movement as well as in the lineage of China's great historical rebellions, Ch'en supplies extremely interesting details about the political situation in Hunan in Mao's youth and the broad picture of the complex situation in China at the time of the Kiangsi Soviet and the Long March. Ch'en also remarks that Mao's development of revolutionary bases in the vast hinterland during the Anti-Japanese War constitutes in fact an extension of the Leninist theory of the weakest link in the imperialist chain. Like Schram, he concludes that the victory of the Chinese Communists was ultimately made possible as much by Mao's direction of the movement as by the weaknesses and blunders of its enemies, the Japanese aggression providing the indispensable opportunity to create the necessary conditions for such a victory.

Mao's victory was followed by his consecration as a great and original Marxist thinker, but the canonization process had begun already in Yen-an. Schram shows how, at the time of the Rectification Campaign of 1942, Mao launched his own personality cult by promoting the study of his writings; the cult blossomed forth at the seventh Congress of the CCP in 1945, when Liu Shao-ch'i (irony of history!) enshrined the Thought of Mao Tse-tung as the guide of the Party.

Yet the bulk of Mao's writings is devoted to practical matters—to problems of strategy and policy. He wrote few philosophical essays and these are generally not highly regarded outside China. Even so, Mao's essays *On Practice* and *On Contradiction* appear too sophisticated to certain Western authorities for them to believe that Mao could possibly have written them as early as 1937, especially since in 1940 he wrote a rather clumsy piece on dialectical materialism not considered worthy by its author of being included in his *Selected Works*. This view is held not only by Dennis Doolin and Peter Golas,<sup>33</sup> but also by Arthur Cohen, whose book *The Communism of Mao Tse-tung*<sup>34</sup> is devoted to analyzing the various aspects of Mao's

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<sup>32</sup> For intimate glimpses of Mao on the Long March, see the reminiscences of his bodyguard, Ch'en Chang-feng, *On the Long March With Chairman Mao* (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1959).

<sup>33</sup> Vsevolod Holubnychy, "Mao Tse-tung's Materialistic Dialectics," *China Quarterly*, 19, July-September, 1964; also Dennis J. Doolin and Peter J. Golas, "'On Contradictions' in the Light of Mao Tse-tung's Essay on 'Dialectical Materialism,'" *ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964.

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thought in relation to the classics of Marxism-Leninism and contemporary Soviet writings.

Cohen drastically pares down the claims for Mao's originality, consigning it almost solely to the realm of revolutionary practice. According to him, Mao's only claim to distinction is that of a revolutionary strategist and practitioner. As a theorist he had attained no real distinction. As a Marxist thinker his originality is virtually limited to his differentiation between primary and secondary contradictions or the thesis of the principal and secondary aspect of a contradiction. Otherwise, his philosophical essays are unoriginal; even the theory of the non-antagonistic contradictions in socialism are paraphrases of Lenin and Soviet theoreticians of the 1930s. In Mao's discussion of contradictions his originality again is limited to the practical political side of admitting the possibility of conflict between leaders and led in socialism, and acting in consequence. It does indeed appear that in the formulation of pure theory Mao may have been inferior to Lenin, but Cohen seems to exaggerate his distinction between theory and practice, and his findings are therefore not very original, for Schram has clearly indicated the strictly practical orientation of Mao Tse-tung's writings. An example of over-statement of his case can be seen in what Cohen writes about Mao's resuscitation of the slogan of "uninterrupted revolution" in 1958, when he called for a "Great Leap Forward" in production by "walking on two legs" (simultaneously developing industry and agriculture). Cohen remarks that there was a novel aspect to Mao's use of this slogan—its application to internal socio-political transformations after the seizure of power; Mao used it drastically to accelerate the pace of collectivization of agriculture before modern machinery became available, thus reversing the order of priorities established by Lenin and Stalin. True enough, this theory was quietly buried in 1960, when Mao reversed yet another order of priorities established by Lenin and Stalin—giving priority to agricultural development instead of heavy industry in the construction of socialism. A serious weakness of Cohen's study is that it is strictly based on comparative Marxism, in almost total abstraction from the Chinese cultural tradition. What further detracts from the value of Cohen's study is the narrow American set of values from which he approaches his subject, characterized by an almost fetishist worship of "freedom-and-democracy." Since, to Mao, democracy-and-freedom are "relative, not absolute," concludes Cohen, his position is that of a reactionary! Not too long after the publication of Cohen's work, the upheaval of the "Cultural Revolution" has refuted some of his hasty conclusions such as that Mao has withdrawn from his 1956-57 innovation positing the existence of contradictions between leaders and led under communism and the toleration of small strikes.

Schram has published a valuable study of the connection between the

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revived slogan of the "uninterrupted revolution" and the acceleration of the pace of the revolution in China.<sup>35</sup> He indicates that Mao never publicly raised the slogan himself, but that it is nevertheless clearly inspired by him; he also provides translations of the speeches and theoretical articles in which this slogan is discussed.

Schram argues that there is no reason to believe that the essays *On Practice* and *On Contradiction* were not written at the claimed date of 1937, since this was the time when important Soviet writings were being translated in Yenan, inspiring a spurt of production by Chinese Marxist philosophers; Mao, as leader, could not remain silent, especially since he now had the leisure to read and write and was tackling the problem of summing up the recent experience of the CCP in order to "Sinicize Marxism-Leninism" in preparation for a new start.

No study of Mao's personality is complete without some evaluation of his poetic achievements. Poetry writing is much more common among Chinese than among Westerners; even so, the claims for Mao's distinction in this field appear indisputable. He has written in classical meters, especially in the *ts'u* lyric form and the regulated seven-character meter. His poetry manifests an appreciation of the grandeur of nature and a fleeting sentimentality which are quite classic; yet, on the other hand, it exudes an energy and a self-confidence uncommon in traditional Chinese poetry. Both Ch'en and Schram have a high regard for Mao's poetry and devote considerable attention to it. Appended to Ch'en's book is a section comprising 37 of Mao's poems, translated and amply annotated by himself and Michael Bullock. Schram quotes Mao's poems throughout the overall text of his biography and has also published an article devoted solely to Mao's poetry.<sup>36</sup> (There have been other translations of Mao's poems—in Peking,<sup>37</sup> and also abroad by Robert Payne, Ng Yong-sang and others).<sup>38</sup> Ch'en and Bullock remark that previous translations of Mao's poems were too smooth and gentle in rhythm and did not therefore reflect "that vigorous, almost violent, and distinctly staccato quality, which one would expect from such a forceful and combative personality as Mao's." By the terseness of their excellent translation, Ch'en and Bullock have indeed retained this quality; Schram's

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<sup>35</sup> Stuart R. Schram, *La "Révolution Permanente" en Chine. Idéologie dialectique et dialectique du réel* (Paris: Mouton, 1963). A more ample book by Enrica Collotti-Pischel, *La révolution ininterrompue* (Paris: Julliard, 1964) deals with China's ideological positions in relation to her internal problems and her dispute with the Soviet Union.

<sup>36</sup> Stuart R. Schram, "Mao as a Poet," *Problems of Communism*, September-October 1964, pp. 38-45.

<sup>37</sup> Mao Tse-tung, *Nineteen Poems* (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1958); also *Chinese Literature* (Peking), 1, 1963.

<sup>38</sup> Ng Yong-sang, "The Poetry of Mao Tse-tung," *China Quarterly* (Special Survey of Chinese Communist Literature), 13, January-March, 1963, pp. 60-73. Mr. Ng's rendering in my opinion is too wordy. See also Ho Ping-ti, "Two Major Poems by Mao Tse-tung," *Queen's Quarterly* (Kingston, Ontario), LXV, 2, 1958, p. 257.

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translation, in comparison, is also accurate, but perhaps more brilliant and imaginative.

One's first analytical impulse is to compare Mao Tse-tung with Lenin. The Chinese Communists have now proclaimed that the "Thought of Mao Tse-tung" is the Marxism-Leninism of our day, which tends to refute Franz Schurmann's recent distinction between the "pure" (Marxist-Leninist) doctrine and "practical ideology" (the Thought of Mao Tse-tung).<sup>39</sup> Just as Lenin adjusted (not to say "revised") Marxism to fit the realities of the age of "monopoly capitalism" or "imperialism," so Mao has attempted to adapt the theoretical legacy of Marxism-Leninism to our epoch. As Lin Piao (now decreed to be his "closest comrade in arms") puts it: "Mao Tse-tung's Thought is Marxism-Leninism of the era in which imperialism is heading for total collapse, and socialism is advancing to world-wide victory."<sup>40</sup>

Lenin in his day made Marxism relevant to economically backward Russia, thus initiating the process, which Schram aptly calls the "De-Europeanization of Marxism."<sup>41</sup> This process was consciously carried forward by Mao Tse-tung, who has adapted Marxism-Leninism to the conditions of China and has claimed that his revolution was the model for revolutions in the non-European areas of the world.<sup>42</sup>

Lenin and Mao fathered two different models of revolution, yet Mao is more than the Lenin of China: he has had the chance to survive, now for almost two decades, the seizure of power and to guide the revolutionary reconstruction of his country, a process which Russia experienced under Stalin. A parallel also exists between Mao and Stalin. Some of Mao's policies were inspired by Stalin—the regimentation of culture and the arts and the "cult of the personality," to name only two. The parallels cannot, however, be drawn very far. Mao's "personality cult," at least until the eve of the "Cultural Revolution," was not the manifestation of unbridled autocratic rule as was the case with Stalin, but rather the gratification of a need, traditionally felt by many Chinese, for some kind of father-figure, symbolizing the country's re-unification, while decisions were arrived at by the leadership of the CCP collectively—a "Leninist norm of Party life" such as Khrushchev wanted to restore in the CPSU in 1956.

Mao strongly resented Khrushchev's "unmasking" of Stalin in 1956, not only because it implicitly attacked Mao's own "personality cult" but also

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<sup>39</sup> Franz Schurmann, *Ideology and Indoctrination in Communist China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), p. 23.

<sup>40</sup> Lin Piao, Foreword to the 2nd Edition of *Quotations of Chairman Mao Tse-tung*, 16 December 1966.

<sup>41</sup> Stuart Schram and Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, *Le Marxisme et l'Asie: 1853-1964* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1965).

<sup>42</sup> See Liu Shao-ch'i's interesting statements in Anna Louise Strong's report, "The Thought of Mao Tse-tung," *Amerasia*, XI, 6 (June 1947), p. 161.

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because an issue crucial to the entire international Communist movement had been decided upon by the leaders of the CPSU without consulting the "fraternal parties," whose prestige and survival were thus suddenly jeopardized in the eyes of the peoples over which they ruled. Mao had always resented CPSU domination over the world Communist movement for it had caused great harm to the Chinese CP. He clearly felt that, as long as the prestigious Stalin headed the Soviet party, this had to be tolerated, but now that obscure Russian *apparatchiks*, who had been terrorized accomplices of the crimes for which they now denounced their late master, intended to perpetuate this domination, the time had come for Mao, who had every reason to consider himself as worthier than Khrushchev, to rearrange the relationships between Communist parties on a new basis. In 1957 he was willing to support Soviet leadership as long as it did not mean *diktat*, but in 1960 he demanded autonomy and equality of all parties. Today he advocates Chinese leadership.

On the whole, Mao is a vastly different personality from both Lenin and Stalin. Every revolutionary is a product of the culture and tradition against which he rises in revolt. This is especially true of revolutionaries, who, like Stalin and Mao, for all practical purposes never left the country of their birth, never experienced the challenging and enriching confrontation of a different tradition or milieu. Born and reared in the conservative province of Hunan, Mao has spent most of his life away from the Westernized, urban centers of China and is intensely Chinese. There is in his personality a touch of both the eclecticism of the Chinese scholar and the earthy sense of humour of the Chinese peasant; we find in him a deep hue of revolutionary romanticism and a versatility, which even the elevation of his thought as official dogma cannot completely hide. His old rival Chang Kuo-t'ao, now retired in Hong Kong, told an American reporter in 1965 that "increasingly Mao seems to have become a revolutionary romantic, who has lost touch with the realities of society."

Mao's voluntarism has become even more extreme with age. In the late 1920s, he affirmed that it was possible, by intensive political training, to transform bandits and various other rural *éléments déclassés* into the vanguard of the proletariat, thus casting to the winds all Marxian admonitions against the *Lumpenproletariat*. His unorthodox practices constantly set him at loggerheads with the leadership which Moscow imposed upon the early CCP. Even when Moscow accepted his guerilla tactics, it merely regarded these as a holding action, pending the revolutionary upsurge in the cities and the consequent reassertion of "proletarian leadership." But for Mao these tactics constituted the start of an entirely new strategy for the revolution, with the development of rural bases as its key. Today more than ever, he believes that the subjective can create the objective, that there is no miracle that a people armed with revolutionary enthusiasm cannot accomplish and

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that on the other hand the persistence of "bourgeois ideas" in the minds can bring about a restoration of capitalism, long after the last economic vestiges of capitalism have disappeared. For this, many Western and Soviet authors have chided him for being afraid of the possible social and political consequences of modernization and therefore manifesting a "Yenan complex," seeking refuge from a changing, uncertain world (which by his parochialism he is not able to comprehend) in a past filled with glory.<sup>43</sup> There is a grain of truth in this, but whether it will prove to be the entire truth remains to be seen, for Mao is still living. History reserves its verdict.

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<sup>43</sup> See for example the attack on Mao Tse-tung published in the October 4, 1967, issue of *Izvestia* and entitled "A Voluntaristic Defiance of Scientific Socialism." The article accuses Mao of ignorance of the classics of Marxism-Leninism, of contempt for the correct path indicated by the historical experience of the Soviet Union, of petty-bourgeois ideology, of great-power chauvinism.