

YENAN RECTIFICATION MOVEMENT: MAO TSE-TUNG'S BIG PUSH TOWARD CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP DURING 1941-1942

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INTRODUCTION

REINHARD BENDIX HAS WRITTEN in a comment on Mao Tse-tung, "there is also little doubt that this leadership deserves the attribute 'charismatic,'" [2, p. 349]. Probably few people would disagree with him in this comment. Bendix also stated, however, that "charismatic leadership is not a label that can be applied" [2, p. 344], and that what is important for a study of leadership is an understanding of its dynamic implications. In fact, understanding the internal dynamics of Mao's charismatic leadership has been a controversial and exciting theme ever since 1966, when the political turmoil in China unexpectedly revealed a genuine crisis in the ideological and organizational cohesion under Mao which until that time had been developing within China's power elites. The impressive events in and following 1966 provided an opportunity, both to those in China and to scholars abroad, to raise new questions as to the history of the Chinese Communist Party and Mao's leadership in it. This essay, prompted by such an occasion, is intended to clarify the genesis of Mao's charismatic leadership, emphasizing in particular the political function played by the Yen-an Rectification Movement.

Research in this direction may throw light on the larger problems of Mao's leadership. As is well known, it was at the Seventh Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in May 1945 that Mao's personal cult, or his charismatic authority, was officially established. In preparation leading up to this objective, from about 1941 Mao Tse-tung escalated his pressure from above in a forceful manner to establish total control over the Party's ideology and organization. It was precisely the Rectification Movement and the following Study Movement of Party History that served Mao as his crucial weapons in this drive. And it was on their basis that Mao could achieve "one-idea" and "one-man" system within the Chinese Communist Party, to use Robert Daniels' terms, on the Seventh Congress.

This five-year period climaxes the process of Mao's authority building during the Yen-an period. The pressures on the leaders brought about by changing

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circumstances of their environment which they could not reverse, the attitudes and decisions of the leaders themselves, the reactions of those who were led, and other social and political forces all interacted to guide the leadership in certain directions in Shen-Kan-Ning and other bases of the communists' anti-Japanese operations. Indeed, Mao's dramatic rise during this period presents a fascinating theme for political scientists to study.

A certain man destined to be a leader, by the name of Mao Tse-tung, emerged from within a definite context in the revolutionary movement, and that context does seem to approximately conform to the conditions for the emergence of charismatic authority as suggested by Weber, even if it be debatable whether we can apply the concept of "charisma" to the Mao Tse-tung of this period.¹ As the conditions, Weber mentions simply "psychischer, physischer, ökonomischer, ethischer, religiöser, politischer Not" [30, S. 662] or "gläubiger Hingabe an das Außerordentliche und Unerhörte" [30, S. 665]. Bendix, in his elaboration of Weber's idea, speaks of "emergencies" and "times of trouble" as conditions and goes on to write, "it is associated with a collective excitement . . . by virtue of which they surrender themselves to a heroic leader." According to Bendix, the leader is called by a higher power in an emergency situation, and he is unable to refuse that call [1, pp. 299-301].

In this sense, Mao's charisma can also be seen as a creation of certain socio-political dynamics operating under "crises and frenzy," and Mao himself as a "self-appointed leader" [11, p. 52]. But Weber's conceptual scheme of charisma is not necessarily clear in its entirety,² and, as is only too natural, in empirical studies it can demonstrate its effectiveness only within a certain limited sphere. Even with the help of Weber's sociology of authority and other conceptual schemes, we must still analytically construct the context establishing Mao's charismatic leadership out of the dynamics of China's revolutionary movement itself. What is to follow will be a tentative essay in this direction.

I. EMERGENCE OF CRISIS AND TOTAL MOBILIZATION

During the two years which the present writer characterizes as a period of a "big push toward charisma" as one step in Mao Tse-tung's authority building, the Chinese Communist Party was under extraordinarily difficult circumstances. In military terms we should point out the large-scale assault on and the attempted encirclement of Communist bases by the Japanese and the Chungking Government armies. They had been alerted to the strength of the Communists after the so-called Hundred Regiments Offensive when the Eighth Route Army leading

¹ Stuart R. Schram remarked that "the emergence of a veritable Mao cult began in 1942, at the time of the 'rectification campaign,' and reached its first climax at the Seventh Party Congress in April 1945" [2, p. 386], Schram uses the term "cult" and not "charisma," but I believe these two terms do not essentially differ and that although Mao's charismatic authority underwent growth and change, its genesis should be traced to 1942.

² Weber did not develop his thesis on the conditions necessary for the appearance of a charismatic leader. See [31].

400,000 men in arms had made an all-out assault on the Japanese Army across five provinces of North China from August to December 1940,

Communist-Nationalist relations had worsened slowly after the fall of Wuhan in October 1938, but with the Hundred Regiments Offensive as the turning point, there was a rapid tightening of the military encirclement of the Shen-Kan-Ning border region by the Nationalist Army. On top of this and further intensifying the strained relations came the incident of the New Fourth Army (the Wannan Incident) in January 1941. The New Fourth Army was defeated at this incident in Maolin, Anhui Province, virtually splitting the United Front and ending all relations between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party. The antagonistic relationship between the two now became decidedly clear.

The reaction to the Hundred Regiments Offensive by the Japanese Army was inevitably quite strong, because, as Chalmers Johnson notes, "the over-all effects of the Hundred Regiments Offensive were serious, as even the Japanese themselves admitted" [14, p. 58]. As soon as General Okamura was appointed the Commander of the North China Area Army in July 1941, a large-scale operation called the "Million Offensive" was launched from August to October along the Chin-Ch'a-Chi border region. Under this operation the previous strategy against the Eighth Route Army was changed to a more severe and protracted one, with the objective of "leaving no possibility of the Communist Army's recovery by completely eliminating the enemy's main forces, by destroying his bases and installations and by thorough execution of purges and pacification" [10, p. 12]. This comprehensive offensive was continued throughout 1942 in North China together with encircling and eliminating activities against Communist forces including the infamous "three-all" policy, and other efforts were further launched on political, social, and cultural fronts. In Central China the Japanese Army twice conducted mopping-up operations against bases of the New Fourth Army in the northern part of Kiangsi province in 1941.

The period of 1941-42 was thus the most difficult phase of the entire anti-Japanese warfare for the guerrilla bases. Chu Te, looking back on this period, said in 1945 that the invasions of the Japanese Army "engendered the gravest situation ever" [7, p. 12]. Due to the geographical contraction of anti-Japanese guerrilla bases, the population under the influence of the Communist Party was reduced from 100 million in 1940 to less than 50 million in 1942, and the population of the liberated area in North China was reduced from 40 to 25 million during the same period. The Eighth Route Army also diminished in numbers, from 400 thousand in 1940 to 300 thousand in 1942.³ In addition to these military difficulties, many parts of North China were struck by such natural disasters as floods, droughts, and blights, causing epidemics and famines. The situation was such that "the army and the populace were forced to eat nuts and berries out of hunger, creating an even graver condition" [7, p. 12].

³ [12, p. 248]. [7, p. 12]. The New Fourth Army, contrary to the general expectation, developed into a force of 180,000 and the population of the liberated regions grew to 20 million.

The progress of the Japanese cleanup operations naturally caused significant damage to the economic activities of the anti-Japanese guerrilla bases. Acute shortages of labor, production materials, daily necessities of life, ammunition, etc. were observed at the guerrilla bases from the end of 1941 and thereafter. The countermeasures adopted by the Communist Party under this situation were mass mobilization and a total system reorganization. As C. Johnson correctly points out,

It was not accidental that the Communists' well-known *cheng feng* (rectification) movement and Army-assisted agricultural production movement were undertaken during this period. The need to establish the firmest possible determination among the leadership of the guerrilla areas was obvious, and the internal production movement was an effort to avoid famine in the blockaded bases. [14, p. 104]

Mark Seldon, who is studying in detail the Communists' policies in the base areas of this period, claims that from this time on, development of the then stagnant agrarian economy was interpreted as the key to the success of all other projects and ultimately to mass support and wartime victory. He goes on to say that the Communist Party, after emphasizing United Front harmony and the creation of a stable government in the base areas for five years, turned now to the task of *revolutionizing the structure of social and particularly economic life* at the village level in Shen-Kan-Ning and in the base areas of North China [25, p. 110]. The various "mass movements" from 1941-44 which the Communist Party and the government carried out in response to the crisis in the areas under their control are already well known. Covering political, economic, social, and military fields, they include the Rectification Movement (1942), the Crack Troops and Simple Administration Movement (1941-43), the "To the Village" Campaign (1941-42), the Campaign for the Reduction of Rent and Interest (1942-44), the Cooperative Movement (1942-44), the Campaign for Strengthening the Militia (1941-44), the Production Movement (1943), the Three-three System (1941-42), the Campaign for Supporting the Government and Protecting People (1943), and the Education Movement (1944). It is not our present task to discuss each of these movements fully. What is to be noted here is that through *movements* the Communist Party thoroughly reorganized the existing system, unified the liberated mass energies and finally found by the end of 1942 a way of independent resuscitation from their extraordinary difficulties.

Such movements, i.e., the formation of *mobilization system*, from 1941 on were partly based on the experiences gained from the Kiangsi Soviet period and from the earlier anti-Japanese guerrilla bases, but they were also in many ways the unique development of Yen-an politics created in new and unprecedented circumstances. Called the "Yenan syndrome" by today's Western scholars on Chinese affairs, these movement bore forth the distinguishing features of the Chinese Communism. Mao Tse-tung drew from this experience to complete his concept on "methods of leadership" in June 1943, what we now call the "mass line." He further used ideas generated during this period when in 1945 he comprehensively

formulated the theoretical concept of the "people's war" in military and civil terms.

The formation of the system of mobilization in the latter half of the Yen-an period cannot be said to have been easy in light of the forms of activities by Communist forces and of the structure of leadership. It was made possible only by the introduction of *new dynamics* into the movements of the Communist Party. One may even claim that the movements of the Chinese Communist Party transformed the organization into an *entirely new one*. As B. Compton points out, the Communist Party had several fundamental Party problems throughout the Yen-an period. The first problem was the difficulty of coordination and liaison within and between bases. This problem arose out of the geographical conditions, the poor communication and the fluctuations of guerrilla warfare in general. Under the circumstances, decentralization and segmentation became inevitable. Local Party initiative was considerable and no uniformity of action could be forced on the scattered Party units [8, p. xxvi]. Concerning this problem, Franz Schurmann states,

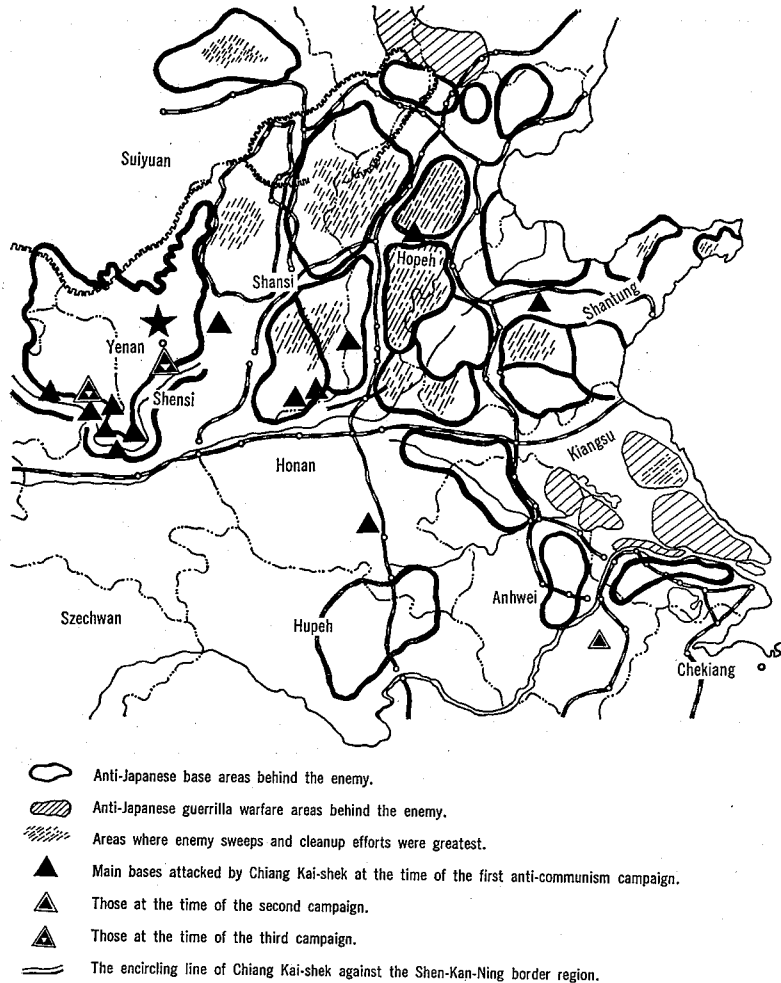
During the Yen-an and civil war periods, one of the major organizational problems the Chinese Communists faced was maintenance of absolute control from the center coupled with maximal mobility and initiative on the part of individual units. [24, p. 78]

We may easily understand that it was an extremely difficult task to exercise uniform control from Yen-an over all the guerrilla bases that were spreading from North to Central China (see Figure 1). Schurmann says, however, that the Communist Party as a final result created a practical sociology of action or an organization weapon out of the experience of guerrilla warfare. In his words it was

The creation of a system of organization that allows for a high degree of organizational centralization and control and at the same time makes possible considerable flexibility and independent decision-making at lower levels. [24, p. 97]

Although this theoretical formula by Schurmann tends to slightly over-estimate the functional characteristics of the Communist Party's organization of the Yen-an period, it is quite appropriate particularly in contrast to the Russian Communist Party and may be well accepted as pointing out a basic characteristic of the Chinese Communist Party's organizational activities. Nonetheless Schurmann's formulation seems to the present writer to be a *static* understanding comprehended only within the framework of a sociological theory of organization. Schurmann does not explain when (during the ten-year Yen-an period), through what, or how this creation of a system of organization was accomplished under the unfavorable conditions of guerrilla warfare, nor does he point out the precise *political dynamics* which supported the effective functioning of the system. While Schurmann's grasp is correct as a macro-term generalization of the system, he does not bring into the scope of his analysis the *evolution* of the Communist Party's leadership in the Yen-an period, which was a necessary prerequisite for the creation of such a system. What is of interest to us is not finding that the

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creation of a system of organization according to Schurmann's concept is *ultimately possible*, but developing an analysis of the political conditions which brought forth and supported such a creation. In other words, we must discuss the mobilization in Yen-an which made the creation of a specific system of organization possible and the leadership and prestige of Mao Tse-tung which supported that mobilization.

In order to establish a system of mobilization, it is necessary not only to secure an improved "organizational weapon" but more basically to already have strong leadership and the leaders' ideological cohesion. This is the very reason why the emergence of *personified* leadership is of critical importance. In the midst of the intensified relation of conflict with the Kuomintang during the 1940s and thereafter and of the general crisis caused by the Japanese invasion, the

leader was "called" to function as "a rallying point" in order to maintain cohesion in the Communist revolutionary movement.⁴ At the same time a basic change of ideological orientation was also demanded. On the relationship between organization and ideology Schurmann writes as follows:

One of the most important expressions of ideology in action is as a communications system in organization. Organizations cannot function without a constant flow of information. If the organization is systematically structured, then the flow of information must likewise be systematic. Ideology, as a systematic set of ideas, provides the basic elements of the communications system. [23, p. 58]

And in order to secure smooth functioning of the communications system, "the systematization of ideological categories and language" [23, p. 59] is indispensable. It follows that when shifting from a stable organization to one that is geared for mobilization, or when an organization is faced with a *critical* task, ideology as a communications system can hardly be left to remain disunited or completely free. Thus in the latter part of the Yen-an period, in parallel with the emergence of leadership personified, the leader's "thought" came to assume strategic importance as a source of strong ideological unity and cohesion supporting the system for mass mobilization. B. Compton presents a simple argument that the Communists' answer to organizational difficulties arising out of guerrilla warfare was thorough indoctrination and training through the Rectification Movement [8, p. xxvi], but it is also necessary to bear in mind that the Rectification Movement served as the decisive starting point for, and the agent bringing about the successful completion of, the mass mobilization system, an unavoidable task of the Communist Party in 1941 and thereafter. As Robert Daniels says,

Doctrine, finally, is an important element in the system of totalitarian control *Discipline and belief mutually reinforce one another*, and each is required to maintain the rigid strength of the other. Ideological standards of conformity are indispensable in establishing and upholding the authority of the party. [9, pp. 352-53]

These words seem to correctly point out the political task of the Yen-an Rectification Movement, which was to open the Mao Tse-tung era. Let us proceed to examine the evolution of Mao's leadership through the Yen-an Rectification Movement.

II. POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE RECTIFICATION MOVEMENT

The Yen-an Rectification Movement has often been cited as a movement clearly representative of characteristic features of Chinese Communist movements. But although it has been seen as an episode in the rather legendary "thought revolution" or education movement, it has not necessarily been put to a thorough analysis as a highly *political* incident within the leadership of the Party. A

⁴ This writer basically agrees with Seldon's view on this point. See [25, pp. 108-109].

summary of the commonly accepted view of the Movement would basically be that it was a "thought revolution" launched with the aim of rallying and re-consolidating the forces of Chinese Communists in order to overcome undesirable effects created within the Party by the anti-Japanese United Front and to effectively counter the crisis of the dying United Front. The Movement therefore involved a reclarification of basic Chinese Communist positions on all matters of doctrine and organization [4, p. 354]. Its representative project was the well-known Rectification of Three Tendencies, i.e., style of learning, Party's activity, and literature. In other words, it was an attempt to criticize and rectify subjectivism, sectarianism, dogmatism, and liberal inclinations of new Party members. But the most essential points running through the projects were two: Affirmation of the Leninist Party principle of *unification of leadership* within the Party organization, and Sinification of Marxism.

With these aims in mind the Yen-an Rectification Movement was conducted from 1942 into 1943, directed chiefly toward the Party's high and middle-level leadership organizations and their organizers. More than 30,000 cadres are said to have been mobilized and put to studying and training in small groups. We can assume that this "thought revolution" movement, through the agency of Sinification, secured the unification of doctrinal standards and created conditions where directions issued by the Party leadership were understood clearly and implemented effectively at all levels [3, p. 15]. As the outcome of the Movement, existing Party ideologists such as Wang Ming who were said to be infected with Western ideas were deprived of their influence, Mao's prestige as the greatest leader of the Chinese Communist Party was immensely enhanced and the "thought of Mao" emerged as the guiding theory of the Party.

Such were the essentials of the Yen-an Rectification. Judging from the above description of what was called the "thought revolution," it did not "purge" particular persons for allegedly committing certain mistakes but it did take the form of an education movement. But we must remember, as has been stated earlier, that "thought revolutions" occur or are made to occur only in specific political contexts. We cannot overlook the logic of power underlying as a recurrent motif all the features and the results of the Rectification Movement. *Narrowly* understood, it was Mao's *decisive struggle* consciously fought against the influence of Russian returned students, by means of "thought revolution." With the thesis of Sinification of Marxism, Mao is now asking Party members to fight against the three incorrect tendencies (meaning mainly the remnants of influence of Russian returned students) with the revolutionary methods or weapons of correct tendencies (correct thought and behavior). The aim of the Yen-an Rectification Movement therefore was the *discovery of Chinese Marxism* within the Party and the *rediscovery of Mao Tse-tung* as its embodiment. In this sense it was a carefully-planned "big push" by Mao himself to gain complete dominance within the Party, and speaking in analogy with Stalin, it was the *first* "Mao's Revolution" within the Party operated from above. It must then be recognized that Mao's road to charismatic leadership was a product of Mao's own will as well as of the pressures of general circumstances. But Mao's

emergence as a charismatic leader within the Party was seen in the latter half of 1942 and more clearly in 1943, not earlier. His emergence, to borrow the words of Kang Sheng, was "a great problem solved only with extraordinary efforts" toward the end of the entire movement [15, p. 47]. Let us then briefly review the process.

The year 1940 on the eve of the Rectification Movement was a turning point supported by a sort of rising tide for the Chinese Communist Party.⁵ Mao had in January brought up the problem of Sinification of Marxism with the publication of *Xinminzhuzhuyi lun* [On new democracy] (for the second time, the first time being at the Sixth Plenum of the Central Committee in 1938), and on the basis of the summary presentation of his strategy of Chinese revolution in that writing he had undertaken an all-out criticism of the Party's policy during the Kiangsi Soviet period in "Zhonggong zhongyan guanyu shiju zhengce de shizhi" [Directive of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party on the policy of current affairs] [16, p. 91]. This "Directive" lists "many leftist measures adopted due to the lack of clear recognition of basic features of the Chinese revolution, such as that the later Soviet period was in the stage of a bourgeois democratic revolution in a semi-colony, and that the revolution would be a long one." In light of the fact that Mao's criticism of Russian returned students at the Sixth Plenum of the Central Committee had been limited only to military and organizational matters,⁶ the issuance of this "Directive" shows that he finally systematized his views on the problem of revolutionary strategy during the Kiangsi Soviet period.⁷ In other words, using the six years after the Tsunyi Conference Mao completed his logic of total criticism, rough may it be in parts, on the faction of the Russian returned students during the Kiangsi Soviet period when Mao had been excluded from the leadership.

The Rectification Movement was in actuality the continuation of the education movement of up to June 1940 for those cadres working in Yen-an. It started with "Gaizao women de xuexi" [The reconstruction of our studies] issued in May 1941 by Mao, and with the "Guanyu zengjiang dangxing de jue ding" [Central Committee resolution on strengthening the party spirit] in July 1941 by the Party's Central Committee. But the above-mentioned political context of the Yen-an Rectification Movement was already clear at the outset, through a secret decision adopted by the Central Committee of Party Affairs sometime in the second half of 1941.⁸ According to Jen Pi-shi, this secret decision was entitled "Jiu yi ha yihon yizhidao Tsungyihuiyi zheyige shiqinei, dangzhongyang de zhengzhiluxian shicuowude" [The political line which dominated the Chinese Communist Party during the period from September 18th Incident to the Tsunyi

⁵ For greater detail, see [26].

⁶ For more detailed information, see [26, pp. 30-31].

⁷ In [21], his system of strategy was described in a more generalized form.

⁸ [13]. In a note attached to [20, p. 942], it is written that the enlarged conference of the Political Bureau directed criticism toward the political line in the history of the Party. One can assume that this conference of the Political Bureau was that of the Central Committee of Party Affairs.

Conference was a mistake], and was adopted as a starting point to strengthen ideological leadership within the Party, corresponding to Mao's "Gaizao women de xuexi" in May of the same year. This decision could be interpreted as moving forward on the "Directive" in December of the year before, but it would be safer to say that it was not until about September 1941 that Mao finally took the decisive step to complete and frontal criticism of the Wang Ming-Po Ku line, at least *though only within the highest echelons of leadership*. Mao's next problem was how to expand thought leadership along this line to the level of the mass and how to create ideological conditions for mobilization. Until the Rectification Movement was officially decided upon, Mao issued a series of directives through his speeches and decisions of the Politburo in pressing from above for a "thought revolution."

III. THE END OF PLURAL AND THE BEGINNING OF CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP

Looking at the process of development of Mao's leadership, we can say that the year 1941 was the final stage of plural leadership. Although at this point Mao had launched his frontal criticism on the past policies of the Russian returned students, they still continued to hold important posts within the Party. Po Ku (Chin Pang-hsien) for instance became the chief editor of the *Jiefang ripao* [Liberation daily] which functioned as the central organ of the party's publicity after it was established in May 1941, and he also presided over the New China News Agency. Lo Fu (Chang Wen-tien) contributed to the editing of the *Jiefang ripao* and retained his position as Secretary General of the Party. In the February 15, 1941 notification by the Chinese Communist Party of refusal to attend the First Plenum of the People's Political Council scheduled for March 1 in Chung-king, we should note that those signing were Mao Tse-tung, Wang Ming, Po Ku, Lin Tsu-han, Wu Yu-chang, Tung Pi-wu, and Teng Ying-ch'ao in that order [17, p. 93]. The ideological activities of these people had continued right up to this time. For instance, the final, 10th volume of *Kang-ri minzu tongyi zhanxian zhinan* [Guidance of anti-Japanese national united front] carrying several essays by Wang Ming appeared in August 1940, and Wang's essay "Lun maliezhuyi jue ding celue de jige jiben yuanze" [On several basic principles of deciding the strategy according to Marxism and Leninism] appeared in *Gong chandangren* [Communist], No. 12 (November 20, 1940). Furthermore, essays by Lo Fu, Li Wei-han, Yang Shang-kun, and others had been included in *Zhongguo gening yu zhongguo gongchandang: ganbu bidu chongyao wenxuan* [The Chinese Revolution and The Chinese Communist Party: an anthology of important readings for cadre] (published in the end of 1940), a work that may be regarded as the standard text for the education of the Party cadre.

In the midst of this transitional situation surrounding leadership and ideology, there was evidence that the ideological authority of Mao within the party even in 1941 was not always absolute. The most clear indication may have been the attitude of Liu Shao-chi. Liu had been dispatched to Central China with

Mao's confidence as a political commissar for the New Fourth Army. In his Communication to Comrade Sung Liang, while pointing out the extreme difficulty of the Sinification of Marxism and lamenting the serious want of adequate theoretical preparation in the Party, he made no reference to the accomplishments Mao had achieved. Far from it, he concluded, "Great works have yet to appear. This must then be one of the most crucial tasks confronting the Chinese Communist Party."⁹ As Mao's thoughts on strategy had nearly been perfected by this time, these words of Liu show an ignorance of Mao that is quite incredible. In another essay by Liu Shao-chi entitled "Zuzhi shang he jilishang de xinyang" [Self-cultivation in organization and discipline] which probably appeared in the latter half of 1941, Liu writes, "Strategic and tactical policies of the Party have *already* been set. They are the *cooperative result* of concrete studies on Chinese society by all Party comrades in accordance with the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism."¹⁰

We should note here the emphasis on "collective leadership," and that limitations are imposed by the organization on the leader's function:

Although comrade Mao Tse-tung is the leader of the entire Party, even he is subordinate to the Party *No matter who the individual may be*, his value is not so great as to command the obedience of everybody. The reason we obey Marx, Lenin and Mao Tse-tung is precisely because they have an accurate understanding of things, because they represent the truth.

Even more openly, in a speech to the Party academy of the Central China Bureau in July 1941 entitled "Lun dangnei de douzheng" [On the intraparty struggle], Liu observed that "a leader and center for the whole Party have yet to be actually established." In spite of Mao's resolve, the decisive shift of Mao's authority over the Party leadership does not yet seem apparent.

However, when one reaches the year 1942 in which the Rectification Movement began on a full scale, the situation undergoes a drastic change. The Movement first adopted a policy directing people in all parts of the country to study twenty-two designated reference works for three to six months, and to criticize and examine their daily activities in their light. According to Jen Pi-shi, the immediate and practical points at issue in this Education Movement were as follows: that the concrete expressions of "incorrect tendencies" were sporadic emphasis of independence, *Benwei zhuyi* or a sort of sectionalism, liberalistic attitudes, inclinations toward the military factionalism, presentation of plans without survey or investigation but based merely on imagination, not beginning with the real conditions when resolving problems, holding the illusion that every border region should be the model for the whole nation, and so forth [13, pp. 100-101]. Consequently, we can say that the Rectification Movement started by re-examining these *everyday problems* on the basis of the "twenty-two documents" in which the nine treatises by Mao Tse-tung were included."

The political context of the Movement, as outlined above, had already been

⁹ It is interesting to note that this communication of Liu Shao-chi is included in [32, p. 78].

¹⁰ See [28].

clearly indicated by Lu Ting-yi's treatise in May 1942. In this treatise, Lu demanded as the method for the Party's thought revolution "to overcome incorrect tendencies using as a weapon *Chinese* Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalinism, namely, the correct style of work which has achieved the dominant position" [19, p. 6]. In short, concealed behind a long line of modifiers to avoid directly saying it, the Mao Tse-tung line as a weapon was what Lu was urging. Mao started from a situation where approximately 94 per cent of Chinese Communists, who had come to number about 730,000 by 1942, were new members who entered the Party after 1937. Based on this fact, we can conclude that first, by means of the Rectification Movement, he tried to create a system of discipline and belief *directed by the Mao Tse-tung line* among the great number of new members and leaders.

The unique value of "Mao Tse-tung's way," which became synonymous with "China's way," however, had to be established by means of the *logic of criticism*. The criteria for this had already been prepared by the "secret decision" of 1941. That is, the Rectification Movement decreed that in spite of the fact that subjectivism, sectionalism, and party formalism which had controlled the Party before the Tsunyi Conference had by then essentially been overcome "with only their residues remaining" [15, p. 44], "these wrong tendencies, as before, again attack and bring harm to our Party, even after the Tsunyi Conference" [19]. Therefore the Movement chose these incorrect tendencies as the object of criticism, linking them with the seven years previous experience which had served as their origin. At this later time, the context of "the residues" from the Kiangsi Soviet period was more important than the pursuit of immediate problems concerning Party organization which arose under the objective conditions of anti-Japanese guerrilla warfare, and it was also necessary to criticize the Kiangsi Soviet period *as the prototype* of misdirected leadership.¹¹ Consequently, as we can see from the treatise of Lu Ting-yi, the criticism of policy errors "in the later years of the Soviet movement" logically leads to the emphasis of the correctness and effectiveness of Mao Tse-tung's leadership after Tsunyi.

As Mao's "correct style of work" was gradually pushed to the fore from 1941 on, the previous heterogeneous theoretical activity within the Party as "a hundred schools contend" disappeared, a new line-up of figures entered, and gradually arguments on Mao himself developed. Chang Ju-hsin must be one of the early admirers of Mao Tse-tung. Chang published a piece entitled "Zai Mao Tse-tung tongzhi de qizhi xia qianjin" [Advance under the banner of comrade Mao Tse-tung] as early as April 30, 1941 in the 127th issue of *Jiefang* [Liberation]. In this article he praises Mao's *Lun chijiuzhan* [On the protracted warfare], *Lun xinjieduan* [On the new stage], and *Xinminzhuzhuyi lun* as "masterful and distinguished works of creative Marxism," and continues, "These excellent works . . . are contributions with great historical significance for the operations of Marxism-Leninism around the world." Chang Ju-hsin also wrote the piece

¹¹ The treatises by Mao and Chen Kun-yuan written at this time, however, do not name Wang Ming, but criticize only the sectarianism of Cheng Tu-hsiu, Chang Kuo-t'ao, and Li Li-san.

“Xuexi he zhangwo Mao Tse-tung de lilun he celue” [Study and grasp the theory and strategy of Mao Tse-tung] in *Jiefang ripao* one year later, on February 19, 1942. In this he used the term “Mao Tse-tung zhuyi” or Mao Tse-tungism to mean “Marxism-Leninism of China.” By mentioning Mao’s name openly, he appealed to the others to study the strategy of one particular person among the highest leaders of the party.

In July 1942, Chen Yi, Peng Te-huai, and others joined the ranks of Chang Ju-hsin and Lu Ting-yi. Chen Yi summarized Mao’s strategy and also argued for the international adaptability of the experience of the Chinese Revolution. What is interesting is that Chen Yi praised Liu Shao-chi as well while justifying Mao’s leadership, and although this probably reflected Liu’s connection with the New Fourth Army, it further looks forward to the appearance of the Mao-Liu line.¹² Peng Te-huai also praised Mao’s concept of “new democracy” as the creation of a genius and said that this concept was born of Mao’s integration of Stalinist’s theory and the actual problems of the Chinese Revolution [22, pp. 13-15].

In his treatise of October 1939, Mao himself had proclaimed that the Party first began down the path to true Bolshevism after the Tsunyi Conference under his own leadership. This aggressive assertion by Mao seems finally to have obtained “recognition” from within the Party in 1942. The justice of Mao’s leadership was first claimed *not by Mao himself but by others*, even though these persons may have been his supporters. Lu Ting-yi said in his treatise of May,

Out of all the 21 years since the establishment of our Party, the period of 13½ years before the Tsunyi Conference was governed, for most of the time, by a correct line of leadership. However, for half a year under Cheng Tu-hsuiism, another half year under the Li Li-san line and three years in the later Soviet period, the Party line was mistaken. . . . For the period of 7½ years after the Tsunyi Conference, the general line of our Party was directed by Comrade Mao and it was from the first to the last correct. [19]

According to Weber, the decisive factor in establishing the validity of charisma is recognition from followers. The year 1942 may be placed in history as the decisive turning point when the image of Mao Tse-tung as an invaluable, destined leader of the Chinese Communist Party was created through the Rectification Movement and when the recognition of this image began to spread. Lu Ting-yi saw the Rectification Movement at that time as an ideological struggle on the whole party level which for the first time had become possible, and indeed after the cautious, gradual progressivism lasting seven years following the Tsunyi Conference, it was a dramatic and decisive battle Mao dared in order to establish his absolute authority. Through this battle, to borrow Lu Ting-yi’s words, the Chinese Communist Party “completed the great leap from its infancy

¹² [6, pp. 8-12]. Liu Shao-chi writes in [18] that the results of the Chinese Revolution “have had important international significance around the world, particularly to those colonial and semi-colonial nations,” and he confirms the fact that Chinese Communists had already assumed “the leader’s position” for the revolution to be achieved in colonial and semi-colonial nations.

to maturity," and cleared the way for transforming itself into a solid, revolutionary group functioning more effectively, under a messianic leader who could act as the symbol of the revolutionary movement.

CONCLUSION

The various policies Mao Tse-tung energetically promoted after 1941 in the northwestern region in anti-Japanese guerrilla bases began to work to overcome the grave crises. Concurrently with the improvement of the situation and through the mediation of ideological indoctrination in the Rectification Movement which gained momentum from the latter half of 1942 on, admiration for Mao, in 1943 and thereafter, began to pour forth in great profusion. This phenomenon was a kind of "mutation" in the historical course of Mao's leadership since 1935. In the context of Weber's conceptual scheme, Mao's leadership between 1941-42 must be said to have manifested before the masses the proof of its validity.

Nineteen forty-three became one climax in the Mao cult. When Liu Shao-chi took over the Party's Secretary Generalship from Lo Fu, possibly in March of that year, he turned into an active director of the drama of the Mao cult. In his treatise of July, Liu writes, "After as long as twenty-two years in the revolutionary struggle, at last I was able to find my own leader in Comrade Mao Tse-tung," and, "We must saturate each phase and aspect of our activities with the guidance of Comrade Mao." In Chinese Communist publications at about the same time, Chu Te, Susumu Okano (Sanzō Nosaka), Hsiu Te-li, Wang Chia-hsiang, Chen Yi, Chou En-lai, Kang Sheng, Po Ku, and others in various articles simultaneously made public their admiration for Mao. Among these words of praise, we should point to those of Wang Chia-hsiang who for the first time suggested the definition that "the thought of Mao Tse-tung (Mao Tse-tung Suhsiang) is the Marxism-Leninism, Bolshevism, and Communist of China" [29], the definition that Liu Shao-chi was to use later at the Seventh Party Congress. Thus one symbol for the Movement was born.

The next activity of the Party after 1943 was to artificially refine the previously established charisma of Mao. The Rectification Movement hence rapidly directed itself to completely establishing the validity of Mao's thought and leadership, in Liu's words of July 1943, by "summing up the experience of the Chinese Revolution," or by re-examining the history of the Party's revolutionary movement. Just as Stalin wrote his party's history in 1938, the history of the Chinese Communist Party had to be rewritten. After reviewing theoretical studies and practical activities, the Rectification Movement passed onto the stage of examining Party history, starting, strictly speaking, from October of 1942.

The first step was the Shen-Kan-Ning Border Region Conference of higher rank cadres which continued into January 1943. At this conference, Kao Kang examined the Communist Party history of northern Shensi and contrasted the incorrect party line before 1935 with the correct one. Later in 1943, the examination of Party history of this northwestern Bureau became the model for all others and, promoted by the Central Committee, re-examination evolved into

the second stage of the Study Movement of Party History on an all-Party level. At this stage the study of Party history was a non-popular activity only for the higher rank cadres of the Party, and esoteric discussion continued for more than one year. The Study Movement came to an end with the resolution on the problem of Party history passed at the Seventh Party Congress in April 1945.

Analysis of the political implications of the Study Movement of Party History holds a crucial significance in efforts to understand the substance of Mao Tse-tung's ideological authority. However, since this would take us beyond the scope of the present essay and as I hope to return to the question elsewhere, I will limit my remarks here only to several central points. At the core, the political significance of the resolution of 1945 on the problem of the Party history was the creation of a political legend or "myth" of Mao's infallibility in leading the revolutionary movement. This resolution was the sum re-examination of all "incorrect" policies of the Party before the Tsunyi Conference of January 1935—for which this writer has argued that Mao himself cannot either directly or indirectly be absolved from responsibility¹³—based on the matured strategic standards that had been attained by 1945. Even if Mao's past revolutionary leadership had proven to be comparatively the most effective, it was an introspective synthesis, a *cooperative effort* of the whole Party including Mao, that was handed down in the form of an artificial contrast between the incorrect Wang Ming—Po Ku and the correct Mao—Liu lines. Consequently, "The Thought of Mao Tse-tung," which emerged as the official party ideology at the Seventh Party Congress following the end of the refining process, was in reality *not* "Mao Tse-tung's own thought" but a summarized conclusion, cooperatively reached, based on the common experience in 1945 of the Party members gained in the course of the Chinese Revolution. Main elements of this conclusion include; (1) *selected* parts of Mao Tse-tung's own thought before 1935, and from 1935 to 1945; (2) strategies and tactics showing valid efforts by party members other than Mao, and (3) the whole of the values, attitudes, spirit, and behavior formed at the revolutionary bases. The academic concept called "Maoism" regarding Mao's thought and activities before 1935 developed by scholars at Harvard University certainly may not have been a legend as some claim it to be, but the "Thought of Mao Tse-tung" of 1945 must be labeled a politically exaggerated myth created out of political necessity.

However, when the "Thought of Mao Tse-tung" was made into a myth and Mao, as the concentrated embodiment of the "Thought," was made the symbol of the revolutionary movement, all the values of the movement came to be monopolized by Mao alone. Thus Mao's authority secured a firm foundation for spreading to the national level of the masses. How was Mao's "charisma" regarded among the higher leaders of the Party? The group including Liu Shao-chi strongly advocating Mao certainly seems to have actively tried to make Mao the symbol of the revolutionary movement after the latter half of 1942. But at this time, our attention is drawn to the fact that the context of much of the

¹³ On this point, see [27].

praise by Party leaders was in terms of stressing practical aspects of Mao's effectiveness as leader in the revolutionary movement, and did not include Mao's Sinification of Marxism. While at first glance this may not seem unusual, it is interesting to relate it to Chen Po-ta's words of May 1944:

It is completely contrary to historical fact to recognize Comrade Mao Tse-tung only as a practical activist of the revolution, or to say that he became a theoretician only after the resistance period set in and that he had not been one before that. [5, p. 65]

In other words, this statement points out that there were attitudes prevalent at that time evaluating Mao not as a theoretician but as a practical strategist within the Party. As is well known, Liu Shao-chi paid the highest tribute to Mao by describing him as "a gifted and creative Marxist" and tried to elevate him from the rank of the strategists to that of a "thinker" or "theoretician," but even he, as noted above, does not seem to have appreciated Mao fully as a theoretician, at least not until about 1942. By that time Mao Tse-tung must have been gaining in prestige as the mighty and trustworthy politician and political leader, even among leadership groups, but it seems that it is a doubtful point whether the ideological authority of Mao's own thought was then firmly rooted among these leaders. Although I have not discussed the structure and operation of the Party in this essay, the internal dynamics of the cohesion of Mao's charismatic leadership among subleaders around him which abruptly appeared in the latter half of Yenan period were no doubt further related to Mao's leadership after 1945.

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