

The Emergence of Maoism

*Mao Tse-tung, Ch'en Po-ta,
and the Search for Chinese Theory*

1935-1945

Raymond F. Wylie

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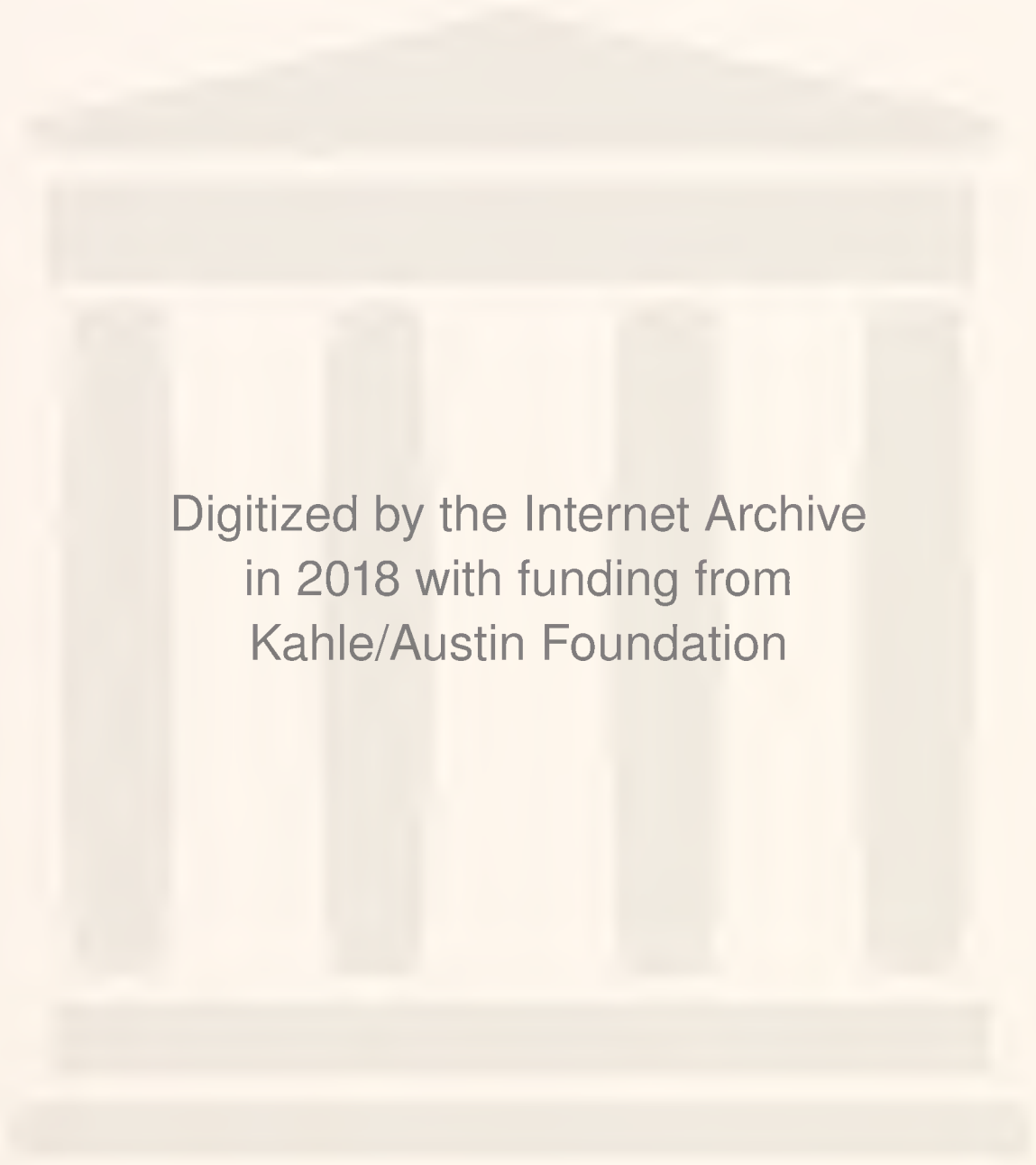
Raymond F. Wylie

This study investigates the political and ideological context of Mao Tse-tung's rise to power in the Chinese Communist Party, and in particular the development of the political ideology known as "Mao Tse-tung's thought."

The author reveals how, in the face of strong opposition from other CCP leaders, Mao played a strong role in fostering the cult of his own person and thought. The most important of his small group of enthusiastic supporters in this effort was Ch'en Po-ta, who not only influenced certain key aspects of Mao's thinking but played a leading role in formulating the claim to ideological supremacy that resulted in Mao's triumph at the Party's Seventh Congress in 1945.

The analysis of the complex interplay of elite politics within the CCP falls into two main periods: 1935–40, when the basic ideas behind the Chinese brand of Marxism were worked out by Mao and Ch'en; and 1940–45, when the two men worked to systematize and disseminate Mao's thought as the CCP's official guiding doctrine. The author provides new insights into both periods. An epilogue appraises the Mao-Ch'en relationship from 1945 to Ch'en's fall from power in 1970.

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To
my parents
and to
Susan, Sheelagh, and Teresa

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Introduction: In Search of a Chinese Way

To an appreciable extent, the history of modern China can be characterized as international history. In few other cases has the impact of external events had such a profound impact on the course of a nation's development as in the case of China since 1840. There is little doubt that the Western powers in the mid-nineteenth century regarded the "opening" of China as one of the great challenges of the age. Similarly, the imperial Chinese government took as a basic premise the necessity of shielding Confucian civilization from the onslaught of the "foreign barbarians."¹ It was truly a confrontation between different civilizations, not merely between different nation-states within the same sea of culture. When the Great Wall was finally breached by the sheer might of the West, the Chinese were forced to recognize the demands of powerful Western governments. More importantly, they also had to face a complex array of special interest groups which, for one reason or another, had designs on traditional China. It was not the foreign statesmen and diplomats who most threatened Chinese civilization; rather, it was the legions of soldiers, merchants, teachers, missionaries, and industrialists who followed close behind.

These unofficial "ambassadors" were a formidable challenge to the Chinese way of life. They were eager to pursue their diverse interests in China, and in so doing often sought to transform China in the modern, "progressive" image of the West. In current political science terms, China was caught up in an increasingly complex web of "transnational relations."² Official diplomatic intercourse became secondary to nongovernmental relationships between Chinese and foreigners at every level of society. It was only in 1949, when the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) took power, that decisive steps were taken to cut back on China's transnational connections, and unceremoniously to expel the un-

wanted foreign agents of change. More so than most other "new nations," the People's Republic of China (PRC) has tried to regulate the unofficial dimensions of national contact with the external world. Only now, in the late 1970's, is this control being somewhat relaxed, and it seems likely that close government supervision of China's transnational relations will continue for the foreseeable future.

In particular, the Chinese Communists have attempted to establish a new, comprehensive ideological system and to regulate all intellectual influences from abroad in the name of doctrinal purity. They have inherited from traditional Confucian culture an intense concern, not only with socio-ethical philosophy but also, and quite as much, with its embodiment in an official state ideology. It was, in fact, this absorption with ideological rectitude that in part prevented the Confucian intelligentsia from responding vigorously to the challenge of the new tides of thought from the West. In a desperate attempt to preserve their traditional ideological framework, the scholar-officials of the empire actually hastened its demise. For the conservative majority of the intellectuals, Confucianism had to stand or fall as a whole, and they proved stalwart in its defense; the growing radical minority, however, believed that Confucianism had to be sacrificed in toto to the demands of national survival. With the ascendancy of the radicals, the traditional ideology was abandoned during the famous New Culture Movement of the 1910's and 1920's, and thoughtful young Chinese sought new doctrines to fill the resulting intellectual vacuum.³

After a period of experimentation with a wide variety of Western "isms," two main ideas emerged as the chief inspiration for the young in China: Western, especially European, nationalism, and Russian Marxism-Leninism, and both soon found representation in political movements that vied for the allegiance of the Chinese people. At first, Chiang Kai-shek and the Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang, or KMT) attracted the stronger following among China's restless youth, but not so strong as to destroy the appeal of the Communists. Gradually, after a number of false starts, the Communists realized that the fusion of the patriotic sentiment of nationalism and the reforming zeal of Marxism-Leninism would broaden their ideological appeal. In-

creasingly throughout the 1930's and 1940's, the union of these two ideological currents came to be symbolized by a single Communist leader—Mao Tse-tung. Finally, in 1943, this intellectual synthesis made its formal appearance in Yen-an, the Chinese Communist capital, as “Mao Tse-tung's thought” (*Mao Tse-tung ssu-hsiang*). The Chinese Communists had at last found an acceptable replacement for Confucianism. After 1949, Mao Tse-tung's thought became China's new state ideology, and the Communists its official interpreters and executors.⁴

Upon reflection, it becomes clear that the free flow of ideological tides from the West and the Soviet Union to China constitutes an excellent example of what we might term “transnational ideological exchange.” By and large, these intellectual currents crossed China's national boundaries regardless of the official positions taken by particular Chinese governments. Faced with a bewildering array of foreign ideologies, Chinese intellectuals rejected some, but embraced others and sought to adapt them to their needs. Within the Communist movement, there was a consistent trend from an early, relatively uncritical acceptance of Marxism-Leninism in its Soviet form to an increasingly critical and selective adaptation of the foreign doctrine. In this complex process of ideological exchange from the Soviet Union to China, the original body of thought began to take on new contents and forms that separated it from its “orthodox” roots. By the time the Chinese Communists had cast it in a form acceptable to both their socio-cultural sensibilities and their practical revolutionary experiences, Marxism-Leninism began to appear “foreign” (and suspect) in the eyes of their Russian colleagues.

In one of the great ironies of history, Soviet Marxist-Leninists are now faced with a severe ideological challenge from a modified version of the very body of thought they originally taught to their Chinese counterparts. Ideological exchange is usually a two-way street, and the Chinese are now seeking to reverse the flow from East to West. The international (or, more accurately, transnational) dimensions of Chinese-Maoist ideology were made manifest, if somewhat crudely, during the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960's.⁵ As China gains in self-confidence and international experience, it is likely that its ideological influence will increasingly be felt in more subtle ways. Like their Confucian fore-

fathers, the modern Communists have made great efforts to protect their ideology from most foreign influences, but, unlike the Confucians, the Communists have been zealous in projecting their beliefs abroad. In a departure from the isolationism of the past, the Chinese today want to enter the international political marketplace alongside the ideologies of the West, the Soviet Union, and other Third World nations.

The emergence of Mao Tse-tung's thought as a specific ideological concept is thus an event of considerable importance in the history not only of the Chinese Communist Party but of China itself. In the past thirty years, Mao's thought has become a major element in Chinese politics, and, in the West, the subject of both praise and criticism. To some, Mao Tse-tung's thought represents the creative development of orthodox Marxism-Leninism; to others it represents the CCP's break from the mainstream of the international Communist movement. Perhaps in reality it means both. Surprisingly, there has been little attempt to subject the historical process that gave rise to Mao's thought to a thorough analysis. The paper by Noriyuki Tokuda, though of considerable value, is too brief to be fully satisfactory, and the passing attention given this subject in any number of more general treatments of the Chinese Communist movement is even less adequate.⁶

The purpose of this study is to fill this gap, to attempt an analysis of the ideological and political process that gave rise to the concept of Mao Tse-tung's thought within the Chinese Communist Party between the years 1935 and 1945. It was during this decade that Mao Tse-tung gradually achieved the fusion of political and ideological authority in his own person, from the time of his limited victory at the Tsunyi conference in 1935 to the formal incorporation of his thought into the CCP's new constitution in 1945.

These ten years conveniently overlap what is known as the "Yenan period" in Chinese Communist historiography. This important period has inspired some excellent book-length studies, to which later reference will be made, but none of them has paid special attention to the ideological aspects of the political struggle that dominated so much of the CCP's inner life during this crucial decade. Boyd Compton's translation of the CCP's famous

“rectification documents” is of course extremely important, but it is hardly a substitute for a comprehensive analysis of the party’s ideological development during the Yen-an years. I am not attempting to write such a volume here, but I do hope that I can throw additional light on the debates that accompanied Mao Tse-tung’s emergence as the party’s leading ideological spokesman, and on the specific political context in which they took place. As is indicated by the recent publication of the purported diaries of Peter Vladimirov, a Communist International (Comintern) representative in Yen-an from 1942 to 1945, a good deal of controversy still surrounds the CCP’s development during these critical years.⁷

I should make it clear that the present study is not meant to cover the evolution and content of the whole range of Mao Tse-tung’s political thought. Although this subject is far from being exhausted, it has been the focus of many able writers in the field, notably Stuart R. Schram.⁸ Rather, I am interested in the concrete ideological and political process that gave rise to Mao Tse-tung’s thought as a formal ideological concept within the CCP and led to its adoption as the official “guiding thought” of the Chinese party. Thus I am not primarily concerned with whether, in any absolute sense, Mao’s thought is sophisticated or not, original or not, orthodox or not, Chinese or not, relevant or not. Such questions are best left to the philosopher or the revolutionary, in whose judgment the subjective factor has an acknowledged place.⁹ My main interest is not in the intellectual content of Mao’s political thought but in the political phenomenon itself, the process by which Mao Tse-tung’s thought became the central locus of authority and mobilization in the Chinese Communist movement. By rigorous analytical standards, Mao’s thought might appear somewhat second rate compared with that of Marx or even Lenin, but there can be no question as to its tremendous influence on the course of modern Chinese history and politics.¹⁰

The questions that I shall try to answer are empirical ones. Did the emergence of Mao’s thought reflect the intellectual concerns of China in the 1930’s and 1940’s, or was it essentially an extraneous development? Did the concept of Mao’s thought spring full-blown from the minds of its advocates, or was it rather a culmination and synthesis of various ideological currents within

the CCP? Also, did it emerge as a natural concomitant of Mao Tse-tung's growing political power in the party, or was it consciously and deliberately worked out by its proponents? Which individuals or groups within the CCP supported the elevation of Mao's thought as the party's official body of doctrine? Who opposed such a move? Who simply went along? What relationship, if any, was there between the idea of the "Sinification of Marxism" in 1938 and the concept of "Mao Tse-tung's thought" in 1943? To what extent was the emergence of Mao's thought affected by developments within the CCP itself, or by domestic or foreign events beyond the control of the party? Finally, what exactly did "Mao Tse-tung's thought" mean to its proponents, and what relationship did they see between it and orthodox Marxist theory on the one hand, and the range of Chinese history and culture on the other?

These are all questions of great interest, and in answering them we shall necessarily have to look closely at the history of the CCP during the Yen-an period. This approach follows the historical course of Mao Tse-tung's rise to power, as his growing ideological stature became a major issue in defining his personal authority in the CCP and a central point of attack on the part of his critics and opponents both within the party and without. This is essentially ideological history—that is, the study of the evolution of political ideas in the context of political power, and the nature and consequences of their mutual interaction. In particular, I aim to show that new departures in Mao's political aggrandizement did not occur casually but were the response to specific challenges and opportunities. This study is not a comprehensive history of the Yen-an period, however, and our excursions into aspects of the broader historical dimension of the Yen-an period will necessarily be limited.

In this history considerable attention will be given to the personal role of Mao Tse-tung. The importance Mao came to attach to the role of ideology in the revolutionary movement, combined with the doubt evinced by many of the party's top leaders regarding his competence as a Marxist-Leninist theoretician, did much to stimulate his determination to acquire undisputed authority as the CCP's leading spokesman on all questions of doctrine. Mao's pervasive influence is to be seen at every important junc-

ture in the evolutionary process that gave rise to the party's acceptance of his own thought as its official guiding ideology.

Yet Mao could not possibly have accomplished this feat unaided, and one's attention is thus drawn to other individuals who played a role in the process. Mao surrounded himself with a small band of party theoreticians firmly committed to his cause, including such figures as Ai Ssu-ch'i, Chou Yang, Chang Ju-hsin, and Ch'en Po-ta. These individuals, and many others besides, came to be recognized as Mao's personal "think tank," people who not only helped Mao formulate his ideas but also worked assiduously to win their widespread acceptance throughout the party. They constituted the intellectual machine that stood behind Mao in the course of his struggles during the Yen-an period, and in many respects Mao's triumph in 1945 was very much their triumph also. Indeed, the high degree of awareness with which Mao and his small band of theorists promoted his claims to ideological supremacy suggests that the formulation of "Mao Tse-tung's thought" was an act of conscious creation, and not simply the result of a seemingly inevitable process in the ideological development of the CCP.

Of this group of theorists behind Mao, Ch'en Po-ta clearly emerges as the single most important figure. In this work I shall pay special attention to Ch'en's position in the ideological debates within the CCP during the years 1935-45 with a view to ascertaining his role in helping to formulate and propagate the concept of Mao Tse-tung's thought. The precise relationship between Mao and his enigmatic political secretary is still obscure, and academic opinion has tended to underrate Ch'en's importance in the Maoist camp and his personal intellectual influence on Mao. Lately, however, Ch'en's key role in the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960's has aroused some second thoughts as to his relationship with Mao, and a shift to a more positive evaluation is now in sight. Michel Oksenberg, for example, has suggested that in times of need Mao has usually "turned to his most trusted supporters, especially Ch'en Po-ta." In the area of ideology, in particular, it was individuals like Ch'en who possessed a "sufficient yet culturally rooted understanding of Marx to enable them to develop Mao's Marxism into a persuasive Chinese ideology."¹¹

There is no question that Ch'en Po-ta played an increasingly

important role during the Yen-an period. He emerged as a party theorist in his own right prior to meeting Mao in the summer of 1937, and he soon took a leading role in the campaign for the “Sinification of Marxism” that led to Mao’s concept of “new democracy” in 1940. In addition, Ch’en played a central role in the party’s Rectification Movement of 1942–43, and in the campaign against Chiang Kai-shek and the KMT that unfolded simultaneously. He emerged immediately thereafter as the leading architect of the “Maoist myth” that has dominated the official history of the CCP right up to the present day. Indeed, Mao and Ch’en established a very close personal and political relationship during these years, and, in certain respects, Ch’en appears to have had some intellectual influence on his patron and mentor. Ch’en was extremely prolific between 1935 and 1945, and I shall not attempt to discuss the full range of his writings and ideas during this period. The focus of this discussion is rather on those aspects of Ch’en’s thought and activities which are particularly relevant to his role in promoting Mao’s thought as the CCP’s official ideology. Nonetheless, the present work does considerably augment the existing body of knowledge concerning Ch’en Po-ta’s role in the Chinese Communist movement during the Yen-an era.*

One final point about Ch’en Po-ta and his relationship with Mao Tse-tung needs emphasizing here: I am not interested in showing that Ch’en had a profound intellectual influence on Mao, or that he was responsible for feeding Mao with many of his own ideas; neither am I interested in demonstrating—as many writers have sought to do—that Ch’en was no more than a ghostwriter who lacked significant ideas of his own but was skillful at putting Mao’s ideas into acceptable literary form.† Mao and Ch’en were

*Ch’en Po-ta’s career should be distinguished from that of A. N. Poskryobyshev, who served as Stalin’s personal secretary from about 1928 until his apparent death in 1953. Poskryobyshev was very important behind the scenes, but he never achieved the kind of theoretical and political influence that Ch’en did. Ch’en was much more a political figure in his own right than was his Soviet counterpart, as illustrated dramatically by his role in the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960’s.

†It has been common in Western writings to dismiss Ch’en as little more than Mao’s amanuensis, at least until the period of the Cultural Revolution. But after Ch’en’s fall from power in 1970, a directive of the CCP Central Committee acknowledged that Mao’s *Selected Works* might have to be purged

two very different individuals who, for their own reasons, placed considerable importance on establishing a central ideological focus for the struggling CCP. My interest is in the specific political steps they took to achieve this goal, and in the general intellectual argumentation they used to justify their actions. It is obvious that Ch'en was subordinate to Mao, and could not have taken substantially different positions from Mao on important issues, even had he wished to do so. But there is, as I shall show, evidence of occasional mutual borrowing of ideas—on the meaning of history, for example, and on “Sinification.”

I should also make it clear that this work is not intended as a biographical study either of Ch'en or of Mao, and I am not primarily interested in their activities prior to 1935, when this study commences. This omission is easily made good in the case of Mao Tse-tung, whose early life and ideas have been subjected to considerable scrutiny by a variety of writers. Should the reader be interested in pursuing the details of Mao's career prior to 1935, he has only to turn to a host of excellent studies on the subject.¹² Unfortunately, the same is not true of Ch'en Po-ta, who has so far received scant attention from students of the Chinese Communist movement.¹³ It would thus seem appropriate to preface the present study with some brief comments on Ch'en Po-ta's life and thought prior to 1935, with particular emphasis on those aspects that are most relevant to the discussion of his role in the creation of “Mao Tse-tung's thought” during the decade 1935–45. Additional material on Ch'en's early career can be found in the various biographical sources listed in the notes to the following discussion.

Throughout the study, I make extensive use of direct quotation from the writings of the principal figures involved. In certain cases, as with Ch'en Po-ta, many of the writings under consideration have not been translated or even discussed to any great extent in English-language studies of the Chinese Communist movement. Accordingly, extensive citation from some of Ch'en's

of the influence of Ch'en Po-ta (*New York Times*, Sept. 8, 1974). To date, the party has not been forthcoming on Ch'en's precise role in this regard, and few additional revelations can be expected.

most interesting and/or important works will give the reader a better insight into his method of analysis and mode of expression. In any study of the evolution of ideas or ideologies, it is often desirable to permit the individual protagonists to speak for themselves rather than through the intervention of a second party. It is hoped that the clarity thus gained will more than offset the possible tedium that this approach might induce in certain readers. In any event, Mao, Ch'en, and other top Communist leaders are often forceful and colorful writers, and some exposure to their prose helps to convey the flavor of the turbulent years that frame our study.

Ch'en Po-ta: The Formative Years

Ch'en Po-ta is one of the few top-ranking CCP leaders to have been born into a "poor peasant" family; on this all the sources agree.¹⁴ At the time of his birth in 1904, Ch'en's family was living in Huian county, Fukien, said to be one of the poorest areas in the province. Ch'en's personal name is Shang-yu, but since the 1930's he has been widely known as Po-ta, the pen name he adopted while teaching in Peking under a quite different alias, Chih-mei.¹⁵ When he was still a child, the family left Huian and settled in or near the town of Chimei in T'ungan county, on the mainland opposite the island city of Amoy. A studious child, Ch'en was accepted at about the age of eight into a "new style" school lately established in Chimei by a wealthy overseas Chinese. The school gradually expanded to include secondary education and teacher training, and Ch'en continued his education through all three levels. Early in 1925, after leaving Chimei and spending a short time in Canton, he enrolled in the newly established Shanghai Labor University. This university, though a creation of the recent Nationalist-Communist united front, was actually controlled by the Communists and its faculty included a number of party leaders, among them Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai. Ch'en was apparently quite left-wing by the time he entered the university, and he played an active role in student activities both on and off the campus. It was at about this time that he joined the Communist party along with his close friend, Jao Shu-shih, who was later to become a leading party figure.¹⁶

After completing his studies in Shanghai, probably in late 1926, Ch'en traveled south to Changchow, Fukien, where General Chang Chen's 49th division of the National Revolutionary Army (KMT) was stationed. Chang (a fellow Huian villager) offered Ch'en a post as a secretary. Ch'en's literary abilities quickly won Chang's esteem, and soon most of Chang's speeches and articles were passing through his young assistant's hands. It is said that Ch'en exercised considerable influence on Chang's thinking during these months. In the spring of 1927, at the time of the Nationalist suppression of the Communists, Ch'en fled to Shanghai, then to Nanking, and was there arrested and imprisoned. With Chang Chen's personal intervention, Ch'en was apparently encouraged to write a "letter of repentance" in which he repudiated the Communists and promised to devote himself to the study of Sun Yat-sen's Three People's Principles. This letter secured his release from prison, supposedly for a new start in life.¹⁷

Immediately upon being released, Ch'en reestablished contact with the CCP. He had been greatly changed by the near destruction of the party. As he recalled it in later years, "Henceforth, and for a long time after, matters such as the pursuit of Marxist-Leninist truth and how to grasp Marxism-Leninism to comprehend the problems of the Chinese revolution swirled in my mind."¹⁸ The Communist debacle of 1927 had not destroyed Ch'en's faith in the ultimate validity of Marxism-Leninism, but it had made him curious about the application of Marxist theory in the specific context of Chinese society. Happily, in late 1927 the party arranged for him to go to Moscow for further education along with many other young activists who had survived the suppression. Thus for some three years Ch'en was enrolled at Sun Yat-sen University, studying the Russian language and Marxist-Leninist philosophy and for the most part staying out of active politics. These years in Moscow gave him a solid foundation in the historical and theoretical aspects of Marxism-Leninism and its application in Russia and provided the intellectual basis for his later career as one of the foremost theorists and historians of the Chinese Communist Party.

Ch'en's modest political role during his stay in the Soviet Union was a condition not only of his desire to study but also of the particular situation prevailing among the Chinese students

at Sun Yat-sen University at the time. In its early years, the CCP sent many young members to Moscow to continue their education, among them the group that later became known within the party as the "Returned Students" (or the "Twenty-eight Bolsheviks"). This group, led by Ch'en Shao-yü (Wang Ming) and Ch'in Pang-hsien (Po Ku), was known at the university as the "international faction" (*kuo-chi-p'ai*) because of its primary loyalty to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the Communist International.¹⁹ The other faction, to which Ch'en belonged, was the "branch faction" (*chih-pu-p'ai*), which was loyal to the direct authority of the CCP and to its official representatives in Moscow. A good deal of tension developed between the two groups, especially in 1930 when Stalin launched a major purge of the CPSU following his victory over Trotsky and Bukharin. Stimulated by Stalin's actions, the international faction at Sun Yat-sen University launched a purge of its own, in which, some sources say, Po Ku (and probably Wang Ming also) singled out Ch'en for engaging in "sectarian activities" and warned him of disciplinary action if he persisted.²⁰ In all likelihood then, Ch'en had personal as well as ideological reasons for supporting Mao Tse-tung during his crucial struggle with the Returned Students in Yen-an in the late 1930's and early 1940's.

Sometime in late 1930 or early 1931 Ch'en went back to China, where he secured a post as lecturer in ancient (pre-Ch'in) Chinese history and philosophy at China University in Peking, one of the strongholds of left-wing students. It was apparently at this time also that he married Chu Yu-jen, a Szechwanese girl and fellow student whom he had met in Moscow and who returned to China with him.²¹ At the university Ch'en was known as Ch'en Chih-mei; at the same time, he pursued underground party activities and wrote polemical articles against enemies of the CCP under a new pen name, Ch'en Po-ta, the name under which he was to acquire his reputation. His teaching duties did not prevent him from undertaking party work in Tientsin in 1933, in cooperation with K'o Ch'ing-shih, Nan Han-chen, Chu Ch'i-wen, and others who later became important party figures.²² This experience doubtless proved useful in late 1935, when Ch'en worked with the same men to give a definite political direction to the famous

student movement that erupted in Peking in December of that year.

By the autumn of 1935 Ch'en was on the threshold of a new stage in his life, for the December Ninth Movement would push him to national prominence among Marxist writers in the Nationalist-controlled part of China. Yet by all accounts Ch'en was a most unlikely-looking leader—a short, stocky man with thick glasses and a strong south Fukienese accent made all the more unintelligible by a pronounced stammer. Nor did his personality do much to enhance his image, for he seems to have been cast in a strict mold; he neither smoked nor drank, and he had little taste for idle conversation. He was more a creature of the mind, and his mind was best expressed through the pen. According to one source, Ch'en had been tutored by his elder brother Tun-yu, with the result that his “written Chinese was rather good and his calligraphy was very beautiful.”²³ It was through the medium of the written word that Ch'en Po-ta was to rise in the ranks of the CCP. There is indeed much in his career that reminds one of the scholar-officials of traditional China.

In an extensive critique of idealism, which he wrote in the spring of 1935, Ch'en clearly reveals his basic philosophical position.²⁴ Although, in deference to the prevailing KMT censorship, he avoids any specific references to Marxism or Leninism as such, he does not disguise his personal commitment to dialectical materialism. In opening his argument, Ch'en tackles what he regards as the “most fundamental problem in philosophy,” namely, the problem of the relationship between thinking and existence. Reiterating the Marxist position that matter exists independently of human cognition, he asserts that there is no such thing as “abstract truth”; there is only “concrete truth.” Man's perception of concrete truth is only partial, and it must develop through his practice in the natural and social worlds. Man's task is thus to apply his partial (relative) truth in actual practice and in this way gradually approach complete (absolute) truth. What intellectual tool is man to employ in his progress from the perception of relative truth to the comprehension of absolute truth? For Ch'en, it is the law of dialectics, or the science of the contradictions inherent in all natural and social phenomena. He denies

the idealists' belief that contradictions exist merely as figures of speech or categories in logic; on the contrary, he argues, "Dialectics are inherent in living matter, and are the soul of the countless things in the universe. If there were no contradictions and no dialectics, there would be no universe, no nature, no society, and no thought."²⁵

Since dialectics are the very "soul" of the objective world, man must use this tool to comprehend the real world existing independently of his consciousness. Ch'en also denies the idealists' charge that dialectical materialists (that is, Marxists) are dogmatists who apply the concept of dialectics in a rigid manner and arrange the facts of the real world according to a fixed formula. In his opinion, "genuine" Marxists "approach and grasp objective things only in a living way [*huo-sheng-sheng ti*], only in the course of their own practice. They then proceed to analyze the internal and external connections in the development of things on the basis of the things' concreteness and totality, and to analyze the various aspects of the concrete contradictions inherent in the things."²⁶

But, ask the idealists, is the law of dialectics itself dialectical—that is, are contradictions inherent in it as well as in the rest of the objective world? Ch'en answers in the affirmative, but he rejects the implication that these inherent contradictions will eventually negate themselves and thus also negate the law of dialectics. Far from doing so, he says, history has on the contrary demonstrated that the science of dialectics has resulted from these inner contradictions developing from a lower to a higher stage. Thus, modern dialectical materialism is an improvement both on the primitive dialectical materialism of ancient Greece and on Hegel's more sophisticated dialectical idealism: "Since its creation, dialectical materialism has developed into new stages, and is just now again developing into a new stage. This process is based on the development of history, of man's practice, and of the law of dialectics itself. This development is not merely quantitative, but also qualitative."²⁷

Earlier in this article, Ch'en had stated that modern dialectical materialism (Marxism-Leninism) was a "brand new thing," the product of the development of the dialectic from lower to higher stages. But if Marxism-Leninism is in turn developing into a new

stage, will another “brand new thing” be produced? And if so, what will it be? Ch'en does not answer this question in his article of 1935, but in the following years, as we shall see, the answer slowly began to emerge. Finally, Ch'en takes up the allegation that dialectical materialists in China are in danger of being ensnared in “foreign nets”—subservient, that is, to outside influences (meaning Moscow), and not in command of their own professed philosophy. He dismisses this charge by turning it on the Chinese idealists, the anti-Marxists. They are the ones, he says, who really “crawl up to ‘foreign’ masters”; they simply regurgitate the anti-Marxist philosophy of such foreign thinkers as Hume, Kant, Bergson, Russell, and Dewey, whose theories are nothing but opium used to “enslave their own people and the people of the colonies.”²⁸

Ch'en's emphasis on the need for applying dialectical materialism to Chinese problems in a “living way” and his firm denial that Chinese Marxists are in danger of being ensnared in “foreign nets” are an early hint of his dissatisfaction with China's dependence upon the West, as a mere borrower of the new “scientific” philosophy of the proletariat, forever indebted to the West (including Russia) for philosophical enlightenment. But was China only a borrower of dialectical materialism, or did it in fact have an independent claim to a “Marxist” tradition in the realm of thought? Ch'en was at this time beginning to take the latter position, as illustrated in his views on T'an Ssu-t'ung, the radical Chinese reformer who was executed in 1898. In late 1933 Ch'en had drafted a short study of T'an's philosophy in which he maintained that T'an's thought contained traces of elementary materialism and incomplete dialectics.²⁹ Thus by 1933 Ch'en was attempting to satisfy himself as to the indigenous Chinese roots of “Marxism.” Eventually, his search for the origins of dialectical materialism in China was to lead him back to the philosophy of classical antiquity.³⁰ For Ch'en, China's long history was not something simply to be rejected; on the contrary, Chinese Marxists like himself were able to inherit the “most outstanding aspects” of the thought of T'an Ssu-t'ung precisely because they were the “inheritors of all the outstanding thought of China.”³¹

To a considerable degree, it seems, Ch'en was influenced by the nativist or “national essence” school (*kuo-ts'ui hsüeh-p'ai*)

that emerged in the early 1900's. This group, which, like Ch'en himself, came mostly from the southeast coastal area, believed in the great importance of culture (as opposed to political institutions) as the carrier of China's unique traditions and stressed particularly the need for going back to pre-Ch'in history to study the various schools of thought that predated the ascendancy of state Confucianism under the Han dynasty. But though essentially conservative and primarily concerned with defining China's unique historical character, the national essence school did not flatly reject the new cultural influences from the West. They recognized that much had to be learned from foreign civilizations, but they argued that China's tradition was flexible enough to accommodate these new elements, however radical.

With regard to Western science, for example, they claimed, in Charlotte Furth's words, to "find in the prescientific cultural tradition itself elements compatible with modern science and upon which it could be expected to build."³² The goal was thus to achieve a new Chinese culture that would represent an integrated synthesis of the finest traditions of both East and West. In one of their popular images, the creation of a new Chinese culture was like making new paper: both the old cloth of China and the old paper of the West were needed to fashion an entirely new product that was different from—and superior to—the original materials.³³

There seems little doubt as to the influence of the nativist tradition on Ch'en Po-ta's essential Marxism-Leninism. His southern origins, his growing emphasis on cultural questions, his hostility to the "New Confucianism" of the 1930's, his professional specialization in pre-Ch'in intellectual history, his belief in the existence of "scientific" elements (dialectical materialism) in China's traditional philosophy, and his advocacy of a new intellectual synthesis that would amalgamate both Chinese and Marxist elements—all these point to Ch'en's intellectual affiliation with the broad concerns of the national essence school. Though the term "national essence" had largely gone out of style in both Nationalist and Communist circles by the mid-1930's, the main ideas behind it persisted. Indeed, the dominant intellectual preoccupation of the 1930's was the desperate search for a new political philosophy that would draw together the seemingly conflicting

claims of Chinese tradition and Western innovation. As Benjamin Schwartz has perceptively noted, the “problem of the relationship of modern articulate Chinese to the total cultural heritage cannot simply be equated with the conservatism/radicalism problem.”³⁴ Certainly, this was the case with Ch’en Po-ta; although a “radical” in politics, he had an intense interest in history and a concern for culture that was in some respects “conservative.” Rather than calling for the destruction of China’s traditional culture in the broad sense, he wanted to preserve much of it for posterity by emphasizing its more “scientific” aspects and in that way making it more applicable to the modern age.*

By 1935 Ch’en Po-ta had moved toward an interpretation of Marxism-Leninism that would establish its compatibility with Chinese society by finding elements of dialectical materialism in China’s rich historical record and would at the same time encourage the development of Marxism-Leninism in China through its “living” application in the course of the Chinese revolution. Such an interpretation would be less open to attacks from right-wing critics in that it countered their claim that Marxism-Leninism was essentially incompatible with Chinese society, and in any event was being applied too dogmatically by its Chinese adherents. Also, it would have a great appeal to the nationalistic feelings of all non-Marxist Chinese because it held out the possibility of developing a new philosophical system that was truly Chinese in both its historical origins and contemporary form. But it was to prove much less acceptable to the left. Many of the left believed that Marxism’s sharp indictment of traditional “feudal” society would be blunted by any attempt to reconcile Marxist theory and Chinese history, and they warned that any attempt to develop Marxism-Leninism by adapting it to Chinese conditions would distort its universal scientific quality, applicable regardless of time and place. Nonetheless, Ch’en’s interpretation

*As Martin Bernal has suggested, elements of national essence ideology survived in the ideas of a wide variety of Chinese thinkers of the 1930’s and 1940’s, including people as politically diverse as Hu Shih and Kuo Mo-jo. It would seem that Ch’en Po-ta, at a younger level, should be included in this group. See Bernal’s “Liu Shih-p’ei and National Essence,” in Charlotte Furth, ed., *The Limits of Change: Essays on Conservative Alternatives in Republican China* (Cambridge, Mass., 1976), p. 112.

of Marxism-Leninism was to prove more relevant than the leftists' to the needs of a new Nationalist-Communist united front against Japan.

Ch'en's views on Marxist theory were also more in accord with those of Mao Tse-tung, who in 1935 commenced his drive to supreme power in the CCP in the face of strong opposition from the leftist Returned Students. In the ensuing years, Ch'en's views on Marxism-Leninism were to become increasingly explicit along national essence lines, and increasingly they were to be put in the service of Mao Tse-tung. In the autumn of 1935, however, Ch'en Po-ta was at a turning point in his own career; at the age of thirty-one, the stammering lecturer at China University was about to become one of the CCP's most effective spokesmen in the struggle for a new united front against Japan. It was in the context of this struggle that Ch'en elaborated on his interpretation of Marxism-Leninism, and in so doing established his position as a rising young theorist in the ranks of the Chinese Communist Party.

The Development
of a Chinese Marxism,
1925-1937

Nationalism and "National Forms"

Following the defeat of the Communists in the revolution of 1925-27, many of China's leftist intellectuals turned to a reconsideration of revolutionary theory in light of China's specific history and social system. Marxism became increasingly accepted by wide sections of the intelligentsia, including the students, as the true science of society, and great efforts were made to translate both classical and contemporary Marxist-Leninist works into Chinese. There was little questioning of the general proposition that a correct grasp of theory was essential as a guide to social practice, and much attention was devoted to working out a suitable theoretical position within the framework of Marxism.¹ As Arif Dirlik has pointed out, many of the participants in the "Controversy on China's Social History" of the early 1930's approached the study of Chinese history with a "rigid faith in the universal applicability of the social formations of Marxist historiography." Thus they concluded from the lack of development of capitalism in China that imperial society (that is, from the Ch'in dynasty to the late Ch'ing) had been a "stagnant transitional phase." This judgment not only downgraded two thousand years of China's history but also badly distorted Marxist periodization regarding the evolution of capitalism out of "feudal" society.²

According to Dirlik, at least some of the disputants in the controversy were uncomfortable with this strained analysis. They argued that although the mechanisms of social change, as explained by Marxism, might be universal, their operation in different social environments could lead to different outcomes. "In these cases, ironically," Dirlik says, "historical universality became the vehicle to the recognition of historical particularity and of

individual historical paths.”³ This was more or less the position taken by Ch'en Po-ta in the debate over Chinese history, and in August 1934 he published an essay in which he pointed out the mistake of ignoring the peculiarities of individual societies.⁴ This concern was to become central to Ch'en's evolving conception of the relationship between Marxist theory and Chinese society. That is, Ch'en was eventually to maintain that the universal “scientific” principles of Marxism-Leninism would have to be adapted to China's particular historical characteristics and to the actual practice of the Chinese revolution.

Ironically, nationalism was becoming an ever more powerful force in the political life of the nation precisely at the moment when large numbers of intellectuals (like Ch'en Po-ta) were abandoning their traditional beliefs in favor of what was essentially a foreign body of thought. Nationalism had been an important political element in China for at least a decade, but it received a great stimulus in the 1930's from the growing Japanese threat, especially after the attack on Manchuria in 1931. The student movement in particular became increasingly nationalistic and militant, and the largely student-organized December Ninth Movement of 1935-36 had a profound effect on the entire country. Many later leaders of the CCP, including Ch'en Po-ta himself, were to rise to prominence during this and similar campaigns against Japan's increasing aggression.⁵

Inevitably, this rapid rise in nationalism had an immediate impact on China's two major political parties. The KMT had always been fairly nationalistic, and under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek this leaning became more pronounced. By the early 1930's the “Nationalist Restoration” had been well launched, with Chiang declaring that a major task of the revolution was to “revive our Chinese culture, to restore our people's ancient virtues, to proclaim our Chinese national soul.”⁶ It was at about this time, too, that the Nationalists launched a concerted attempt to establish their own ideology as the basis for China's reconstruction, a problem which in one writer's opinion lay “at the roots of the Kuomintang's concern in the thirties.”⁷ In great part, the KMT New Life Movement of 1934-35 was an attempt to win the youth of China to the Nationalist cause.⁸

Beyond this, however, China's "national soul" formed the basis of what was to develop into a major debate in the mid-1930's on the nature of the Western impact on China. In the 1920's, people as far apart ideologically as Hu Shih and Ch'en Tu-hsiu had urged the widespread introduction of Western ideas and techniques into China. In the next decade this wave of Westernization began falling under increasing criticism, not only among the Chinese intellectuals of both camps but also from abroad. In 1931, for example, a team of foreign experts under the auspices of the League of Nations made a comprehensive study of Chinese education. According to James Sheridan, who has called attention to this report, the foreign educators pointed out that China's universities were "particularly denationalized" and displayed a "preoccupation with foreign ideas and phenomena." The main theme of the report, Sheridan says, was that "Chinese education at all levels was insufficiently Chinese. It copied foreign models, primarily American models, with little regard for the different conditions existing in China and the United States. The experts repeatedly stressed the dangers inherent in mechanically imitating foreign approaches and philosophies."⁹

As the nationalist tide swelled in the wake of Japanese aggression, more and more Chinese began to see danger in this relatively uncritical attitude. A landmark in the Westerner-nationalist debate was the publication in January 1935 of a joint declaration by ten leading professors opposing the "wholesale Westernization" approach taken by their more zealous colleagues and urging a more nationalist approach. Though China had much to learn from the West, it must not imitate the West—England, the United States, the Soviet Union, Italy, or Germany—too closely but must turn inward: "We demand a cultural construction on the Chinese basis. . . . We must examine our heritage, weed out what should be weeded out, and preserve what should be preserved. . . . It is right and necessary to absorb Western culture. But we should absorb what is worth absorbing and not, with the attitude of total acceptance, absorb its dregs also."¹⁰ The similarity of this conclusion to that of the foreign educators suggests that Chinese "anti-foreign" attitudes in recent history are perhaps grounded as much in social reality as in traditional "xenophobia." In any event, this

is an important issue that merits close attention by Western students of modern Chinese history and contemporary politics.

The ten professors who issued this statement were speaking from an essentially conservative point of view, but within a particular context, and as Lloyd Eastman has suggested, the term “conservatism” should be used here with a certain amount of caution. The 1935 declaration was said to have been based on a preliminary draft by Ch'en Li-fu, an American-educated engineer who had established himself as one of the Kuomintang's leading theoreticians. The members of the so-called C. C. Clique that he headed along with his brother, Ch'en Kuo-fu, were politically authoritarian and anti-leftist, but they were not conservatives in the sense of being opposed to change as such. On the contrary, they believed that China had to change in order to survive, and—like the liberals and leftists—they accepted the need to preserve the vitality of the Chinese people and nation even if this necessitated the rejection of traditional culture in part or in whole. But the conservatives were more disillusioned than the liberals were by the extent to which China had recently been Westernized—hence their insistence that any necessary changes should be based on a selective integration of the most desirable elements in both the Chinese and Western cultural traditions. They acknowledged that the resulting “dialectical” synthesis would give rise to a “new Chinese culture” that would be neither traditional nor Western, but something quite different from and superior to both.¹¹

The conservatives had a strong sense of cultural nationalism, and they emphasized the need to strengthen China's “national character” (*min-tsu-hsing*) in order to meet the challenge of the West and bring about a genuine renaissance. Although it echoed the concerns of the now discredited national essence school of the early 1900's, this new emphasis on cultural reconstruction on a Chinese basis was in tune with the times and could not be dismissed lightly by political activists in any camp who wished to relate to the temper of these turbulent years. As we saw in the previous chapter, Ch'en Po-ta himself was considerably influenced by the national essence thinkers, and was much concerned in the spring of 1935 with refuting the allegation that Chinese dialectical materialists (the Marxists) were overly influenced by their

“foreign masters.” Rather, he assured his readers that the “new philosophy” he espoused was on the point of entering a higher stage in its development in China.

It was in this general intellectual climate that the December Ninth Movement erupted at the end of 1935. By the spring of 1936 the movement had spread from Peking to every part of the country. The students demanded that the Nationalist government terminate its campaigns against the Communists and join with them in a new united front against Japan. China University, where Ch'en was teaching, had the largest number of CCP members of any university in Peking, and it was one of the leaders in the campaign, along with Yenching and Tsinghua, two important universities in the capital. Shih Li-te, who headed the liaison department of the Peking Students' Federation at this time, later revealed that Ch'en was a “responsible comrade” in the CCP's Northern Bureau and took an active part in the movement.¹² Nothing specific is known about Ch'en's activities, however, other than that he worked in cooperation with K'o Ch'ing-shih, Nan Han-chen, and others who later became party leaders. It was also about this time that Ch'en got to know Liu Shao-ch'i, who headed the party's Northern Bureau in the mid-1930's, and established good personal relations with him. Liu, it is said, thought highly of Ch'en at the time.¹³

Following the Comintern's initiative, the CCP had been moving, though less rapidly, toward a united front policy, and the December Ninth Movement did much to prepare public opinion for some kind of renewed cooperation between the Communists and the Nationalists.¹⁴ In December 1935 Chou Yang, who was an important CCP figure in cultural affairs in Shanghai, disbanded the League of Left-Wing Writers and set up a new body, the United Association of Chinese Writers. The new organization was directed to play down militant left-wing literature and propagandize in favor of cooperation among all writers, Marxist or not, who opposed Japan. Chou and his associates launched the slogan “national defense literature” as the rallying cry under which all patriotic writers could work toward a common cause, the defense of China against Japanese aggression. This slogan won the immediate support of many Communist intellectuals, including Kuo Mo-jo, Ai Ssu-ch'i, Ho Kan-chih, and Ch'en Po-ta,

but not of all, and one influential group of leftist writers, including Lu Hsün, Hu Feng, Feng Hsüeh-feng, and Mao Tun, responded by setting up a rival organization called the Chinese Literary Workers. Their slogan, which they believed to be more comprehensive and more radical than that of Chou Yang's group, was "mass literature of national revolutionary war."¹⁵

Central to Chou Yang's slogan of national defense literature was the concept of "national forms" (*min-tsu hsing-shih*). The immediate influence on Chou here was Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai, the CCP leader who was executed by the Nationalists in 1935, but the real origin of the concept of "national forms" was the so-called "new school" of poetry at the turn of the century. As characterized by Liang Ch'i-ch'ao in his 1903 "Poetics" (*Shih-hua*), the new school emphasized involvement with current affairs, the infusion of new spirit into old forms, and the use of a syntax closer to the vernacular.¹⁶ Ch'ü, in the early 1930's, took some of these ideas and reapplied them in a broader cultural context to develop his own views on the question of "common speech" in language and "national forms" in literature.

Ch'ü thought that the May Fourth Movement had not gone far enough in making the written language accessible to the common people, and he criticized the so-called plain speech (*pai-hua*) of the 1920's as being an awkward mixture of Chinese and foreign elements that was to a large extent incomprehensible to the ordinary person when read aloud. Ch'ü advocated the creation of a real *pai-hua* that ordinary people could understand when spoken, but this was to be based not on the language of the peasants, which was often obscure, but on the language of China's new urban working class. The language of this class of people, who were exposed to the modernizing influences of the cities, was fast becoming a kind of national "common speech" (*p'u-t'ung-hua*), and it could be the starting point of a new mass revolutionary literature. Ch'ü was not against some use of local dialects in written form, and he suggested that in the future it might be desirable to encourage particular regional literatures—for example, a Kwangtung or a Fukien literature. So long as the starting point was the easily understood *p'u-t'ung-hua* of the urban proletariat, the written language could, he thought, be quite flexible,

even including certain foreign expressions if it were felt desirable or necessary.¹⁷

On the question of literature, Ch'ü sharply rejected the common view in left-wing literary circles that new contents demanded new forms. On the contrary, he argued that traditional literary forms could be given new content, and suggested in particular that the traditional *yen-i* (historical romance) could be used as a form for modern revolutionary history. For example, one could envisage a new *yen-i* entitled "The Canton Commune" (Kuang-chou kung-she) or, perhaps, "Chu and Mao Boldly Descend the Ching-kang Mountain" (Chu Mao ta hsia Ching-kang-shan). Ch'ü also maintained that certain old forms in literature were superior to certain new forms, in that they were linked directly to traditional oral literature and took the form of easily understood narration. He criticized the arrogance of those writers who held that the literary level of the masses should be raised without any lowering of standards in order to cater to their existing tastes. According to this view, the masses should be taught to appreciate new forms in literature, and there should be no going back to traditional forms. Ch'ü did not deny the value of new forms in literature, but he believed that old and new forms could be used at the same time, with the masses gradually coming to accept the new forms. If the content of revolutionary mass literature were suitably progressive, he thought it should be possible to experiment with many different forms, both old and new.¹⁸

Chou Yang had been greatly influenced by Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai in the early 1930's when they worked together in the League of Left-Wing Writers, and his new offshoot organization based its program on many of Ch'ü's ideas. With nearly all these ideas the rival group centered around Lu Hsün took issue, primarily because they feared that they would attract too many non-Marxist writers and that the revolutionary content of national defense literature would be washed away in the tide of nationalism that was sweeping over the country. In later years Mao Tun, one of the Lu Hsün group, complained that the emphasis laid upon nationalism at this time "overshadowed the importance of the class outlook."¹⁹ The dispute was marked by a number of personal quarrels among some of the leading personalities on both

sides, but it was essentially ideological in nature. It was also quite serious; in her study of the issue, Merle Goldman has concluded that Lu Hsün and Feng Hsüeh-feng in particular “masterminded and spearheaded a policy of deliberate insubordination to the party’s cultural directives.”²⁰ This open dispute in the cultural field was an acute embarrassment to the CCP in its efforts to launch a new united front, and Ai Ssu-ch’i complained bitterly that the “most important danger at the present time is . . . left-wing dogmatism.” These left-wing dogmatists, wrote Ai, “have a most advanced appearance, but they repeatedly sell out, and their surrender harms those who are united to save the country.”²¹ Ai’s accusation was of course directed at the “literary leftists” in Shanghai, but it was similar to the charges Mao Tse-tung was leveling against the Returned Student faction within the leadership of the party in the remote fastness of Yen-an.

In October 1936, with the dispute over the two slogans in full swing, Ch’en Po-ta published a proposal that he hoped would unite the two sides.²² Granted that disputes were an inevitable part of life, this particular one, he declared, had dragged on for so long that the only people benefiting from it were the enemy, and it was time for an “armistice” among the warring factions on the literary front. Having said this, he immediately endorsed the slogan of national defense literature and called upon its left-wing opponents to recognize its validity in a united front setting. He acknowledged that certain people felt that this slogan lacked a radical ring, but he pointed out that it was designed to further the goals of the united front against Japan. As such, it had to be broad enough to appeal to large numbers of people who were opposed to Japan for a wide variety of reasons arising from their differing social interests. Also, Ch’en argued, the idea of national defense should be broadly interpreted to include such revolutionary causes as “opposition to darkness and oppression, demands for freedom and transformation of the life of the people, and opposition to orthodoxy and superstition.”

But even with such a broad definition, Ch’en went on, there was still room for the alternative slogan of mass literature of national revolutionary war, not as an opposing slogan but as a slogan for the forces of the left in the literary world, under the umbrella of national defense literature. The more radical form

of literature should be a key element and the major force in national defense literature. Hence, the slogan of the Lu Hsün group could serve to represent the "individual standpoint of left-wing writers" within the united front in the literary field, but it could not be the slogan of the united front in literature itself. This was a compromise by which the two opposing groups might cooperate in a common struggle against Japan, and Ch'en called upon the individuals involved on both sides to "sacrifice their prejudices" and reunite.

With war drawing ever closer, the leftist faction among the Shanghai writers, persuaded in part by Ch'en's argument, reluctantly accepted the idea of a broad united front against Japan.²³ Even so, it was many years before several important members of the original group finally accepted the CCP's authority in the cultural field, and then only because they were forced to do so during the Rectification Movement in Yen-an in the early 1940's. Others never did recognize party authority in this area.

Ch'en's proposal for a compromise in the literary debate over national defense literature is an interesting illustration of his understanding of the relationship between content and form. For Ch'en, content was by far the more important of the two: as long as the content of any policy was "correct," the question of form was quite secondary. Thus, whereas the slogan of national defense literature appeared reactionary to the leftists, Ch'en himself was little concerned with the form. Provided that this seemingly unprogressive form could be infused with revolutionary content, with Lu Hsün's more radical slogan representing the revolutionary kernel, all would be well. Not only would the revolutionary content of the slogan be preserved, but its moderate form would enhance its appeal to broad sections of the public, many of whom would be certain to shy away from an overtly leftist slogan. In Ch'en's view, the use of the more conservative slogan was both necessary and desirable in the quest to win over the masses to the cause of resistance to Japan. On the other hand, Lu Hsün's slogan, though seemingly progressive, would actually alienate many potential patriots from uniting to resist Japan, and to this extent it was reactionary in essence.

This was the same attitude that Ch'en was to take later on the question of Marxism-Leninism: if the foreign doctrine could be

cast in a form that preserved its revolutionary content but at the same time enhanced its appeal to the Chinese public, that was the right thing to do. To preserve the so-called revolutionary form of the doctrine at the cost of limiting its appeal to the masses was in effect to destroy its usefulness as a means of revolutionary mobilization and action. When Ch'en and Mao raised the issue of the Sinification of Marxism in 1938, it was ridiculed by Hu Feng, Feng Hsüeh-feng, and other leftist theoreticians in the CCP, just as earlier they had rejected the concept of national defense literature as a betrayal of revolutionary purity.

Ch'en's "New Enlightenment Movement"

Although the December Ninth Movement helped the Communists in their efforts to form a new united front, the literary dispute in Shanghai illustrated the difficulty of finding the right slogans which would be accepted by all the major political groupings concerned. On September 10, 1936, the left-wing Shanghai periodical *Tu-shu sheng-huo* (Reading Life) published a special issue in an attempt to spark off a broad movement on the cultural front, and Ch'en Po-ta rose to the occasion by calling for a "New Enlightenment Movement" (*hsin ch'i-meng yün-tung*).²⁴ According to a contemporary account by Ho Kan-chih, Ch'en was the first person "consciously" to raise the question of a new intellectual movement to accompany the political forces generated by the December Ninth Movement. Ch'en's first two articles on the New Enlightenment Movement (NEM) were the "earliest calls" for and the "foundation stones" of the entire movement, Ho declared.²⁵ Ch'en's proposals provoked a lively debate in "progressive" intellectual circles throughout the country and won the immediate support of Chou Yang, Ai Ssu-ch'i, Ho Kan-chih, Hu Ch'iao-mu, and other leading CCP intellectuals. The response from non-Marxists was more reserved and critical, as could be expected, but from this time on Ch'en became an increasingly well known figure in the numerous debates on the united front prior to the Japanese invasion in July 1937.

What exactly was the NEM? Or, perhaps more accurately, what did Ch'en think it should be? In a series of essays in 1936-37, Ch'en developed the theme that the NEM should be a "second

New Culture Movement—a cultural salvation movement,” similar to yet different from the May Fourth Movement of 1919. During that famous movement, Ch'en explains in the second of these essays (October 1936), there was no conflict of interest between enlightenment and patriotism, because “Fighters of the New Culture Movement were at the same time fighters of the patriotic movement, and fighters of the patriotic movement equally became fighters of the New Culture Movement.”²⁶ Yet in spite of this important similarity, there is a crucial difference between the May Fourth Movement and the NEM, for in the intervening years dialectics (*tung ti lo-chi*) have replaced formal logic as the dominant philosophical system in China. Consequently, Marxists are to be the main force of the present NEM, and the “concrete application of dialectics will become the central concern” of this new movement. As in the united front in literature, so in the NEM; the Communists will willingly cooperate with other groups in the united front but will not voluntarily relinquish their leading role. Having established this point, Ch'en makes it clear that the “recognition or denial of dialectics” is by no means the criterion for participation in the NEM; the only criteria are the “defense of the motherland and the enlightenment of the people.” The NEM will develop on a broad scale only if it is constructed on the basis of “nonsectarianism,” and it should therefore include individuals from various social strata who will support the defense of China against Japan and resist the current attempts to revive traditionalism.²⁷

This attempt to broaden the appeal of the NEM was rather roundly attacked as being “excessively narrow in scope and excessively leftist in expression,” and Ch'en's ultimate insistence on the importance of Marxism in the NEM probably did much to undermine its general appeal to non-Marxists in the cultural field.²⁸ However, the Japanese invasion cut off debate on this issue as on all intellectual matters. The NEM might have been more successful had it not been for the intervention of the war, but this must remain speculative.

Although Ch'en stressed the importance of Marxism and the Marxists in the NEM, he was not at all saying that the Marxists had all the right answers. On the contrary, in his original article calling for the NEM, Ch'en suggested that in the field of philoso-

phy, which was of course his own special area of interest, the Marxists ought to undertake a thorough “self-criticism” as part of their contribution to the new movement. Specifically, they should recognize the fact that they had been remiss in not having made a systematic critique of China’s traditional philosophical systems and in not having integrated in a satisfactory way Marxist theory and the practical politics of China. Both these points are relevant to our discussion. Although Marxism had become the dominant philosophy in China in the years since the failure of the revolution of 1925-27, Ch’en said, the Marxists had failed to deal effectively with these two important problems. “There is, in general,” he pointed out, “a lack of a systematic, penetrating critique of China’s old traditional thought, and this millennia-old ruling traditional thought has become today a powerful tool which the imperialists (especially the Japanese imperialists) and traitors are using to enslave the consciousness of the Chinese people.”²⁹

In calling for a “systematic, penetrating critique” of China’s philosophical heritage, Ch’en was by no means implying that it should be totally rejected. In another article, for example, he suggests that in struggling for a “China with a new culture” it is necessary to “defend the best traditions in Chinese culture.”³⁰ The important point, as he made clear in still another essay (May 1937), is that “we wish to inherit and moreover develop what is good, [but] we will definitely not give any consideration to what is not good.”³¹ The purpose of the NEM is not to destroy traditional Chinese culture, but to save the modern Chinese nation. Still, there can be no return to the past for its own sake: “We want to struggle for a ‘China with a contemporary culture.’ Otherwise, we will merely reach the blind alley of ‘reordering the national essence [*cheng-li kuo-ts’ui*].’ The point of emphasis in our New Enlightenment Movement is to struggle for a ‘China with a contemporary culture.’ ”³²

The new Chinese culture that Ch’en has in mind is to be constructed from two essential components. One of these is the “acceptance and glorification of the finest cultural traditions in China’s past”—no doubt a reflection in part of his earlier discovery that elements of dialectical materialism existed independently in China prior to the introduction of Marxism in the twentieth

century. The other component is the "acceptance of all the world's greatest cultural traditions and achievements," the greatest of which is dialectical materialism, especially in its most advanced form, Marxism-Leninism. The combination of selected aspects of China's traditional culture and modern foreign cultures, Ch'en concludes, will produce a dynamic synthesis that will bring about a new and qualitatively different and superior culture for China.³³

Unfortunately, however, Ch'en observes, China's Marxist philosophers have so far not been successful in integrating their foreign theory with Chinese reality. The time has come, he argues, for a greater effort to evaluate the broad dimensions of China's cultural legacy on the basis of dialectical materialism. Nor have the Marxists shown much skill in using Chinese political reality as a matrix within which to develop dialectical materialism: "The greater part of China's Marxist philosophers have not integrated practical politics into their philosophical writings, and have not successfully used examples from China's living politics to elucidate dialectics, thus concretizing dialectical materialism in Chinese problems and further enriching it. . . . Hence Marxism can easily become empty talk and can be misrepresented by others."³⁴

In a later article Ch'en suggests that Ai Ssu-ch'i's efforts in the popularization of Marxist philosophy are "epoch-making," but are "still inadequate" regarding the union of philosophy and the "total reality of China's history."³⁵ Ch'en deplored this inability of Marxist theorists to combine their new philosophy with the historical and contemporary reality of China, for in such a situation theory becomes separated from reality and that in turn strengthens the tendency of theory to lag behind reality. Thus, Marxist-Leninist theory loses its ability to serve as the guiding ideology of the revolutionary movement, dooming the Chinese revolution to ultimate failure.

Ch'en's emphasis on the role of Chinese reality in developing Marxist theory should be noted. The prevalent tendency among Chinese Marxists was to emphasize the role of Marxism as a methodology to evaluate the nature of Chinese social reality. There was little suggestion that Chinese reality could, in turn, serve as a methodology to measure the strengths and weaknesses

of Marxism as a theory of society. Ch'en, however, chose to emphasize the dialectical relationship between Marxist theory and Chinese reality. This suggested that, in the same way that dialectical materialism in its Marxist-Leninist form served as a guide to understanding Chinese reality, so too could Chinese reality serve as a guide to understanding Marxism-Leninism. This implied that man's perception of dialectical materialism could move from the present, limited level represented by Marxism-Leninism to a future, more developed level in the course of continuing interaction with Chinese reality. This meant, in turn, that Marxism-Leninism, once integrated with Chinese revolutionary practice, would gradually emerge in a different and, in Ch'en's words, "enriched" form. It would, of necessity, emerge in a Chinese cultural form, just as Marxism emerged in a West European form and Leninism in a Russian form.

These calls for the preservation of the "best traditions" in Chinese culture and for the "enrichment" of Marxism by "concretizing" it in Chinese reality seemed to put Marxism in great danger of losing its status as the scientific philosophy of the international proletariat and becoming instead a cultural philosophy serving only the interests of the Chinese nation. An even more pronounced cultural bias appeared in the views of Chang Shen-fu, another young Marxist theorist who was involved in the debate on the New Enlightenment Movement. In an essay of May 4, 1937, for example, Chang supported Ch'en's proposal for such a movement, declaring that it should be "rational, synthetic, and scientific." Marxism, of course, was to provide the basic "rational" and "scientific" content of the NEM, but this should be seen in the context of Chang's ideas concerning "synthesis" as applied to the cultural sphere. Chang strongly defended the need to infuse Chinese culture with the new culture from the West, and he rejected the stubborn defense of Chinese tradition to the exclusion of Western influences. The task at hand, he urged, was to strike the proper balance between traditional Chinese and modern Western elements in the "genuinely new culture" that the NEM was to create for China: "There should be a dialectical or organic synthesis [*tsung-ho*] of the various cultures existing at the present time. As a rule, the creation of a genuinely new culture results from the fusion [*chieh-ho*] of two dissimilar cultures. When a

foreign culture (or civilization) is transplanted, it cannot grow if it does not conform to the soil in the local place [and does not] bear a national character.”³⁶

In equating “culture” with “civilization” rather than limiting his discussion of cultural synthesis to the narrower fields of art and literature, Chang is here following the broad sociological approach to culture, but it is an approach that inevitably raises certain questions about Marxism. Surely, the revolutionary philosophy of the proletariat was itself part and parcel of the immense cultural (or civilizational) impact of the West. Therefore would not Marxism also be synthesized with traditional Chinese culture? Although Chang in this essay did not deal specifically with the possible theoretical implications of his argument, the nuances were apparent, as Ch'en Po-ta himself and others who were involved in the debate over the New Enlightenment Movement quite realized.

Small wonder, then, that Ch'en felt it necessary to attack certain unnamed “literary Pharisees” for suggesting that in a new united front Marxism would quickly degenerate into “united philosophy” (*lien-ho che-hsüeh*) or “patriotic philosophy” (*ai-kuo che-hsüeh*), and would lose its “philosophical party nature.”³⁷ These charges of course implied that Marxism and nationalism were irreconcilable, and this was the brunt of the criticism the literary leftists leveled against the united front policy and the probable consequences that would flow from it. But were Marxism and nationalism indeed incompatible? Not according to Ch'en, who agreed with his critics that Marxism in the present era in China would have the appearance of being a patriotic philosophy. In the face of Japanese aggression, Ch'en argued, any philosophy that was not patriotic would be useless to the Chinese people. But the patriotism he was advocating was not to be confused with “ordinary” patriotism. Ch'en's kind of patriotism had its “own historical characteristic,” in that under the right circumstances it might “rather quickly transform itself into [the basis of] a new rational social life.” In other words, Ch'en's patriotic philosophy was also Marxist philosophy, for it emerged in a historical situation characterized by a patriotism that was different from ordinary patriotism (i.e. bourgeois nationalism).³⁸ In firmly rejecting the charge that there was any conflict of interest be-

tween Marxist philosophy and Chinese nationalism, Ch'en provides us with the key to his fundamental understanding of Marxism itself:

The real task of our philosophy [Marxism] is to transform the world, but in our present circumstances the task of our philosophy is to serve the defense of the motherland. Our philosophy is the philosophy that will liberate all mankind, but at the same time it is also the present patriotic philosophy of us Chinese people. Our new philosophy is not abstract dogma; it must struggle under every concrete historical situation, and within every concrete historical environment, for every genuinely progressive cause. In China, which is suffering annexation [by Japan], the cause of national liberation is a very great progressive cause.³⁹

For Ch'en, Marxism is not "abstract dogma" that exists independently of a specific time and place; it is rather a living philosophy which is intimately bound up with the "concrete historical situation" and "concrete historical environment" peculiar to China.

Ch'en played a major role within the CCP in redefining the nature of Marxism in the light of growing nationalism in the immediate years prior to 1937, but he had the support of an important group of urban party intellectuals who enthusiastically accepted the party's demand for a new united front in the face of Japanese aggression. In the spring of 1937, some six months after the NEM had been launched by Ch'en, the CCP theorist Hsia Cheng-nung brought out a collection of essays relating to the movement. Besides three of Ch'en's most important essays, the volume contained contributions by such well-known figures as Ai Ssu-ch'i, Ho Kan-chih, and Chou Yang. In his concluding essay, Hsia attempted to uncover the "principles of China's ideological movement at the present stage."⁴⁰ Ideology, says Hsia, is based on class, and the ideology of the leading class at a given moment in history is the "leading element" in any contemporary ideological movement. This leading element therefore establishes the fundamental principles of the ideological movement in question. In European intellectual history the leading role of the bourgeoisie and its ideology is very clear, but in China things are different. In terms of both political progressiveness and sheer numbers, the "laboring masses" play this leading role in present-day China and in China's contemporary ideological movements.

In other words, the ideology of the laboring masses (namely, Marxism-Leninism) is to be the leading element in the New Enlightenment Movement.

Because of China's "special character," however, the laboring masses have certain limitations in comparison with their European counterparts. First, the Chinese masses are undertaking two historic tasks—their own task, and also the task of the bourgeoisie. And only after they have helped to satisfy the demands of the bourgeoisie can they move on to the realization of their own aspirations. Second, the Chinese masses have not yet gone through the tempering process of capitalist society, nor have they fully experienced the effects of the (bourgeois) liberation of the individual. In the realm of thought, these two historical limitations have not been conducive to the thorough elimination of traditional "feudal" ideas from the ranks of the Chinese laboring masses, nor to the systematic establishment of their own class ideology and fighting forces. In consequence, the Chinese masses are "a little backward" in comparison with the laboring classes of Europe, America, and certain other countries. The conclusion seems clear:

Although it takes the ideology of the laboring masses as its guide, China's ideological movement in its present stage [i.e. the NEM] definitely cannot take the philosophy of the European proletariat and transfer it to China in an unchanged form. It is only when it is applied to real problems that dialectical materialism can exist and be of significance. It itself will then develop. We cannot deny that the sharpest and most correct weapon in today's ideological movement is dialectical materialism, but we must pay special attention to the fact that the present stage is one in which dialectical materialism will develop in China.⁴¹

By early 1937, then, there was a feeling among certain CCP intellectuals in the cities that the time had come for Marxism-Leninism to "develop" in China. Only if it took form in the course of concrete struggles in China, they argued, would Marxism-Leninism be relevant to the special needs of the Chinese people at this crucial moment in their history. In proposing his New Enlightenment Movement, Ch'en Po-ta had clearly indicated that it was only through the reconciliation of the philosophy of the international proletariat and the rising nationalism of the Chinese people that Marxism-Leninism could develop in China.

In his support for "national forms" in literature, for the preservation of the "best traditions" in Chinese culture, for a "systematic critique" of China's traditional philosophy, and for the "enrichment" of dialectical materialism by "concretizing" it in Chinese problems, Ch'en was pointing, however imprecisely, toward the later concept of the "Sinification of Marxism."

In time, Ch'en's New Enlightenment Movement might very likely have led to a more or less explicit theory along these lines, but events intervened to make this impossible. Prior to the Japanese invasion of China in July 1937, many of the active participants in the movement, including Ch'en himself, fled to the safety of Yen-an. There they were to become the core of the ideological and propaganda machine which Mao Tse-tung was busily assembling in the course of his struggle with the Returned Students. Mao, in other words, achieved supremacy within the CCP precisely at the moment when Ch'en Po-ta and his urban colleagues were calling for the development of Marxism-Leninism in China. Mao was thinking similar thoughts, although he had somewhat different views on the specific question of the correct attitude toward China's history and traditional philosophy.

Mao Tse-tung's Rise to Power

Mao Tse-tung's rise to supreme power in the CCP dates from late 1934, when the military failures of the Returned Students gave him the chance to reestablish his power in both the Red Army and the party organization at Juichin. This in turn placed him in a strong position at the extraordinary meeting at Tsunyi in January 1935, when the party leadership convened to reorganize itself during the Long March.⁴² Many of the details of the Tsunyi conference remain obscure to this day, but there can be little doubt that the meeting was a very important milestone in Mao's career. He was reelected to the Politburo and to the chairmanship of the important Military Affairs Committee, positions which provided the basis for his eventual domination of the party.⁴³ But Mao's support was far from overwhelming, and as Hu Chi-hsi has pointed out, it came largely from the army, which was by now probably dominated by the Maoist faction.⁴⁴ The delicate balance of power within the party is indicated by the fact

that in spite of Mao's real gains it was Chang Wen-t'ien who was elected secretary-general, and there was no criticism of the party's political line—that is, the line of the Returned Students, to which Mao was opposed.⁴⁵ Though some of the Returned Students were prepared to admit to errors in the military sphere, they would not countenance criticism in the more important realm of politics.

In spite of Chang Kuo-t'ao's open opposition to Mao's growing power after Tsunyi, Mao's First Army completed its epic Long March in October 1935 and settled down in its new home in Shensi. In mid-December, during a temporary stay in the small town of Wayaopao, the Politburo convened a full meeting to review the situation in the party and the country as a whole. Official sources have described this meeting as "one of the most important ever called" by the CCP Central Committee.⁴⁶ The conference declared its support for the policy of a united front in China in line with the Comintern's decisions earlier that year. This policy gave the CCP a new lease on life and set the stage for the party's rapid growth during the war against Japan. It was also at Wayaopao that Mao abandoned the compromise he had made at Tsunyi and came out with a direct attack on the political line of the Returned Students. In a Politburo resolution of December 25, which clearly reflected his own opinions, Mao paid due notice to the need to guard against the right, yet he went on to declare that the "main danger" was a "'left' closed-door tendency" which had existed for some time within the party. That the leftists in question were none other than the Returned Students is suggested by the resolution's conclusion that the "basic source" of leftism within the party was the proponents' "inability to apply Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism in a living way to China's specific concrete environment, thus rendering Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism a lifeless dogma."⁴⁷ This charge of "dogmatism" was to become a major theme in Mao's struggles with the Returned Students, and the "living" application of Marxism-Leninism to China was to become the cornerstone of his approach to problems of ideology.

The Wayaopao conference was crucial to Mao's rise to power because it turned the tables on the Returned Students and placed them squarely on the defensive. No longer the tireless scourgers of "right opportunism" in the party, they would now have to

devote their energies to deflecting the charge that they themselves were guilty of a serious left deviation. Mao's growing prestige within the CCP following the meeting at Wayaopao is reflected in the comments of Edgar Snow, the American journalist who interviewed Mao and other party leaders in July 1936. After spending some time with the Communists in the small town of Paoan, Snow reported that in his dealings with a wide variety of people, "I never met one who did not like 'the Chairman'—as everyone called him—and admire him. The role of his personality in the movement was clearly immense." Snow further declared that "the influence of Mao Tse-tung throughout the Communist world of China is probably greater than that of anyone else." Yet in spite of Mao's dominant position Snow could observe that there was "as yet, at least—no ritual of hero-worship built up around him. I never met a Chinese Red who drivelled 'our-great-leader' phrases."⁴⁸

The last few months of 1936 were of supreme importance to both Mao and the CCP. They witnessed the destruction of Chang Kuo-t'ao as a force to be reckoned with, and the legitimization of the party as a result of the Sian incident in December of that year, when Chiang Kai-shek was forced to agree to a new united front with the Communists.* These two events further consolidated Mao's leading position within the CCP and presented him with the opportunity of becoming a truly national figure as well, in direct competition with Chiang. In particular, the legitimization of the Yen-an base area added new luster to Mao's position as the party's top leader. Ever since the Nationalist-Communist split in 1927, Mao had been personally identified with the creation of territorial base areas in the countryside, and this had exposed him to considerable criticism from the party hierarchy. It had always been an article of faith among the CCP's early leaders that the proletarian revolution in China would be based, as it was in Russia, in the country's largest industrial cities. The disaster of 1927, when the Communists were driven from the cities

*On December 12, 1936, near the city of Sian, Chiang Kai-shek was arrested and threatened with death by two of his own generals unless he agreed to a united front with the CCP against Japan. After some initial indecision, the Communists supported Chiang's release on the condition of his participation in a new united front.

and forced to regroup as best they could in the remote countryside, was seen as a purely temporary setback. Ch'en Tu-hsiu, Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai, Li Li-san, and the Returned Students had all agreed that the party had to reestablish its urban roots and use them as the foundation for the revolution among the industrial working class.

Mao Tse-tung's views were somewhat different. Although he agreed with the general principle that the party would eventually have to reestablish itself in the cities, he did not see this as an immediate possibility. For the present, the party should concentrate on rebuilding itself in base areas deep in the countryside far from the cities.⁴⁹ To those who feared that the party would lose its proletarian roots, Mao replied that correct ideological leadership would guarantee the proletarian nature of the party even though it took in large numbers of peasants. Indeed, from his own experiences in the first base area that he established in the Ching kang Mountains in late 1927, Mao was convinced that it was *only* in China's vast, mountainous hinterland that the party could survive against the superior military might of the KMT. By making a virtue out of necessity, Mao and his faction were able to restore renewed faith in the vitality of the Communist movement, and they provided the party with a fresh approach to the revolution in China. It was an approach that was to lead to bitter (and still continuing) debate within the CCP and also in Moscow.⁵⁰ But Mao's strategy of surrounding the cities from the countryside worked, and in due course he was able to lead his triumphant party back to the cities and to its proletarian roots.

It must be emphasized that Mao's attitude toward the base areas was pragmatic, not ideological: they were simply the means to an end, to be established or discarded as circumstances dictated. The Ching kangshan base was abandoned in 1929, the Kiangsi base was evacuated in 1934, and even the much more substantial Shen-Kan-Ning base was deserted in the face of the advancing Nationalist armies in 1947. But while they could be of use, they were to be looked upon as valuable. Preferably, the individual base areas were to be located in relatively inaccessible regions, border areas and the like. Working together, a strong party and a capable army would strive to win the support of the peasant inhabitants. Both the party and the peasants would grow

and prosper, and while the army was being built up and strengthened to meet the military forces of the KMT, valuable experience could be accumulated in the day-to-day administration of the base areas. Also the party could be building up a strong force of experienced cadres in such diverse fields as political organization, military security, economic development, and general social concerns such as education and culture. Although none of the numerous other base areas reached the size or level of sophistication of the Yen-an model, they achieved success in varying degrees as circumstances permitted. As a result, when the Communists marched into the major urban centers and established the new regime in 1949, they brought with them a rich store of experience that could be put to use on a national basis. Thus the base areas had an importance far beyond their own temporary existence, not only in enabling the Communists to win the war but in providing them with the means of administering the peace.⁵¹

The Nationalist regime in Nanking had of course declared the base areas illegal and had systematically destroyed them, but after the Sian incident all this changed, and despite later KMT and Japanese harassment the base areas were able to develop in a relatively secure environment. As the Yen-an base in particular grew and prospered in 1937 and subsequent years, the stature and fortunes of Mao Tse-tung also prospered. In April 1937 the Politburo met in Yen-an to discuss the new situation arising from the Sian incident, and in May a national conference of the party was convened to discuss the new line. According to Chang Kuo-t'ao, Mao further strengthened his position at this conference by supporting Liu Shao-ch'i's critique of the party's "leftist errors" in the past. Liu's report antagonized the Returned Students, and Mao's support of Liu's position marked the beginning of the Mao-Liu coalition that was eventually to dominate the party. Soon after the May conference Liu was transferred to Yen-an and took on an increasingly important number of party posts, probably with the personal support of Mao.⁵² In a few months' time Mao was to be confronted by Wang Ming, the one Returned Student who could still pose a serious challenge to Mao's bid for power. Wang's attitude toward Mao was clearly revealed in an article of mid-1937, in which he twice referred to "Comrades Chu Te and Mao Tse-tung" as the leaders of the Chinese Red Army.

Not only was Mao ranked second to Chu, but both were described solely as military, not political, leaders of the Chinese Communist movement.⁵³

Whatever Wang Ming's hesitations, Mao Tse-tung was by now, in the early summer of 1937, very much the first among equals in the CCP, and it was at this time that the first signs of a personality cult began to make their appearance. On June 22, *Liberation*, the CCP's new central organ, published its first portrait of Mao. A comparison of this with the portrait of Chu Te published in the same journal on June 16 indicates Mao's growing preeminence. Though the two portraits, both woodcuts, were done by the same artist, the treatment of the two leaders is radically different. Both Chu and Mao are shown full face, but the background in the Mao portrait—marching columns with flags flying—is much more dynamic than the one in the Chu. In addition, Mao's face is strikingly illuminated by the glowing rays of the sun, a motif that has associations with the emperor in traditional China and was to become the hallmark of the later cult of Mao. Finally, whereas an empty space beside Chu's portrait is filled with decorative lines, a similar one below Mao's portrait contains a quotation from Mao calling for the "complete liberation of our nation and society." The marching columns, the rays of sun, the apt quotation—all these indicate that the cult of Mao was definitely in the making by June 1937.* Six months later the first collection of writings by Mao, the *Collected Essays of Mao Tse-tung*, was published in Shanghai.⁵⁴ No other Communist leader

*For Chu's portrait, see *Chieh-fang* (*Liberation*), 6 (June 14, 1937): 25; for Mao's portrait and quotation, see *ibid.* 7 (June 22, 1937): 24. The sun motif reached its zenith during the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960's, when a popular song ("Tung-fang hung"—The East is Red) directly comparing Mao to the rising sun became virtually the national anthem of China. The use of quotations from Mao reached its peak in the "Little Red Book" phenomenon of the same period. For a detailed treatment of the cult of Mao at the height of its development, see Robert W. Rinden, "The Cult of Mao Tse-tung," a paper delivered at the Conference on Ideology and Politics in Contemporary China, Santa Fe, New Mexico, August 2–6, 1971. Mao himself in 1970 acknowledged his support for the cult as a means of increasing his political power during the Cultural Revolution, but confessed that it had perhaps been overdone and should henceforth be toned down. See Edgar Snow's conversation with Mao Tse-tung (December 10, 1970) in his book *The Long Revolution* (New York, 1971), pp. 168–70.

at the time was to have a similar honor, and none has had since during his own lifetime.

Prior to Tsunyi the Comintern had always had a major say in selecting the top leadership of the Chinese party. This tradition was broken at Tsunyi when Mao, rather than Wang Ming or someone else with close ties to the CPSU, was elected head of the important Military Affairs committee. According to Charles B. McLane, who has studied Soviet attitudes toward Mao during these critical years, Mao was on the whole highly regarded in Moscow, but only as a peasant leader, not as someone to be promoted as a top party leader. When Li Li-san fell from power in late 1930, Moscow replaced him with a leadership of its own choosing, putting aside whatever claims Mao and others in the field might have had to Li's post.⁵⁵ This was, McLane says, the "last identifiable instance of outright Soviet intervention in the internal affairs of the Chinese Communist Party," and in the next few years there was a gradual decline in Moscow's interest in maintaining strict supervision over the internal affairs of the CCP.⁵⁶ The Sian incident in December 1936 accelerated Moscow's gradual disengagement from the affairs of the Chinese party.⁵⁷ Stalin placed great hopes on the united front that emerged from this episode, and his attention soon focused on the task of strengthening the KMT and its armies in the struggle against Japan. Thus it was that Mao's rise to power in the CCP was accompanied by a marked decline in Soviet intervention in the internal affairs of the Chinese party. After years of subordination to the will of Moscow, the center of the world revolution, the Chinese Communists under Mao were at last becoming masters of their own house.

Mao's Search for "Correct" Theory

It was in this favorable environment of growing power within the party and declining interference by Moscow that Mao turned to what was probably his first concerted attempt to master Marxist-Leninist theory. When Edgar Snow met Mao in the summer of 1936, he found him to be an "ardent student of philosophy:" "Once, when I was having some nightly interviews with him on

Communist history, a visitor brought him several new books on philosophy, and Mao asked me to postpone our engagements. He consumed these books in three or four nights of intensive reading, during which he seemed oblivious to everything else.”⁵⁸

The summer of 1936, we will recall, was precisely when Ch'en Po-ta and his colleagues were preparing to launch their New Enlightenment Movement. From a later essay of Mao's we know that he was aware of the main outlines of the NEM, for he referred to the “broad movement of dialectical materialistic philosophy” that had recently developed in China's intellectual circles.⁵⁹ Mao's interest in philosophy was probably genuine, but there is no doubt that his voracious appetite for new books in mid-1936 was whetted by the fierce ideological dispute that had erupted at Wayaopao a few months previously. The argument over “correct” theory was at the core of Mao's struggle with the Returned Students, all of whom had studied Marxism-Leninism at Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow for several years, could read Russian and speak it fluently, and were thoroughly familiar with the history of the CPSU. If Mao had one outstanding point of vulnerability as the now acknowledged leader of the CCP, it was this inadequate grasp of formal Marxist-Leninist theory. Snow's description of him in the summer of 1936 as an “ardent student of philosophy” indicates that Mao was trying very hard to make good the deficiency.

I am by no means suggesting that Mao at this time had no views on theory, or ideology. Even at Tsunyi, although he had been unable to drive home his attack on the Returned Students' political line, Mao already had some definite ideas about the role of ideology in the revolutionary movement. At Wayaopao he was in a much stronger position and could speak more openly on political and ideological matters. At this important meeting he firmly established the key principle that was basic to his understanding of the revolution, that is, that the CCP's proletarian nature was determined by its ideology, not by its social composition. In a resolution expressing Mao's line (adopted December 25, 1935), the Politburo emphasized the need to expand the party rapidly if the new united front strategy were to be successful. Since China was an economically backward, agricultural country,

this implied that nonproletarian groups such as peasants and petit bourgeois intellectuals would always be in the majority within the party. But this did not in any way jeopardize the CCP's status as a proper Bolshevik party:

The major criterion in the party's absorption of new members is whether or not they are able to struggle resolutely for what the party advocates. Attention should be paid to social composition, but this is not the major criterion. We should make the party a smelting furnace of communism [*i-ko kung-ch'an-chu-i ti jung-lu*], and take numerous new members who wish to struggle for what the Communist Party advocates and temper them into Bolshevik fighters with the highest class consciousness. The struggle between the two lines within the party and communist education are the methods to achieve this aim. Bolshevik unity in ideology within the party is the concrete expression of the firm proletarian leadership of the party.⁶⁰

Several comments should be made regarding this passage. First, it reaffirms Mao's earlier belief that ideology, not social composition, determines the CCP's ability to exercise the hegemony of the proletariat.⁶¹ Also, it extends the analogy of the "smelting furnace" (which Mao had used at the Kut'ien conference in December 1929) from the Red Army to the CCP itself, thus opening the party's doors wide to peasant and intellectual elements. Third, in calling for a struggle between the "two lines" in the party, it is virtually declaring war on the Returned Students, for in another passage the same resolution also declares left deviationism to constitute the main danger in the party. It is important to remember the political context of this resolution, which simply restated ideological positions at which Mao had arrived between 1927 and 1930. When he propounded them in the earlier period he did so merely as a rural cadre in the CCP; when the Politburo repeated them at Wayaopao Mao was the *de facto* leader of the whole party. The union of organizational power and political ideology had eluded Mao during the period of the Kiangsi Soviet (1931–34), but at Wayaopao the fusion at last began to take place.

At Wayaopao Mao had declared unequivocally that the leftists in the party—meaning the Returned Students—had reduced Marxism-Leninism to a "lifeless dogma" because they were unable to unite theory with "China's specific concrete environment." But in calling for the union of Marxist theory and Chinese practice Mao was by no means offering original views on the subject, for

the CCP had been attempting to do this very thing ever since its founding in 1921. There was general agreement that in applying Marxism-Leninism to China, full account would have to be taken of the country's particular socio-cultural characteristics. This of course begs the question of how one is to distinguish between "correct" and "incorrect" integration of theory and practice, but by late 1936 Mao had clearly made up his mind about this. In "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War," an important series of lectures delivered in December 1936 to the students of the newly established Red Army College at Paoan, Mao gave a frank opinion of the military theories of the Returned Students, which by implication took in also their grasp of Marxism-Leninism: "Without a doubt all of these theories were incorrect," he said. "They were mechanistic . . . and were the theories and practices of stupid and ignorant people. They did not have the slightest flavor of Marxism about them; indeed, they were anti-Marxist."⁶²

In the course of these lectures, Mao gave a number of clues to his developing approach to more general Marxist-Leninist theory.⁶³ From the outset he stressed the need to study military problems in the context of a specific time and place and declared his opposition to a "mechanical approach to the problem of war." Though the party and army should learn from countries other than China, this fund of knowledge was not all there was to be learned, and the military theories of the past should be looked upon simply as the raw materials from which new theories could be fashioned to meet the situations of the present day: "We should verify these conclusions in the light of our own experience and assimilate what is useful, reject what is useless, and create what is specifically our own. The latter is very important, for otherwise we cannot direct a war."⁶⁴

Mao is of course dealing here with the correct approach to the theory of revolutionary war, but it is immediately obvious that the creative adaptation that he is advocating was becoming the main feature of his approach to the theory of revolution itself. No longer content with simply exposing the shortcomings of the theories expounded by the Returned Students, he was now groping toward the union of theory and practice that would be at one and the same time "correct" and "specifically our own." Indeed,

any new theory that resulted from the union of Marxist theory and Chinese practice would by necessity be distinct from the Marxist theory that existed prior to such a union. As Ch'en Po-ta had pointed out a few months earlier, Marxism that was not concretized in Chinese problems soon degenerated into mere "empty talk" and could easily be misrepresented by others. This seems clearly to be the essence of Mao's critique of the Marxist-Leninist theory espoused by the Returned Students—theory that had its basis in Russian problems, not Chinese problems. Was this not, then, a misrepresentation of Marxism-Leninism, in that they had taken it in its specific Russian form and applied it out of context of time and place as a universal form?

During 1935 Mao's attacks on the "anti-Marxist" theories of the Returned Students were accompanied by his increasing insistence on the autonomy of the CCP. At no time did Mao repudiate the CPSU's leading position in the international Communist movement, but he clearly was trying to gain a greater degree of independence for the CCP than the Comintern had previously tolerated. This is seen in his remarks to Edgar Snow in the summer of 1936, remarks which Mao knew would find their way back to the Kremlin. Though acknowledging the leading role of the Comintern, and the CCP's membership in it, he was specific about Chinese autonomy: "This in no sense means that Soviet China is ruled by Moscow or by the Comintern. We are certainly not fighting for an emancipated China in order to turn the country over to Moscow!"⁶⁵

Mao not only was beginning to assert the autonomy of the CCP with regard to Moscow; he was also claiming a more positive role for the Chinese party in an international context. This claim was most clearly brought out in the previously mentioned series of lectures that he delivered in December 1936 to the students of the Red Army College, in which, apropos of military questions, he had an opportunity to touch on international affairs. The essential point of his comments was that the Chinese revolutionaries had a role that went beyond their own nation:

The Chinese Communist Party has led and continues to lead a stirring, magnificent, and victorious revolutionary war. This war is not only the banner of China's liberation but possesses international revolutionary significance as well. The eyes of the revolutionary people around the

world are upon us. In the new stage, the stage of the anti-Japanese national revolutionary war, we will lead the Chinese revolution to its completion, and exert a profound influence on the revolution in the East and throughout the world.⁶⁶

For Mao, the often thwarted Chinese revolution was at last coming of age, and the CCP was about to claim its legitimate place in the forefront of the international struggle. It is in this broader international context, along with the national context, that we must see Mao's later efforts to improve his standing as an important Marxist-Leninist theorist, instead of being simply a successful political and military leader.

Mao, Ch'en, and Marxism-Leninism

By mid-1937 it was apparent that Mao Tse-tung and Ch'en Po-ta, and their like-minded colleagues, were moving toward a common position regarding Marxist-Leninist theory. Mao and Ch'en were agreed that Marxist-Leninists in China had failed to integrate in a satisfactory way the universal truth of dialectical materialism and the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution. For Mao, this failure reduced Marxism-Leninism to "lifeless dogma," and for Ch'en, to mere "empty talk." This emasculated the theory of the proletariat, and it lost its ability to serve as a reliable guide to the revolutionary process in China. Now, change was in the air: Mao's rapid rise to power in the CCP gave him the chance to advance his own "correct" interpretation of the doctrine, and Ch'en and his urban colleagues perceived in their New Enlightenment Movement the possibility of Marxism-Leninism actually "developing" in China. Both Mao and Ch'en were searching for a new ideology that was at once Marxist and Chinese, and their later collaboration in Yen-an is not surprising. But this growing similarity in their views prompts at least two questions which should be dealt with briefly. First, is there any reason to believe that the two men were aware of—and possibly influenced by—each other's writings on Marxism-Leninism during 1936 and the first half of 1937? Second, despite the apparent similarity in their views, is there any evidence to suggest that there were major differences in their approaches to the problem of Marxism-Leninism in China?

It is impossible to answer the first question definitively, but it seems that the two men were not greatly influenced by each other at this time. Ch'en was no doubt aware of general developments concerning the party's struggle deep within China, but it is unlikely that he and his colleagues in Peking had access to detailed information concerning inner-party affairs until some months after the Sian incident in December 1936. Until the party began to operate more openly, Mao's important speeches on the party's internal problems were delivered at closed meetings and were not widely circulated. In none of Ch'en's articles during this period does he once refer to Mao by name, nor does he discuss the affairs of the CCP as such—it being still an illegal party. Similarly, Mao apparently never discussed the New Enlightenment Movement at any length, nor did he refer to Ch'en and his connection with it.

That the two men were not influenced by one another except in the most general sense is further suggested by a comparison of their attitudes toward the relationship between Marxism-Leninism and China's traditional philosophies. Both Mao and Ch'en believed that Marxist-Leninist theory should be integrated with Chinese reality, but this similarity of opinion masks an important difference in their overall approach to the problem—which reinforces the likelihood that they developed their views independently of one another and in response to their own differing values and the situations they faced. Ch'en Po-ta was a professor of ancient Chinese history and philosophy at one of Peking's major universities. His professional milieu was academic, and even in his political activities he was primarily concerned with intellectual issues, philosophy in particular. He had had some practical experience in political struggle, having worked in Chang Chen's army, and he had been imprisoned and exiled and had also been directly involved in the December Ninth Movement. Nonetheless, it was rather typical of the man that when he called for the union of Marxist theory and Chinese reality, he linked this demand with another for a thorough study of China's traditional thought. Nor was his attitude entirely negative, for elsewhere he had called for the preservation of the "best traditions in Chinese culture," one of which was undoubtedly the existence (in his opinion, at any rate) of elements of dialectical materialism

in China prior to its introduction from the West. Ch'en's attitude toward China's traditional philosophy at this time appeared to be selective; he would ruthlessly discard its reactionary elements, but with equal fervor defend and preserve its more progressive aspects. This approach became more evident in Ch'en's writings as time went on, and was doubtless encouraged by the current upsurge of nationalism in China. The temper of the times demanded that Marxists who wished to remain politically relevant should seek to find elements of congruence rather than dissonance between their new philosophy from the West and China's own philosophical heritage.

In the mid-1930's, Mao Tse-tung was taking a much harder line than Ch'en was on China's traditional philosophies. Mao had had a good general education in the early part of the century, and was still at normal school at the time of the Russian revolution of 1917. The tides from the West were flowing strongly then, and Mao and his contemporaries tended to be somewhat indiscriminate in their rejection of the past. Since the early 1920's Mao had been a busy political activist, with little opportunity for study, and for the past ten years he had lived mostly in the countryside. Like Ch'en, Mao had come to advocate a more effective union of Marxist theory and Chinese practice, but he saw few points of similarity between Marxism and China's traditional philosophies. This is clear from a statement he made in a lecture delivered at Yen-an, one of a series on the subject of dialectical materialism, in the spring of 1937:

Because of the backwardness of China's social development, the dialectical materialist philosophical currents developing in China today have not emerged from the inheritance and transformation of our own philosophical legacy, but have emerged from the study of Marxism-Leninism. If we wish to ensure that the dialectical materialist currents of thought will penetrate deeply into China and continue to develop, and will, moreover, firmly direct the Chinese revolution along the road to complete victory, then we must struggle with the various decadent philosophies currently existing [in China]. [We must] hoist the flag of criticism on the ideological front throughout the whole country, and thereby liquidate [*ch'ing-suan*] the philosophical heritage of ancient China. Only thus can we reach our goal.⁶⁷

The fact that Mao was speaking to a militant audience at the Anti-Japanese University may account for some of the tone of this

statement. It is unlikely that Ch'en Po-ta would have endorsed it at the time; apart from his own convictions, by mid-1937 it had simply become impolitic to call for the "liquidation" of China's philosophical heritage. In the ensuing months, Mao was to change his stand on this issue, doubtless under the urgings of his new political secretary.

This difference in Mao's and Ch'en's attitudes toward China's philosophical legacy serves to highlight a subtle but significant difference in their approaches to the problem of the union of Marxist theory and Chinese reality. Both men were good Marxists in that they firmly believed the union of theory and practice to be the essential prerequisite to the successful direction of the revolutionary process. To this extent they shared a common approach to the question of the unity of Marxist-Leninist theory and Chinese reality. But Mao's interest in the problem had a certain practical-political urgency—practical to the extent that it had resulted in part from Mao's struggles on the revolutionary front to reconcile the theory he had read with the somewhat different reality he had encountered. In other words, he had a pressing practical need to find theories that were useful to the survival and growth of the political and military movement he was leading. As a young man he had rather uncritically accepted the basic premises of Marxism-Leninism, and it was only in the course of actual revolutionary practice that he had perceived the rather noticeable divergences between the Western theory and the Chinese reality. His interest in bringing theory more into line with reality was thus firmly grounded in the concrete tasks he faced in leading the practical movement deep in the Chinese countryside.*

Mao's interest was political to the extent that it emerged and

*By his own admission, it was only in the spring of 1925 that Mao first began to appreciate the revolutionary potential of the peasantry as opposed to that of the urban proletariat. See his comments in Edgar Snow, *Red Star over China* (London, 1937), p. 157. It was not until 1927, when he was thirty-four years old, that Mao began to translate his new awareness of the peasants' revolutionary potential into important political writings such as his famous "Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan" (March 1927). Key passages from this important report have been translated in their original form in Stuart Schram, *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung*, 2d ed. (Harmondsworth, Eng., 1969), pp. 250–59.

developed in the context of his struggle with the Returned Students for supreme power in the CCP. Politically, Mao had much to gain from a unity of theory and practice because the new theory that resulted—provided he could claim it as his own—would confer a much needed ideological legitimacy on his leadership of the party. Mao's rise to power in the CCP would then be seen not merely as the result of historical chance but as the inevitable consequence of Mao's correct grasp of theory. Thus the new theory, whatever it was called, could well become a political weapon that Mao could use in his efforts to consolidate and strengthen his position of leadership. And also, importantly, it could help him to establish a certain degree of ideological and organizational independence from Moscow and the Comintern.

Ch'en approached the unity of Marxist theory and Chinese reality from a quite different and much more abstract point of view than Mao. Ch'en began with a strong grasp of Marxism-Leninism, learned in Moscow, and while Mao, in the early 1930's, was refining his ideas in the political struggle in the countryside, Ch'en was redefining his concept of Marxist theory in heated polemics with a wide range of political theorists in China's major cities. It was in the course of these rather academic and theoretical debates, the so-called Controversy on China's Social History and the New Enlightenment Movement, that Ch'en began to work out the correct relationship between Marxist-Leninist theory and Chinese reality. There was also a much stronger cultural element in Ch'en's desire to unite theory and practice than in the case of Mao. As a young lecturer in ancient Chinese history and philosophy at a university in Peking he was well placed to respond favorably to the rising tide of nationalism in China's cities after 1931. For Ch'en, the new theory that would result from the union of Marxism-Leninism and Chinese reality was desirable because it would establish a "living" relationship between Marxism and Chinese culture, make Marxism more acceptable to the average Chinese person, and—not the least—symbolize China's cultural independence from the West.

This difference of approach does not mean that there was no overlapping in the attitudes of Mao and Ch'en on the question of uniting Marxist theory and Chinese reality. It is obvious, for example, that Mao's desire for political independence from the

Soviet Union and from its more zealous allies in the CCP bore something in common with Ch'en's desire for cultural independence from the West in general; and as time went on, Mao placed an increasing emphasis on the broader cultural dimensions of the unity of Marxism-Leninism and the distinctive features of the Chinese people and nation. By October 1938 he had moved to the position of equating the union of Marxist theory and Chinese reality with the new and startling concept of the "Sinification of Marxism," a more culturally charged term than he had ever used before. In fact, Mao had picked up the term from Ch'en, who first used it in an essay of May 1938, several months before it was adopted by Mao in his important report to the CCP's Sixth Plenum. Even so, Mao was to employ this cultural term in decidedly political ways, for it very quickly became identified with the swelling Maoist campaign against Wang Ming and the Returned Students.

Toward the Maoist Myth, 1937–1938

Mao's Philosophy of "Sinification"

In the months since Wayaopao Mao had relentlessly attacked the Returned Students' version of Marxism-Leninism, but he had not offered a clear-cut alternative that was distinctly his own. By the spring of 1937 the time had come for Mao to produce such an alternative, for the emerging united front demanded a substantial recruitment of new party members, and it would give unprecedented opportunities for open propaganda work in the Nationalist-controlled areas of China. At such a critical point, the CCP could not show any signs of ideological disarray, especially among its top leadership. Mao revealed his awareness of the need for unity in his opening report of May 3, 1937, to the party's national conference in Yen-an. He reaffirmed the need to struggle resolutely against the twin evils of right and left deviationism, and called for the education of thousands of cadres to meet the demands of the new united front. In his concluding remarks, he once again turned to the importance of ideology within the party: "In order to overcome [these] undesirable tendencies, it is necessary to raise the Marxist-Leninist theoretical level of the entire party. This theory alone is the compass to guide the Chinese revolution to victory."¹

Commencing in the winter of 1936–37, Mao showed how much in earnest he was about this challenge. His main contribution was a series of lectures on dialectical materialism delivered at the Anti-Japanese University in Yen-an (the former Red Army College). These lectures are available today in two forms, neither of which is complete in itself: (1) a set of "Lecture Notes on Dialectical Materialism," originally published in 1938; and (2) two philosophical essays, "On Practice" and "On Contradiction," published separately in 1950 and 1952. Most scholars have accepted the original lecture notes as genuine, and this is the posi-

tion taken here.² As for the two essays, the editors of Mao's *Selected Works* have themselves pointed out that in their present form they are revisions of the original lectures Mao delivered in July and August of 1937.³ Certainly there is a basic similarity in the ideas expressed in the lecture notes and those in the later essays. But since the essays have been revised and probably incorporate later thinking, they can be used only incidentally in an analysis of Mao's ideas in the Yen-an lectures, and I shall refer to them here only when there appears to be a definite continuity in thought on a certain issue that is of importance to the discussion.*

In the lectures, Mao was mainly interested in arguing the case for certain immediate political concerns, particularly the united front with the Nationalists; but the real importance of the lectures lies elsewhere. As D. W. Y. Kwok has suggested, Mao's philosophical efforts at this time "clearly reveal his determination to become both the theoretical and practical scientist of society and its revolution."⁴ Mao had already proved himself a master of practice; now he had to show that he was a master of theory as well in order to prove his qualifications as the top leader of a political party calling itself communist. The ideal of unity of theory and practice embodied in one leading individual was deeply ingrained in the Marxist-Leninist tradition—as, indeed, it was in Chinese political tradition generally—especially since the example of Lenin himself. Even Stalin, as the Chinese must surely have known, had for several years been busy establishing his reputation as a theorist in the course of bitter inner-party disputes. Thus Mao had precedent for wanting to establish his undisputed supremacy in the Chinese party.

*In a private communication, Stuart Schram has brought to my attention the existence of an anonymous version of Mao's lectures which contains one of the essays ("On Practice") in "substantially its present form." This anonymous version, said to be a reprint of an edition that originally appeared in Chungking in September 1944, is *Pien-cheng-fa wei-wu-lun* (Dialectical Materialism), published by Chung-kuo ch'u-pan-she (Chungking?) in 1946. A preface to the reprint states that the lectures are "extremely good," for they discuss dialectical materialism in an idiom much more relevant to Chinese needs and conditions than do most texts on the same subject. This is of course precisely the strength of Mao's lectures, in spite of their shortcomings in other ways, and they probably had much appeal to a Chinese readership for this reason.

At one point in the lectures Mao says that he hopes one day to publish a book on dialectical materialism, since those available in the Chinese language are either mistaken in content or badly written. In particular, he says, China has no "explanatory book" on dialectical materialism that is effective in its "use of common language and discussion of personal experience." But he admits frankly that he himself has just begun to study dialectical materialism and cannot himself, at present, write a "good book."⁵ The intensification of the war with Japan soon after this apparently put an end to any such literary effort, but at least we have some idea of what it would have contained.

Most students of the subject tend to agree with Mao's own assessment that in 1937 he was not yet able to write a "good book" on dialectical materialism. Karl Wittfogel and C. R. Chao, for example, have amply demonstrated that the lectures are full of plagiarisms from Chinese translations of contemporary Soviet writings on Marxist philosophy. Some of Mao's colleagues in the higher echelons of the CCP were themselves critical. It is said that Teng Fa remarked on one occasion that the lectures were "full of errors," and that Chou En-lai agreed that this was possible.⁶ Evidently, at any rate, the lectures did not receive extensive publicity outside Yen-an, and it was not until the spring of 1942 that Chang Ju-hsin publicly referred to them in *Liberation Daily*.⁷

If Mao's lectures were no more than rather inexpert discussion of Marxist theory, they would be of minor importance. Our interest in them today is that in them Mao developed, in outline at least, a philosophical justification for the Sinification of Marxism. This comes in a discussion of idealism. When individuals think, Mao says, they are compelled to use concepts, and in this way their knowledge can easily be split into two aspects. One aspect is reality, which is of an individual and particular nature; the other is concepts, which are of a general nature. With idealists, this separation of the general and the particular can be dangerous, for they push this separation—which is necessary in the process of thinking—to the point where it distorts their view of reality itself. That is, idealists come to regard generality (concepts) as objective reality, and particularity (reality) merely as a form of existence of generality. In other words, the real is sub-

ordinated to the conceptual, and becomes simply a form of existence of the conceptual. It is a false division, Mao says: “Particularity and generality are in actual fact interconnected and inseparable; if separated they depart from objective truth. Objective truth is manifested in the unity of the general and the particular. If there is no particularity, generality cannot exist; if there is no generality, it is not possible to have particularity.”⁸

Mao did not carry this line of argument any further in his original lectures (or at least one infers that from the fragments of notes available for study), but in the published essay version of his lecture “On Contradiction” he applies this theory of unity to the study of actual historical phenomena such as the “historical roots of Leninism.” In the essay Mao says that Stalin, in his discussion of Leninism in his *Foundations of Leninism* (1924), provided a “model” for understanding the particularity and generality of a thing, and their interconnection. Stalin pointed out that Leninism has a universal character to the extent that it is “Marxism of the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution”; at the same time Leninism has a particular character inasmuch as Russia was the specific “birthplace of the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution.” Further, Mao says, Stalin explained that the universal character of Leninism (its Marxianness) is contained within its particular character (its Russianness).⁹ The implication then, given Mao’s belief that the general and the particular character of a thing cannot be separated, is that Leninism as a theory of revolution cannot be separated from its social background. In other words, Mao is saying that there is no pure, abstract Marxist theory in Leninism that can rise above Leninism’s specific and concrete Russian origins. Therefore, Leninism is nothing more or less than the union of Marxist theory and Russian practice; it is “Russified” Marxism.*

If this analysis is correct, it raises two important questions. First, is Leninism simply the sum total of its parts (Marxism plus Russia), or is it something qualitatively different? Second, since Leninism has both a general (Marxist) and a particular (Russian) character, can it be applied to countries other than Russia—to

*Mao does not use this term, but his line of argument leads directly to this conclusion, and was eventually to lead to the coinage of the term “Sinification.”

China, for example? The answer to the first question is suggested by Mao's treatment of Leninism as the integral union of the general and the particular, that is, the conceptual and the objectively real. But, one may ask, what relationship is established between concept and reality or, to say it another way, between consciousness and matter? Mao responds by using the idealists as a negative example: they are unable to grasp the "materialist truth" that "consciousness is limited by matter," and think instead that "only consciousness is active, whereas matter is merely an inert, composite entity." He then concludes that "only dialectical materialism correctly shows the active role of thought, and at the same time points out the limitation imposed upon thought by matter."¹⁰ If matter is indeed more than an "inert, composite entity" and is able to impose limitations upon thought, one may logically conclude that Leninism is not simply the sum total of Marxism plus Russia; rather, it is the integral combination of the two, in which the original Marxism (thought) has been changed (limited) by Russia (matter). To repeat for the sake of clarity, Leninism is not simply Marxism in its original German form dressed up in a Russian idiom; it is instead a transformed, "Russified" Marxism that is in certain respects qualitatively different from Marx's original theoretical formulations.

From this it would follow, turning to our second query, that Leninism, because of its Russian character, cannot be transplanted successfully to any other country. Or if it can, would it not have to be applied to the new country in its entirety, including all the specific theories and policies characteristic of its distinctive Russian form? Mao could easily reject the first possibility, since Marxism in its West European form had already been transformed and successfully transplanted in Russia. As for the second possibility, it was of course the very thing that Mao had been criticizing the Returned Students for so foolishly attempting to do. Nevertheless, he does affirm the value of applying Leninism to China, but he stresses that it can only be applied in a new form, since general character represents "universal truth for all times and all countries, which admits of no exception," whereas individual character "exists conditionally and temporarily and hence is relative."¹¹ That is to say, Leninism's general character (its Marxianness) would be valid for China because it represents

“universal truth.” Its particular character (its Russianness) can be dispensed with because it is merely “relative.” The implication is that, once transplanted to China, Leninism would have to shed its particular Russian character and adopt a particular Chinese character. Thus, the integral combination of general Marxist character and particular Chinese character would be “Sinified” Marxism; as such, it would not be referred to as Leninism, for Leninism is “Russified” Marxism containing both universal and particular character.

Would Sinified Marxism be different from but equal to Leninism, or would it be a different and also superior form of Marxism? Ch'en Po-ta, a few years earlier, had claimed that modern dialectical materialism (Marxism-Leninism) is a higher stage of development over both the crude dialectical materialism of classical Greece and the more sophisticated dialectical idealism of Hegel. From his lecture notes, it would appear that Mao fully accepted the idea of the qualitative development of Marxism from its original nineteenth-century form to newer and higher forms. For example, though he acknowledges the role of Marx and Engels in founding the modern form of dialectical materialism, he does not hesitate to point out that “Lenin developed this theory.” Leninism is not a different but equal form of Marx's original theory but rather a different and superior form, an adaptation and development of Marxism in a particular Russian setting.

But development beyond Leninism is also possible. In light of the victory of the socialist revolution in Russia and the arrival of the era of world proletarian revolution, the theory of dialectical materialism “has entered a new stage of development that will enrich its content even more.”¹² Now, in the summer of 1937, Mao is contemplating an adaptation and development of Leninism in China's particular environment—a new theoretical synthesis, which, he seems to be suggesting, will represent a higher formulation than Leninism itself. A development of this sort would obviously have had a serious effect on the CCP's (and Mao's) relations with Moscow, and Mao had good reason to be cautious in his statements. Nonetheless, there seems no doubt that the essential philosophical basis of the synthesis was worked out by Mao in 1937, and that it formed the theoretical underpinning

of the later creation of "Mao Tse-tung's thought." It was a synthesis that Ch'en Po-ta and his like-minded urban colleagues also could accept. Had they not themselves predicted that with the advent of their New Enlightenment Movement the time had come for Marxism to develop in China?

Ch'en's Rise in the Maoist Camp

Mao and Ch'en Po-ta met for the first time in the summer of 1937, probably in late June or early July. Ch'en seems to have left Peking sometime in June, shortly before the Japanese invaded north China, and made his way in secret to Yen-an. According to some reports, Mao was not immediately impressed by this scholarly representative of the Northern Bureau, a somewhat withdrawn, inarticulate individual who spoke with a pronounced Fukienese accent and had a noticeable stammer. But Mao very soon realized that Ch'en had special abilities as a writer, and it was not long before he had made him his political secretary (*cheng-chih mi-shu*).¹³ In that position, Ch'en was responsible for drafting and/or editing many of Mao's speeches, articles, and telegrams, including those concerned with foreign affairs.¹⁴ Ch'en, at the age of thirty-three, was now at the center of the Maoist camp at Yen-an, not merely one of the crowd of young intellectuals there but in a position of trust. A "symbiotic relationship" developed, with Mao drawing upon Ch'en's intellectual abilities and Ch'en benefiting from Mao's political patronage.¹⁵

Ch'en had other responsibilities as well, some of which likely preceded—and prepared the ground for—his appointment as Mao's political secretary. According to Boyd Compton, an outstanding feature of the Yen-an period was the rather important educational system that functioned under the CCP Central Committee. Prior to 1935, selected cadres from national Communist parties were sent to Moscow for advanced training in Marxism-Leninism, as indeed Ch'en had been himself. After the Comintern's Seventh Congress in 1935, there was an increasing emphasis on the development of higher party schools in individual countries. In China, during the early years of the Yen-an period the party established a number of schools, including the Central Party School, the Marxist-Leninist Institute (reorganized in 1941 as the Central

Research Institute), the Anti-Japanese Military and Political University, the Lu Hsün Academy of Arts and Letters, and the Academy of Natural Sciences.¹⁶ This proliferating educational system, developed side by side with Mao's growing power in the party, gave Mao the means to exercise a degree of ideological control over the party that had never been possible before. It was this educational system that was to serve as the incubator for Mao's Rectification Movement of 1942-43. In the meantime, these new educational and research organizations provided a natural outlet for the talents of the many CCP intellectuals from the nation's cities who were then streaming into Yen-an in the wake of the Japanese invasion.

Ch'en Po-ta occupied a prominent position in this important group of people from shortly after his arrival in Yen-an. He was appointed head of the research section in the CCP's Propaganda Bureau—obviously a key position—and in addition undertook unspecified responsibilities at the Marxist-Leninist Institute. He also lectured on political questions at Lu Hsün Academy, and, according to one account, even found time from his many political duties to write a musical drama entitled *Song of the Villages* for the itinerant theatrical troupes of the academy. Of particular interest politically was his appointment at the CCP's Central Party School, where he became director of the China Problems Research Section (*Chung-kuo wen-t'i yen-chiu-shih*) and lectured on issues in the Chinese revolution.¹⁷

As the name indicates, this newly established research section within the Central Party School dealt with problems of the revolution peculiar to China as distinct from the world revolution as a whole. It was modeled directly on a Soviet predecessor, the China Problems Research Institute associated with Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow. This institute, which was established in 1929 under the direction of M. Volin, was concerned with research and publication on both traditional and contemporary China, although its main focus of interest was on current developments. Its staff was composed of Russian Sinologists and China experts, but it customarily had ten or so Chinese graduates of Sun Yat-sen University as associate members. Most of these Chinese members later became involved with the Returned Student faction after leaving the Soviet Union, but it is probable that

Ch'en Po-ta also participated in the work of the institute.¹⁸ In any event, Ch'en's appointment as director of the new research section in Yen-an certainly fits in with his long-standing concern that Chinese Marxists should unite their "new philosophy" more successfully with the concrete problems posed by the revolution in China, and many of the articles that he wrote during 1937-38 specifically deal with the problem of the application of Marxism-Leninism in China.

Ch'en's arrival in Yen-an in mid-1937, at the time when Mao was delivering his series of lectures on dialectical materialism, may suggest a possible connection between Ch'en's theories and Mao's rationale for the Sinification of Marxism. It is a question worth looking at. As we have seen, there is reason to believe that it took some time for the two men to warm to each other; Mao did not immediately take to Ch'en, who was not adept at social intercourse. This would tend to argue against Ch'en's having had a direct role in helping Mao prepare his essays on Marxism-Leninism in the summer of 1937. On the other hand, I have recently come across what appears to be the earliest known collection of Mao's speeches and writings under the title *Mao Tse-tung lun* (On Mao Tse-tung).¹⁹ This is a volume of 288 pages, containing twenty-five separate pieces (speeches, articles, letters, interviews, and so on) by Mao. Ch'en Po-ta is listed on the cover as editor, and the brief, highly laudatory editorial note or preface, though unsigned, can be assumed to be by Ch'en. Since this note appears to date from late August or early September 1937 (it refers to Mao's well-known report to the party, of May 1937, as having been delivered "four months ago"), we can assume that Ch'en had established a relationship of some significance with Mao during the summer of 1937, at least sufficient for him to have been chosen to edit the first collection of Mao's works. In particular, the collection contains the original text of Mao's important report to the party of May 5, 1937 ("The Tasks of China's Anti-Japanese United Front in the Present Stage"), which Ch'en describes as being of "great significance to the Chinese people's struggle for national liberation." Appended is a short biographical sketch of Mao (presumably also by Ch'en), which, in conjunction with the collection itself, is provided for "study by [our] compatriots at home and abroad."²⁰

The dating of this volume presents something of a puzzle, and it could suggest a certain amount of disagreement within the leadership of the CCP. Although the preface dates the compilation of the book to August-September 1937, the publication date (on the cover) of the only edition that seems to be available is 1939. This 1939 edition may simply be a reprint, of course, but it is possible that publication was for some reason delayed for two years, and that the 1939 edition is the first edition. One clue to the problem is the existence of another collection of Mao's writings that was published in Shanghai in December 1937. This is a smaller, more modest collection than the 1939 edition, and it does not have Ch'en's laudatory preface and biographical sketch. (Interestingly, in this sketch Ch'en says that Mao came from a "family with a literary reputation" [*shu-hsiang men-ti*], an embroidery that implicitly strengthens Mao's claim to be the party's leading theorist.) One explanation of the puzzle would be that there was top-level opposition to the rather extravagant character of the Ch'en edition, and that it was withheld in favor of the smaller *Collected Essays*, which came out in December of 1937.²¹

Although Ch'en may have suffered a rebuff on this issue, it is apparent that by September 1937 the young intellectual from Peking had assumed a position of unusual closeness with the party's top leader. Building on this early relationship, Ch'en Po-ta gradually emerged as one of Mao's key theoretical advisers in Yen-an. Probably more than anyone else, he was responsible for introducing Mao to the theoretical and cultural debates of the urban Marxist intellectuals following their displacement to Yen-an after the Japanese invasion in mid-1937.

In spite of this, however, it seems highly unlikely that Ch'en had anything to do with Mao's lectures on philosophy, at least in their original form.²² Circumstances alone, as I have said, make the connection improbable, since Ch'en arrived in Yen-an when Mao was in the midst of delivering the lectures, and there is the earlier suggestion that it took some time for Mao to warm to Ch'en (even assuming that they met at once). There is also the fact that Ch'en had spent the ten years since 1927 primarily engaged in the study and interpretation of Marxism-Leninism, whereas, by his own admission, Mao had only recently commenced the serious study of dialectical materialism. It is difficult to be-

lieve that if Ch'en had had a substantial influence on the preparation of Mao's lectures, they would have been full of the "plagiarisms" and "errors" that Chinese and foreign critics have noted. Ch'en, being fluent in Russian and well versed in Soviet developments, and obviously, as his early writings show, at home with both Marxist and non-Marxist philosophy, would not have had to resort to plagiarism of Chinese translations of Soviet works on philosophy. A third point has to do with Mao's rather harsh call in these lectures for the "liquidation" of China's traditional philosophy. As I have already shown, this is a position that Ch'en would scarcely have endorsed in mid-1937.

Mao's lectures were, as noted earlier, his own contribution to his call for party members to raise their "Marxist-Leninist theoretical level." The party journal, *Liberation*, naturally lent its support. In a special issue of September 6, 1937, it introduced a supplement, to be published, it was hoped, once or twice a month in the future, devoted to problems of theory and research. The editor noted that the new section was designed to assist the reader in his study of theoretical questions. The first supplement (and the second) consisted of translated excerpts of Stalin's new official history of the CPSU, but the editor declared his intention of publishing in future issues study materials specifically relating to the "problems of the Chinese revolution."²³ Ch'en Po-ta, as the director of the special section of the Central Party School dealing with "China problems," was probably responsible for preparing these materials for the newspaper. Yet after only a few issues this new theoretical supplement died out, having confined itself exclusively to translated materials from Russian sources. Nothing further was mentioned about the special study materials on the Chinese revolution, and it appears that none were ever published. In spite of his personal encouragement, Mao's ideological campaign seemed to be getting off to a bad start.

In late 1937 Ch'en wrote a long article that was probably intended for publication in *Liberation's* new supplement. In this essay Ch'en refutes the allegation that Sun Yat-sen rejected Marxism as a solution to China's problems. He argues that, on the contrary, Sun's basic ideas are in harmony with much of Marxism, although he does admit that on certain important points Sun "misunderstood" the real nature of Marxist theory. He then goes

on to clarify the Marxist position (as he sees it) regarding (1) the materialist view of history, (2) the nature of the class struggle, (3) the question of surplus value, (4) the problem of social reformism, and (5) the methods of achieving socialism.²⁴ It is the last section, in which Ch'en deals with the question of Marxism's applicability to China, that is of interest to us here.

Marxism, argues Ch'en, is without doubt the essential intellectual key to understanding the development of society, but it is not a dogma: when history changes, Marxism must change along with it. For example, Lenin and Stalin developed Marxism to accord with new problems arising after the time of Marx and Engels, but Leninism was firmly based on Marxism; it was a "development of Marxism under new historical conditions."²⁵ Lenin and Stalin did not depart from the "fundamental thinking" of Marxism, that is, the core idea that socialism can be constructed only after the proletariat have become the "political masters" of the social system in question. The seizure of political power by the proletariat was characteristic of the socialist revolution in Russia, and it will be equally characteristic of socialist revolutions in all other countries. Apart from this essential point, however, Marxism is really very flexible; indeed, there can be a wide variety of specific methods employed in bringing about the socialist revolution, methods that vary "in accordance with the historical and economic conditions of each country." For example, Ch'en agrees with the idea that the proletariat can seize power through peaceful means provided the concrete historical conditions are right, although he does not elaborate further on this. In his concluding comments, he reminds the reader that when Marxism was first introduced into Russia the Slavophiles said that the new philosophy was foreign and unsuitable to Russia and would be harmful if introduced into the country. Nonetheless, he says, Marxism was in fact successfully applied in Russia and the cries of the Slavophiles came to nothing.²⁶

There are a few points we should make regarding this essay. One, Ch'en's ideas on the need for Marxism to change in response to new historical situations are similar to the opinions Mao expressed in his lectures on philosophy the previous summer. (Ch'en's ideas here are closely linked to the views on Marxism he developed in Peking.) Hence the two men appear to have

shared a similar attitude toward Marxist theory, and this similarity no doubt formed the basis of their close cooperation during the Yen-an years and after. Two, Ch'en reaffirmed his belief that traditional Chinese philosophy contains elements of "Marxism," however tenuous. Mo-tzu, for example, was aware of the idea of the class struggle, as seen in his statement that "the strong are certain to oppress the weak; the rich are certain to be pitiless toward the poor" (*ch'iang pi ling juo, fu pi pao kua*).²⁷ This attitude toward traditional philosophy constituted a major difference between Ch'en's and Mao's views on the relationship between Marxism and Chinese culture, although the difference was to be resolved in due course. Three, this essay contains what appears to be Ch'en's first reference to Mao Tse-tung (apart from the edited collection mentioned previously), whom he quotes briefly on the desirability, if conditions are appropriate, of the peaceful seizure of power by the proletariat.²⁸ Significantly, Ch'en quotes Mao on a question of Marxist theory (not political or military concerns), and this probably indicates Ch'en's acceptance of Mao's growing claims as the CCP's preeminent theoretician. In any event, Ch'en does not refer to or quote any other CCP leader in the course of his lengthy article; there is no mention, for instance, of Chang Wen-t'ien, who was apparently considered at the time to be "one of the [party's] best theorists, second to Mao."²⁹

Ch'en wrote this essay in late 1937, but for some unexplained reason it was not published until 1939. Possibly his criticism of Sun Yat-sen's many "misunderstandings" of Marxist theory and his insistence that socialism in China could not be constructed until the proletariat had become the "political masters" of the nation were considered too leftist at the time, with the new united front with the Nationalists just taking shape. By 1939, the united front had been reduced to a fiction, and the publication of the article would have been less of an embarrassment to CCP-KMT relations. It also seems reasonable to assume that Ch'en's essay was put aside temporarily along with Mao's whole ideological campaign (including, perhaps, Ch'en's collection on Mao) when it ran into opposition in the latter half of 1937. The opposition was led by Wang Ming, who arrived in Yen-an from Moscow shortly after the campaign got under way. Wang was the acknowledged leader of the Returned Students, a prominent

figure in both the CCP and the Comintern, and the only remaining person with sufficient stature (aside from Stalin himself) to challenge Mao's growing domination of the CCP.

Mao, Ch'en, and the "Maoist Myth"

Wang Ming arrived in Yen-an in late October 1937 aboard a Soviet military aircraft, and Mao and other party leaders were on hand to greet him. Not only was Wang's presence in China certain to have some effect on the future course of the CCP, but also any instructions he was carrying from Stalin would no doubt indicate to Mao just how he stood in official favor and how well his own ambitions would prosper.

As it turned out, Stalin's instructions had a mixed impact on Mao's fortunes, although they ultimately worked to his advantage. According to Wang, Stalin felt that Mao Tse-tung should be confirmed as the CCP's top leader in view of the existing situation; but Stalin also appears to have urged the Russian-educated leaders in the party (that is, the Returned Students) to help Mao overcome his ignorance of Marxism-Leninism, his lack of an internationalist outlook, and his tendency toward narrow empiricism. Mao, having only recently delivered his lectures on dialectical materialism in an effort to improve his reputation as a theorist, could not have been very happy at this criticism.

Other instructions worked in Mao's favor, however. One of these was to the effect that Chang Wen-t'ien was unsuitable for the post of secretary-general of the CCP, a position he had held since January 1935. (Chang was apparently under suspicion in Moscow because of his connections with the Trotskyists while he was a student at Sun Yat-sen University.) Chang was not by any means ready to step aside, and the unity of the Returned Students began to dissolve as Wang played off Chang and Po Ku against one another in an attempt to gain the post of secretary-general himself. Mao's hand was further strengthened by another directive from Stalin suggesting that in the new conditions of the anti-Japanese war the CCP should be as self-reliant as possible, and no longer bound by Comintern policy regarding China. Notwithstanding Stalin's slur upon Mao's theoretical abilities, the overall impact of the instructions from Moscow was to strengthen

Mao's position. He had been confirmed as the party's top leader, the unity of the Returned Students had been broken, and the party's movement toward self-reliance had been approved by no less an authority than Stalin himself.³⁰

The full implications of Stalin's three-point directive did not emerge overnight, of course, nor was Wang at all ready to concede power to Mao. Shortly after Wang returned, the Politburo met in a lengthy session to hear his report on Moscow's (and his own) desire for faster progress toward a close united front with the Nationalists. Mao apparently held his tongue for the time being, but in November at an important meeting of "party activists" he launched a stinging attack on Wang and his supporters. He charged Wang and his group with having become unprincipled opportunists in their excessive zeal for cooperation with the Nationalists and declared that since cooperation of that sort could easily lead to subversion within the party, the only correct policy for the CCP was one of "independence and initiative within the united front."³¹ The details of the dispute do not concern us here, but one recent study has concluded that, compared with the line espoused by Mao, Wang Ming's policies toward the KMT "were 'accommodationist' and framed with one eye on Moscow's foreign policy needs."³²

The struggle between the two men flared up again in December, at another formal session of the Politburo that was convened for the purpose of reviewing the general party line. According to Chang Kuo-t'ao, at this meeting Wang suddenly, and completely on his own, proposed a new slate of members for the Politburo, in which Chang Wen-t'ien was demoted to seventh place. Mao was annoyed at not having been consulted on this matter beforehand, but after Wang assured him that he had no intention of "seizing the commander's seal," he went along with his proposals.³³ Wang's tactics succeeded in placing Mao on the defensive, and in the following months Wang was able to win a good deal of support for his "conciliationist" policies toward the KMT, even from such people as Chu Te and Chou En-lai. Indeed, Wang's return to China had the immediate effect of "temporarily shifting the CCP towards the Right," and this in turn strengthened the position of Wang and the Returned Students in the party hierarchy.³⁴

Wang Ming's hand was further strengthened by the Politburo's decision, on December 13, to convene the CCP's Seventh Congress in the "shortest possible time." A new congress would be the proper forum in which to realign the party leadership, and especially to undo what had been done at Tsunyi in 1935. Mao was vulnerable on this point, because the Tsunyi conference had been a hastily arranged affair with some important Politburo members missing, including Chang Kuo-t'ao and Wang Ming himself, and it had been held without the knowledge, let alone approval, of the Comintern. The agenda of the Seventh Congress seemed certain to bring a real showdown between the Maoists and the Returned Students. The "central task" would be to decide upon the best way to carry out the united front against Japan. In addition, the congress was to make a "basic summation" of the CCP's history since the Sixth Congress, at Moscow, in 1928.³⁵ In his study of the subject, Gregor Benton has concluded that, upon his return to Yen-an, Wang Ming's "political onslaught on Mao . . . and his arrogant behavior in the Party added up to an indisputable bid for leadership."³⁶ Certainly, the decision to convene the Seventh Congress at an early date was favorable to Wang, and unfavorable to Mao, whose position was perhaps still not strong enough to survive an all-out attack from Wang and the Returned Students.

Perhaps as a counter to his political vulnerability, Mao at this time began to strengthen his undoubtedly strong military position. Early in 1938, numerous articles on the importance of the army began appearing in the party journal. On January 11, for example, *Liberation* printed an article by the army commander Ch'en Po-chün that consisted mainly of a lengthy excerpt from a military text written by Mao in 1934 ("Guerrilla Warfare"), which Ch'en hoped would be helpful to "leading cadres" throughout the party involved in active combat.³⁷ The issue of May 30, 1938, contained a new article by Mao on guerrilla warfare, and between May 26 and June 3 Mao gave an important series of lectures entitled "On Protracted War." These were published as a single article in *Liberation* in a special issue on July 1 that marked the second anniversary of the Sino-Japanese War and the seventeenth anniversary of the founding of the CCP. Besides the specially featured article by Mao, this issue also had an open-

ing page with a message from Mao, in his own calligraphy, encouraging people to persist in the war against Japan.³⁸ In spite of Mao's efforts in Marxist philosophy, I would agree with Noriyuki Tokuda that at this critical period in Mao's rise to power, his theory of warfare was perhaps the "corner-stone of the foundation supporting the legitimacy of his leadership."³⁹ Not surprisingly, then, we see that Mao abandoned philosophy in favor of strategy when it came to a final showdown between himself and his Moscow-educated opponents.

Since the Autumn Harvest Uprising in late 1927, Mao had been deeply involved in military affairs, increasingly alongside Chu Te. Though not much experienced in warfare, Mao quickly developed his basic strategy in the late 1920's and early 1930's.⁴⁰ Because of his constant difficulties with the party political leaders, he came to rely on the military as his main base of operations, and before Tsunyi his reputation both in the CCP and in Moscow was mainly that of a peasant military leader. Even so, with the rise to power of the Returned Students, Mao had been gradually pushed aside in the military sector, and it was only when the strategy of the Returned Students failed to maintain the Kiangsi Soviet that he was called back to assume control of the army. The Returned Students and their Comintern military adviser (Otto Braun) had been determined to defend the territorial integrity of the base area at all costs, even if this meant fixed battles with the vastly superior troops of the KMT. Mao, on the other hand, had urged the necessity of allowing the enemy troops to penetrate deep inside the base area, if necessary, so they could be isolated and destroyed on a piecemeal basis. The Returned Students were much opposed to this strategy because of what they called its "guerrillaism" and advocated instead their own strategy of the defense of "fixed points."

Mao's emphasis on mobility was the key to his evolving concept of military strategy, but the so-called guerrillaism was not simply that. Mao's strategy centered on the assumption that eventually, when circumstances were right, guerrilla warfare would give way to mobile warfare, and ultimately to positional warfare of a decisive nature. For the present, however, the party's military strategy, he argued, had to be based on the less than ideal circumstances of the moment, when the small Red Army was badly

outmanned and outgunned by the armies of the KMT. He particularly stressed the importance of developing highly motivated soldiers who would fight with whatever weapons they had instead of waiting for better weapons that might never arrive. He further argued that the small size of the Red Army would be compensated for by the use of mobile guerrilla tactics, which would slowly whittle away at the larger, slower moving enemy armies without ever exposing the Communists to direct attack and potential annihilation. Still, even guerrillas need some degree of sanctuary, and this would be provided by the establishment of territorial base areas, which also would furnish the guerrillas with manpower and supplies. But if a base area become militarily untenable, it would be abandoned without ceremony and another established at a more suitable location. In the long run, it was the party and the army that had to be preserved; individual base areas could come and go as the circumstances dictated.

Mao did acknowledge that eventually it would be necessary to establish sizable, relatively permanent base areas that could nurture more stable armies capable of large-scale mobile and ultimately positional warfare. Only this kind of warfare would finally settle the issue of supreme power in the struggle between the Communists and the Nationalists. But such warfare would only be practical in the more distant future, when the Red Army was strong enough to challenge the KMT armies directly. In the meantime, it was necessary to put such warfare out of one's mind and to concentrate on building up the small Red Army on a day-to-day basis, while never losing sight of the ultimate goal of nationwide victory. Realizing the difficulties of motivating men to fight against overwhelming odds for a distant goal, Mao emphasized that there must be a strong program of ideological indoctrination both for party members and for the troops, with the party at all times maintaining its leadership over the army, rather than the other way around.⁴¹ It was only such a party and army, imbued with ideological zeal and possessed of firm leadership, that would be able to mobilize the peasant masses to support them under the most trying circumstances. Without such support, Mao argued, the party and the army would die, just as surely as fish would perish if deprived of the sanctuary of the waters in which they swam.

By late 1938, when the final showdown between Mao and Wang Ming took place, Mao had amassed a wide range of military experience and had published extensively on the subject. This placed Wang in a very difficult position, for his years of exile in Moscow had removed him from the practical movement, and even support from Stalin could not compensate for this. The military commanders in particular placed great importance on Mao's experience in both political and military leadership, and they remained highly skeptical of Wang's ability to assume the top leadership post of what had become a highly militarized political movement. Wang Ming's line in early 1938 was to a considerable extent based on two propositions, namely, "genuine" cooperation with the KMT, and all-out defense of Wuhan, which became the new national capital after the fall of Nanking to the Japanese. This was in sharp contrast to Mao's line, which stressed a looser relationship with the Nationalists and mobile warfare rather than the defense of fixed points. As it turned out, Wang's two-point strategy was in shambles by the autumn: the KMT had arbitrarily closed down the CCP's organizations in Wuhan, and the city itself was about to fall to the encircling Japanese. Wang's personal influence quickly evaporated with the undercutting of his political and military strategy, and his campaign against Mao also rapidly lost momentum.

If, as one can reasonably assume, Wang had planned to attempt a reorganization of the party leadership at the coming party congress, his hopes were rudely shattered by the announcement that, instead of a Seventh Congress, the party would hold the Sixth Plenum of the Sixth Congress. Mao's explanation was that "because of the tensions of war" it had been impossible to prepare adequately for a formal congress.⁴² Clearly, Mao, far from being dislodged by Wang Ming and his supporters, had managed to reinforce his position. Official sources state that although Mao was severely challenged by Wang and his group, their "right deviation" was at last "basically overcome" at the Sixth Plenum, the result being "unanimity of thought" in the party leadership.⁴³ This claim may be somewhat exaggerated, but most students of the period agree that it is essentially correct. Lyman P. Van Slyke, for example, says that at the Sixth Plenum "no purge was carried out, but the Returned Students, the last group standing in the

way of Mao's complete control of the Party, were probably reduced in importance and forced to recognize Mao's supremacy."⁴⁴ This conclusion is reinforced by the acknowledgment of Mao's supremacy within the CCP in an article on him in the 1938 edition of the *Large Soviet Encyclopedia* published in Moscow.⁴⁵ Stalin may not ultimately have backed Wang Ming in his final attempt to wrest power from Mao, but it was evident that Wang had lost, and thus it now became prudent on Moscow's part to acknowledge publicly Mao's preeminence in the CCP.

Ch'en Po-ta, meanwhile, had established himself in the Maoist camp, and his writings began to reflect Mao's growing power. Ch'en's first appearance in *Liberation* was in the issue of April 1, 1938, with a short article on Sun Yat-sen's views on the concept of the united front. Both Ch'en and Ai Ssu-ch'i, who also contributed to this issue, were introduced to the readers as "professors" whose "new interpretations" of Sun's theories were worthy of some attention.⁴⁶ In this article and others in the spring of 1938, Ch'en avoided any discussion of Marxist theory, very likely because of the tense situation within the party resulting from Wang Ming's return from Russia. In the July 1 anniversary issue, however, in an article entitled "We Will Continue to Advance toward Our Historical Goal," Ch'en returned to the question of theory.⁴⁷ This special issue contains one article each by Lo Fu (Chang Wen-t'ien), Lin Po-ch'ü (Lin Tsu-han), and Ch'en Po-ta (in that order). Lin's article, "Glorious July," is only a brief eulogy to the CCP and its heroic struggle against Japan, and was probably contributed by Lin in his relatively neutral capacity as the chairman of the government of the Yen-an base area. Lo's article is more substantial (and will be discussed below), and no doubt represented the general views of the Returned Students. Ch'en's article, though last, is the longest and seems intended to be the most important of the three pieces. It can be taken as representing the views of the Maoist faction. Indeed, the three articles formed a kind of united front within the upper echelons of the CCP, and it is significant that Ch'en, a relative newcomer to Yen-an, should have been chosen by the Maoists to formulate their position.

The publication of Ch'en's essay on the CCP's seventeenth anniversary marked his emergence as a leading spokesman for the Maoist camp. Ch'en's personal relationship with Mao was also

becoming closer, it seems. According to one of Mao's bodyguards, Mao expressed great concern when Ch'en was wounded slightly during a Japanese air raid on Yen-an in November 1938. Ch'en, caught in the raid while out buying newspapers in town, suffered a scalp abrasion from bomb fragments, and when Mao heard of the incident he immediately called for special medical assistance for Ch'en. "Only when he heard that Comrade Ch'en's wound was not serious," runs the account, "did the Chairman heave a sigh of relief."⁴⁸

Ch'en's article of July 1 is representative of much of his later writings, for it is equally concerned with Marxist theory and CCP history. For the moment, it is the history aspect that is of interest; his treatment of theory will be saved for discussion in the next chapter.

One of Ch'en's main points is that the CCP has become an important element in Chinese politics because it has persisted in the "struggle between two lines." This struggle, he says, commenced at the birth of the party in 1921 and has continued right up to the present day. The chronicle of the history of this struggle that follows strikingly resembles the official party history that was formally adopted by the party some seven years later, at the Seventh Plenum in 1945. The "right opportunism" of Ch'en Tu-hsiu, the "adventurism" of Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai (who is unnamed), and the "leftist" line of Li Li-san are all included in Ch'en's account. Indeed, in light of Ch'en's later concern with party history in 1943-44, it appears more than likely that his article of 1938 was the genesis of the resolution on official history adopted in 1945. (See pp. 263-69 below for a discussion of this issue.) There is one important difference between the two, however: in the 1938 article, the Returned Students are nowhere mentioned by name, either individually or collectively, nor is Mao or any other member of his faction. It seems obvious that Ch'en was writing to a formula agreed upon by Mao and the Returned Students. The only persons he mentions by name are (1) the negative examples—Ch'en Tu-hsiu, Li Li-san, Chang Kuo-t'ao, and so on—and (2) the martyrs—Li Ta-chao, P'eng P'ai, Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai, and others.⁴⁹

But if Ch'en was not permitted to criticize the Returned Students by name, he makes his opinions clear enough in his account of the party's activities since the Fourth Plenum, of January 1931.

Although this plenum, he says, maintained the party's "Bolshevik unity," it was followed during the years of the Kiangsi Soviet by a struggle against both left and right opportunism. Left opportunism was characterized during this period by a lack of understanding of the nature of the democratic revolution, a neglect of the consolidation of the worker-peasant alliance, and "adventuristic proposals" for attacks on key cities at times of military successes. Right opportunism, on the other hand, exhibited a pessimistic, defeatist attitude in times of difficulty, and a tendency toward flightism. It is obvious that the characteristics of left opportunism are in fact those of the Returned Students (as perceived by the Maoists), and the shortcomings of the right opportunists are those of Chang Kuo-t'ao. Unable to refer to the Returned Students by name, Ch'en gets over the difficulty very simply by declaring that both left and right opportunism are best represented by Chang Kuo-t'ao! He also makes Chang the whipping boy in accusing him of having carried out successive left and right lines during the party's attempts to cooperate with the KMT in the new united front. If Ch'en's account in any way represented the Maoist reconstruction of party history, the Returned Students could not look to a happy future, for Ch'en was suggesting, if only indirectly, that the CCP under Returned Student leadership had not "taken the Bolshevik road" after the Fourth Plenum in 1931. If this were so, the legitimacy of the Returned Student leadership between 1931 and 1935 would be seriously undermined, as would their credibility as current party spokesmen.

Ch'en's interpretation of party history is as significant for its timing as for its content. One of the tasks that had been assigned to the coming Seventh Congress was that of making a "basic summation" of party history since the Sixth Congress in 1928. In the July 1 anniversary issue, the editors of *Liberation*, though without mentioning the proposed congress, announced a drive to collect as much material as possible on the party's past. Readers were urged to send in whatever materials they possessed—documents and publications issued by the party center as well as local organizations; essays, articles, and books written by individual party members; and personal reminiscences concerning the party's history. The purpose of the collection, the announcement said, was to further the study of the "experience and lessons of the

Chinese revolution," and it was hoped that everyone would cooperate in the task of gathering materials.⁵⁰

In light of the review of party history due at the intended Seventh Congress, and seen in the context of this call for historical materials on the party, Ch'en's article of July 1 certainly seems to have been the first step in the Maoists' official reconstruction of party history, and it clearly indicates that the Maoists were finally asserting their supremacy over Wang Ming and the Returned Students. It may also be taken as significant that Lo Fu's article in the same issue of *Liberation* says nothing specific about party history. The Returned Students were to have but a small part in the forthcoming reconstruction of party history in the wake of Mao's rise to supreme power.

By the summer of 1938 the major elements of the future "Maoist myth" were clearly discernible: (1) Mao's successful leadership of the practical movement since the Tsunyi conference; (2) his gradual displacement of all opposition groups in the party; (3) his increasing independence from the influence of Moscow; (4) his growing stature as the party's leading military strategist; and (5) his emergence (however tentatively) as a Marxist-Leninist theorist in his own right.* Mao was by this time very much the first among equals, and we have already noted the initial signs of his cult appearing in June 1937. Two more indicators should be noted now: in a report of July 9, 1938, Lin Piao, president of the Anti-Japanese University and one of the Red Army's leading commanders, openly praised "Comrade Mao's leadership genius," and on July 15 *Liberation* published its second woodcut portrait of Mao.⁵¹ By mid-1938 the Maoists were in a position to incorporate the key elements of the Maoist myth into the official review of party history promised at the coming Seventh Congress. As the individual chosen to write the first draft of the Maoist reconstruction of the CCP's history, Ch'en Po-ta thus became one of the leading figures behind that myth.

*For an interpretation of certain aspects of the "Maoist myth," see William F. Dorrill, "Transfer of Legitimacy in the Chinese Communist Party: Origins of the Maoist Myth," in John Wilson Lewis, ed., *Party Leadership and Revolutionary Power in China* (Cambridge, Eng., 1970), pp. 69-113. Following Dorrill (p. 71, n. 1), the term myth is not used in a pejorative sense. It is meant simply to convey the idea of a political legend—part fact, part fiction—which focuses on a leader who is held to be "invariably correct and victorious."

The Sinification of Marxism, 1938

Ch'en and the "Sinification" of Chinese Culture

By 1938 both Mao Tse-tung and Ch'en Po-ta were equally concerned with the problem of developing Marxism in China according to China's own characteristics. Yet we have noted a difference in their attitudes toward traditional Chinese culture, with Ch'en adopting a more positive attitude than that displayed by Mao. The burning issue in early 1938, however, was not the development of Marxism in China but rather China's ability to sustain itself in the face of the recent Japanese invasion. In the months that followed Mao's lectures on philosophy, China sank deeper into despair as the Japanese rapidly subjugated large parts of the nation. In his lectures on protracted war in late May and early June 1938, Mao noted that the "predatory policy" of the Japanese had two aspects, the material and the spiritual. Besides simply plundering the country, Mao said, the Japanese were, in the realm of the spirit, "robbing the Chinese people of their national consciousness; under the flag of the [Rising] Sun all Chinese can be nothing but docile subjects, beasts of burden forbidden to have the least bit of Chinese national spirit."¹

Mao's concern with this "Chinese national spirit" (*Chung-kuo ch'i*) was shared by many of his fellow countrymen at the time, and extensive propaganda campaigns were carried out by both the KMT and the CCP to fan the flames of nationalism.² In his lectures on protracted war, Mao turned to the question of the political mobilization of the people in the face of Japanese aggression. It was true, he said, that much had already been done to organize the mass media for this purpose, but it was only "a drop in the ocean." Furthermore, too much of the propaganda so far had been "uncongenial to the tastes of the masses," so that "bar-

riers had arisen" between propaganda and the people to whom it was intended to appeal. All this, Mao concluded, had to be changed as soon as possible if the people were to be effectively mobilized against the Japanese.³

One obvious way of making Communist ideology and propaganda more acceptable to the Chinese people of all classes was to smooth over the points of conflict between Marxist theory and China's traditional culture. Ch'en Po-ta had long been sensitive to the charge that Marxism was a "foreign dogma" hostile to the spirit of Chinese culture, and therefore without a future in China. The time had now come for him to elaborate on his belief that this charge was groundless, and that there was no real conflict between Marxist theory and Chinese "national essence." If these two crucial ingredients could be brought together effectively, there would be an intellectual basis for a new type of ideology and propaganda that would probably be attractive to the Chinese masses.

Although Ch'en avoided the delicate issue of Marxist theory in the spring of 1938, he had been working hard in helping to formulate a cultural policy for the CCP. Mao had tended to neglect the cultural side of both the revolution and the war against Japan, but for Ch'en the cultural dimension was a major concern. In an essay written near the end of 1937, but not published until May of the following year, Ch'en is at pains to emphasize the importance of the cultural factor in the war. The Japanese attack on Chinese culture, he maintains, is simply a part of the general fascist attempt to destroy world civilization and plunge mankind into a new era of darkness. Since Chinese culture, both traditional and contemporary, reflects the genius of no less than one-quarter of humanity, the struggle of the Chinese in defense of their own culture is far from being parochial: "Our defense of the existence and development of Chinese culture is simultaneously linked to the existence and development of world culture, and to its [ultimate] destiny."⁴ Ch'en saw the struggle against Japan as the crucible of the new Chinese culture that would emerge from the fusion of past and present. The basic existence of Chinese culture would be assured through this struggle; equally, the war would provide the immediate context in which Chinese culture would further develop.

Ch'en's non-Marxist readers were apt to be disturbed by all this emphasis on the development of Chinese culture, particularly in wartime, and to be suspicious that it was in any event probably no more than a guise for the introduction of Marxism. Anticipating this reaction, Ch'en reassures these skeptics that the creation of a new culture is an important aspect of the national struggle against the Japanese and need not conflict with the preservation of traditional culture. As for China's cultural legacy, especially the key areas of morality and thought, Ch'en states his basic premise: "We are historicists, and we believe that the emergence of a new morality cannot be unconnected with the development of the old morality. . . . Further, we do not consider that the old thought has no legacy of tradition to pass on to the new thought."*

In calling for the fusion of old and new in the cultural sphere, Ch'en had gone farther toward striking a compromise between Chinese history and Marxist theory than had most of his colleagues in the CCP. Yet as a Marxist he could not abandon the central proposition that, in the course of this reconciliation of history and theory, the basic content of the culture that would emerge would be new in the sense that it would bear the characteristics of the current age. And the age, as we know from Ch'en's earlier assertions, was one in which the new science of dialectical materialism was rapidly assuming a commanding position in China's intellectual life. Consequently, Ch'en had to return to the question that had so embittered leftist literary circles in 1936-37, namely, the relationship between content and form.

*Ch'en Po-ta, "Lun k'ang-Jih wen-hua t'ung-i chan-hsien" (On the Anti-Japanese United Front in Culture), Winter 1937, in Ch'en, *Tsai wen-hua chen-hsien shang* (On the Cultural Front), Hong Kong, 1939, p. 56. There is a striking similarity between this passage and another from Mao Tse-tung's report to the Sixth Plenum a few months later. On this point, see the long quotation from Mao on pp. 91-92 following. It is not unreasonable to assume that Ch'en had a hand in drafting Mao's speech, especially the section dealing with problems of theory and culture. Although Ch'en uses the term *li-shih-che* and Mao *li-shih-chu-i-che*, both can be translated as "historicist" because the central idea in both passages is the importance of history as "a standard of value or as a determinant of events" (Webster). To both Ch'en and Mao, history was to be studied not as an end in itself but because it was directly relevant to the course of present and future events.

In a letter written in May 1938 to the literary editor of a journal that had recently published a special issue on the topic of popularization in literature, Ch'en reaffirmed his support of the movement to make the written word more accessible to China's millions. Given the need to mobilize the masses in the war against Japan, Ch'en says in the letter, the popularization movement is essential to China's very survival. But the popularization movement implied a certain contradiction: too much emphasis on Marxism (by whatever name) in the movement to mobilize the masses would surely alienate them, yet on the other hand, excessive stress on traditionalism (in whatever guise) would amount to a betrayal of the proletarian revolution. Ch'en quickly resolves this problem of choice by going back to the issue of national forms in literature. "Regarding the popularization movement," he says, "I consider that the use of traditional forms to introduce new contents will be especially effective."⁵ He elaborates this point in an essay, also of May 1938: "If we are to transform our traditional national culture and morality into a new national culture and morality in a living, vital, intelligent, and scientific way, [we must allow] new contents to emerge in traditional forms. This is not to deny our need for new forms. What we are saying is that new contents in our culture will give birth to new forms, but new contents in our culture may emerge in any form, however old."⁶

These were essentially the ideas of Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai, but Ch'en had espoused them ardently since the early 1930's. In 1938, after much acrimonious debate with the literary leftists, Ch'en Po-ta, Chou Yang, and other advocates of Ch'ü's literary theories were about to win the day. With the official support of Mao himself, the CCP's official policy on the cultural front came to reflect Ch'ü's amalgam: Marxist ideology was to be transmitted to the masses in forms both old *and* new, the main object being the mobilization of the nation's millions in the struggle for national and social emancipation.

The analyses of cultural problems by Ch'en that appeared in the spring of 1938 were of great importance in the formulation of the CCP's official policies in this area, and they also prepared the way for the long essay of July 1, 1938, written for the anni-

versary issue of *Liberation*, in which Ch'en returned to the central issue of Marxist theory and Chinese history. Ch'en states in this essay that the Chinese Communist Party firmly believes in the "scientific communism of Marx and Lenin" and is the political representative of the proletariat, a new class on the ascent in China. Yet it should not be thought that communism is something that has been "dreamed of" throughout the centuries only in foreign lands. On the contrary: "It is something that has been dreamed of for several thousands of years by the most outstanding representatives of our nation. Mo-tzu [for example], one of our country's ancient philosophers . . . used to dream of this kind of society."⁷

Nonetheless, dreams have to be realized in practice, and for this it is necessary to have an adequate theory of society—a theory that only Marxism-Leninism provides. But Marxism is not a "lifeless dogma"; it is a "living science" that takes into full account the individual characteristics and historical conditions of the various nations. Since Marxism is a living science, it is not static but must change in response to new circumstances. Hence, Ch'en says, Chinese Communists must be able to "develop concretely and fill out" the principles of Marxism-Leninism in accordance with the special characteristics and historical circumstances of China. Pulling all these strands of thought together, we may conclude that in Ch'en's view, Marxist theory (1) has antecedents in traditional Chinese culture, (2) can be adapted to the specific environment of China, and (3) can be enriched and developed through application in China.

In light of this it is not surprising that Ch'en disclaims any conflict between Marxism and Chinese culture; nor does the Chinese Communist Party reject everything in China's "rich legacy in culture and thought" simply because it believes in Marxism. Quite the reverse:

The Chinese Communist Party is one that takes over all the best in China's inherent cultural traditions, and all of China's most outstanding [intellectual] theories. Members of the Chinese Communist Party consider themselves to be the inheritors of the revolutionary essence of Sun Yat-sen's Three People's Principles, the inheritors of all the outstanding enlightened thought of the modern Chinese reform and revolutionary movements, and the inheritors of all the most outstanding cultural legacy of ancient China.⁸

Surely, if the CCP undertook to inherit this tremendous cultural and intellectual legacy from the past, Marxism-Leninism would go by the board. Would it not be impossible for the party to maintain its revolutionary integrity if it were exposed to such an immense influence from the past? On this point Ch'en is confident that in addition to inheriting this cultural legacy, the CCP will be able to "transform, develop, and enrich" it on the basis of Marxism. Yet this cultural legacy is not simply a pliable mass that Marxism can shape at will; rather, a complex process of interaction will be triggered off between the foreign theory and the native tradition, which will remold both. "The Chinese Communist Party's skill at accepting all the best in our nation's cultural and intellectual legacy is increasing the limitless value of Marxism-Leninism in China," Ch'en says. "At the same time, it is increasing the value of all the best in our nation's cultural and intellectual legacy."⁹ Ch'en does not indicate at this time the probable consequences of this interaction between theory and culture, but it was a subject to which he returned a few weeks later.

While Ch'en was strongly arguing the case for the combination of Marxist theory and Chinese culture in his anniversary essay in *Liberation*, Chang Wen-t'ien was assiduously avoiding it in his essay in the same issue, although he too dealt with the question of the role of Marxism in China. Chang's main thesis is that Marxism-Leninism should be regarded as a modern science. Like other scientists, Marx and Lenin contributed their discoveries to the general store of human knowledge, and therefore Marxism-Leninism represents a body of scientific thought that is as applicable to China as it is to any other country. Indeed, as the only correct theory of society, Marxism was readily accepted once it was introduced into China. Marxism-Leninism can thus be said to have roots in Chinese thought and culture to the extent that (in accordance with the dialectic of history) Chinese thought and culture would inevitably have developed in the direction indicated by Marxism.¹⁰ Chang seems to think it is sufficient to demonstrate that the compatibility of Marxism and Chinese culture is established by the scientific nature of Marxism; unlike Ch'en, he sees no need to prove that some of China's ancient philosophers were proto-Marxists. Chang, then, is silent on the alleged

necessity to effect some kind of combination of Marxist theories with specific, concrete elements in China's cultural tradition.

Nor is Chang ready to declare, as Ch'en does, that Marxism itself will be enriched by interaction with China's cultural legacy. Retaining the scientific analogy, Chang maintains that the introduction of Marxism-Leninism into China greatly speeded up the development of Chinese thought and culture, and at the same time raised their general level. This, says Chang, is similar to the way the introduction of modern science and technology into China greatly advanced and improved the nation's level of science and technology.¹¹ Chang seems implicitly to be saying that the hope of combining Marxist theory with Chinese culture was as futile as the notion that modern science and traditional culture (of whatever nationality) could somehow be amalgamated.

This dispute between Ch'en Po-ta and Chang Wen-t'ien over the relationship between Marxist theory and Chinese culture was rooted in the shortcomings of the Second Comintern Congress of 1920. On the surface, Lenin's theory of imperialism, in which the class struggle within the capitalist countries is transferred to the colonies and semi-colonies, should have provided an adequate rationale for the relevance of Marxism to China. Lenin had even gone to the extent of acknowledging that communist parties and soviet institutions would have to be adapted to the fact that the colonial countries in the East were primarily peasant societies. Although this does not necessarily suggest that Lenin envisaged communist parties in the East that were composed almost exclusively of peasants, he at the very least had taken the first step that was to lead ultimately to the establishment of a communist party in China that was largely peasant in its composition.¹² At the same time, Lenin (and even M. N. Roy, the Asiocentric Indian theorist) promoted the view that although peasants might constitute a large proportion of the revolutionary forces in the East, the path of the revolution in the colonial countries in Asia would be largely identical with that of Europe itself. In other words, as the Second Congress agreed, the applicability of Marxism to Asia was a function of the socioeconomic structure of Asian society, and therefore the fundamental tasks of the revolution in Asia were similar to those in Europe, and differences in the cultural superstructures of the two areas were not to obscure this fact.

Hence, as Carrère d'Encausse and Schram observe, it was "quite logical" that Lenin and the Second Congress were primarily concerned with questions of strategy and tactics of the revolution in Asia, and almost completely ignored the cultural dimensions of the revolution in the colonies.¹³

This tendency to ignore the distinctive cultural dimensions of Asian society was clearly reflected in Chang's emphasis on the acultural "scientific" nature of Marxism. Ch'en found such thinking inadequate. It was responsible for the mechanical application of Soviet theories of revolution to China which culminated in the disaster of 1927. Further, it exposed Marxism to the charge that it was an "alien ideology" unsuited to China and unappealing to the Chinese people in their struggle against the Japanese in the 1930's. Spurred on by his own interest in cultural questions, as well as by Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai's earlier efforts in trying to work out the same problem of the revolution in China, Ch'en was fast becoming a leading party spokesman in the realm of theory and culture. Chang's emphasis on the scientific nature of Marxism was a reflection of the growing concern of the Returned Students that in the hands of people like Ch'en, Marxism was in danger of being "nationalized." Many of them knew Ch'en from their student days in Moscow, and they probably remembered that in 1936 he had proudly accepted the charge that he was an advocate of "patriotic philosophy."¹⁴ The failure of Lenin and the Comintern to deal adequately with the cultural dimensions of the revolution in the East had largely been overlooked by the CCP in its early years of trial and error in the 1920's. Even Mao Tse-tung himself had tended to concentrate on matters of political and military strategy and tactics, and had largely ignored the cultural realm. For Ch'en Po-ta, however, the cultural context of the revolution, and, in particular, the relationship between Marxist theory and Chinese culture, were questions of decisive importance.

Having formally opened the debate on the relationship between theory and culture in his important essay of July 1, Ch'en quickly moved to gain the offensive. On July 23 he published another major essay in *Liberation*, entitled "On National Traditions in the Cultural Movement." In this essay, Ch'en laments the fact that many "outstanding revolutionaries" and cultural

workers have fallen into “formalism” and “dogmatism”; consequently, they have been guilty of neglecting the study of their own nation’s history, preferring to talk about world philosophy and literature to the neglect of China’s traditional philosophy and literature. In a scarcely veiled allusion to the Moscow-trained Returned Students, Ch’en attributes the shortcomings of the dogmatists in the cultural field to their failure to understand the theory of the relationship between socialist content and national form that Stalin had formulated apropos of the development of culture in the Soviet Union. Not understanding his theory, these dogmatists have been unable to apply it in practice, “in accordance with the revolutionary movement in their own nation, their own nation’s characteristics, and the cultural movement needed by their own nation.”¹⁵ This neglect and even dismissal of China’s own national cultural traditions, Ch’en warns, is most worrying, for it plays into the hands of the Trotskyists and other renegades. In particular, it gives strength to the Trotskyists’ views that the peasants constituted a reactionary force in Chinese history and society, and that the two main camps of idealism and materialism were absent in traditional Chinese philosophy.

Besides playing into the hands of the class enemy, the neglect of China’s long historical tradition is fundamentally unsound from a theoretical point of view. As Ch’en sees it: “Genuine Marxists all understand that a new culture cannot fall out of the sky [*p’ing-k’ung tiao-hsia-lai*] and be unconnected with the development of history and culture in the past. If one is unable to accept and transform one’s traditional culture in a critical way, it is impossible to create a new culture.”¹⁶ This, Ch’en declares, is a truth taught by Lenin arising from his own experience during the Russian revolution, but it is universally applicable. If the Chinese Communists wish to create a new culture for China, they must be able to comprehend the vast panorama of Chinese history and must be “good at accepting and developing the best traditions in the past.”¹⁷ In thus invoking the authority of both Stalin and Lenin, Ch’en was using a familiar tactic of the Returned Students, who were prone to use their mastery of the classical texts as an ideological weapon against the less theoretically qualified Maoists. As a Moscow “returned student” himself,

Ch'en was well able to employ the same tactics on behalf of the Maoist faction in the party.

Ch'en then goes on to point out that besides being basically unsound theoretically and playing into the hands of the Trotskyists politically, the tendency of the dogmatists to ignore China's cultural traditions had another serious consequence. It encouraged the production of a good deal of CCP ideology and propaganda that was ineffectual in appealing to the broad masses of the people. Supporting Lu Hsün's rejection of the theory that "old bottles cannot contain new wine," Ch'en complains that in the past too many of the party's cultural workers have neglected the use of "traditional (i.e. old) national forms." They have failed to realize that in order to get through to the masses of ordinary Chinese people (most of whom are peasants), it is necessary to transmit new ideas in well-known national forms relevant to particular parts of China. In short, says Ch'en, the new national culture that the Communists are trying to create should be both "Sinified" (*Chung-kuo-hua*) and "localized" (*ti-fang-hua*).¹⁸

Ch'en's use of these two terms is striking, for one of them (Sinification) was to be adopted by Mao Tse-tung in his report to the Sixth Plenum of the CCP in October 1938. Ch'en had first used these terms as early as May 4 the same year, in his essay "Our Opinions Concerning the Present Cultural Movement," and they appear to have originated with him, or at the very least to have become identified with him at this time.¹⁹ The basic ideas behind the two slogans were not Ch'en's, however, but those of Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai. By 1938 Ch'ü's literary ideas had influenced a great number of intellectuals in the CCP, including Ch'en. Ch'en had probably known Ch'ü personally from as early as 1925, when Ch'en was a student and Ch'ü an instructor at Shanghai Labor University. When Ch'en was a student at Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow between 1927 and 1930, he would have had occasion to meet Ch'ü again, as the latter was the CCP's top representative to the Comintern during this period.

Ch'en does not go into any detail as to what he means precisely by his terms "Sinification" and "localization," apart from equating the former with "nationalization" (*min-tsu-hua*). Nevertheless, their general intent is clear. Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai, it will be re-

membered, believed that “plain speech” (*pai-hua*), the new form of Chinese that had emerged by the 1920’s, was not really an effective “common speech” (*p’u-t’ung-hua*) because, in the course of absorbing foreign influences (many of which were beneficial), it had been to a large extent “Westernized” as well as “modernized.” It contained too many foreign words, and its speech patterns were difficult for ordinary people to understand and assimilate. It was an awkward mixture of Chinese and foreign elements that had not been effectively fused into a true *p’u-t’ung-hua* that was readily comprehensible to ordinary people. Thus it was a *pai-hua* that was unable to perform the linguistic role for which it was intended; it was neither fully modern (linguistically comprehensible) nor fully Chinese (culturally acceptable). In its place, Ch’ü proposed a form of *p’u-t’ung-hua* (the modern speech of the urban proletariat) that would represent the development of the existing *pai-hua* into a new spoken and written language, one that was at one and the same time modern and Chinese. To employ Ch’en Po-ta’s terminology, *p’u-t’ung-hua* as Ch’ü conceived it would be a “Sinified” form of *pai-hua*.

In calling for the Sinification of Chinese culture in general (not just language and literature), Ch’en was in effect rejecting the theory that culture in twentieth-century China must be either modern (Western) or traditional (Chinese), but not both simultaneously. He argues that if the correct relationship between modern and traditional influences in China’s emerging culture can be established, a Sinification can take place in which the essence of the modern influences is retained, but in a form that preserves the genius of the traditional culture. Like Ch’ü’s *p’u-t’ung-hua*, Ch’en’s Sinified culture is both modern and Chinese. Hence, although the Chinese Communists are firm believers in Marxism-Leninism—an essentially Western philosophy—Ch’en does not hesitate to claim that they are equally the defenders of China’s genuine “national essence” (*kuo-ts’ui*), though certainly not its “dregs” as well.²⁰

Ch’en’s concept of localization, like that of Sinification, is also based on the literary theories of Ch’ü Ch’iu-pai. Ch’ü believed in encouraging local and regional literary traditions if conditions permitted. Provided they remained subordinate to the national *p’u-t’ung-hua*, they could serve as useful media of communication

with ordinary people living within a particular dialect area. If, as Ch'en was suggesting, the CCP rigorously applied these two concepts in the field of literature, the party's ideology and propaganda would likely prove more congenial to the tastes of ordinary Chinese people, regardless of their regional background or social class.

It is worth repeating that Ch'en believed these two concepts were to be applied not merely to language and literature but to the broad field of culture, which included Marxist-Leninist theory itself. The crux of the matter lies in this last point. First of all, could the new Marxist wine be poured into old Chinese bottles—could Marxism be Sinified and still retain its acultural scientific nature and universal applicability? Or would Marxism become so Chinese in content and form that, while being more acceptable in China, it would be rendered irrelevant to the rest of the world? Further, would the interaction between “socialist content” and “national form” (Ch'en's terms) change the very nature of Marxism—that is, would Sinified Marxism really be Marxism at all? A second question is whether Marxism, like language and literature, can be localized—that is to say, can there be different varieties of Marxism geared to the particular conditions in different areas of China, such as a “Kwangtung Marxism” or a “Fukien Marxism”? The question is not as absurd as it may seem. If it is possible to Sinify Marxism (make it Chinese), is it not equally possible to “Fukienize” it (make it Fukienese)? Again one asks, if Marxism were to be both Sinified and localized, would there be much left of it that Marx and Lenin would recognize and claim as their own?

This was obviously a question that troubled Ch'en, for he knew that it would be on the minds of both potential supporters and opponents of the slogans he was proposing. But he assures his readers that in the final analysis the new contents in culture (such as Marxist philosophy) will not be compromised by their appearance in national or even local forms. In the dialectical relationship between the new contents and the old forms, it is the former that will dominate in the end:

The extensive use of traditional cultural forms is precisely the condition that is conducive to the widespread development of new cultural contents. Moreover, in the process of development the new cultural contents

will continuously [*pu-tuan-ti*] achieve supremacy over the old forms, continuously make the old forms become subsidiary to the new cultural contents, and thus effect the transition to new cultural forms.²¹

In the first stage of this complex process of interaction, new Marxist contents will fuse with traditional Chinese forms, but the process will not terminate at this point but will instead progress to a second and higher stage in which the interaction of content and form will transform the traditional Chinese forms into modern Chinese forms. In such a synthesis, the final product (although, in Ch'en's mind, nothing is ever final) will be a distinctive culture that represents the total integration of modern Marxist (scientific) contents and modern Chinese (national) forms. A new nation will be born with a culture that is at once truly modern and unmistakably Chinese; this new culture will be both scientific and national in character. It was such a culture that Mao Tse-tung was to call for in these very terms in his famous work of 1940, "On New Democracy," a text that was probably influenced by Ch'en Po-ta.

Mao's Call for the "Sinification of Marxism"

Ch'en's essay of July 1 urging the CCP to reassess its attitude toward China's national traditions was the signal for a new ideological campaign within the party. Articles by Ai Ssu-ch'i, Chang Ju-hsin, Yang Sung, and others (including Ch'en) on a wide variety of subjects relating to Marxist theory and Chinese history soon began appearing in the party journal; in a rapid reorientation of intellectual life, Marxism was now to be studied and applied in light of China's distinctive history and culture, and not in a foreign context. As for the education of the ordinary people of the country—the sea in which the Communist fish swam—Mao declared that the "great task" was twofold: it was necessary to "heighten the national culture and national consciousness of the people" and to "educate the new generation in the national spirit."²² Mao's concern with the "national spirit" was understandable in light of China's plight in the autumn of 1938; Japanese armies were sweeping over the country, and the huge industrial complex at Wuhan was about to fall into their hands. By the spring of 1939 the CCP's campaign to reassess its attitude

toward China's national history and traditions had blended with a KMT-sponsored "national spiritual mobilization," which tried to bolster the people's sagging morale in the face of repeated Japanese victories.

When Mao delivered his major report ("On the New Stage") to the party's Sixth Plenum in October 1938, he did so within a very specific context—increasing nationalism within and without the CCP, his growing supremacy within the Chinese party, and Moscow's acceptance of his preeminent position. Mao's report, delivered between October 12 and 14, was a lengthy summary of the state of the nation, the party, and the revolution. In the latter part of the report, noting that the "study of theory is the precondition of victory" in the revolution, Mao took up the question of Marxist-Leninist theory. The CCP had made great strides in raising its theoretical level, he said, but there was still much to be done. He then called for a "party-wide competition" in the study of the theories of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, to commence after the conclusion of the Sixth Plenum. This ideological campaign was thus to coincide with the flood of articles on Chinese history and tradition that had begun to appear in the pages of *Liberation*.

The overlapping of two separate drives emphasizing Marxist theory and Chinese history was by no means fortuitous, for the burden of Mao's comments on ideological study in his report was on the absolute necessity to unite the two. Mao first of all pointed out that members of the CCP should regard Marxism-Leninism merely as a guide to action, not as a rigid dogma:

We must not study the letter [tzu-mu] of Marxism-Leninism, but the standpoint and methodology by which they [Marx and Lenin] investigated and solved problems. It is only this guide to action, only this standpoint and methodology, that constitute revolutionary science, and provide the only correct orientation enabling us to appreciate the object of revolution and to direct the revolutionary movement.²³

In Mao's eyes, one must distinguish clearly between the "letter" and the "standpoint and methodology" of Marxism-Leninism. It is the standpoint and methodology, not the letter, that constitute "revolutionary science."

What does all this mean? In his lectures on dialectical materialism in 1937, Mao had distinguished between the general and

the particular character of all phenomena. The general character was absolute and enduring; the particular character was relative, and hence temporary. Applying this analysis to Leninism, Mao argued that Leninism's general character was its Marxist content; its particular character was its Russian form. If we apply this same analysis to Marxism-Leninism (not merely Leninism), we can say that the general character of Marxism-Leninism is its content (that is, it is "revolutionary science"), and that its particular character is its form (that is, it is both European and Russian). Thus in distinguishing between the "letter" and the "standpoint and methodology" of Marxism-Leninism, Mao was actually distinguishing between absolute content and relative form. He was exhorting the Chinese Communists to assimilate the revolutionary content of Marxism-Leninism, but to reject its national form.

Yet Mao had previously argued that a thing's general character is contained within its particular character; that is, the revolutionary content of Marxism-Leninism is contained within its European and Russian form. If, as Mao suggested in his report to the Sixth Plenum, Communists in China were to strip Marxism-Leninism of its national form in order to expose its revolutionary content, what would be left—a highly abstract "standpoint and methodology" divorced from any concrete environment or context, perhaps best expressed in the language of pure mathematics? Mao was quick to reject this conclusion: "There is no such thing as abstract Marxism, but only concrete Marxism. What we refer to as concrete Marxism is Marxism that has taken on a national form, that is, Marxism applied to the concrete struggle in China's concrete environment, and not applied abstractly."²⁴

Mao appeared to be calling for the creation of a new variant of Marxism-Leninism particular to China, but how was this to be achieved? We will recall that Ch'en Po-ta had previously declared the time had come for Chinese culture to be Sinified, that is, to be rendered both modern *and* Chinese—modern in content and Chinese in form. This is very similar to what Mao had in mind for Marxism, namely, the creation of a new variant of Marxism that exhibited a scientific revolutionary content within a Chinese national form. In speaking to the Sixth Plenum, Mao used Ch'en's term Sinification, but in a more specific sense: "The Sinification of Marxism [*Ma-k'o-ssu-chu-i ti Chung-kuo-hua*]*—making it ex-*

hibit a Chinese character in all its manifestations, that is to say, applying it in accordance with China's characteristics—becomes a problem that the entire party must understand and solve without delay.”* Sinification, as used here, was the process of creating a new variant of Marxism; the new variant itself was still nameless. Some seven months later, as we shall see, *Liberation* suggested that of all the CCP's leaders, it was Mao Tse-tung who was most successful in combining the history of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution. From this it was but a short jump to the proposition that Mao's thought represented the new variant of Marxism that was emerging from the process of Marxism-Leninism's Sinification.

The proper attitude toward China's historical heritage was, we recall, an important point of disagreement between Ch'en and Mao. In the past, Mao had called for two fundamentally contradictory things: the adaptation of Marxism to China's concrete environment *and* the liquidation of China's traditional philosophy. This of course overlooked the fact that China's contemporary environment had not, in the words of Ch'en Po-ta, “fallen out of the sky”; it was itself the creation of history and intimately linked with history. This stern view of the traditional heritage was certainly philosophically unsound, and in the face of growing Chinese nationalism and the concern over China's “national spirit” it was fast becoming politically unsound as well. Doubtless with these considerations in mind, Mao in his report to the Sixth Plenum finally withdrew his demand for the destruction of China's philosophical heritage. In addition to the Sinification of Marxism, there was now to be a new look at the past: “Another task of our study is to examine our historical legacy and to evaluate it critically by the use of Marxist methodology. . . . Today's China is a development from historical China, and as Marxist historicists we should not cut ourselves off from history [*ko-tuan li-shih*]. We should sum it up from Confucius to Sun Yat-sen, and

**Mao Tse-tung chi* (Collected Works of Mao Tse-tung), 10 vols. (Tokyo, 1970-74), 6: 259-60. For rather obvious reasons, Mao did not apply Ch'en's concept of localization to Marxism-Leninism. This idea had its place in the field of art and literature, for example, but it would have proved rather awkward if applied to political theory. This would have been especially true in 1938, when Mao was doing his best to unify CCP ideology under himself as an emerging national leader.

adopt all that is precious in this legacy.”²⁵ This sounds very like what Ch'en Po-ta had in mind in 1936 when he lamented the failure of Marxists in China to deal properly with China's philosophical heritage.

“The assimilation of this legacy,” Mao continued, “becomes a methodology that is of substantial help in directing the great [revolutionary] movement at the present time.”²⁶ Mao had previously said that Marxism provides a methodology to guide the revolution. Now he is introducing a second methodology, that of the Chinese legacy, to serve as a guide to the revolution in China. Since he had previously argued that present-day China had emerged from yesterday's China, and that the two were inseparably linked, he must in speaking of the assimilation of the “legacy” really mean the assimilation of the characteristics of both China's past and China's present—the sum total of the Chinese environment, material and mental alike. Whereas Mao's previous exhortations on the need to adapt Marxism to China's concrete environment had focused on the present-day environment, now a historical dimension had been added. China's historical heritage had been successfully absorbed into the new concept of the Sinification of Marxism.

Mao made it quite clear, however, that the two methodologies were not meant to be of equal importance. If, as he said, the “historical legacy” must be evaluated critically “by use of Marxist methodology,” then obviously Marxist methodology is the superior of the two, the indispensable guide to both the revolution and the historical legacy. But once the historical legacy has been correctly evaluated by Marxism, it can itself become a methodology that evaluates Marxism's relevance to guiding the concrete revolutionary struggle in China. This reasoning seems to agree with Ch'en Po-ta's earlier assertion that in the dialectical interaction between content and form, new contents gradually transform old forms into new ones. Applied to Mao's discussion of Marxist theory (new content) and Chinese history (old form), this reasoning suggests that Marxism's interaction with *traditional* Chinese history will eventually lead to the creation of *modern* Chinese history. Yet in the process Marxism itself will have been changed—that is, it will have developed to a higher stage, and its contents will be richer than before its application in China. In

calling upon all party members to improve their understanding of both Marxism *and* Chinese history, Mao was implicitly recognizing that the dialectical interaction of the two was the essential key to the success of the revolution.

For Mao, then, it is not sufficient that Chinese Marxist-Leninists merely “evaluate” their historical heritage; they should also “assimilate” it into their own world view, for this would provide them with a new methodology to help guide the revolution. What Mao seems to be saying is that in assimilating China’s historical legacy (i.e. China’s total environment), Chinese Marxists are not simply adopting a new particular form in which general content (revolutionary science) can reside. Or, perhaps more precisely, they are adopting a new form, but this new form is not merely an inert receptacle into which the old content is poured. Quite the contrary: the new Chinese form, as a methodology by which to evaluate the old Marxist content, is actually necessary to its continuing vitality. In his lectures on dialectical materialism in 1937 Mao had emphasized the “materialist truth” that “consciousness is limited by matter,” and had firmly rejected the proposition that matter is an “inert, composite entity.” From this we deduced that in Mao’s eyes Leninism was the creation of a process in which European Marxism (consciousness) was transformed (limited) by the Russian environment (matter); that is, Lenin had adapted, transformed, and developed Marxism in the course of his new revolutionary practice in the Russian context. Now, in the autumn of 1938, Mao was persuasively showing the CCP that Marxism-Leninism in China should undergo a similar process of adaptation, transformation, and development.

Mao took theory to be composed of two distinct though interrelated elements: methodology and form, or more precisely, scientific methodology and national form. In calling for the Sinification of Marxism-Leninism, he was rejecting the application in China of both Marxist theory (revolutionary science in a European form) and Leninist theory (revolutionary science in a Russian form), and was instead proposing the creation of new revolutionary theory adapted to China (revolutionary science in a Chinese form). A new theory was possible because theory as such has both a general scientific (absolute) character, and a particular national (relative) character, the general character being

contained within the particular. Provided the general character of the original theory were retained, a new particular character could be grafted on to it, the resulting union being new theory.

Let us look at this process of Sinification: Marxist-Leninist theory is separated into two distinct conceptual elements, revolutionary science (“methodology”) and European and Russian national form (“letter”). In the course of concrete revolutionary practice in China the original national forms are dropped, and the (now abstract) revolutionary science takes on a new Chinese national form. This fusion of content and form (“methodology” and “letter”) results in the creation of new theory to be added to the general storehouse of revolutionary science. This new theory is not simply the original content dressed up in a new Chinese garb, for the new form exerts a certain transforming influence on the original content. Mao thus conceives the new Chinese national form as confirming, rejecting, or supplementing the variety of propositions which the original revolutionary science (Marxism-Leninism) had brought to bear on the Chinese environment. This was much like his thinking in 1935, when he declared that the Chinese Communists, confronted with the existing body of military theory in the world, should “assimilate what is useful, reject what is useless, and create what is specifically our own.”

Mao devoted little attention to developing his ideas on the subject of Sinification, and it is evident, as Stuart Schram says, that the meaning of the Sinification of Marxism was both “complex and ambiguous” in Mao’s own mind at the time.²⁷ Neither did Mao give any specific examples of what he really meant, apart from saying that as far as literary style was concerned, “[foreign] dogmatism must be put to rest and replaced by a fresh and lively Chinese style and manner pleasing to the eye and ear of the Chinese common people.”²⁸ As a busy leader in time of war, Mao was thinking on his feet and not in the solitude of his study, and he had probably not worked out all the implications of what he was proposing. In essence, though, Mao was suggesting that China’s unique history (form/legacy/environment) provided an empirical data base (methodology) by which the specific propositions of Marxism-Leninism (theory) could be evaluated. Some of them could be adopted essentially as they were, others might have to be adapted to China’s specific situation, and still others

might be rejected as being unsuitable in the Chinese context. In addition, certain new theories might well have to be formulated to deal with entirely new situations that were encountered in the course of revolution in China. As to what would happen to Marxism-Leninism as a result of this process of adaptation, or Sinification, one can only speculate subjectively. It could be argued either that the original body of thought would be “creatively developed” (i.e. valid new theories would be developed), or that it would be “revised” (i.e. valid existing theories would be distorted and even destroyed). This, in a nutshell, was the crux of the bitter theoretical dispute that had been smoldering for a long time between the Returned Student leadership and the newly ascendant Maoists.

There can be little doubt that Mao was consciously proposing the creation of new revolutionary theory based on the application and development of Marxism-Leninism in China. This new theory would be a fresh contribution to the general body of Marxist-Leninist theory; it would represent an addition to Marxism-Leninism, but certainly not its replacement. Just as Mao in his lectures on dialectical materialism had shown that Lenin applied and developed Marxism in Russia and greatly added to its value but did not replace it, so for China, Mao was saying that Marxism should never be studied in isolation from Leninism, nor Leninism in isolation from Marxism. But if any new theories were created anywhere in the course of concrete revolutionary practice, they should be added to the general storehouse of scientific revolutionary theory that originated with Marx.

Ch'en, Mao, and the Sinification of Marxism

We ought at this stage to try to pinpoint the exact relationship between Ch'en's and Mao's thinking in the autumn of 1938, when Mao was proposing the Sinification of Marxism. Ch'en had by this time gained enough of Mao's confidence to be asked to write the main article on party history for the special issue of *Liberation* honoring the seventeenth anniversary of the CCP. Mao's report to the Sixth Plenum was extremely long, and one can fairly assume that he would not have prepared it without some assistance. Furthermore, as an active leader, Mao did not

have the time to draft all his numerous writings personally, and it was the responsibility of his political secretary to assist him in this. Thus it seems quite probable that Ch'en, his political secretary, who was himself a competent theorist, had at least some hand in the writing of the report to the Sixth Plenum.

Beyond this, however, there is a striking similarity, as I have already noted, in one key passage that appears in both Mao's report to the Sixth Plenum and an earlier essay written by Ch'en. And furthermore, Mao's justifications of the need for a Sinification of Marxism bear a strong resemblance to several earlier ideas of Ch'en's. These can be enumerated: (1) Mao's two major demands for the integration of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution and for the Marxist evaluation of China's historical heritage (especially the philosophical heritage "from Confucius to Sun Yat-sen") are identical with the two main tasks Ch'en set for China's Marxist theorists in September 1936, in connection with the New Enlightenment Movement. (2) Mao's altered attitude toward a more sympathetic view of China's historical legacy—an almost complete reversal of his position in 1937—resembles Ch'en's repeated urgings that Marxists should adopt a more constructive attitude toward the positive aspects of Chinese history. (3) The term "Sinification" (which Mao used for the first time in his report to the plenum in October) seems to have originated in Ch'en's essays of May 4 and July 23, 1938, in which he called for the Sinification and localization of all Chinese culture. In other words, Ch'en provided Mao with the slogan and much of the rationale (but not the basic concept, which Mao had formulated independently) for the union of Marxist theory and Chinese practice, and he encouraged Mao's appreciation of the need for the CCP to adopt a more positive attitude toward China's historical legacy. Finally, the basic concept of the Sinification of Marxism is fully consistent with Ch'en's opinions since at least 1936, and after Mao's proposals in 1938 Ch'en was to become a leading exponent of the theory within the party. All this would seem to confirm Ch'en's independent role in the original formulation of the concept itself, and his growing importance as a party theoretician and adviser to Mao.

In calling for the Sinification of Marxism Mao was moving into uncharted theoretical terrain. The omission in the Sixth

Plenum's political resolution of any mention of the need to Sinify Marxism-Leninism suggests that the party felt no surge of enthusiasm to set off in this new direction.²⁹ There were reasons for reluctance. The Sinification of Marxism-Leninism could well deprive it of the prestige and authority associated with its two famous European exponents, and it could also isolate Communists in China from the mainstream of the international Communist movement. Also, the concept could possibly antagonize Stalin and the Comintern, who might see in the Sinification of Marxism the unhealthy influence of Chinese petit bourgeois nationalism in the CCP. A hint of possible inner-party dissension on this issue is provided by an important discrepancy between the official Chinese and English texts of Mao's report "On the New Stage." Both texts warn against the separation of "internationalist content from national forms," but whereas the Chinese version calls upon the party to purge "dogmatism" from its ranks, the English version urges the liquidation of "chauvinism" from the CCP. Thus, Mao's original charge of dogmatism, directed most certainly against the Returned Students, is deftly transformed into an accusation of chauvinism turned against Mao himself.³⁰ Merle Goldman has pointed out that in the spring of 1939 such prominent Communist writers and critics as Hu Feng and Feng Hsüeh-feng openly rejected Mao's proposals for the union of Marxist theory and elements from China's traditional culture. (They had both also previously rejected as bogus the idea that, in literature and art, new Marxist contents could be combined with traditional national forms.)³¹ Mao was to have a difficult time getting the party—particularly the Returned Students and other competent theorists—to accept his proposal for the Sinification of Marxism. His struggle on behalf of his new theory was to become one of the main themes in the Rectification Campaign of 1942–43, and in winning it he was to establish his undisputed position as the leading theorist of the CCP.

In spite of the opposition that his proposal stirred up, the concept of the Sinification of Marxism was to prove immensely valuable to Mao in his efforts to achieve ideological supremacy within the party. His idea of Sinification may have been "complex and ambiguous," but by this very standard it effectively placed Marxism-Leninism in a vacuous limbo divorced from the

absolute authority of either the classic texts or Stalin, the CPSU, and the Comintern, the official living interpreters of the texts. One question in particular remained still to be answered, of course: who would control the actual process by which Marxism-Leninism was to be Sinified, and who would define the correctness or incorrectness of the finished theoretical product? If Marx, Lenin, Stalin, and the Comintern were to be displaced as the ultimate authorities on whether or not the Chinese Communist Party was guided by "correct" Marxist-Leninist theory, who was to take their place? Properly used, Mao's theory of Sinification could help him establish his ideological preeminence in the CCP, and at the same time it could strengthen his ideological position, and that of the party as a whole, in relation to Moscow and the Comintern.

It would be unfair to leave the matter there, however. Certainly the concept of the Sinification of Marxism was in some ways a tool that Mao fully intended to use—and did use—in his rise to power within the CCP; but it was much more than that alone. It represented the first serious attempt by the CCP to deal in a popular way with the problem of introducing a complex foreign ideology to the broad masses of China. The Sinification of Marxism, Mao hoped, would encourage the Chinese people to look sympathetically upon the new doctrine, and, more importantly, to use it as a methodological tool with which to investigate their own history. Marxism would provide the masses with new insights into their own past, and reveal to them a popular Chinese tradition in which the masses, and not the elite, were the central actors. At the same time, the study of Chinese history would suggest ways in which Marxist theory, based largely on the Western tradition and couched in Western terms, could be adapted to and perhaps enriched by the distinctive culture of China. The true test of the correctness of any insights thus gained would of course be revolutionary practice, from which would emerge a body of knowledge and theory that would be characteristically Chinese, but unmistakably scientific. The concept of the Sinification of Marxism neatly summed up this quest for the union of theory and practice in China.

Having proposed the Sinification of Marxism-Leninism, Mao now had the task of exerting his control over both its process and

its finished product. He was not to be alone in this endeavor. On September 30, 1938, just two weeks prior to Mao's call for the Sinification of Marxism at the Sixth Plenum, it was announced in *Liberation* that the New Philosophy Society had been founded in Yen-an. Its declared aim was to discourage the study of "pure theory" (*ch'un li-lun*) and to promote the serious study of concrete theoretical problems in light of China's real needs. Like the rest of the nation, it was stated, philosophers in China should fulfill their responsibilities in the "war of resistance, the reconstruction of the nation, and the development of theory in China."³² Among the leading founders of this new philosophical society were such "proto-Maoist" theorists as Ai Ssu-ch'i, Chou Yang, Chang Ju-hsin, Yang Sung, and, of course, Ch'en Po-ta. The campaign for the Sinification of Marxism-Leninism—and the conscious creation of "Mao Tse-tung's thought"—was about to begin in earnest.

The Emergence of the Prophet, 1939–1940

Ch'en's Efforts to Sinify Marxism

By the autumn of 1938 Mao had emerged as the de facto leader of the CCP. He had overcome the opposition of both Chang Kuo-t'ao and Wang Ming, and had at long last been recognized by Moscow as the top man in the Chinese party. Military leaders like Lin Piao had openly praised Mao's "leadership genius," and even Wang Ming was coming to accept the fact of Mao's preeminence. In a speech in Yen-an on January 15, 1939, Wang referred specifically to Mao as "the leader of the Communist Party of China."¹ Nor was Mao's prestige growing only within the party; following an interview with Mao in the summer of 1938 the American correspondent Haldore Hanson suggested that, next to Stalin, Mao Tse-tung was the "most powerful Marxian thinker and leader in world politics."² Although Mao's credentials as a theorist were as yet by no means universally accepted within the CCP, as Kenneth Shewmaker has suggested, most Western correspondents who visited Yen-an during the war years tended to overestimate Mao's originality and stature as a Marxist theoretician.³

Mao still had many critics among the Returned Students, and among various groups of intellectuals as well. In an article of June 30, 1939, Mao revealed that his two important reports "On Protracted War" and "On the New Stage" had been subjected to "criticism, challenge, and doubt" from various quarters since their publication the previous year.⁴ Some of this criticism undoubtedly came from Wang Ming and his supporters among the Returned Students, some also from men like Hu Feng and Feng Hsüeh-feng in the KMT-controlled areas who were opposed to Mao's ideas on Sinification, national forms, and the like in the

field of theory and culture.⁵ Ch'en Tu-hsiu and his fellow Trotskyists had also been leveling constant criticism at the CCP's war strategy, which was of course Mao's strategy. Ch'en Tu-hsiu was one of many political prisoners who had been released by the KMT under the general amnesty following the united front, and now Ch'en, first in Wuhan and later in Chungking, spent his time writing articles denouncing the CCP's conduct of the revolution in China.⁶

Around this same time—that is, the beginning of 1939—the Nationalists launched their own ideological offensive against the Communists. Although never a popular leader previously, Chiang Kai-shek had gained immense personal prestige after the Japanese invasion in July 1937. In the spring of 1938, notwithstanding his military reversals, Chiang was elected General Director, or Leader, of the KMT. Later that year, the fall of Wuhan marked the end of the Japanese offensive (until it was revived briefly in 1944), and the war in China settled into a long period of stalemate. With both increased authority and opportunity, Chiang turned his attention once again to the problem of dealing with the Communists. At its Fifth Plenum in January 1939, the KMT's Central Executive Committee adopted "Measures for Restricting the Activities of Alien Parties," and followed them up with appropriate steps to ensure enforcement.⁷ It was a shrewd move on Chiang's part to label the CCP an "alien" political party, for this would help to undermine whatever appeal Mao had generated among the public by his recent determination to Sinify Marxism-Leninism and thus make it more acceptable to the average Chinese.

Besides weakening the Communists, Chiang wanted to reinforce his own public image as the nation's true savior. This was not going to be easy, for by early 1939 Japan's seeming invincibility, the Nationalist armies' poor showing in the field, and uncontrolled inflation had produced a feeling of defeatism among the Chinese population. Chiang first tried taking a leaf from his prewar New Life Movement, and launched a rather grandiose "national spiritual mobilization." This was in the spring of 1939. According to Paul Linebarger, who witnessed it firsthand, the campaign lacked a "broadly popular character" and never really got off the ground.⁸ The movement did help to heighten

nationalistic feelings among at least some of the population—and it therefore had some effect on the environment in which the CCP had to formulate its policies. But it was evident that, with or without the Nationalists' encouragement, nationalism was on the ascent in China, and the Communists could not be seen to be lagging behind.

It was in this context that Ch'en Po-ta rose to prominence as one of the CCP's leading proponents of the Sinification of Marxism-Leninism. By the summer of 1938 Ch'en had become a well-known figure in the Maoist camp, owing to his position as theoretician, party historian, and personal adviser to Mao. Then, early in 1939, he was elected to the standing committee of the Presidium of the first elected Council of the Shen-Kan-Ning Border Region.* In addition, he was entering upon one of the most prolific periods in his career as a writer. Mao had just called for the study of Marxism-Leninism in the context of China's own history and had declared that, there being no basic incompatibility between Marxism-Leninism and Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles of the People, all party members should study Sun's principles "from the perspective of Marxism" and strive for their realization in practice.⁹ The task now was to effect a reconciliation between Chinese history and culture, the principles of Sun Yat-sen, and Marxist-Leninist theory. Such a reconciliation was sorely needed, for the CCP under Mao was being attacked from both left and right on the question of ideology. The Trotskyists (and the Returned Students as well) doubted that Mao's theoretical and practical leadership was sufficiently Marxist-Leninist, while the Nationalists alleged that the CCP was in fact an "alien party" and not truly Chinese. Under these conditions, it was incumbent upon Mao and his supporters to demonstrate as forcefully as possible that the CCP under the leadership of Mao was genuinely Marxist-Leninist *and* Chinese.

*Warren Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party*, 4 vols. (Taipei, 1966-71), 3: 581. Kuo's source is *Chieh-fang*, no. 68 (April 4, 1939), a special issue on the first Council of the Shen-Kan-Ning Border Region. The council, which met in Yen-an between January 17 and February 4, 1939, elected Ch'en to its Presidium (ranked twentieth out of twenty-five) and to its standing committee (ranked third out of seven). Presumably, Ch'en's high rank on the Presidium's standing committee reflected his position as a representative of the Maoists, and not his individual standing in the Yen-an hierarchy.

Ch'en Po-ta spearheaded this ideological offensive, beginning early in 1939 with a series of articles designed to place Marxism-Leninism firmly within the context of Chinese history and culture. His ideas and arguments are scattered throughout the numerous articles that appeared in *Liberation* and elsewhere during the next several months, but I shall try to follow his developing line of thought, indicating sources as accurately as possible, without abusing the particular contexts.

At the outset, in his article of January 28, Ch'en locates the beginnings of dialectical materialism in China at the time of the fall of the Shang dynasty. Certain thinkers—for example, the Duke of Chou—began to doubt the constancy of Heaven in ordering human affairs and exhibited a growing confidence in the innate ability of men to look after their own interests. Ch'en concedes that this suspicion of Heaven's "inconstancy" (*wu-ch'ang*) on the part of the early Chou rulers was prompted by their interests in the preservation of the new dynasty, for it undermined the Shang claim to unceasing Heavenly grace and divine protection. Nonetheless, the Chou's doubts represented a distinct advance beyond the "rigid superstition" of the Shang rulers concerning the omnipotence of Heaven. Although the Chou rulers still believed in the "Lord-on-High" (*Shang-ti*) and in the "Mandate of Heaven" (*T'ien-ming*), their newfound suspicion (not disbelief) of Heaven and growing confidence in man represented the "earliest beginnings of the development of materialist and dialectical thought in ancient China."¹⁰ In another article (February 16), on the philosophy of Lao Tzu, Ch'en detects in the sage's thought an "insurmountable contradiction between idealism and materialism, and between dialectics and metaphysics." Still, Lao Tzu did demonstrate that (1) the rulers of any given society do not exist independently of the material universe (that is, they are not divine), and (2) their rule is not permanent, but is in constant flux and subject to decline. Therefore, because Lao Tzu wrote of the earthly nature and the changing fortunes of the ruling classes, his thought exhibits an "initial materialism and a crude dialectics."¹¹

It is Mo Tzu, however, whom Ch'en regards as China's "greatest and most enduring philosopher of ancient times," primarily because he detects in his thought elements of the "materialist

view of history and the theory of the class struggle.”¹² Mo Tzu, for example, was a representative of the lower strata of society in ancient China, and he denounced the oppression of the rich and the powerful and dreamed of a new, more equitable society in the future. Of all the ancient philosophers, it was Mo Tzu who best understood the two major problems in the history of Chinese philosophy, namely, the relationship between “appearance and reality” (*ming-shih wen-t'i*) and the relationship between “knowledge and action” (*chih-hsing wen-t'i*). (In modern philosophical terminology, Ch'en notes, these two problems are referred to as ontology [*pen-t'i-lun*] and cognition [*jen-shih-lun*].) Mo Tzu understood, however imperfectly, that reality exists independently of human cognition, and that practice is the sole criterion for evaluating cognition. Further, he did not view the seeming opposites—knowledge and action—as being disjointed but regarded them as being locked in a single unity. Thus, Ch'en concludes, Mo Tzu grasped the fundamentals of materialism and the unity of opposites, and his thought should be regarded as the “original precursor of modern Chinese dialectical materialism.”¹³

Ch'en is not at all attempting to prove that full-blown dialectical materialism existed in ancient China, or even in traditional China up to the beginning of the twentieth century; his argument is only that certain “elements” of dialectical materialism can be found in China's past. For example, his description of T'an Ssu-t'ung's “crude” materialism and “incomplete” dialectics is rather similar to his estimation of Lao Tzu's “initial” materialism and “crude” dialectics. (Likewise, Ch'en detects in the thought of Sun Yat-sen certain “elements of materialism,” and some “individual, spontaneous elements of dialectics.”)¹⁴ Ch'en does not adequately account for the sluggish development of dialectical materialism in the more than two millennia that separate Lao Tzu and T'an Ssu-t'ung. He suggests only that the necessary social conditions for the effective development of dialectical materialism in China did not exist until the twentieth century. (Wang Yang-ming, for example, was an important dialectical thinker, but his philosophy was severely weakened by his espousal of idealism rather than materialism.)¹⁵ Even so, Ch'en argues, when dialectical materialism in China finally did develop to its present level as “scientific communist ideology,” it was not due only to the impact of the

Russian revolution, which merely “influenced and accelerated” the development of Marxism in China.¹⁶ On the contrary, there were important internal, indigenous elements that provided the complex social environment conducive to the growth of Marxism-Leninism in China:

The emergence of Marxism as a self-conscious current [of thought] and a self-conscious force in China was based on the development of the foundation and strength of the Chinese working class, at a time when the working-class movement was developing from being a class-in-itself to becoming a class-for-itself. Generally speaking, this was after the May Fourth Movement. This was a time when, in accordance with the above [evolution] in the social [i.e. class] base, social consciousness emerged in China, and when the development of China’s cultural traditions was best able to link up with the growth of Marxism. It was thus a time when the foundations existed for the acceptance of Marxism into the modern culture of China. Consequently, the emergence of Marxism in China cannot simply be regarded as [the introduction of] a “foreign import.”*

By demonstrating that elements of dialectical materialism are to be found in China’s traditional philosophy, and that the development of Marxism in modern China is due primarily to internal conditions, Ch’en hoped to refute the arguments of the right. Their allegation that Marxism was totally inapplicable to China because of China’s “special national conditions” was, in Ch’en’s view, quite insupportable. Yet this exposed him to attack from the left, who claimed that—precisely because China did not have any so-called “special national conditions”—Marxism itself could not have any “peculiarity” when applied to China. This argument, Ch’en says, is nothing more than the left’s “empty verbiage,” for to say that Marxism in China should have no special characteristics is simply to render it a “dead, abstract dogma.” It amounts to cutting Marxism in China off from real life instead of basing it on a concrete historical foundation.

Ch’en believes that, to be really effective, Chinese Marxists must be able to grasp five intellectual keys in their own revolu-

*Ch’en Po-ta, *San-min-chu-i kai-lun* (An Outline of the Three People’s Principles), Chungking, 1939, pp. 120-21. Ch’en’s emphasis on internal factors favoring the development of Marxism in China is in sharp contrast to Mao’s emphasis in 1937 on the external origins of dialectical materialism in China. Refer to Mao’s comments cited on p. 49 above.

tionary struggles: (1) the revolutionary theories of the West and the rest of the world; (2) the methods by which the proletariat in the West and Russia has "creatively applied" the theories of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin; (3) the best elements in traditional Chinese culture and thought; (4) the central features of Chinese revolutionary tradition of the past one hundred years; and (5) the revolutionary essence of Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles of the People. By synthesizing these five essential elements and uniting them with the actual practice of the Chinese revolution, Chinese Marxist-Leninists will, Ch'en thinks, be able to "concretize" and thus "Sinify" Marxism-Leninism in China.¹⁷

In including Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles of the People as merely one of the five major ingredients of fully Sinified Marxism, Ch'en anticipated his interpretation of Sun's ideology as a transitional phenomenon. In his book *An Outline of the Three People's Principles*, Ch'en observes that none of the many volumes written on Sun's ideology has treated it on the basis of "scientific principles." This Ch'en proposes to do, arguing that a correct, scientific interpretation of Sun's system of thought is necessary to ensure the "development of the science of revolution in China." Ch'en's main point is that Sun's ideology must be seen in its specific historical context, as something that emerged from China's own history and is today being rapidly transformed by actual revolutionary practice. It is not a permanent and immutable phenomenon, but merely a transitional element in the broad stream of history. According to Ch'en, the three individual principles of Sun Yat-sen were developed from three major strains in traditional Chinese thought. Sun's Principle of Nationalism grew out of the racial thought that was common in China especially at the time of the Mongol and Manchu conquests, that is, the concept of the "defense of China against the barbarians" (*i hsia chih fang*). His Principle of Democracy evolved from certain of the ideas of traditional Chinese philosophers such as Mencius, who believed that "the people are precious and the rulers inconsequential" (*min kui chün ch'ing*). The third principle, he says, the Principle of the People's Livelihood, is based on the traditional Chinese concept of the "great harmony" (*ta t'ung*), especially as it was interpreted by the late Ch'ing reformers K'ang Yu-wei and T'an Ssu-t'ung.¹⁸

Thus Sun's ideology grew directly out of China's history, and the Three Principles of the People represent the "continuation of the best traditional thought of our nation." But, Ch'en is quick to add, Sun's ideas have developed far beyond those of the past. The Three Principles did not and could not have existed in traditional China, because they are "historical products of modern semi-colonial and semi-feudal China, and reflect the national and social contradictions in modern China."¹⁹ Sun's ideas did not emerge spontaneously but were gradually developed in the course of his long years of revolutionary practice. The Principle of Nationalism superseded the simple anti-Manchuism of the past and reached the present stage of anti-imperialism. "Great Han chauvinism" was overcome, and emphasis was now placed on "equality and free union" for ethnic minorities within China. The Principle of Democracy developed from limited suffrage and indirect democracy to universal suffrage and direct democracy. Finally, the Principle of the People's Livelihood was expanded from the original idea of "equalization of landownership" to the new concepts of "land to the tiller" and "labor legislation" to improve the lot of the urban workers. As a result of these changes, Ch'en concludes, the original Three Principles had reached a higher, "revolutionary" stage of evolution, and were thus of increased value to the Chinese people.²⁰

Nor were the Three Principles of the People Sun's—or China's—exclusive creation, for they had evolved from the "unending bloody revolutionary struggles of the modern Chinese people and the revolutionary practice of the radical vanguard of the modern revolution." (Although Ch'en's purpose in writing this book was to emphasize the domestic Chinese sources of both Sun's ideology and Marxism-Leninism, in this reference to the "radical vanguard of the modern revolution" he indirectly acknowledges that Sun's system of thought was also influenced by radical currents of thought in the West, including Russia.) Of course, Ch'en continues, Sun's ideology must progress beyond its origins; being a product of history, it must change with the passage of time. It must evolve along with the "development of the contradictions in our nation and society and the development of revolutionary practice in China." Indeed, he argues, the Three Principles of the People were developing right up to the time of Sun's death

in 1925. Were they not greatly enriched, for example, by the addition of the CCP's "three great policies" (alliance with the Soviet Union, cooperation with the Communists, and assistance to the workers and peasants) in the early 1920's?²¹

In his discussion of Sun Yat-sen's ideology and Marxism-Leninism, Ch'en makes it quite clear that there is a fundamental difference between them. The former is the ideology of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in China, whereas the latter most definitely represents the ideology of the more advanced international proletarian revolution. Nevertheless, at the present time in history the two different systems of thought have much in common, and they can be regarded as "good friends" for some time to come. Yet in the long run the Chinese Communists will never abandon their belief in "scientific communism" (Marxism-Leninism), and they will struggle to the end to establish a true communist society. At the appropriate stage in this revolution the Three Principles of the People will be bypassed by Marxism-Leninism, which even now is assimilating all other revolutionary ideologies, and is in turn being assimilated into the new cultural system evolving in China.

We can now begin to appreciate just how complex a process the Sinification of Marxism was going to be, involving as it does the forging of a new ideological synthesis by the complicated interplay of at least five separate elements: foreign non-Marxist theories, Marxist-Leninist theories and methods, traditional Chinese thought and culture, modern Chinese revolutionary tradition, and the revolutionary essence of Sun Yat-sen's thought. Ch'en does not demonstrate exactly how this new synthesis is to be worked out in detail, but simply repeats his belief that it can be forged only in the furnace of actual revolutionary practice in China. Yet he does not doubt in the least that such a synthesis can be achieved:

Our nation is the oldest and the largest in the history of world civilization, and possesses unlimited intelligence and ability. Regarding the acceptance of various foreign cultures and ideologies in the course of its history, it has always been especially able to embellish and develop them, thus rendering them particular creations [*t'e-ch'an*] of our nation. [To illustrate this,] there is no need to go beyond the introduction of Indian Buddhism into China. The result was an especially colorful [period of] creativity and development, in which Buddhism was made

extremely glorious. . . . This is the most famous [example of this]. We can see that by relying on the intelligence and ability of this great nation of China, we will certainly be able to take Marxism-Leninism, and, on the basis of China's new society, discover its especially glorious colors. [We can thus] lead China forward to a new history of civilization, creating happiness in both our own nation and the entire world.²²

One can question the amount of purely scientific reasoning in this line of argument, and no doubt there were many in the CCP who were not enthusiastic at seeing Buddhism and Marxism-Leninism compared in this way. Yet Ch'en Po-ta was carrying on the great Chinese tradition of syncretism, believing intensely that the sheer power of China's massive cultural heritage would ultimately transform Marxism-Leninism into something both scientific and Chinese. After all, even after Indian Buddhism had been transformed by China's indigenous culture, did it not in the end remain unquestionably Buddhist? The answer to this question—and to the similar question of whether or not Sinified Marxism would really be Marxism at all—is beyond the scope of this study. In any event, Ch'en believed that the fundamental, underlying essences (whether religious or scientific) of both Buddhism and Marxism were fully capable of surviving their cultural transformation, and we shall leave it at that. Apparently many of his comrades in Yen-an agreed, for Ch'en's writings during this period were said to be popular with party cadres both old and young.²³ Indeed, by mid-1939 Ch'en had done perhaps more than any other party theoretician to give substance to Mao's call for the Sinification of Marxism. In the process he had established himself as one of the CCP's leading theoreticians, and the major advocate of the Sinification of Marxism-Leninism within the ranks of the party. During the cadre education movement of 1939-40, for example, an important essay of his ("Certain Clarifications Concerning Marxist Theory") was reprinted in large numbers by the Eighth Route Army and widely distributed for study by officers and men alike.*

**Fei-ch'ing yen-chiu* (Studies in Bandit Affairs/Studies in Chinese Communism), 2, no. 2: 98. By the autumn of 1939, Ch'en was sufficiently well known to be able to sign some "random thoughts" (*sui-kan-lu*) in *Liberation* with just his personal name, Po-ta. See, for example, *Chieh-fang* 85 (September 30, 1939): 17-18.

The Campaign to Study Mao's Writings

I have dealt at length with Ch'en Po-ta's writings on Marxism and Chinese history because they played a major role in establishing the ideological climate that directly preceded the CCP's first important cadre education movement. The Sixth Plenum, responding to Mao's call for a "party-wide competition" in the study of Marxist-Leninist theory as part of a wider educational movement among the cadres, had adopted a specific resolution on the matter. This urged strenuous efforts to "raise the theoretical level of the entire party," particularly as related to the problem of "how to apply in a living way Marxism-Leninism and international experience in China in the course of practical struggles."²⁴ In the last weeks of 1938 the party established a Bureau of Cadre Education, which was to be responsible for carrying out the program in a "planned and organized way." This lasted for exactly one year (May 1939–June 1940), and involved approximately 4,000 cadres and students within a thirty-mile radius of Yen-an. Its main content was the study of Marxism-Leninism in a Chinese context, but this was supplemented by courses in various basic skills essential to effective political and governmental leadership.²⁵

One of the theorists who directed the movement was Lo Mai (Li Wei-han), one of the Returned Students, and in an important speech of June 1, 1939, he declared that the Sixth Plenum had elevated the study of Marxism-Leninism to a "position of primary importance in party building." Lo outlined the program in detail: the cadres were directed to make a "general and systematic study" of Marxism-Leninism, political economy, dialectical and historical materialism, the history of the CPSU, and the program of the Communist International. Chinese history was also to be studied from the standpoint of Marxist methodology, though Lo lamented the lack of a good "comprehensive textbook" on Chinese history and suggested greater research efforts along this line. Regarding the "laws of party building," Lo recommended to the cadres that they read the draft copy of *Communism and the Communist Party*, a text recently approved by the Central Committee. Finally, reminding his audience that Communists were not mere academicians, Lo exhorted them to pay careful attention

to current national and international events. All this study was necessary, Lo concluded, to respond to the call of the Sixth Plenum and to prepare the way for the convocation of the CCP Seventh Congress at an unspecified date in the future.²⁶

Where did Mao Tse-tung's writings fit into this ambitious program of study? Although Ch'en Po-ta and others had quoted Mao on several occasions in their recent writings, nowhere did they hold up Mao as a model to be studied and emulated. Yet Lo Mai, though not recommending the study of Mao's writings as such, did urge his audience to "learn from the spirit of hard study without tiring of the party's important leaders such as Comrade Mao Tse-tung and others."²⁷ Notwithstanding the added "and others," Lo was pretty clearly singling out Mao as the chief model for emulation. It thus appears that a campaign for the emulation of Mao and his writings was being developed side by side with the cadre education movement.

We can, in fact, pinpoint the inauguration of this campaign to a special editorial in the May 1, 1939, edition of *Liberation*. This editorial purports to be a review of the work of the journal since its first issue just over two years previously, but the important point comes after the summary:

There is no doubt that the documents published in this journal by the CCP Central Committee, and the articles likewise published by various responsible comrades in the Central Committee, constitute the soul of all this journal's proposals and opinions. [Those that] may be especially mentioned are "On Protracted War" and "On the New Stage," two works by Comrade Mao Tse-tung that were published successively in this journal. They sum up the experience of the war of resistance, indicate the future [development] of the war of resistance, and are of historic significance.²⁸

Alongside this carefully worded statement, clearly intended to establish Mao's preeminence within the leadership of the CCP, especially in the field of theory, was a large handwritten slogan praising *Liberation* and signed "Wang Ming." In this way Wang Ming—publicly at least—was identifying himself with the ideological supremacy of Mao Tse-tung.²⁹

After this, references in *Liberation* to Mao's writings became more frequent. In an article of May 30, for example, the theoretician Yang Sung quoted Mao on several occasions regarding

various national and international questions.³⁰ In the issue of August 30 the well-known Marxist theorist Ai Ssu-ch'i encouraged his readers to study such "famous works" of the Chinese Communist Party as "On Protracted War," "On the New Stage," and "On Guerrilla Warfare."³¹ On December 30, in the text of a speech given earlier to a local party conference, Kao Kang praised Mao's theories concerning the three stages (defense, stalemate, offense) in the war against Japan, although he bracketed Mao's name with the Central Committee.³²

In the course of the cadre education movement Mao appears to have established effective control over the CCP mass media, which was expanding rapidly at the time. For example, he wrote prefaces or leading articles for the inaugural issues of a host of new journals that the CCP now began to publish, including the *Military and Political Journal of the Eighth Route Army*, *The Communist* (a new theoretical journal), *Chinese Culture*, *The Chinese Worker*, and others.³³ Mao quickly became the most sought after writer in the entire CCP, and he was lionized by the Communist press. Gone were the days when his contributions to the party's leading journals were rejected and scorned (by Ch'en Tu-hsiu in the late 1920's, and by the Returned Students in the early 1930's). He was now hailed as the foremost of the party's theoretical writers as well as its greatest practical leader. By the summer of 1939, though there was as yet no highly developed cult centering on Mao or his thought, clearly one was in the making. Yet there were still indications that Mao's growing preeminence was not wholeheartedly endorsed by all party leaders, including some of those who might be thought of as pro-Maoist, or at least neutral. In an important article of May 30, for example, Ch'en Yün urged party members to study both Marxism-Leninism and Chinese history, but nowhere did he even so much as refer to Mao or his writings.³⁴ Similarly, Chang Wen-t'ien, in two articles in *Liberation* on July 7 summing up the "history of Marxism-Leninism" on the occasion of the CCP's eighteenth anniversary, referred to Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin (and also Sun Yat-sen), but failed to mention Mao and his writings.³⁵

Liu Shao-ch'i—who was ultimately to become one of Mao's staunch supporters—came the closest to stating his misgivings about Mao's power in public. In a lecture given at the Marxist-

Leninist Institute in Yen-an on August 7, 1939, Liu reflected the current line in declaring that the CCP had inherited all the “fine traditions of the many progressive thinkers and prominent men” in China’s long history, but at no point did he refer to the current attempts to Sinify Marxism.³⁶ More surprising was his total avoidance of any mention of Mao or his writings. Yet he referred to a wide range of Chinese traditional thinkers and Soviet theoreticians such as M. Mitin. He urged his audience to become “best pupils of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin,” but avoided listing Mao Tse-tung as someone to be emulated in the same fashion.³⁷ Finally, in what can only be interpreted as a direct reference to the dangers of the increasing veneration of Mao, Liu declared that party members must adopt a proper attitude toward the various good and bad phenomena in the party:

We [must] first of all recognize and distinguish which of the various phenomena, ideologies, diverse opinions, and views in the party are correct . . . and which are incorrect. . . . If both sides of an argument are wrong, a third opinion or viewpoint should be correct. After sober analysis and consideration, [we should] decide on a clear and correct attitude of our own, and take our stand on the correct side. [We should] not follow blindly, nor worship any idols.³⁸

Two points should be made here. First, in suggesting that there might be a third—and better—way in a two-sided quarrel, Liu seems to be pleading for a compromise between the ascendant Maoists and the Returned Students, though everything was pointing in the direction of a complete Maoist victory. Second, in anticipation of this total victory, and apparently in fear of its possible consequences, Liu is explicitly warning people to be wary of “idol worship”—that is, of growing praise of Mao and his writings.* Liu’s revision of the text of this lecture in 1962 shows how far he had come since 1939, and suggests how strongly his original remarks were intended to be taken. In the 1962 revision Liu refers to Mao no less than eight times, and where he had

*Of course, few of the top leaders in the party personally idolized Mao at this time. Po Ku, for example, in an interview with Edgar Snow on October 9, 1939, revealed his dissatisfaction with Mao’s excessively hostile attitude toward Britain and the United States. See Edgar Snow, *Random Notes on Red China, 1936–1945* (Cambridge, Mass., 1957), pp. 24–25. As the cult of Mao developed in the early 1940’s, even people like Po ultimately had no choice but to participate in it.

originally cautioned not to “worship any idols,” he now cautions not to “drift with the tide.”³⁹ In light of Liu’s growing importance in the party from 1939 on, and his remarkable volte-face on the question of Mao’s supremacy in the CCP, we shall have occasion to return to Liu at regular intervals in the years up to 1945. To a certain extent, Liu’s changing attitude toward the growing cult surrounding Mao probably reflects the position of many of the party’s other top leaders as well.

Liu and other critics of Mao in 1939 were not, I should emphasize, totally opposed to Mao’s leadership as such but rather disagreed in principle with, or at least disliked, the trend toward a Maoist cult, in which Mao’s somewhat ordinary theoretical treatises were exalted beyond their real worth. Constant reference was now being made in the party press to the importance of two of Mao’s writings of 1938, “On Protracted War” and “On the New Stage.” These were certainly important contributions to the party’s development, but hardly sufficient in themselves to sustain a claim to theoretical preeminence for their author. No mention was made of any of Mao’s many writings prior to 1938, and his philosophical efforts of 1937 were ignored even by such supporters of Mao as Ch’en Po-ta. Clearly, if the current campaign to study Mao’s writings was going to succeed, it would be very helpful if Mao were to strengthen his own position as a Marxist-Leninist theoretician. Also, as John E. Rue has pointed out, Mao was increasingly desirous of counteracting the influence of Stalin’s new history of the CPSU, which had been published in 1938 and was now required reading in the cadre education movement in Yen-an.⁴⁰ If Mao was to wean the CCP away from overreliance on “foreign models” (however Bolshevik), it would make sense to provide the party with a few basic texts of its own. Likewise, it would be desirable to discredit even further the Returned Student leadership and the policies they had pursued in the past.

Mao tackled the latter problem by turning to the question of party history, a subject that Chang Wen-t’ien had studiously ignored in his two essays on the CCP’s eighteenth anniversary. As Mao noted in his important preface (October 4, 1939) to *The Communist*, the party’s new theoretical journal, it was only by delving into the CCP’s history that the correct means could be found to build up a Bolshevized party. In his review of these

eighteen years, Mao declared that it was only after the Tsunyi conference in January 1935 that the CCP “definitely took the Bolshevik road and laid the foundations for the establishment of the national united front against Japan.”⁴¹ But it had long been the Returned Students’ thesis that it was their own Fourth Plenum in January 1931 that had marked the CCP’s maturation as a truly Bolshevik party (hence another of their inner-party nicknames, the “Twenty-eight Bolsheviks”). They were now being asked by Mao to accept a new interpretation of party history that still accorded the Fourth Plenum a positive role in the party’s development but considerably reduced its overall importance. Even worse, the new interpretation prepared the way for the total discrediting of the Fourth Plenum (and therefore of the Returned Students themselves) in the course of time. Indeed, Mao’s preface to *The Communist* is a landmark in the Maoist reconstruction of party history, and it helped set the tone for Ch’en Po-ta’s later writings on the CCP, which glorified Mao and completely disparaged the Returned Students.

Shortly after this preface appeared, Mao turned to the problem recently raised by Lo Mai, namely, the lack of a comprehensive textbook on Chinese history written from the Marxist standpoint. On December 15, Mao issued a short treatise that met this very need, entitled “The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party.” Official sources have revealed that the text was written jointly by Mao and “several other comrades” in Yen-an. Chapter 1, a survey of Chinese history, was drafted by the “other comrades” but revised by Mao. Chapter 2, on the modern Chinese revolution, was written by Mao alone. Chapter 3, on party building, was for some unexplained reason “left unfinished by the comrades working on it.”⁴² It is in this important text that Mao introduced the term “new democracy,” but since he developed the concept fully in his major essay by that title of January 19, 1940, I shall postpone discussion of it for the time being. But there are two puzzling aspects of the December 15 text that ought to be looked at. First, who were the “other comrades” who wrote the first chapter on Chinese history? And second, why was chapter 3 on party building left unfinished?

In light of his position and previous writings, it seems reasonable to assume that Ch’en Po-ta had some part in drafting chapter 1, probably along with certain other intellectuals in the Maoist

camp. This is further suggested by the rather more positive attitude toward traditional history in the original text of 1939 than in the later revised version published in Mao's *Selected Works* in the 1950's. One particular change may be cited. The original reads: "During the several thousand years of its history, the Chinese nation has given birth to many national heroes and revolutionary leaders and has produced many revolutionary strategists, statesmen, men of letters, and thinkers. Thus, the Chinese nation is one with a glorious revolutionary tradition and an outstanding historical heritage."⁴³ The revised version omits the reference to "many revolutionary strategists, statesmen, men of letters, and thinkers." The deletion would seem to imply that, although Mao let this reference stand in 1939, it was much more a reflection of Ch'en's rather more positive attitude toward traditional history than of Mao's own attitude. Mao in 1939 had somewhat modified his prior views, but by the early 1950's he again had a more skeptical view of the merits of the Chinese tradition, in which only "national heroes and revolutionary leaders" were left to represent the heritage of the past. Ch'en, on the other hand, never ceased to have a profound respect for Chinese history and philosophy. In particular, Ch'en admired the ancient Chou philosophical thinkers, including his personal favorite, Mo Tzu.*

The case of the missing chapter on party building is also an interesting problem, and it, too, probably involves Ch'en. In the original version of the text, Mao concludes chapter 2 with the words: "Below, we shall discuss step by step the question of building up the Chinese Communist Party."⁴⁴ One infers from this that when chapter 2 was printed it was intended that chapter 3 would be included, but that it was withdrawn only at the very last minute. The chapter on party building would seem to have been of sufficient importance to delay publication of the entire text until it was finished. Therefore the publication of chapters 1 and 2 without chapter 3 would appear to indicate a deliberate

**Mao Tse-tung hsüan-chi* (Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung), 4 vols. (Peking, 1967), 2: 586. As Stuart Schram has suggested in a private communication, however, this diminution of the importance of Chinese history may have been inspired more by Soviet pressure than by Mao himself during the general revision of Mao's writings before publication. Perhaps, but for the present the question must remain moot.

omission, for reasons having nothing to do with publishing contingencies.

It is perhaps of some importance that the special party committee responsible for the study and preparation of materials on the history of the CCP was headed by Chang Wen-t'ien, and included Ch'en Po-ta as one of its important members. In spite of his key position on the committee, Chang had dodged the touchy issue of party history in his recent articles on the CCP's eighteenth anniversary. Mao then tackled the question in his preface to *The Communist*, in which he launched a direct attack on the Returned Students' line (heretofore the party's official line) on party history. Since the chapter on party building would have necessitated a review of party history, one can speculate that the committee was unable to agree on the line to take. The chairman of the committee, Chang Wen-t'ien, was certainly well placed to frustrate the Maoist faction, which included Ch'en Po-ta, and he would have been in a position to withhold the controversial chapter altogether from publication.⁴⁵ This would mean that the Maoists gave in on the issue at this time, and acquiesced—though no doubt unwillingly—in the publication of Mao's textbook in its truncated version. Nonetheless, the issue probably aggravated the already bad relations between the two factions, and by late 1939 the struggle for control of the party's history began to emerge as one of the key areas of conflict between the Maoists and those Returned Students still willing to fight.

Mao's Theory of "New Democracy"

In addition to the internal party pressures on Mao to strengthen his position as the CCP's leading theorist, there were urgent external pressures on him to strengthen the position of the party on the national scene. By the end of 1939, the Nationalists had virtually blockaded the Shen-Kan-Ning Border Region, and the imminent possibility of a split in the united front made it necessary that the CCP establish its own distinctive political position. Wang Ching-wei's sensational defection to Japan in December 1939, and the widespread fears that even Chiang Kai-shek might be persuaded to come to terms with the seemingly invincible Japanese, placed the Communists in the position of possibly being

the only anti-Japanese alternative for those Chinese who wished to continue the struggle. A further complication was the announcement in November that the KMT, in response to a resolution of the People's Political Council the previous September, intended to convene a National Constitutional Assembly in November 1940. A KMT-sponsored peace treaty with Japan coupled with a promise of constitutional rule might well prove highly attractive to the war-weary Chinese people, and the CCP would be left out in the cold. Worse, the Communists would probably be faced with a joint Nationalist-Japanese campaign to exterminate them once and for all, for both Chiang Kai-shek and the Japanese looked upon the Communists as being a deadly menace to the fabric of Chinese society. With the elimination of the Communists, the Nationalists would then be in a position to pursue an acceptable settlement with the Japanese in the context of the expanding global conflict.⁴⁶

These ominous developments demanded a positive response from the CCP leadership, in order to demonstrate to the Chinese nation that there was an attractive alternative to compromise with the Japanese. In contrast to the indecisive wavering and internal conflict within the KMT, the Communists were to present themselves as a genuinely national movement capable of leading the Chinese people to victory over the Japanese, and toward a progressive, constitutional government in the future. Mao responded to the challenge by issuing, on January 19, 1940, a lengthy treatise entitled "On New Democracy," in which he attempted his first systematic exposition of the nature of the Chinese revolution. This article was regarded by all sides as a major statement when it was published (in the new CCP journal *Chinese Culture*), and it has remained one of the key texts in Mao's body of writings. Our interest here, however, is limited to Mao's concept of the term "new democracy" and its theoretical implications. Mao also used the term in the party textbook of the previous December, but the concept in the later work, his editors point out, is "considerably developed."⁴⁷ Since, on the other hand, "On New Democracy" was written for the general public and is less direct in its ideas than the party textbook, it will be useful to refer to both works in discussing the ideas behind new democracy.

In the party textbook Mao argues that because of particular national conditions, the bourgeois-democratic revolution that China is going through at the present time is not the old type, but is a "new, special type": "We call this type of revolution a new-democratic revolution . . . an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution of the broad masses of the people under the leadership of the proletariat. That is, it is a revolution [carried out under] a united front of the various revolutionary classes."⁴⁸ This new type of revolution in China will, in turn, produce a new type of society—"no longer democracy in general, but democracy of the Chinese type [*Chung-kuo-shih ti*], a new and special type, namely, new democracy [*hsin min-chu-chu-i*]."⁴⁹

But, one asks, what is it that gives this "Chinese type" of democracy its distinctive character, or, put in a more direct way, what makes "new" democracy different from "old" democracy? The answer to this question has two dimensions, the domestic and the international. In Mao's view, the Russian revolution of 1917 changed the very course of *all* revolutions, for it superseded the traditional bourgeois-democratic revolution and ushered in the era, on a global scale, of the proletarian revolution. In the past, democratic revolutions were under the leadership of the bourgeoisie (and thus of bourgeois ideology); the new-democratic revolution in China is under the guidance of the proletariat (that is, the Communist Party) and its distinctive Marxist-Leninist ideology. This means that the ultimate goal of the Chinese new-democratic revolution is the establishment, not of a conventional bourgeois democracy, but rather of a proletarian, socialist democracy leading to the full realization of communist society in the more distant future.

If this is the universality of the Chinese new-democratic revolution, what is its particularity, or, in other words, what makes it distinctly Chinese? The answer is to be found in Mao's concept of the "united front, an alliance of several revolutionary classes."⁵⁰ Whereas the Bolshevik proletarian revolution accorded revolutionary or quasi-revolutionary status only to the proletariat, the petit bourgeoisie, and the peasants, the Chinese new-democratic revolution will accord quasi-revolutionary status to the so-called national bourgeoisie as well, and will include them in the revolutionary united front. Because tsarist Russia was already well

on the road to capitalist development, and because Russia was not subject to all-out foreign conquest, the bourgeoisie could be made the leading target of the revolution. In China, however, with its "semi-feudal and semi-colonial" status, the bourgeoisie who were not directly in the service of reaction or imperialism could be included in the revolutionary struggle, at least for the time being. The state system that would be established by the united front would be a "republic under the joint dictatorship of several revolutionary classes."⁵¹

In this perspective, the Chinese new-democratic revolution could be seen as having a dual nature. In its minimum program, the revolution would seek a broad united front to overthrow "feudal" landlord elements, bureaucrat-capitalists, and foreign imperialists, and consolidate the new-democratic revolution. In its maximum program, the nonproletarian classes in the united front would gradually be transformed, and the new-democratic revolution would then progress inevitably into its socialist and eventually communist stages. (Mao was vague as to how long this entire process would take, only commenting in passing that the first stage of new democracy would be "relatively lengthy."⁵² The emphasis on the universality of Marxist-Leninist ideology and the particularity of the Chinese united front suggests that the new-democratic revolution is in fact a "Chinese type" of proletarian revolution—that is, it is Marxist in content but Chinese in form. Thus, the theory of the new-democratic revolution is the product of the integration of the "universal truth" of Marxism-Leninism with the "concrete practice" of the Chinese revolution, a fusion that Mao (and Ch'en Po-ta also) had been seeking for many years.

Mao does not say in so many words that he is offering a new theory for the guidance of all revolutionaries, in China and throughout the wider world, but this is the implication of his argument. He makes it clear that his new-democratic revolution is not simply a tactic that can be dispensed with if the proletarian forces become powerful enough to carry out the revolution on their own. On the contrary, he argues, "China must go through this revolution, for only thus can it progressively develop toward the socialist revolution; there is no other way."⁵³ New democracy, then, is to occupy a central place in Mao's (hence the CCP's)

theory of the Chinese revolution, and it is to be the truly distinctive characteristic of the proletarian revolution in China. Although Mao does not use the actual term, it is obvious that his theory of the new-democratic revolution is a direct product of the Sinification of Marxism-Leninism. The new theory is at one and the same time Marxist in content and Chinese in form. This is further suggested by the nature of the distinctive new culture to which the new-democratic revolution will give rise. Mao declares that, in his opinion, new-democratic culture will be "scientific" and "national," or in other words, Marxist and Chinese.⁵⁴

This of course poses the question of whether the new theory—precisely because of its essential Chineseness—is applicable outside China. That is to say, is it a culture-bound theory that is irrelevant to the entire non-Chinese world? Not according to Mao, who suggests in his party text that the new-democratic revolution is already in the course of developing "in all other colonial and semi-colonial countries as well as in China."⁵⁵ Since Mao does not see the new-democratic revolution developing in Europe, North America, and other noncolonial countries, the implication of his line of reasoning is obvious. He is suggesting that the Russian revolution of 1917, hitherto the sole example of an internationally valid Marxist-Leninist revolution, is to be supplemented (not replaced) by a new revolutionary model. That is, the Russian proletarian revolution is to remain the prime example of a Marxist revolution in the noncolonial (developed) world, but a new revolutionary model—China's new-democratic revolution—is henceforth to be regarded as the major example of a Marxist revolution in the colonial and semi-colonial (underdeveloped) world. Mao's new theory was likely to raise a few eyebrows in Moscow, whose ideological authority would be considerably weakened if the CCP's claim were to be sustained. By 1940, however, the Russians were much too preoccupied with the rapidly developing war in Europe to pay much attention for the time being to what the CCP was saying, as opposed to what it was doing. As long as the Chinese party was supporting the united front against Japan, its precise ideological status could be put aside for closer consideration at a later time.

Mao's concept of the new-democratic revolution provided the cornerstone to the CCP claim that Mao Tse-tung was a creative

theorist in his own right and not merely a simple imitator of Marxism-Leninism. In fact, neither the term "new democracy" nor the general ideas behind it were original with Mao but had been common coinage for some time. As Lloyd Eastman has suggested, democracy was very much a vogue idea among KMT and non-party intellectuals during the 1930's. There was a considerable degree of disillusionment with the concept, however, because of China's unhappy experience with the so-called "democratic" institutions of the 1912 republic, and attention had turned more to the question of how the "old style" democracy imported from the West might be adapted to China's particular situation. Some current ideas were that democracy in a Chinese context would be based on some degree of economic equality, would be of the whole people rather than just of a class or party, and would be run by men of ability who had been screened by examination. If such (or similar) reforms were introduced, it was argued, China's future democracy would be a "real," or "improved," or "new style" democracy.⁵⁶ These ideas were current also within the Communist movement, although they were of course colored by Marxist-Leninist ideology. The "men of ability" of the KMT and non-party theoreticians, for example, were presented as party cadres in the CCP interpretation. This notwithstanding, new democracy was a concept common to all political camps in the 1930's. In late 1937, for instance, Wang Ming referred to China's future as a "new style democratic republic," and in 1938 Po Ku predicted that China would surely become a "new, democratic state . . . the Republic of China of the Three People's Principles."⁵⁷ Nonetheless, within the Communist camp it was Mao who took this previously ill-defined concept and revived it as a comprehensive, systematic theory of the Chinese revolution and its international significance.

Even so, Mao was not alone in this endeavor. It appears that Ch'en Po-ta exerted a significant degree of influence on the formulation of the philosophical and cultural aspects of new democracy. According to O. Brière, a Jesuit priest then living in China and paying careful attention to the philosophical aspects of the Chinese Communist movement, it was Ch'en Po-ta who "developed the philosophical aspect" of Mao's concept of new democracy. D. W. Y. Kwok also states that Ch'en "is reputed to

have provided a good part of the philosophy" of new democracy, and a Japanese source claims that Ch'en took an active part in the "new-democratic culture movement" in 1940.⁵⁸

From the philosophical, or ideological, point of view, the major distinguishing feature of the new-democratic revolution is that it is a "democratic" revolution under the leadership of the ideology of the proletariat—in other words, Marxism-Leninism. This sharply distinguishes it from the "old" type of democratic revolution, which was guided by the ideology of the bourgeoisie. In 1936-37 Ch'en Po-ta claimed that the New Enlightenment Movement was "new" precisely because it was guided by dialectical materialism, the "new philosophy" of the Chinese proletariat. The general philosophical-ideological rationale behind Mao's new democracy thus is very similar to that of Ch'en's earlier movement. "New democracy" and "new enlightenment" are both "new"—hence different from and superior to "old" democracy and "old" enlightenment—because they are social movements under the leadership of the "new philosophy" of the proletariat, Marxism-Leninism. Mao paid close attention to the Marxist philosophical debates in Shanghai and Peking in the late 1930's, and there can be little doubt that he was influenced by them. This was even more true after 1937, when many of the leading participants of these debates (including Ch'en Po-ta) came to play important roles in shaping the CCP's ideology in Yen-an.

The exact ideological parallelism behind Ch'en's "new enlightenment" and Mao's "new democracy" does not in itself, of course, prove that the one influenced the other, but it can hardly be ignored. Ch'en's probable influence on Mao is further suggested in the cultural sphere, especially regarding Ch'en's earlier proposal of 1938 for the Sinification of Chinese culture, broadly defined. In the process of modernization, Ch'en argued, China's culture was in danger of losing its distinctive Chinese character. The task, then, was to establish the proper balance between the requirements of modernization (which carried the risk of Westernization) and the need to preserve a genuine Chinese character (which could encourage narrow nationalism) in China's new cultural forms. The concept of Sinification outlined by Ch'en referred to the process by which this balance could be found, the result being the gradual emergence of a new Chinese culture that

was both modern and Chinese. Mao had later applied Ch'en's concept of Sinification to the narrower field of ideology, but he had avoided any extended comments on the cultural sphere in general. By 1940, however, Mao was clearly more confident in cultural matters, and he dealt with them at length. In calling for a "new-democratic culture" that was equally a "national, scientific, and mass culture," Mao was actually repeating Ch'en's proposals for the Sinification of China's culture. The essential logic behind Ch'en's proposal, as Mao's new slogan takes into full account, was that it was only a truly Sinified culture (both modern and Chinese) that stood any chance of appealing to and meeting the needs of the broad masses of the Chinese people in the twentieth century.

Finally, we know that Ch'en played an active role in propagating and applying the idea of new democracy throughout China. In February, for example, he was elected to the Executive Committee of the newly established Yen-an Association for the Promotion of Constitutional Government. On March 8 he published an essay in which he applied the concept of new democracy to the problem of constitutional government, which was at that time under discussion by the KMT and non-party political circles in Chungking. Not surprisingly, he came to the conclusion that the movement for constitutional government would prove fruitless unless it were agreed to establish a "democratic constitution of the dictatorship of the various revolutionary classes."⁵⁹ Ch'en's proposal was clearly an attempt to apply Marxist theory as "developed" by Mao to the concrete political situation in China. In China's unique historical context, a "democratic constitution" would legitimize a "dictatorship of several revolutionary classes" rather than a dictatorship of either the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. To this extent, then, the revolutionary process in China would be quite different from the course of the traditional bourgeois revolution in the West or the classical proletarian revolution in Russia. Though within the Marxist-Leninist tradition, China's revolutionary path would be unique.

By early 1940 Mao's standing within the Chinese Communist Party was clearly at a new height. This was due to the gradual campaign to glorify him—and the burst of new theoretical efforts on Mao's part accompanying it—which developed in the course

of the cadre education movement. The editors of *Liberation* duly took note of Mao's growing stature in their review of the journal's success and failures on the occasion of its one hundredth issue, February 29, 1940. Since *Liberation* was the official journal of the CCP Central Committee, the editors said, many "leading comrades" in the party had already participated in its work. For example, over the years the journal had published "many great works" of Comrade Mao Tse-tung, including "On Protracted War" and "On the New Stage," and now, most recently, "On New Democracy." The editorial was in fact one more step in the elevation of Mao's personal prestige, for it described him as being no less than the "leader of the people who is esteemed by the masses both at home and abroad."⁶⁰

The editorial thus went much further than the anniversary editorial of May 1, 1939, in elevating Mao personally head and shoulders above all the other top leaders in the party. In deference to these leaders, however, the editors took pains to refer collectively to the "valuable writings" of eight party leaders of the first importance (Chu Te, Wang Ming, Lo Fu, Chou En-lai, K'ang Sheng, Ch'en Yün, Wang Chia-hsiang, and Liu Shao-ch'i, in that order), and to eighteen additional party and/or army leaders who were presumably of lesser importance than the first eight named. This careful listing of these twenty-six top party and army leaders was clearly meant to satisfy both the real (e.g. Chu Te) and the symbolic (e.g. Wang Ming) leading personalities in the CCP. They may well have supported (or at least accepted) the new campaign to elevate Mao above themselves, but they were obviously determined not to let their own achievements pass unnoticed in the process.*

Mao's prestige was growing outside the confines of the CCP as well. Paul Linebarger, an American scholar who was in China at

*The title of this editorial ("Standing in the Advanced Position in the Cause of China's National Liberation") is strikingly similar to the title of the first of Lo Fu's articles on the eighteenth anniversary of the CCP ("In the Most Advanced Position in the National War of Self-Defense"), which appeared in *Liberation* on July 7, 1939. Was Lo finally persuaded to praise Mao openly in this special editorial, or was it written by someone else in response to Lo's neglect of Mao in his earlier article? Perhaps there was a compromise, and Lo agreed to praise Mao provided the other important party and army leaders were given due regard at the same time.

the time, and who was by no means sympathetic to the Communists, wrote that Mao Tse-tung was an "expert dialectician, skilled in rationalizing the policies of the Communist International, and keenly critical within the limits of his Marxian orthodoxy."⁶¹ This description of Mao is very interesting, for it accurately reflects the exact image that Mao was trying to promote of himself. That is, even so critical an observer as Linebarger concluded that Mao was a competent Marxist-Leninist theorist who maintained a firm spirit of independence from Moscow. Mao could not have described himself better, and Linebarger's comments reflect the remarkable degree of success enjoyed by the effective propaganda machine that the ascendant Maoists had built up in Yen-an.

Even the Nationalists, who had no love for Communists of any hue, were increasingly forced to acknowledge that Mao Tse-tung stood apart from the normal run of CCP leaders. In late 1939, for example, the KMT theorist Yeh Ch'ing scathingly reviewed Mao's recent comments on the outbreak of World War II in Europe. No wonder Mao had a wrong view of the situation, he remarked sarcastically: "Mr. Mao has not yet thoroughly imbibed the idea of 'Sinifying' things. I express my sympathy for him in his policy of 'Sinification.' . . . What I mean by sympathy is that I like the way he appreciates the Chinese national culture, and wants to be a one hundred percent Chinese. In this respect he is more worthy of Ch'en Shao-yü, and hence deserving of greater achievement."⁶²

Although Ch'en's article is filled with venom from beginning to end, he is clearly, one notes, distinguishing between Mao and Wang Ming on the basis of their attitude toward Sinification. Wang had long been intimately associated with Moscow and the Comintern, and regarded himself as the leading spokesman of the true Bolsheviks in the Chinese Communist movement. This may have gone down well in the CCP (prior to Mao's ascendancy), but it was scarcely calculated to impress the Nationalists or other non-communist groups in China. Mao's connections with Moscow were never so close, and his posture of independence from the Comintern was a good deal enhanced by his recent policy of the Sinification of Marxism-Leninism. Apparently, if Yeh's views are representative of the Nationalists, Mao was more

acceptable as a leader of the CCP than was Wang Ming or any of his Returned Student followers. Even if Mao's policy of Sinification did not actually appeal to people like Yeh, it did provide them with another opportunity to drive a wedge between the two major factions of the CCP. Without in any way discounting this possibility, there is little doubt that Mao's growing appreciativeness of Chinese history and traditional culture struck a responsive chord even among those Chinese who had little love for the Communists. If nothing else, Mao's new policy of Sinification represented a step in the right direction; today Marxism might merely be Sinified, but tomorrow it could be completely assimilated in the traditional Chinese fashion, and thereby deprived of its Western, revolutionary pretensions.

Apparently, there was considerable concern within the CCP that the Sinification of Marxism would indeed destroy its revolutionary essence. One of the puzzles of the Yen-an period is why the new journal *Chinese Culture* (Chung-kuo wen-hua), which was launched in January 1940 with Mao's essay "On New Democracy" as its centerpiece, is rarely mentioned thereafter. One would have thought that the publicity surrounding Mao's campaign for new democracy would have given the journal an excellent start. The answer to this puzzle is perhaps to be found in the lead editorial that introduced the journal to the public.* Whereas Mao argued that the theory of new democracy was unique to China, and was based on the particular circumstances of Chinese society, the editorial took a sharply conflicting stance. There was no direct criticism of either Mao or "new democracy," but a reference instead to the "people's democratic revolution" seemed to suggest a lack of enthusiasm for Mao's new concept. However, the article did mount a frontal assault on the concept

*I insert a qualifying note here. *Chinese Culture* appears to have vanished from the scene during the Rectification Movement, and I have not been able to locate a copy of the original issue. The following analysis and quotations are based on the account given in a monograph prepared by the Institute of Philosophy and the Institute of the Far East of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences. The Soviet scholars apparently had access to the inaugural issue of *Chinese Culture*, and one can only assume that its contents have been fairly represented. (As no author is cited, I take it that the article in question is an editorial.) See V. A. Krivtsov and V. Y. Sidikhmenov, eds., *A Critique of Mao Tse-tung's Theoretical Conceptions* (Moscow, 1972), pp. 69-70.

of Sinification. It argued forthrightly that those (like Yeh Ch'ing, for example) who insisted on the need to Sinify Marxism-Leninism "implied Sinification to mean a change of its form and by a change of its form a total rejection of original Marxism."⁶³ This was of course an indirect attack on the views of Mao, Ch'en, and other Sinificationists within the CCP. It was also a gross distortion of their views, for they had always claimed that a change in the form of Marxism would be compatible with the retention of its revolutionary content. Although we do not know who wrote this editorial, its concern with form and its belief that form determines content are reminiscent of the views of Hu Feng and Feng Hsüeh-feng. In all likelihood, it was written by someone who was sympathetic with the ideas of Hu and Feng but was closer to the party machine than were these two outspoken critics of Mao's cultural policies.*

To attack the concept of Sinification was, of course, to undermine the theoretical structure of new democracy, which was based on the peculiarity of the Chinese revolution. This raises the question whether or not China's historical development sets it apart from other cultures, and to some degree places it outside the "general laws of human history." Because Marxism-Leninism was regarded within the CCP as a scientific statement of these so-called "laws of history," one must ask if the theory of China's peculiarity represented a rejection of Marxism-Leninism itself. For the writer of the editorial in *Chinese Culture*, the answer to this critical question was only too apparent:

All the reactionary views in modern China have one special tradition, and to give it its name one could perhaps say that it is ideological seclusion. . . . Regardless of the numerous transformations these reactionary views have undergone, their main content invariably consists in stressing the "national features" and "specifics of China," a denial of the general laws of human history, an assertion that the development of Chinese society can proceed only on the basis of specific Chinese regularities, that China can advance only along her own way, which runs outside the general laws governing the development of human history.

*In view of his later conflict with the Maoists in the field of theory and culture, Wang Shih-wei comes to mind as a possible author. As I shall discuss in the next chapter, *Chinese Culture* published a controversial essay on national forms by Wang which brought him into sharp conflict with Ch'en Po-ta just as the Rectification Movement was taking shape.

In China, this ideological tradition of seclusion . . . is a specific feature of reactionary views.⁶⁴

Although Mao is not mentioned here, it was well known that he had ardently espoused the very ideas the editorial singled out for attack. *Chinese Culture* had thus rebuked Mao as a Marxist theorist in its inaugural issue, and had in consequence raised the question of his competence to be the leader of the CCP. This was a challenge Mao could not afford to ignore, and there is little wonder that the new journal seems not to have survived the Rectification Movement.

Despite this incident, 1939 was an important year in Mao's gradual rise as the top leader, and the leading theoretician, in the Chinese Communist Party. Thus Stuart Schram is essentially correct in concluding that by the winter of 1939–40, "Mao was at last in complete control of the policy and ideology of the Chinese Communist Party. . . . Wang Ming was relegated to subordinate functions and ceased to play any real role by the end of 1939."⁶⁵ Yet this statement has to be qualified, for, as in the case of *Chinese Culture*, Mao was to encounter a series of challenges to his authority during much of 1940 and part of 1941. It was in the summer of 1940, for example, that Wang Ming and his supporters organized their last clear act of defiance of the Maoists, before completely losing their influence in the party. These challenges to Mao's ascendancy were by no means of the same magnitude as those of Chang Kuo-t'ao, or Wang Ming in his prime, but they were apparently serious enough to convince Mao that greater efforts were required to place the party squarely under his leadership, and to root out once and for all the remaining pockets of opposition that still remained in the party organization. This determination led to his call for a "rectification movement" that was to dominate the life of the party during most of 1942 and in the end establish Mao Tse-tung as the undisputed leader of both the theory and the practice of the CCP.

Challenge and Response, 1940-1941

The Challenge to Mao's Authority

After the fall of Wuhan in October 1938, the Japanese did not undertake any further major offensives in China, and a period of relative stalemate set in. This gave the Nationalists an opportunity to turn their attention to the Communists, and during 1939 severe strains began to appear in the united front; by September 1939 the KMT had launched what the Communists have referred to as the "first anti-Communist onslaught." Coincidentally, the Soviet Union was at this time repairing its relationships with both Germany and Japan; the Soviet-German nonaggression pact was signed in August 1939, and in September an armistice was worked out between the Soviets and the Japanese to end the clashes on the Sino-Mongolian border.

With the Soviet Union apparently on favorable terms with both Germany and Japan, and with the Germans scoring amazing successes in Europe, a mood of pessimism set in throughout China. This pessimism was heightened by Wang Ching-wei's defection to the Japanese in December 1939, and his establishment, in March 1940, of a puppet Chinese government in Nanking. Wang's defection shocked people both at home and abroad, but it reflected the sentiments of pro-Japanese elements in the Nationalist administration and in the country at large.¹ The possibility was always there that even Chiang Kai-shek might come to terms with the Japanese (as the government of Thailand was to do in 1942), thus giving the KMT the option of a joint Nationalist-Japanese campaign against the CCP. Once the Communists were disposed of, the war against the Japanese could then be renewed with perhaps better chances of success.

The CCP, of course, had every reason to keep the Nationalists fully engaged in the war—not only to wear down the enemy

troops but also to keep the Nationalists so occupied that they would have little time for pressure on the Communists. At the very least, keeping the KMT busy against the Japanese would encourage the preservation and perhaps even the strengthening of the united front, which was a key plank in the Maoist strategy. As Chalmers Johnson has aptly put it, "One way to keep Chungking in the war was to keep the war alive, and the Hundred Regiments accomplished just that."² This is a reference to the remarkable military offensive that the Communists launched on August 20, 1940, when the Eighth Route Army simultaneously attacked Japanese troops in five provinces in north China. Although the offensive had certain side effects that were later to prove detrimental to the Communists, it inflicted heavy damage to Japan's major lines of communication in north China. In his analysis of the offensive, Johnson concludes that the deteriorating international situation—and the wave of pessimism to which it gave rise in China—was "probably the most important consideration" in the CCP's decision to strike against the Japanese in such a bold fashion at this particular time.³ The Communists demonstrated not only that the war was very much alive, but also that the Japanese could be severely hurt into the bargain. The message to Chungking was abundantly clear: doubts and hesitations on the part of the Nationalists should give way to bold military offensives, if the war was to be won.

Yet the Hundred Regiments Offensive was probably also inspired by an internal conflict that had broken out within the CCP in the spring of 1940. According to one official account, the KMT's increasing harassment of Communist forces between September 1939 and March 1940 had generated a good deal of antagonism within the CCP, causing certain groups within the party to call for a tougher line against the Nationalists. "Such an extreme leftist tendency," runs the account, "emerged as the principal danger within the Party, which hindered the Party in its effort to further enlarge and consolidate the united front against Japan."⁴ The argument of the "leftists" was apparently based on three major propositions: (1) the Sino-Japanese *national* contradiction had declined to secondary importance (presumably because of Russia's improved relations with Japan and the stalemate in the war in China); (2) the recent anti-Communist activities of

the KMT had elevated the Nationalist-Communist *class* contradiction to primary importance; hence (3), the CCP was to abandon its united front policy and readopt the more militant policy of the agrarian revolution.⁵ This leftism was contrary to the party's united front policy, and Mao had to take steps to nip the "tendency" in the bud before it became too powerful. In light of this, the Hundred Regiments Offensive in the autumn of 1940 was launched as much to convince certain groups in the Communist camp as to convince others on the Nationalist side that the war of attrition against Japan was still the number one priority for all concerned.

Although the CCP leadership presumably agreed that some bold action would have to be taken on the military front, there were serious disagreements over the actual conduct of the offensive. According to one source (1968), Chu Te and P'eng Te-huai initiated the campaign on their own authority, without seeking Mao's approval, or, indeed, even informing him. This could well be the case, for, although Mao was chairman of the party's Military Affairs Committee, Chu and P'eng had operational control of the army. The same source also says that the actual offensive violated Mao's basic military principles, and this rings true in that the wide dispersal of large numbers of troops during the Hundred Regiments Offensive was the sort of tactic that Mao had always disliked. This alleged dispute between Mao and his top military commanders remains obscure, but it does seem in keeping with the general loosening of discipline in both the party and the army occasioned by the leftist currents that emerged in the spring of 1940.⁶

Yet one man's difficulty is often another's opportunity. In July 1940, when Mao was facing the leftist upsurge, Wang Ming reissued (under a new title) the study of party history he had originally published in 1931, *The Two Lines*.⁷ Mao, in his preface to *The Communist* (October 4, 1939), had attempted to rewrite party history in his favor, and had called for a complete review of the CCP's "eighteen years of experience."⁸ Until then, Wang's 1931 pamphlet had been the standard account of CCP history. Wang could not have had much hope in 1940 of regaining his former powerful role in the party, but that did not mean that he also had to give up all hope of preventing the former

general line of the Returned Students—which the Maoists were now calling “left opportunist”—from being completely repudiated in the party history.

Wang evidently saw nothing inconsistent in viewing the Returned Students’ line as correct for its times and at the same time accepting Mao’s present line as correct in light of the changing circumstances between the early 1930’s and early 1940’s. In the new preface (March 1940) to the third edition of his party history he argues the point sensibly:

No true dialectical and historical materialist can deal with a problem apart from the conditions of a certain time and place. He cannot regard what was correct yesterday as entirely wrong today, nor decide that what is incorrect today could not have been right yesterday. Likewise, he cannot regard what was right there as entirely incorrect here, nor decide that what is incorrect here could not have been right there. Everything is decided by time and place, by the various concrete conditions and circumstances of a given time and place.⁹

Wang’s ultimate intention may have been only to seek a *modus vivendi* that would allow the Returned Students a face saving, but he did not help his position by retitling his pamphlet *Struggle for the Further Bolshevization of the Chinese Communist Party*. This seems an obvious rejoinder to Mao’s recent claim that the CCP had “definitely taken the Bolshevik road” only after his rise to power at the Tsunyi conference, and that in subsequent years it had achieved a true “Bolshevik unity” under his correct leadership. If Mao and his supporters needed any further proof that Wang and his faction were not to be trusted, Wang’s action, coming at a time when Mao was in difficulties, should have been convincing.¹⁰

Wang’s pamphlet was published in July 1940. On May 3, some two months or so before that, and probably in anticipation of an adverse reaction from the Maoists, Wang gave a brief but highly laudatory speech about Mao at the opening ceremonies of the Tse-tung School for Young Cadres, which had recently been established in Yen-an. The name of the school was in itself a good indication of Mao’s rapidly growing prestige within the CCP, and Wang’s speech formally acknowledged his acceptance of this situation. Following a report by Feng Wen-pin, Wang summed up his remarks in a single slogan: “Learn from Mao Tse-tung!”

Wang's speech was carefully organized to make certain specific points. The central task for the students, Wang said, was to bring the reality of their new school into accord with its "glorious name" by "studying the lifelong cause and the theories [*li-lun*] of Comrade Mao Tse-tung." They should take Mao Tse-tung as a model for their own lives, follow Mao's leadership, and struggle for the great cause that he represented.¹¹

How, Wang asked, was one to study Mao Tse-tung? He suggested five major areas of focus: Mao's "revolutionary spirit," his "diligent spirit in study," his "bold spirit of creativity in theory and practice," his "spirit of being adept at work," and his "spirit of being good at [fostering] unity." Wang's explanation of these five topics is detailed and in all senses laudatory of Mao. Mao's "revolutionary spirit," Wang says, guaranteed his loyalty to the revolution even at an early age, with the result that he has now become a "major leader" in the party and an "outstanding leader" of the revolution. Because he plunged into revolutionary work at an early age, Mao was not able to attend a "school which specialized in the study of revolutionary theory" (such as Wang had in Shanghai and Moscow), but his diligent attitude toward study enabled him to overcome this deficiency. He has since mastered Marxism-Leninism, is adept at applying it in a "living way," and is able to unite theory and practice in the course of practical revolutionary work. Consequently, he has become "not merely a great statesman and strategist of the Chinese revolution, but a great theoretician [*wei-ta ti li-lun-chia*] as well."¹²

This brings Wang to his more detailed discussion of Mao's "bold spirit of creativity in theory and practice," which he analyzes in terms of five "new creations": (1) Mao's development of the Marxist-Leninist concept of the soviet to include a special form representing a "worker-peasant democratic dictatorship" as opposed to its traditional designation as a "proletarian dictatorship"; (2) the transformation of China's military traditions by the creation, based on the experience of the Soviet Union, of a "new Chinese worker and peasant Red Army"; (3) the elevation of guerrilla warfare from the status of a "supplementary tactic" to the "level of strategy" in both theory and practice, as represented in Mao's military writings, which are "new developments of Marxism-Leninism on military problems"; (4) the creation of a new

“anti-Japanese national united front” based on Marxism-Leninism and Mao’s “dialectical grasp and application of the principles of unity and struggle” within the broad national movement; and (5) the creation of the concept of “new democracy,” as represented in Mao’s essay of that title, which is a “new contribution to Marxism-Leninism on the question of the state.” In these five separate areas, Wang concludes, Mao Tse-tung has established himself as a creative theorist who has adapted to new situations and challenges in the Chinese revolution without departing from the general theoretical framework of Marxism-Leninism as developed by Stalin.¹³

Continuing with his inventory of Mao’s qualities that should be emulated by the students, Wang lauds his “spirit of being adept at work.” No matter what the assignment, Wang says, Mao has always done well—in student work, united front activities, propaganda, organizational work, lower level mass work, and higher level leadership. In particular, Mao is a “celebrated giant [*yu-ming ti ta-wang*] in peasant work, a great strategist in military work, a statesman of genius in political work, and in party work he is the acknowledged leader [*kung-jen ti ling-hsiu*].” Above all, Wang emphasizes, one should study Mao’s “spirit of being good at fostering unity” if one wishes to be successful in revolutionary work. Because he is able to foster unity with people in both his attitude and his working style, Mao is “not only the unifying core [*ho-hsin*] of the Communist Party Center and the whole Communist Party, and not only the unifying pillar of the Eighth Route Army and the New Fourth Army, he is also the unifying center desired by the entire Chinese proletariat and the popular masses.”¹⁴

This remarkable speech by Wang Ming can be taken as his final surrender to Mao, the subsequent reissue of his pamphlet on party history notwithstanding. It is true that Wang’s praise of Mao as a theorist concentrated on practical issues in the political and military spheres and omitted any reference to philosophy, economics, or culture. But Mao’s philosophical essays of 1937 were not highly regarded even by his supporters, and economics and culture were subjects he had seldom dealt with. One could also interpret Wang’s emphasis on Mao’s dependence on the theoretical framework of Marxism-Leninism, including Stalin’s alter-

ations, as a belittling of Mao's own ability as a theorist. It is more likely, however, that the emphasis was carefully planned to establish Mao firmly within the Marxist-Leninist framework and to put an end to the lingering controversy over Mao's alleged theoretical heterodoxy resulting from his so-called "peasant mentality" and lack of grasp of the essentials of Marxist-Leninist thought. The fact remains that Wang had gone a considerable way in accepting Mao's claim to supremacy in the party as both a theorist and a leader, and the speech certainly must have removed him from the list of serious challengers to Mao's supremacy.

But if Wang had counted on defusing Maoist hostility to the reissue of his party history by this unusual praise, he was quite mistaken. As late as February 20, 1940, Wang appears to have maintained at least a nominal position in the party's top echelons. In the communique issued on that day at the inaugural meeting of the Yen-an Association for the Promotion of Constitutional Government, Wu Yü-chang was listed as the director of the Executive Committee. This 45-man elected body included Mao (ranked first), Wang (ranked second), and Chang Wen-t'ien (ranked third), and the actual communique was apparently drafted by Mao himself.¹⁵ Still, articles by Wang, once a frequent contributor to the party press, appeared less and less often, and an essay on "Comrade Mao Tse-tung's" united front tactics in the November 20, 1940, issue of *The Communist* has been characterized by one author as a "self-criticism."¹⁶ The republication of Wang's controversial treatise on party history was his last clear act of defiance of the ascendant Maoists before he was to suffer the humiliation of the Rectification Movement. By 1942, when that campaign reached its peak, Wang was apparently serving as the principal of the Yen-an Girls' School.¹⁷

But even though Wang was practically out of the way, Mao was still facing other pockets of dissidence in the party. In a directive of December 25, 1940, for example, he complained that the "ultra-left viewpoint is creating trouble, and is still the main danger in the party."¹⁸ Undoubtedly, this leftist tendency had been strengthened by the outcome of the Communists' Hundred Regiments Offensive in the autumn of 1940. Greatly perturbed by this dramatic display of Communist power, the Nationalists decided that the time had come for greater efforts to contain their

united front allies. The existing blockade of the Shen-Kan-Ning Border Region was intensified, and in January 1941 Nationalist armies attacked the CCP's New Fourth Army in southern Anhwei province. The New Fourth Army was routed; its leading officers were captured or killed, and the dead and wounded in the ranks ran into the thousands. In spite of these severe losses, however, the "Southern Anhwei incident" proved in the long run to be enormously valuable to the CCP, for in the eyes of the nation it had made the Communists "martyrs to the cause of Chinese nationalism," with consequent enhanced prestige as compared with the Nationalists.¹⁹ At the same time, the incident strengthened the position of the leftists within the CCP, for it seemed to confirm their theory that the class contradiction between the KMT and the CCP had come to overshadow the national contradiction between China and Japan.

The CCP managed to weather the Nationalists' "second anti-Communist onslaught" between October 1940 and March 1941, but not without some disarray in its ranks. In a directive of May 8, 1941, for example, Mao noted that "some comrades" believed that the Southern Anhwei incident had invalidated the united front, that the CCP should adopt a policy of "agrarian revolution," that more emphasis should be placed on purely "class education," and so on. Particularly noteworthy was Mao's admission that these same comrades felt that under the new circumstances "we no longer need the kind of state power that includes all those who stand for resistance and democracy, but need a so-called state power of the workers, peasants, and urban petit bourgeoisie."²⁰ This amounted to a total rejection of Mao's recently formulated concept of the new-democratic revolution. The leftists were treating his new *theory* of the Chinese revolution as a mere *tactic*, something that could be dispensed with according to changes in the practical situation. This, of course, was unacceptable to Mao, and it is not surprising that he complained that the "party's correct policy has become blurred in the minds of these comrades, at least for the time being." By the early spring of 1941, however, Mao was no longer prepared to tolerate the ideological and organizational dissension that had wracked the CCP since early 1940. The party was facing a crisis, and it seemed to him that only decisive action would save it from disaster.

In retrospect, it might seem that Mao was overestimating the seriousness of the leftist tendency at this time. After all, he had made great gains at the Sixth Plenum in 1938, and there appeared to be no single leader (Wang Ming included) strong enough to challenge him with any great hope of success. On the other hand, when one looks at the conflicts within the party in the context of the difficult problems the party was facing in other areas, one can appreciate just how explosive the situation really was.

Rapid expansion had placed fresh strains on the party's organization, and the premature termination of the cadre education movement in mid-1940 had hampered the indoctrination of the flood of new members. In the military sector, the attack on the New Fourth Army had robbed the united front of all its strength, so that the Communists were obliged to give greater attention to the state of their military organization. The need for such vigilance was made all the more apparent by growing Japanese harassment of the Communist forces. The CCP's Hundred Regiments Offensive had convinced the Japanese that the Communists would have to be dealt with more vigorously. By July 1941 the Japanese had appointed a new commander in north China (General Okamura), and had initiated a new and ruthless scorched-earth or "three-all" ("kill all, burn all, destroy all") policy in an attempt to isolate and wipe out the Communist guerrilla forces. This policy was ultimately to prove counterproductive because it drove otherwise passive peasants into the ranks of the Communist armies, but while it lasted it made things exceedingly difficult for the Communist base areas in north China, especially as it coincided with increased Nationalist pressure on other fronts.²¹

Besides these problems in the military sphere, the Communists also had to contend with an economic blockade imposed by both the Nationalists and the Japanese in an attempt to wear the Communists down. According to one study, the intensification of the blockade in 1941 brought "rampant inflation" in the Shen-Kan-Ning Border Region, caused not only by the increasing shortage of necessary staples such as grain, cotton cloth, and salt, but also by the Communists' decision to issue their own currency, which rapidly declined in value. The situation was further aggravated by the complete severance of the Nationalist government's war-

time subsidies to the Communist base areas. Finally, despite the obvious hardships these various developments imposed on the population in the base areas, the grain tax for 1941 was set at an amount more than twice the previous levy. This tax burden represented an all-time high under Communist rule, and it was ironic that it fell on the poor peasants, whom the Communists regarded as their closest allies.²²

In the various Communist base areas, conditions were to deteriorate even more during the second half of 1941 and 1942, but even in the spring of 1941 the Communists were faced with a real crisis. In a recent study of the period, Mark Selden has gone so far as to compare the crisis of 1941 with those of 1927 and 1934, each of which involved the Communist movement in "crippling defeats verging on annihilation." In each of these instances Mao Tse-tung emerged as the "leading architect" of the new line that was to save the CCP from destruction at the hands of its enemies. The breakup of the first united front in 1927 gave rise to Mao's rural strategy, the liquidation of the Kiangsi Soviet in 1934 was followed by Mao's espousal of the cause of the second united front, and the military and economic blockade of the Communist base areas in 1941 gave birth to Mao's theory and practice of the mass line.²³ Selden is undoubtedly correct in equating the seriousness of the crisis of 1941 with that of the crises of 1927 and 1934, but we must not forget an essential difference between the crisis of 1941 and the two earlier ones. In 1927 and 1934 Mao was very much on the fringe of things in terms of party leadership: in 1927 he was a secondary figure in the party's top echelons, and in 1934 he had already been dropped from his important party and army positions under the ascendancy of the Returned Students. Therefore when things went wrong, he was not the one who was responsible and got the blame. Ch'en Tu-hsiu in 1927 and Wang Ming and Po Ku in 1934 were the inevitable scapegoats, and on both these occasions Mao was well placed to enter from the wings as the leading critic of the fallen leaders. Thus on both occasions he was able to establish himself as a pivotal figure in the new leadership group that emerged.

In 1941, of course, the situation was quite the reverse. And no one knew better than Mao himself that if the CCP succumbed to the growing crisis it would be he, as the leader of the party,

who would carry most of the blame. This time it could be Wang Ming and/or a Returned Student-military coalition group that would step from the wings as Mao's chief accusers and successors. Mao had survived the crises of 1927 and 1934 largely because he had little responsibility for them in the first place, but the same would not be true if the party failed to weather the crisis of 1941.

Yeh Ch'ing Attacks Mao

While Mao was in this difficult situation, another old foe, Yeh Ch'ing (Jen Cho-hsüan), took it upon himself to launch a sharp attack on Mao's personal leadership, and in particular on his competence as a Marxist theoretician. Yeh had been a CCP leader in the 1920's but had left the party in 1928 after being arrested and threatened with execution by the Nationalists. Since then he had been an "independent Marxist." During the 1930's he was a vigorous participant in the various intellectual debates in Shanghai, but after the Japanese invasion in 1937 he abandoned his polemics with the CCP's urban theorists (including Ch'en Po-ta) and renewed his contacts with the Nationalist Party, with which he had had some ties at various times. As he became increasingly nationalistic in his outlook, his Marxist fervor cooled somewhat, though he never forsook Marxism altogether; and in 1939 he rejoined the Nationalist Party. For the next few years he held various posts in the KMT's political education system. Then in 1942 he became head of the KMT Organization Department, and in 1943 he was elected an executive secretary of the KMT's San-min-chu-i Youth Corps.²⁴

Yeh's rise to power in the Nationalist Party was due in part to the success of a book he published in the spring of 1941, *A Critique of Mao Tse-tung*. This was perhaps the most comprehensive and sophisticated attack against Mao to have issued from the Nationalists up to that time, and it was widely circulated in various editions and revisions.²⁵ In the book, Yeh deals at some length with Mao's theoretical concepts, in particular with his proposal for the Sinification of Marxism, and it is this issue that interests us here. Although in its broad outlines Yeh's critical analysis of Mao and the CCP is representative of official KMT attitudes, Yeh consistently argues from within the "socialist" tra-

dition as an avowedly objective student of "scientific communism." Obviously, such an approach would most appeal to the particular audience to whom Yeh was directing his message, that is, those literate individuals within the broad leftist movement in China who were weighing the merits of Mao's call for a "new democracy" the previous year. Indeed, Yeh time and again declares that Mao's aim in proposing the idea of new democracy is to establish a "basis for the existence . . . and development" of a communist party in China, namely, the CCP. But he quickly goes on to declare that Mao's attempt to plant the roots of new democracy in China, however ingenious it may be, will in the final analysis "fail completely." It will fail, he says, because the idea of new democracy is the defective concept of a so-called Chinese Communist leader who understands neither the essence of communism nor the process by which it can be adapted to the special needs of China.²⁶

Yeh does not dismiss Mao altogether. He thinks he should be congratulated on having recognized the need to resolve the contradiction between "Marxist methods" and "Chinese reality." But though he is more experienced than Wang Ming and that generation of leaders, because his understanding of Marxism is basically faulty, his grasp of the concept of the Sinification of Marxism is correspondingly confused, and his efforts along this line have been unsuccessful. Since the time of Sun Yat-sen's emergence as a theorist, Yeh argues, the world "communist" or "socialist" movement (Yeh uses the two terms interchangeably) can be divided into two major schools of thought. Employing their own terminology, one school advocates "communism," while the other espouses the "Principle of the People's Livelihood." In terms of content, Yeh says, there is no fundamental difference between these two "isms" (*chu-i*); rather, their distinctive characters emerge from the methods they use to put their aims into practice: "This similar aim constitutes the generality of socialism, and is applicable to the world. These dissimilar methods constitute the peculiarity of socialism, and are applicable to specific countries."²⁷

From this, Yeh explains, one can see at once that the kind of socialism that is universally applicable regardless of time or place is only socialism in its generalized or abstract form, namely, the "concept" (*i-nien*) of the common ownership of property. This

type of abstract socialism, he says, has been talked about since ancient times in China and the rest of the world, but it has never been realized in practice. Since it did not accord with the concrete conditions in specific countries at particular times, it was unscientific, hence utopian in character. But the world has moved beyond this utopian socialism of the past, Yeh goes on, and contemporary socialism or communism may be divided into two concrete, specific types according to regions of the globe—European socialism and Chinese socialism.

Yeh has an explanation of how these two distinctive types of concrete socialism came about. All theories or “isms,” he suggests, are created by the flesh-and-blood individuals for whom they are named, individuals who lived a “concrete” existence in a specific time and place and whose thinking was colored by these temporal and spatial characteristics. Hence, the precise qualities of the thought that emerged from the minds of these gifted individuals had to be determined by the particular era and specific country in which they lived. Nowhere, he says, is this general truth more evident than in the character of the two different types of “scientific” socialism that developed from utopian origins:

It was Marx and Sun Yat-sen who particularized the general. The former’s particularization was Europeanization [*Ou-chou-hua*], and the latter’s particularization was Sinification [*Chung-kuo-hua*]. All particularities are concrete. Therefore, European socialism and Chinese socialism are both particular socialisms, concrete socialisms. Because they accord with the conditions under which they exist, they may both be termed scientific socialism. They each use particular methods to arrive at a general goal, and traverse different paths to the same destination.²⁸

This phrase “particular methods” has a lot to do with the line of argument. Yeh believes that Marxism is the particular method by which the general goal of socialism can be realized in countries in which capitalism is fully developed. Since capitalism is not by any stretch of the imagination fully developed in China, Marxist methods are not applicable. Furthermore, he says, capitalism—with the resulting division of society into two antagonistic classes (bourgeoisie and proletariat)—will never develop in China, because the implementation of Sun Yat-sen’s theories will enable China to skip the stage of capitalism on the way to socialism. Under the guidance of Sun’s ideas, China can avoid the costly

“two-stage revolution” (i.e. political and social), which is the particular product of the capitalist class system and is the only method for the transformation of capitalism into socialism. In China, a one-stage revolution is possible, and things will be entirely different: “State operation of industry, regulation of capital, and equalization of power are the most appropriate [methods], and they will lead to the common ownership of property. A Sinitized communism will gradually emerge, but this will be called the Principle of the People’s Livelihood. It will be the socialism of Sun Yat-sen, not Marxist socialism.”²⁹

On the basis of this argument, Yeh scornfully dismisses Mao’s attempts at Sinifying Marxism as both futile and misleading. “Thus,” he concludes, “the Marxism of Mao Tse-tung is Sinified in name but rigidly foreign in reality, and is purely a form of ‘dogmatism.’ ”³⁰ This pessimistic conclusion naturally has implications for the political party that Mao leads, and it is no surprise that Yeh finds the CCP to be neither a genuine product of Chinese society nor something that is needed by the Chinese people in their struggle for liberation. It is all too obvious, he says, that the CCP is entirely the creation of external, non-Chinese forces, the U.S.S.R. and the Comintern in particular. Indeed, the short history of the CCP has already indicated that it only has three paths open to it in the years ahead. It can be “Russified” (*E-kuo-hua*) if it adopts Russian Bolshevism as its ideology and the CPSU/Comintern as its organizational form, as it has done at various times in the past. Or it can be “Sinified,” but falsely, and in a backward form, if it adopts the ideology and behavior of such traditional Chinese “roving bandits” as Li Tzu-ch’eng (who led a peasant rebellion against the Ming dynasty), as it is now doing in spite of the united front. Or, third, it can be truly “Sinified” in a modern, progressive form by adopting the Three Principles of the People as its ideology and genuinely joining forces with the Nationalists, as it did at least partially in the past. In abandoning their allegiance to the CCP, Yeh adds reassuringly, party members need not give up their hopes for the future of their homeland. They should realize that mere labels can be deceiving, that whereas a communist party in Europe is a progressive force, in China it is reactionary. In joining the Nationalist Party, former members of the CCP are at the same time embrac-

ing the ideas of Sun Yat-sen, whose ideology is in full accord with the realities of China's contemporary one-stage revolution. And because it is, this ideology is both scientific and progressive; it is a "product of the age, and can undertake the historical task of transforming China."³¹

In conclusion, Yeh reaffirms his belief that Mao and himself (and also Karl Marx and Sun Yat-sen) share the common conviction that "world history is moving toward socialism." The crucial differences that exist between them lie in their conflicting interpretations of the "historical laws" that govern this process of change from one social system to another. Since, Yeh argues, Marx's two-stage revolution is applicable to countries "in which capitalism is developed and class divisions are distinct, we may designate it as the path for advanced countries." Sun Yat-sen's theory of the one-stage revolution is quite a different thing, however. Since, he says, it is applicable to China and to other countries "in which capitalism is not developed and class divisions are not distinct, we may designate it as the path for backward countries." This is a somewhat audacious claim, and Yeh hastens to predict that China and its fellow underdeveloped countries will not remain inferior to Europe indefinitely. Europe deserves credit for pioneering the initial impetus toward the formulation of correct theories leading to the movement toward socialism, but China was quick to follow the example: "Once Europe pointed out clearly the inevitability of moving toward socialism, China was able to take this as an example and consciously 'catch up' [*ying-t'ou-kan-shang*], and cannot but take the shortest route . . . [to socialism]. This is of course a special situation."³²

Yeh is not saying that the path pointed out by Sun Yat-sen is superior to that indicated by Marx. "All things are composed of the unity of the general and the particular," he observes, indicating that in the era of scientific socialism the European path to socialism is a "general law" in the sense that it preceded and provided the basis for the emergence of the Chinese path to socialism, which is a "particular law." (It should be noted that this does not contradict his earlier proposition that, in the decisive transition from utopian to scientific socialism, Marxism represented the particularization—that is, "Europeanization"—of the abstract notions of socialism and communism.) Like everything else, he con-

cludes, the "historical laws of the world" are formed by the unity of the general and the particular:

They are formed by the unity of the historical laws of Europe and the historical laws of China. In other words, the historical laws of the world are formed by the unity of Europe's two-stage revolution and China's one-stage revolution. . . . Communism is European socialism, and the Three People's Principles represent Chinese socialism. Each has its own framework, and each has its own countries to which it is applicable.³³

Throughout the discussion, Yeh tends to equate the global significance of Europe (and North America) on the one hand, and China on the other. Such a suggestion was of course very flattering to the Chinese nationalists who were struggling to free their country from what they saw as the crippling sense of cultural inferiority that had resulted from the decline of China at the hands of the more powerful West. In this, Yeh had much in common with the emerging views of Mao Tse-tung and his colleagues, who had also concluded that the Chinese revolutionary model (i.e. the Maoist revolutionary model) was of increasing international significance, especially in relation to the colonial world of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. For all their many differences, Yeh and Mao both had an unmistakable sense of nationalism that gave a similar hue to the way in which they conceived China's role in the world and its relations with other nations.³⁴ But Yeh was very critical of Mao for what he saw as an attempt to apply the methods of the European socialist revolution (namely Marxism) to China's special conditions. Mao, of course, would heartily have agreed with Yeh that such an attempt would be futile, and it was precisely for this reason that he constantly distinguished between the inner content of Marxism and its outer form, rejecting the latter as "dogma" in the Chinese context, but retaining the essence of the former.

What Yeh really was criticizing in Mao was his interpretation of Sun Yat-sen's Three People's Principles. Yeh believed that Sun's ideology represented above all the Sinified form of the universal socialist idea, and therefore he judged any attempt such as Mao's to concoct yet another (and necessarily bogus) form of Sinified socialism as at best misguided, and subversive in actual practice. Here he is appealing to Mao to give up his foolish endeavors, join forces with the Nationalist Party, and seek the

realization of Sun Yat-sen's Three People's Principles. Only by doing so, Yeh concludes, can the Chinese Communist Party and its ideological doctrines be truly S'ınified, and useful to the Chinese people and their revolutionary cause. Failing that, the Chinese Communists are doomed to final destruction.

Yeh Ch'ing's attack on Mao came at a time when the CCP was facing very serious threats to both its internal and its external stability. Since these threats endangered Mao's position as the party's top leader, it is not surprising that in the spring of 1941 he moved to reassert his authority in the party. The cadre education movement had been wound up in June 1940, apparently more for reasons of necessity than of choice. The leftist upsurge in the party in the spring of 1940 had inaugurated an entire year of inner-party dissension, and the formal study movement had to be abandoned before it had got very far among the party's rank and file. After some months of this inner-party strife, Mao seems to have tried to breathe new life into his ill-fated educational campaign by having the party publish for the first time his "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War," a series of lectures he delivered in 1936. These were the lectures in which Mao first developed his systematic critique of the military strategy of the Returned Students. By 1941 it was common knowledge in Yen-an that Mao characterized the military line of the Returned Students as "left adventurism," and therefore the publishing of these lectures on strategy was a signal to the leftist comrades who were urging an open split with the Nationalists and a reversion to the military strategy of agrarian revolution. Clearly, the careful study of Mao's lectures would be a salutary experience for those Returned Students who might be repeating their former errors, and equally for those individuals who had no wish to become personally identified with the military line of this now discredited faction.³⁵

In a preface and postscript to a volume entitled *Rural Surveys* (March-April 1941), Mao made a thinly veiled attack on the military policies of the Returned Students. The party's present "dual policy," he comments, synthesizing both alliance and struggle (with the Nationalists), "is the most revolutionary policy for China today. It is mistaken to oppose and obstruct this line." Then, turning to broader issues in the life of the party, he says

that the CCP is working in a “most complicated Chinese environment,” and at the present stage in the revolution one of the party’s “indispensable historical tasks” is the “scrupulous and resolute preservation of the communist purity” of all its members.³⁶ Not more than a month later, Mao formally called for the revival of the defunct cadre education movement, and by early 1942 this had been transformed into the Rectification Movement, one of the pivotal episodes in the history of the CCP.

Ch'en Po-ta's Dispute with Wang Shih-wei

Before moving on to a consideration of the beginning of this campaign, it is necessary to say something about a rather obscure quarrel in the winter of 1940-41 between Ch'en Po-ta and Wang Shih-wei, both of whom worked in the party's Marxist-Leninist Institute. Since this dispute appears to have had a great deal to do with the course of the Rectification Movement, it merits careful examination. By his own account, Ch'en had begun to cut down on his writing on purely cultural topics by mid-1939, feeling that he was not really a specialist on questions of art and literature. In addition, he acknowledged that many literary specialists were now working in Yen-an, and he reiterated his belief that the problems in this field could only be solved in the course of practice. Excessive discussion was both unnecessary and undesirable.³⁷ Indeed, after the publication of Mao's treatise on new democracy, Ch'en's concerns gradually began to turn to more practical matters such as political economy, an interest that persisted to the very end of his lengthy career. His growing neglect of purely philosophical and cultural concerns was a direct reflection of his steady rise to power in the Maoist faction in the party. More than ever before, Ch'en was beginning to play an increasingly conspicuous role as a leading Maoist spokesman on general policy issues. It was during the Rectification Movement in particular that he clearly emerged as an important personality in his own right, and not simply a shadowy figure maneuvering behind the scenes.*

*This is not to deny Ch'en's lack of a personal power base within either the party or the army, and his consequent dependence on Mao's support both at this time and in later years.

Despite these new concerns, Ch'en was, much against his will (or so he says), from time to time dragged into disputes with some of the literary specialists in Yen-an to whom he had previously deferred. He clashed with a certain Hsiang Lin-ping on the question of national forms in literature, but his major conflict was with Wang Shih-wei. Wang was an old party member. He joined the CCP in 1926, just before Ch'en, and became known in Marxist circles primarily as a translator of Marxist-Leninist writings from the Russian. He was also an author, who had written a few short stories, and he maintained a strong interest in general literary problems. Around 1929 he became associated with the Chinese Trotskyists, published in their journals, and translated some of Trotsky's works. Nonetheless, in the early 1930's he went to Moscow to study Marxist philosophy, but continued to correspond with Ch'en Tu-hsiu right up to 1936. At the time of his arrival in Yen-an in the late 1930's, Wang was considered to be a specialist in ideological and literary matters, and on this basis was appointed to a research post at the Marxist-Leninist Institute.³⁸

Very little is known of Wang's activities at the institute, and to a large extent one has to rely on the account provided by Ch'en Po-ta, which can hardly be regarded as detached. It seems, however, that in the autumn of 1940 Wang drafted an article titled "Short Essay on National Forms in Art and Literature," which was circulated to various members of the institute, Ch'en took strong exception to most of Wang's views, and—tearing himself away from other work he was then engaged in—he hastily drafted a point-by-point rebuttal of Wang's major contentions. Ch'en was particularly disturbed at Wang's having attacked some of his earlier essays on literary problems, and Wang in turn was so incensed by Ch'en's rebuttal that he attempted to prevent its publication. A compromise was worked out by which Wang agreed to revise his article in light of Ch'en's criticisms, with Ch'en himself forgoing the right to have his critique published alongside Wang's article. Wang's revised essay was published in the spring of 1941, but Ch'en's rebuttal did not appear in print until July 3-4, 1942, when it was published in *Liberation Daily* as "reference material" in the campaign against Wang and other ideological deviationists.³⁹

Ch'en and Wang were raising a number of substantive issues in their dispute, among them the old question of national forms

in literature. As before, Ch'en defended his advocacy of the use of certain traditional cultural forms to convey new political contents, although he agreed with Wang that the danger always existed of the new contents being subverted by the old forms. The key to the problem, he maintained, was in using the old forms intelligently, so that the new contents would remain intact. It would not do, he said, to " 'utilize old forms' by depicting Chu Te and P'eng Te-huai, representatives of the proletariat and the ordinary people, as the 'Gods of War' [*Kuan Kung Lien*], or by transforming the actions and behavior of Chu and P'eng into the actions and behavior of aristocrats."⁴⁰ To do that would be to nullify the whole exercise; it would be nothing more than a capitulation to tradition, and this was certainly not what he was advocating in calling for the creative use of national forms in literature. In any event, he concluded there was no need to insist on the exclusive use of either old or new forms, experimentation with both being the preferable course. The pressing need was to abandon further discussion on the theory of national forms, and to test the ideas that had already been advanced in the course of actual practice.

In rebutting Wang's criticisms of the use of national forms in culture, Ch'en drew attention to Wang's apparent confusion of the "proletarian revolution" with the "national war of resistance." Indeed, Wang gave far too much emphasis to the proletarian nature of the current revolutionary movement in China, and this led him to place too much importance on the necessity of there being in existence a well-developed proletariat with a fairly high level of culture. These conditions simply did not exist in China, Ch'en argued, for the broad masses of the people, not just the proletariat, were united against an external foe, not against China's own bourgeoisie. Further, the ordinary people were fully capable of raising their own cultural level in the course of actual struggle and were not dependent on the prior achievement of a high cultural level on the part of the proletariat. Wang's views, Ch'en concluded, were detrimental to the cause of the Chinese people's national war of resistance, and only served to give comfort to the Japanese.⁴¹

It is immediately obvious that Wang's alleged emphasis on the proletarian nature of the current revolutionary movement in China, and his simultaneous depreciation of its broad national

significance, identified him as a “leftist” of some sort. Was he, for example, part of the “leftist tendency” within the ranks of the party, or, even more sinisterly, a representative of Trotskyism within the CCP’s highest research, educational, and cultural organs? Wang was evidently aware that such suspicions might be going through the minds of some of his colleagues at the institute and elsewhere, and he apparently decided to clear the air before things got out of hand. After reading Ch’en’s critique of his views, he belatedly admitted to the party authorities that he had had close connections with the Trotskyists in the past but had long since severed this relationship.⁴² This timely confession did have the effect of bringing about a temporary compromise between Wang and Ch’en (and the party authorities). Ch’en later claimed that at the time he wrote his rebuttal of Wang’s views on national forms, he knew “absolutely nothing” about Wang’s former Trotskyist associations and had wondered why Wang became so agitated over the affair. With the benefit of hindsight, Ch’en realized that he had unintentionally exposed Wang Shih-wei’s “Trotskyist ideological fox’s tail.” Wang, said Ch’en, had attempted in his original article to propagate Trotskyist ideology under cover of a discussion on questions of art and literature.*

I have discussed this little-known dispute between Ch’en Po-ta and Wang Shih-wei in some detail because it had three possible consequences of importance for the coming Rectification Movement. First, because of its timing (the winter of 1940-41), it probably helped convince the Maoists that the leftist tendency that had been developing in the party since early 1940 was beginning to find reflection and reinforcement in the party’s leading research and propaganda organs. Thus it had a bearing on Mao’s determination in the spring of 1941 to crack down on this growing ideological deviationism before it got out of hand, partly by reviving the cadre education movement. Second, the existence of ideological heterodoxy among a small group of influential but organiza-

*Ch’en Po-ta, “Kuan-yü Wang Shih-wei” (Concerning Wang Shih-wei), *Chieh-fang jih-pao* (Liberation Daily), June 15, 1942, p. 4. In fact, Wang’s ideas on art and literature were very close to those of the “literary leftists” in the debate on national defense literature in 1935-37, a debate with which Ch’en was very familiar. Although Wang was now being labeled a Trotskyist, the basic issues were linked directly to the earlier debate.

tionally powerless intellectuals (as revealed in the Ch'en-Wang dispute) may well have suggested to Mao the possibility of using them as scapegoats. Since these intellectuals were relatively isolated from the party's main political and military organizations and could be attacked either individually or collectively without causing any major upheavals in the party organization, the campaign against ideological deviationism throughout the party could be carried to a high pitch with little damage either to the morale of the ordinary cadre who might be in need of some ideological rectification or to the essential work he was doing under very trying conditions. Certainly, as the Rectification Movement unfolded this appeared to be the pattern, with a small group of intellectuals bearing the brunt of public criticism.

Third, in light of the dispute between Ch'en and Wang, Merle Goldman is likely correct in suggesting that Ch'en had some influence on the decision to single out Wang Shih-wei as the principal target in the summer of 1942.⁴³ Indeed, as a close adviser to Mao Tse-tung in cultural affairs, Ch'en probably played a key role in Mao's decision to aim the spearhead of the Rectification Movement not simply at Wang Shih-wei but at the so-called dissident writers as a group. Given Ch'en's other influential positions in the party's Propaganda Department, the Yen-an mass media, and various government and cultural bodies, it seems likely that his influence was far from slight. Certainly, he played a personal role of considerable prominence in the Rectification Movement, especially as it reached its peak in the summer of 1942.

Prelude to Rectification

The Rectification Campaign of 1942 has usually been regarded as a consequence, and an illustration, of Mao Tse-tung's growing ascendancy in the CCP. This is a sound enough evaluation, but nonetheless, this key episode in party history can be better understood by relating it to the unsettling events of 1940 and early 1941. Mao's personal authority had been challenged on a number of fronts, from politics to culture, and it was to his advantage to confront the issue squarely. His first move was to seek a revival of the defunct cadre education movement of 1939-40. In an important speech of May 5, 1941, Mao characterized the entire

history of the CCP as “twenty years in which the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism has become more and more integrated with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution.”⁴⁴ In spite of this, continued Mao, the party still had “very great shortcomings,” and if they were not soon corrected it would inevitably fail in its historical mission. The three main areas of study in which improvements were in order were current affairs, history (particularly Chinese history), and the practical application of Marxism-Leninism in revolutionary work. But Mao cautioned the assembled cadres that they were not all equally guilty of such shortcomings, the last of which was the most troublesome. The most susceptible to a “subjectivist attitude” toward the study of Marxist theory were (1) the students, especially those who had studied in Europe, America, and Japan; and (2) “cadres of the middle and higher ranks.”⁴⁵ In bracketing these two specific groups as the main culprits, Mao was clearly attacking the most prominent “returned students” in the party, that is, the “Twenty-eight Bolsheviks” who had dominated the party leadership after their return from the Soviet Union and still had great influence among “cadres of the middle and higher ranks.”

There was a good deal of implied insult in this suggestion that the Returned Students ought to return to the classroom for further instruction in what they regarded as the subject of their greatest expertise, Marxist-Leninist theory. And who was to be the new instructor, and whose texts were to be the required reading? Mao modestly recommended that Stalin’s well-known *History of the CPSU* should be the “principal material, [with] everything else as supplementary material.” This reference to Stalin’s text was probably no more than a token gesture to Moscow, for Mao carefully assigns a certain priority to the unspecified “supplementary material”: “For the education of cadres in service and in schools, research should be focused on the actual problems of the Chinese revolution, and then on the study of Marxism-Leninism. The method of static and isolated study of Marxism-Leninism should be eliminated.”⁴⁶ In other words, the main emphasis is to be on the “actual problems” of the revolution in China. Students are to approach the study of Marxist theory only after they have attained an adequate understanding of Chinese conditions. This is a direct reversal of the old days, when aspiring Marxist theo-

rists turned their attention to Chinese conditions only upon completion of a rigorous course of study of classical Marxist-Leninist texts, whether in China or abroad.

Mao's proposal of May 5, 1941, represents a point of some importance in the ideological history of the CCP. It was tantamount to suggesting that henceforth Chinese reality was to provide a methodology by which to study Marxist theory, rather than the other way around. This is very similar to Mao's argument of 1938, when he proposed that the study of Chinese history (a part of the total reality of China) itself constituted a methodology for the evaluation of the applicability of Marxist theory to the revolution in China. If this were to be so, the classical Marxist-Leninist writings would lose a good deal of their sanctity, and Moscow's cherished role as keeper of the seals and protector of the faith would in consequence be severely undermined.

From the strictly logical point of view of the some of the orthodox party theoreticians, Mao's proposal must have appeared somewhat odd, since it did not follow the usual practice of using Marxist-Leninist theory as a scientific methodology on which to base a systematic study of Chinese historical reality. It was for this grounding that in its early days the CCP had encouraged many of its brightest young members to spend years in Moscow mastering the intricacies of Marxism-Leninism in preparation for their later return to China to participate in the revolutionary movement. The result (in Mao's eyes, the inevitable result) of this procedure had been that a whole generation of Chinese revolutionaries was trained to accept without question the applicability of a rigid foreign theory to their own Chinese problems, and with disastrous results. Though there might ideally be in the learning process a dialectical interaction between theory and reality, so that the resulting body of knowledge was appropriate to the situation, Mao in the spring of 1941 had come to think that even if this ideal could be reached, the previous emphasis would have to be reversed.

Mao believed that it was sometimes necessary to go to the opposite extreme in order to correct an existing imbalance, even at the danger of creating, if only temporarily, a new imbalance. In this case, it was necessary to insist on a reversal in the program of theoretical study in the CCP. Henceforth, the emphasis was to

be placed on the systematic mastery of Chinese historical reality as a means of acquiring the essential empirical data base (or methodology) by which to evaluate the specific theoretical formulations of Marxism-Leninism. An accurate grasp of Chinese reality would enable the revolutionary to determine which concrete formulations of the foreign theory were directly applicable to China, which could be adapted to Chinese conditions, and which were totally inapplicable and must be discarded and/or replaced with new formulations. As noted previously, this opens up the question of whether Mao was advocating a process that would "creatively develop" Marxism-Leninism or one that would in fact "revise" and/or "distort" it beyond recognition. Clearly, the Maoists believed they were advocating the former, while their opponents in the party feared they were promoting the latter, and this debate became a central issue in the unfolding *cheng-feng* (lit., to rectify the winds, or work styles) campaign. It is, indeed, an issue that is still very much alive in the international Communist movement and is far beyond resolving here.⁴⁷

If Mao was indirectly proposing that his writings on China's "actual problems" should henceforth take pride of place in the CCP's educational curriculum, one might ask whether or not the intrinsic quality and scope of these works were adequate to the task. Certainly none but the most committed in the party made any pretense of claiming that Mao's writings could stand comparison, either in intellectual sophistication or in sheer volume, with the truly impressive corpus of theory and practice in the writings of orthodox Marxism-Leninism. An essay by Shih Fu (a pseudonym?) in *Liberation* on January 16, 1941, for example, says that the "Chinese Communist Party, with Mao Tse-tung as leader," had "correctly grasped creative Marxism," and had even "pushed Marxism-Leninism a step forward" in the course of arduous revolutionary struggles. But no claim is made for any uniqueness of Mao's role; Shih brackets Mao with the party and refers to Wang Ming and Lo Fu in addition to Mao, praising all three leaders for having creatively applied Marxism-Leninism to the practical situation in China.⁴⁸

It was surely with the aim of establishing Mao's singular importance within the CCP that Chang Ju-hsin, a young party theoretician who had come to Yen-an from Shanghai, wrote his

important essay, "Advance Under the Banner of Comrade Mao Tse-tung." Certainly the appearance of Chang's admiring article in *Liberation* on April 30, 1941, just a few days before Mao's key speech of May 5 on the problem of study within the party, seems more than a coincidence. According to Chang, Mao Tse-tung was not simply one important revolutionary leader among many others; nor was he merely the first among equals. On the contrary:

It should be pointed out that the leading, most typical person in applying creative Marxism to Chinese problems is our party leader, Comrade Mao Tse-tung. He is our party's great revolutionary, a talented theorist, a strategist, and one of the most creative Marxist-Leninists in China. With a mastery of the theory of Marxism-Leninism and almost twenty years of extremely rich experience in revolutionary struggle, he is able to unite skillfully within himself the profound theory of Marxism-Leninism and the extensive, concrete practice of the Chinese revolution, and to link together organically the fixed principles and the flexible strategies of Marxism-Leninism. He is the most qualified, most typical person to be our party's political leader and military strategist.

In summing up, Chang argues that the "many contributions" of the CCP, "and, in particular, Mao Tse-tung," to the development of Marxism-Leninism include the "theory [*li-lun*] and practice" of political and military strategy, the unified front, base areas, military forces, party building, and so on. And to Chang, Mao's development of Marxism-Leninism is of more than parochial interest, for it provides a concrete model of the successful "nationalization" of a foreign theory in one specific country. With proper leadership, this model can be applied "flexibly" in other colonial and semi-colonial countries as well as in China.⁴⁹

Mao's keynote speech calling for a new study campaign did not, it should be remembered, appear in the party journal at this time, and the campaign got off to a somewhat uncertain start. July 1, 1941, the CCP's twentieth anniversary, was the logical occasion to launch the new movement, and the editorial in *Liberation Daily* on that day was devoted to the subject. After summing up the CCP's twenty years of growth, the editorial declared that all the party's successes were due to "the Chinese Communist Party's union of the scientific truth of Marxism-Leninism and Chinese reality over the past twenty years, the undaunted leadership of Comrade Mao Tse-tung over the past twenty years, and

the unceasing sacrificial struggles on behalf of the party of countless martyrs, cadres, and party members over the past twenty years.”⁵⁰ This passage is noteworthy for the neat parallelism it sets up between the “holy trinity” of Marxism-Leninism—theory, leader, and party—and for the implication that Mao Tse-tung, having correctly grasped theory, had successfully led the party for twenty years, that is, since the day of its birth.

To strengthen the case for this somewhat lofty claim, the editorial went on to give a few details on the “theories and policies of the Chinese revolution” that had emerged during the course of the preceding twenty years. These theories and policies were said to be manifested in (1) the CCP’s “basic political orientation”; (2) the “revolutionary Three People’s Principles and the three great policies” of Sun Yat-sen; and (3) “Comrade Mao Tse-tung’s ‘On Protracted War,’ ‘On New Democracy,’ and the ‘Shen-Kan-Ning Border Region Administrative Program’ ” that he edited, all three of which are the “highest crystallizations of the twenty years of the Chinese revolution.” Curiously, though, after this buildup of Mao’s theoretical stature, the editorial ended by calling upon all of the party to plunge into renewed study only of Marxism-Leninism, the union of theory and Chinese reality, and the Three People’s Principles. Although cadres were exhorted to unite closely “under the party’s Central Committee, led by Comrade Mao Tse-tung,” there was no specific call to study Mao’s writings as such.*

This strange omission seems to have reflected an ambivalence as to the real merits of Mao’s theoretical writings. Shortly after the appearance of this editorial, Chang Ju-hsin intervened to make good the deficiency with an article entitled “On Creative Study”—obviously in an allusion to Shih Fu’s essay of the previous January, which had failed to stress Mao’s singular importance in the party. Lamenting that not only Mao’s writings but also the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin were being given insufficient attention within the CCP, Chang nonetheless was quite

*The fact that the editorial lauded a volume of which Mao was merely the editor suggested, though indirectly, that the other writers who contributed to it had perhaps also made contributions of some importance to the party’s “theories and policies.”

unambiguous as to the correct priority for party members in the forthcoming study movement:

Certain of our comrades still do not understand that without careful study and mastery of Comrade Mao Tse-tung's writings, one is incapable of becoming a Chinese Marxist, for these are the most typical writings for our party to use to Sinify Marxism-Leninism. Therefore, they should be one of the best guides for all of our comrades in their study and analysis of Chinese society, and in solving the problems of the Chinese revolution.⁵¹

With this injunction in mind, party members could study the works of Mao and his four famous predecessors, especially their method of analyzing the distinctive characteristics of Chinese society. Thus, all members of the party could become effective disciples of Mao Tse-tung in creatively applying Marxism-Leninism to the practical problems of the revolution in China.

In the course of his essay, Chang referred specifically to three of Mao's major works up to that time ("On Protracted Warfare," "On the New Stage," and "On New Democracy"), calling them "works of genius in creative Marxism," which should be numbered among the "world's greatest contributions of historic significance to Marxism-Leninism." Chang did not at this time undertake a systematic study and classification of Mao's writings and their significance, but this was a task to which he turned nearly a year later, just as the Rectification Movement was moving into high gear.

These two essays of 1941 established Chang as a new voice in the swelling Maoist chorus. Still, in spite of his efforts, there seemed to be a strange dualism in the party's attitude toward Mao's stature as a theoretician, and toward the value of his writings as study materials for the unfolding campaign to raise the party's theoretical level. As had happened so often before, Mao was having trouble shaking off his image as a primarily practical leader—though undeniably an important one—whose chief accomplishments lay in the fields of organization, strategy, and tactics, and not in theory. Nor was it only the Returned Students and other party antagonists who remained doubtful as to Mao's theoretical credentials. This hesitation is well illustrated in the remarks of Chu Te, the party's top military leader, in the short

essay he wrote for the issue of *Liberation Daily* honoring the CCP's twentieth anniversary. Chu maintained that the armies led by the CCP were guided in all their work by the "army-building principles" of Sun Yat-sen, and that, moreover, the party had gone on to "inherit and develop" these principles of Sun. "The Chinese Communist Party," Chu said, "has created its own strategies and tactics [which] are great discoveries and creations in the history of warfare."⁵² Yet nowhere in the essay does Chu even refer to Mao—an acknowledged military theoretician—by name. The omission seems undoubtedly deliberate, and doubly insulting in that it was precisely in the military field that Mao could claim to have added significantly to the party's store of theoretical knowledge.

The attitude of Liu Shao-ch'i is also interesting. Liu, who had shown some misgivings at the first signs of a Maoist cult during the cadre study movement of 1939-40, appears to have remained ambivalent in his attitude to Mao as the party's supposed leading theorist. From a remark in one of a series of lectures delivered to the Central China Party School in mid-to-late 1941, it seems evident that Liu clearly recognized Mao as the party's top leader. "We obey the party," Liu said, "the Central Committee, and the truth, not individuals. Marx, Lenin, and Mao Tse-tung have done good work and represented the truth. Hence we obey them."⁵³ In some ways this warning against obedience to mere "individuals" as opposed to the party and the Central Committee recalls Liu's attitude in 1939, when he cautioned against the "worship of idols." However, this is more than compensated for by his bracketing of Mao with Marx and Lenin, his claim that Mao, like his two great predecessors, represents "the truth," and his declaration that Mao is worthy of the party members' obedience.

Yet at roughly the same time, in a letter of July 13 devoted to questions of theory, Liu completely ignored Mao. In this letter, written in reply to a Comrade Sung Liang, Liu lauded the CCP's organizational and revolutionary strength but equally deplored its "relative immaturity" in the important area of "ideological preparation and theoretical cultivation." He conceded that there were good reasons for this inadequacy, including previous ideological quarrels within the party, the short history of Marxism

in China, the pressing need for practical revolutionary work, and the acute shortage of Chinese translations of Marxist-Leninist writings—a shortage aggravated by the scarcity of party members who were competent in foreign languages. (Although Liu did not say so, the small body of foreign-language readers included himself and all the Returned Students, but not Mao Tse-tung.) For all these reasons, Liu concluded, the “Sinification of Marxism, that is, using the principles of Marxism-Leninism to interpret the historical practice of Chinese society, and to guide this practice, is exceedingly difficult.”*

By 1941 the alleged difficulty of Sinifying Marxism had become a cliché within the CCP, and Liu was simply restating the problem. But what of Mao’s major treatise of 1940, “On New Democracy,” which was supposed to have effected in a systematic way the union of Marxist theory and Chinese practice, and which had been accepted both at home and abroad as the CCP’s single most important theoretical and programmatic document to date? Of this Liu made no mention. Having totally ignored Mao’s theoretical contributions, Liu came to the following conclusion:

What we regard as the [desired] theoretical standard of the Chinese party includes a unified grasp of the principles and methods of Marxism-Leninism and the laws of development of the history of Chinese society. Regardless of what aspect of this [we wish to consider], the large majority of comrades in the Chinese party are still extremely inadequate. A great work [*wei-ta ti chu-tso*] has still not yet appeared, and this remains an exceedingly important task for the Chinese party.⁵⁴

Though Liu perhaps did not realize it at the time, “On New Democracy” was as great a work as any Mao was to produce in

*Liu Shao-ch’i, “Ta Sung Liang t’ung-chih ti hsin” (A Letter in Reply to Comrade Sung Liang), in *Liu Shao-ch’i wen-t’i tzu-liao chuan-chi* (A Special Collection of Materials on the Question of Liu Shao-ch’i), edited by Fang Chun-kuei (Taipei, 1970), pp. 113-15. Note that Liu holds the orthodox view of the relationship between Marxist theory and Chinese history—that is, he sees Marxism as a methodology to interpret and guide “historical practice.” He ignores Mao’s more novel view that “historical practice” can function as a methodology to interpret and modify Marxist theory. Stuart Schram first brought attention to Sung Liang’s letter and its implications in an article of 1970. See “The Party in Chinese Communist Ideology” in John Wilson Lewis, ed., *Party Leadership and Revolutionary Power in China* (Cambridge, Eng., 1970), p. 177, n. 3.

the future.* Two years later, Liu had reconsidered his position, and had discovered "great works" by Mao where he had earlier perceived none to exist.

By mid-1941, though the study campaign was beginning to move ahead, Mao himself was not faring particularly well. On July 1 and August 1 the party's Central Committee passed resolutions approving the campaign and establishing guidelines for its implementation. The resolutions called for "personal reform with the weapon of self-criticism and the method of intensified study," and urged the entire party to "oppose the evil of separating the study of Marxist-Leninist theory and principles from the understanding of the conditions of Chinese society and the solution to the problems of the Chinese revolution."⁵⁵ Yet neither of these resolutions referred to Mao as the CCP's outstanding theoretician who was worthy of emulation, nor did they recommend any of his writings as official study materials in the upcoming movement. The Central Committee was thus in the curious position of, on the one hand, urging the rejection of the abstract study of Marxism-Leninism divorced from Chinese reality, and, on the other, refusing to recommend the study of the works of Mao Tse-tung, the party leader who had specialized in the concrete application of Marxist theory to the practice of the revolution in China.

The party had reached an impasse. The Returned Students were reluctant to support a campaign for the study of Mao's works, for the very good reason that they were most likely to be used as the negative examples in any such movement. Even seemingly pro-Maoist leaders like Chu Te appeared unwilling to let their own personal contributions be swept aside in a mass movement to elevate Mao. Liu Shao-ch'i, the representative of a wing of the party that was hostile to the Returned Students but not at the same time a firm Maoist, was obviously troubled over the soundness of Mao's role as the party's leading theoretician. It was

*I do not wish to imply that Mao's many writings since 1940 are neither interesting nor important. Nonetheless, "On New Democracy" was offered in 1940 as a polished, comprehensive synthesis of Mao's thinking on the Chinese revolution, and it had a dramatic impact at the time on both Chinese and foreign audiences. Even today, it is widely regarded as one of his most important writings.

to become increasingly evident during *cheng-feng* that the intellectuals within the party were also seriously divided on their attitude to Mao, and their internecine bloodletting was to provide the focus of the campaign during the spring and summer of 1942.

The Maoists Rectify the Party, 1942

Mao's Ascendancy in the Party

The Rectification Campaign of 1942–43 is one of the decisive points in the history of the CCP that has generated endless analysis. That it was essentially an indigenous Chinese phenomenon is no longer seriously questioned. Boyd Compton pointed out in 1952 that the campaign benefited from the new permissiveness of the Comintern's Seventh Congress in 1935, but he concluded nonetheless that the "general reform movement . . . was a Chinese idea."¹ There has been little disagreement with this early evaluation of the role of Moscow in the *cheng-feng* movement, but there has been much speculation on the matter of the motivations that lay behind the campaign. The by-now classic realpolitik interpretation is stated succinctly by Wang Ming, writing in 1969 from Moscow. Wang claimed that Mao Tse-tung "repeatedly said that by carrying out the campaign he wanted to achieve three aims: (1) to replace Leninism by Maoism; (2) to write the history of the Chinese Communist Party as the history of Mao Tse-tung alone; (3) to elevate the personality of Mao Tse-tung above the Central Committee and the entire Party [in order to] capture the chief leading place in the Party leadership and all power in the Party in his own hands."²

Of course Mao may not actually have stated his aims in so many words, but Wang is certainly accurate in his summary of what happened. Nor is Wang's conclusion simply a later rationalization of the obvious, for it accurately reflects an unmistakable trend in the party after the Tsunyi conference in 1935, and especially after the Sixth Plenum three years later. By 1941 the trend toward Mao's domination of the CCP had become pronounced. It was strongly reinforced by the Rectification Movement and

subsequent developments, and, allowing for certain fluctuations, it persisted up to Mao's death in 1976.*

In recent years, certain "revisionist" historians such as Mark Selden have gone beyond the power struggle aspects of *cheng-feng* to inquire into the social significance of the many secondary campaigns that sprang up in the wake of rectification. It was this series of intensive campaigns in all sectors of Yen-an life, Selden argues, that gave rise to the "mass line"—"a conception of leadership in which mobilization of the masses was enshrined as the Party's fundamental approach to the problems of war, revolution, politics, and production."³ These campaigns gave Mao and his lieutenants an opportunity to acquire important practical experience in administering—and, equally important—transforming the socioeconomic structure of the Yen-an base area in a wide variety of ways. A brief description of the most important of these will give some idea of their scope: the campaign to simplify administration and improve the quality of the army; the "to the village" movement, which gave many intellectuals firsthand experience working in the countryside; the campaign to motivate the peasants by means of reduced rents and interest on loans; the cooperative movement, which was designed to develop agricultural production and reorient political and social relations in the countryside; the production campaign, which aimed at involving everyone, including cadres and soldiers, in economic activity; and, finally, the popular education movement aimed at spreading literacy and knowledge to the remote villages. There were in addition a number of other smaller or more specialized campaigns, but these are the ones that had a substantial impact on the life of the ordinary inhabitants in the Yen-an area.⁴

In a later restatement of his findings, Selden concludes by drawing attention to the two impulses that he sees as having characterized the CCP's approach to revolution, namely, the "elitist"

*I do not wish to suggest that before the Rectification Movement Mao wanted to create a personal cult to the extent that it later developed. Nonetheless, although domestic and foreign circumstances conjoined in 1943 to provide the appropriate political climate for such a cult, there is little evidence to suggest that Mao took any decisive steps to nip the burgeoning cult in the bud. In the mid-1940's it was clearly in Mao's interest to promote—or at the very least not hinder—his personal elevation as preeminent thinker and leader of the Chinese Communist movement.

impulse toward hierarchy and centralization and the “populist” impulse toward arousal of the peasant masses. It was during the *cheng-feng* movement in 1942, Selden says, that “for the first time, mobilization approaches became the key for generating economic development and social change in the base areas.”⁵ Selden’s approach does much to enhance our understanding of the socioeconomic dimensions of *cheng-feng*, but the “revisionist” argument sometimes goes a little further. Peter Seybolt, for example, notes the close correlation between the reformist slogans of *cheng-feng* and specific criticisms of the educational system that appeared in *Liberation Daily* between 1942 and 1944. Seybolt believes the education campaign that accompanied *cheng-feng* was a genuine effort at real reform, not just window dressing to disguise the fierce power struggle within the top echelons of the party. Thus, he concludes, “these criticisms bring to life all of the clichés of the *cheng-feng* campaign and serve to refute the common contention that *cheng-feng* was primarily a means employed to resolve a power struggle within the Party.”⁶

This, however, is simply not the case; Seybolt’s own research (like that of Selden and others) indicates only that the power struggle was not the *sole* motivating factor in *cheng-feng*, but it does not give a satisfactory ranking of all possible factors ranging from “primary” on down the scale. Indeed, it is perhaps futile to attempt such a ranking; attention should rather be directed at the interplay of the many diverse factors that undoubtedly went into *cheng-feng*, including power as one of the most important. If in the following pages I seem to emphasize the power aspect, I do so because it is the most relevant to the present discussion, not because I wish to slight the importance of other contributing factors.

Yet even the political dimension of the *cheng-feng* campaign involved much more than a mere struggle for power within the party on the part of Mao and his faction. The internal cohesion and external control of the party were placed under great pressure by its rapid expansion after the outbreak of the war with Japan. According to one estimate, in the three years after the commencement of hostilities (that is, from July 1937 to July 1940), party membership increased twenty times, from some 40,000 to around 800,000.⁷ Even under the most favorable circumstances, such a

rapid expansion would be bound to cause some problems, and in the context of the united front against Japan the problems were multiplied manifold. Nationalistic sentiment was running high, and the young people who joined during these years were motivated as much by a desire to fight the Japanese as by a desire to struggle for the realization of socialism and communism, this being especially true of the students and other intellectual elements who flocked to Yen-an in the wake of the Japanese invasion. The party thus found itself exposed to a heavy influx of petit bourgeois and other non-Marxist ideas toward which the Maoist leadership was not at all well disposed. Nor was the problem simply that of the students and intellectuals; even impoverished workers and peasants could not but bring with them certain ideological baggage that would have to be shed if they were to remain in the party.

Quite apart from the question of ideology, the sheer problem of effectively organizing these new members within the existing framework of the CCP was to prove formidable. As the party grew larger, it required more sophisticated methods of organizational guidance and control. At the same time, it was necessary to preserve a high degree of decentralization and flexibility if the party was to operate successfully in its complicated and fluid environment. Holding the view that correct organization inevitably flows from correct ideology, Mao predictably called for the raising of the party's ideological level during the cadre education movement. If the party could be welded together by a commonly understood ideology—an ideology that both motivated and disciplined people—then a certain degree of independence and flexibility could be tolerated within the organizational framework.⁸ Yet by early 1941 it appeared that things were not going very smoothly; the cadre education movement had been abruptly terminated in mid-1940, and ideological and factional disputes were seriously eroding Mao's ability to control the sprawling party organization.

Mao had already shown that he had a concern for political power, and he had in the course of the preceding year been subject to multifaceted attacks on his own position. He was also quite aware of the ambiguities in the attitudes of many of the party's top leaders regarding his claim to eminence as both a

theoretician and a political leader, and of the indecision to which this state of affairs had given rise. It now seemed an appropriate time for some decisive action to give the CCP a clearly acknowledged leader.

As early as March 18, 1941, Mao had concluded that Chiang Kai-shek was making renewed efforts to build up his stature as a "national leader" who was above class or party loyalties and only concerned with China's resistance to the Japanese.⁹ For much the same reasons, it seems, Mao quickly moved to resolve the indecisiveness in his own party, and in so doing to oppose this attempt by Chiang and the Nationalists to project themselves as the only true representatives of the Chinese nation. Since Wang Ming was by now very much on the fringe of things in Yen-an, Mao had no reason to fear a possible countermove from that quarter. As of February 15, 1941, Wang was still ranked second to Mao in an official party document, but his power was ebbing rapidly, and he was even disappearing as a contributor to the party press. As Gregor Benton has pointed out, the New Fourth Army was the last stronghold of Wang's united front policy, and when this army fared badly at the hands of the Nationalists in January 1941, Wang lost his last shreds of political influence.¹⁰

Wang's fall from power was probably confirmed at the "enlarged session" of the Political Bureau that was convened in Yen-an in early September 1941. This important meeting made a thorough review of the "question of the political line in the past history of the party, especially during the period of the Second Revolutionary Civil War."¹¹ Unfortunately, as James Harrison has pointed out, "virtually nothing" is known of this meeting of the enlarged Politburo.¹² We do know, however, that the session was of unusual importance. Mao himself has ranked this meeting alongside certain other "inner-party struggles" (Tsunyi 1935, Sixth Plenum 1938, Rectification 1942, party history study movement 1943) as one of the decisive milestones in eliminating "factions which formerly existed and played an unwholesome role in the history of our party."¹³ According to one official account, this Politburo meeting called for the "development of an all-party ideological revolution" to overcome problems of organization and the separation of theory and practice.¹⁴ And, writing in 1943, Jen Pi-shih revealed that this same session passed a formal resolution

concluding that the “political line predominant in the Party during the period from the September Eighteenth Incident to the Tsunyi Conference was erroneous.”¹⁵ The deadlock in the party had thus been resolved; Wang Ming and the Returned Students had fought and lost their last rearguard action, the other party factions had been won over or at least neutralized, and the victorious Maoists were free to move ahead with their plans. And their plans were becoming more ambitious; as Harrison has concluded, the September 1941 Politburo meeting “probably made the formal decision to escalate the cadre education movement into the much more intense and politically orientated rectification movement.”¹⁶

We have no knowledge of the debates that went on behind the closed doors of this Politburo meeting. The main arguments of the Maoist faction, however, can be deduced from the contents of an important editorial that appeared in *Liberation Daily* shortly before the session opened. The editorial pointed out that as long ago as the Sixth Plenum in 1938, “Comrade Mao Tse-tung, our party’s leader,” had called for the party-wide study of Marxist theory and Chinese history. Specifically, Mao had urged the Sinification of Marxism as an antidote to “dogmatism” within the party. Yet, asked the editors, have Mao’s “instructions” in this regard been adequately implemented in the course of the past three years? “Very unfortunately, we can only answer: No, or very little.”¹⁷ Somewhat impatiently, the editors claimed that Mao’s call for the Sinification of Marxism was fully in accord with Marxist-Leninist tradition, and they warned that the time had come for a “decisive change” in the Chinese party’s handling of ideology. After all, had not Stalin himself stressed the need to distinguish clearly between “dogmatic Marxism” and “creative Marxism,” and had not both Lenin and Stalin themselves departed from Marx and Engels in various significant ways, for example, on the questions of the Soviet republic, the victory of socialism in one country, and the persistence of the state under socialism? Regarding Marxist-Leninist theory, did not the recently published *CPSU History* itself call upon all Marxist revolutionaries to be “good at enriching this theory with the new experiences of the revolutionary movement, good at enriching it with new principles and new conclusions, good at developing and

advancing it, and not being afraid, on the basis of the substance of this theory, of replacing certain outdated principles and conclusions with new principles and conclusions suitable to new historical environments?"

Having established the orthodoxy of the principle of theoretical innovation, the editors concluded most forthrightly that, like Lenin, Stalin, and the CPSU before them, "Comrade Mao Tse-tung, the leader of our party, and the Central Committee of our party are also developing and filling out Marxist-Leninist theory in accordance with the practical experiences of our country's revolution and the war of resistance."

This editorial was probably a direct rebuttal of the line of argument advanced by Liu Shao-ch'i in his letter to Sung Liang of the previous July. The editors accepted the argument that, in comparison with the CCP's work in other areas, its theoretical level was "extremely backward" and "unusually low," and that the Sinification of Marxism was not an easy task. Nonetheless, the essential point of difference between Liu and *Liberation Daily* was the latter's claim that Mao Tse-tung (and as a concession to the principle of collective leadership, the Central Committee too) had gone a long way toward Sinifying Marxism in accordance with Chinese reality. Further, it was the party's continued reluctance to implement Mao's instructions regarding theory that had perpetuated the CCP's backwardness in this crucial area. Therefore there was a need for a "decisive change" in the attitude of the party (and undoubtedly to a great extent also of the Central Committee) toward Mao's repeated calls for the rejection of "dogmatic Marxism" and the acceptance of "creative Marxism" on the ideological front.

This important editorial set the mood for the debates at the Politburo meeting that began soon afterward, and it most likely represents a close approximation of the arguments of the victorious Maoists. The "decisive change" they demanded of the party was not long in manifesting itself; it came in a *Liberation Daily* editorial of January 21, 1942, entitled "Grasp the Key to Marxism-Leninism." Written to commemorate the eighteenth anniversary of Lenin's death in 1924, the editorial called upon the party to distinguish clearly between the "physical body" and the "spirit" of Marxism-Leninism. The physical body is the "indi-

vidual formulas and set phrases” of Marxism-Leninism; its spirit is its “standpoint and methods.” Most important, it is only the latter that is the “genuine Marxist-Leninist weapon” that will ensure the eventual victory of the CCP. The editorial goes on to praise Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin as “great teachers, well versed in the application of dialectics,” and in particular it lauds the *CPSU History* as an excellent source for the study of Lenin’s and Stalin’s correct application of dialectics. Nonetheless, the editorial continues: “Comrade Mao Tse-tung is applying dialectics and solving various practical problems in the present stage of the Chinese revolution. Therefore, his works are even more closely connected to and urgently needed by us, and should be carefully studied by us first of all [i.e. before anything else].”

Mao’s important writings had of course been praised in the past in the party media, but this appears to have been the first time that an official organ of the CCP declared in no uncertain terms that the study of Mao’s works should take precedence over the voluminous writings of the four founders and directors of the international Communist movement. This editorial was thus a landmark in the ideological history of the CCP, bringing to a close the era of ideological diversity that had characterized the development of the Chinese party since its founding in 1921. The fundamental premise underlying the essay was clear: Marxist-Leninist theory had at last entered upon the correct path in its application to China’s specific environment. Henceforth, it would develop dialectically into a new and, of necessity, higher form closely associated with the revolutionary leadership and theoretical principles of Mao Tse-tung. Initially, there was no universal agreement within the party on this interpretation of Mao’s theoretical contributions, but ultimately the Maoist position expressed by *Liberation Daily* was to prevail.

The editorial of January 21 declared that the work of the ideological reconstruction of the party had just begun. Mao personally contributed to the task ahead by issuing, only two days later, an order instructing the Border Region armies to publish and study the party’s “Kut’ien Resolutions” of December 1929. These resolutions, which are concerned with combating organizational and ideological deviations within both the party and the army, were written by Mao himself, although this was not revealed

until 1944. The belated revelation was probably intended to relieve Mao of the embarrassment of being seen to be ordering the “attentive study of his own works,” to use Stuart Schram’s apt phrase.¹⁸

The Rectification Campaign was formally inaugurated by Mao in the opening days of February, when he delivered two major speeches on the need for ideological reform within the CCP. In these two addresses, Mao asserted unequivocally that the “general line of the Party is correct.” Still, he felt compelled to acknowledge that in view of the CCP’s rich store of revolutionary experience, the “advance of our theoretical level has been exceptionally slow and retarded.”¹⁹ In particular, the CCP suffered from three “rather serious” problems—subjectivism in thought, sectarianism in organization, and formalism in literary expression. These three problems could be reduced to one, namely, subjectivism, for “all sectarian thoughts are subjectivist [and] subjectivism and sectarianism use Party formalism as their propaganda tool and form of expression.”²⁰ Having singled out subjectivism as the chief source of ideological error in the party, Mao complicated the issue by saying that there were in fact two major forms of subjectivism—“empiricism” and “dogmatism.” Both deviations were unwholesome, he warned, but of the two there was no doubt that dogmatism was the “more important and dangerous.”²¹

Thus, without directly naming them, Mao had pointed to the Returned Students as the chief source of subjectivism (hence of sectarianism and formalism) in the party. He reinforced the case against them by suggesting that there were those within the party who had ignored the Sixth Plenum’s resolutions on the elimination of formalism “as if they were intentionally opposing these decisions.”²² Yet by the time Mao delivered this rebuke to the Returned Students, their fate had already been sealed. According to a *Liberation Daily* account, the meeting of over eight hundred higher-level party cadres to whom Mao had addressed his remarks rendered a “final judgment” (*mo-jih shen-p’an*) on the surviving phenomenon of party formalism within the ranks of the CCP.²³ Castigating the Returned Students as the leading negative examples in the ideological sphere was but one aspect of Mao’s method; the other was putting forward a positive model for the party cadres to emulate. Mao of course named no names, but he did go

into considerable detail in describing the exact image he had in mind:

What type of theoretician do we need? We need theoreticians who base their thinking on the standpoints, concepts and methods of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, who are able to explain correctly the actual problems issuing from history and revolution, who are able to give a scientific interpretation and theoretical explanation of the various problems of Chinese economics, politics, military affairs, and culture. This is the type of theoretician we need!²⁴

In describing his model theoretician, was Mao Tse-tung referring to himself? This was most certainly the case, and it was probably appreciated as such by the high-level cadres in Mao's audience. Ten days later, however, Chang Ju-hsin removed any lingering doubts as to who was to be the CCP's theoretical paragon by publishing his two-part essay "Study and Grasp the Theory and Strategy of Mao Tse-tung." In this essay Chang concluded that to "endeavor to study and grasp Comrade Mao Tse-tung's theory and strategy is the glorious fighting task of the entire party at the present time."²⁵

Chang's essay, which appeared in *Liberation Daily* on February 18 and 19, 1942, was the first official attempt to systematize the content and structure of Mao Tse-tung's thought on the basis of an integrated study of Mao's most important writings prior to 1942. And since, in the course of his exposition, Chang went to some length to detail the particular writings of Mao that best expressed the essence of the various components of his thought, his essay may be called the first "annotated bibliography" of Mao's writings. It was clearly intended to follow up the *Liberation Daily* editorial of January 21, which had designated Mao's writings as the most important study material for the CCP, and it provided the party cadres and others with an approved reading list on Mao's thought in preparation for the coming Rectification Campaign, during which non-Chinese Marxist-Leninist texts were relegated to a position of secondary importance in the CCP's ideological curriculum.

Chang divides Mao's thought into three "component parts": the "ideological line," the "political line," and the "military line." The first of these (which Chang also calls "ideological methodology") is the most important part, as it determines the

other parts, but it cannot be regarded as abstract from them. Rather, Chang says, the “internal organic unity of these three component parts forms the system of Mao Tse-tung’s theory and strategy.”* In other words, Mao’s thought as of early 1942 was a body of correct political and military doctrines based on the creative application of a correct theoretical methodology to the concrete problems of the revolution in China. But Chang makes it clear that this system of “theory and strategy” is firmly rooted in classic Marxism-Leninism: “Comrade Mao Tse-tung’s theory and strategy is [based on] the application and development of the theory and strategy of Marxism-Leninism in a colonial, semi-colonial, and feudal society. Comrade Mao Tse-tung’s theory is Chinese Marxism-Leninism. Therefore, whoever wants to become a Chinese Marxist-Leninist must study and grasp Comrade Mao Tse-tung’s theory and strategy, and, moreover, become his loyal disciple.” On the reasonable assumption that Chang’s analysis reflected the point of view of the Maoist faction in Yen-an, we can conclude that the CCP was at last formally entering the period of Mao Tse-tung’s ideological dominance.

Yet if we are to believe Chang Ju-hsin, even at this late date there were those within and without the party who were not at all pleased with this new tilt. Chang naturally enough dismisses as Trotskyist slander Yeh Ch’ing’s accusation that Mao’s thought is little more than “Chinese peasantism” or “Hung Hsiu-ch’uanism.”† Renegades like Yeh, scoffs Chang, are unable to understand that Mao Tse-tung’s thought is the “theory and strategy of the twentieth-century Chinese proletariat, the scientific weapon of the liberation of the Chinese nation and society.” Chang quite

*It should be mentioned in passing that Chang thought highly of Mao’s “Lecture Notes on Dialectical Materialism.” He regarded them as an important source for the study of Mao’s methodology, and drew particular attention to chapter 2, part 11, entitled “On Practice.” Apart from content analysis, Chang’s attribution is the principal corroborative evidence for believing that Mao actually wrote these lecture notes during the Yen-an period. For additional comments by Chang on Mao’s “Lecture Notes,” see his earlier essay on Mao in *Chieh-fang* 127 (April 30, 1941): 20.

†Hung Hsiu-ch’uan was the leader of the Taiping Rebellion, a massive peasant-based movement of agrarian protest in mid-nineteenth-century China, which was ultimately crushed by forces loyal to the Ch’ing dynasty.

understands the criticisms of Yeh Ch'ing and others of his sort, but he finds it somewhat surprising that in the CCP there are still a "small number of people who, right up to the present day . . . persist in maintaining an insufficiently respectful, and individually even a scornful attitude," regarding Mao's theory and strategy of the Chinese revolution. These people, Chang goes on, can be divided into two main groups: (1) those lacking in theoretical knowledge and political experience; and (2) those with "stubborn and conservative" minds, the "dogmatists" and the "sectarians." The first group can be helped by means of proper education, he says, but the second group must be resolutely exposed and made to discard their "anti-scientific, anti-Marxist-Leninist" attitudes. This task accomplished, the party can then concentrate on using Mao's theory and strategy to train large numbers of "Mao Tse-tung-style" (*Mao Tse-tung-shih ti*) cadres, thus ensuring the eventual triumph of the revolution. The development of as few as one or two hundred cadres in the upper echelons of the party, cadres who are able to "genuinely grasp Mao Tse-tungism [*Mao Tse-tung-chu-i*] in theory and practice," will certainly ensure final victory.

Although Chang's essay did much to strengthen Mao's claim to be a systematic theorist in the Marxist-Leninist tradition, it fell short in two important areas where it might have presented a clear case for Mao. In the first place, Chang was unable to decide on one single term that would precisely convey the essence of the body of theory associated with Mao. He uses at least three different terms in the course of the essay: "Mao Tse-tung's theory and strategy," "Chinese Marxism-Leninism," and "Mao Tse-tungism." Chang seems to have been the first CCP theorist to use "Mao Tse-tungism" in an official party publication, and, for reasons we shall consider later, he also seems to have been the last to use it during the period under review.²⁶ His preferred usage was clearly "Mao Tse-tung's theory and strategy" (i.e. theory and practice), but this is an excessively cumbersome term, whether in Chinese or in English, and his failure to arrive at a simpler term should not be dismissed lightly in the context of a political movement that places great importance on the exactness of terminology (if not always of thought). It was not until more than a year

later that the party theorists settled on "Mao Tse-tung's thought" as the accepted term.

A more worrisome problem for the Maoists was Chang's somewhat narrow interpretation of the content of Mao's thought. There could be little disagreement with Chang's assertion that Mao's correct "ideological methodology" was the basis of his correct "political line" and "military line." The probable disagreement was likely to be centered on Chang's argument that these three component parts constituted the sum total of Mao's thought: that is, was the content of Mao's thought merely of an ideological, political, and military nature, and if so, would this provide a sufficient basis for Mao's claim to be the CCP's undisputed theoretical leader? Mao had of course already answered this question himself in his speech on February 8 to the party's leading cadres, in which he defined the kind of theoretician the CCP needed as being one who was competent in "Chinese economics, politics, military affairs, and culture." Clearly, Mao did not hit upon these four categories at random but chose them carefully to reflect the comprehensiveness that was to be expected of anyone claiming leadership as a theorist. And true to Marxist tradition, he put economics first.

Given the integrated and systematic nature of Marxist thought, one had to be a complete theorist or not one at all, a truth well understood by Stalin in his own drive to consolidate power in the Soviet Union. Yet as of early 1942 Mao Tse-tung was in neither category, and his inadequacy as a theorist had been made all the more obvious by Chang Ju-hsin's emphasis on Mao's political and military thought and by Chang's failure even to mention Mao's contributions in the fields of economics and culture. Of course Chang was hampered by the facts, for the truth was that despite Mao's emphasis on economics as an important category of interest for the party leader, he had over the years shown little interest himself in purely economic matters, and his admittedly growing concern with cultural matters was of very recent origin.*

*Mao's relative lack of interest in questions of economic theory prior to 1942 is undeniable. Certain scholars, however, have questioned Mao's alleged neglect of economics after 1942. Jack Gray, for example, claims that "Mao's theories concerning the economic aspects of social organization are as important as his theories concerning political leadership, but they have been almost

As of the early spring of 1942 he had not produced one single, comprehensive treatise in either the economic or the cultural field that stood comparison with his many important writings dealing with political and military problems. Chang might perhaps have tried to gloss over the omissions, but it was Mao himself who was in danger of showing up his own weaknesses, as any thoughtful party cadre who listened to his speech of February 8 and read Chang's essay ten days later must have realized.

Before the year was out, however, Mao had strengthened his position by producing the two most comprehensive treatises he was ever to write in the economic and cultural fields. The first of these is his celebrated "Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art," given on May 2 and 23, which have since served as the fundamental Maoist documents on cultural matters, and to which we shall return later. The second (and much more obscure) dissertation is his "Economic and Financial Problems," a lengthy report Mao delivered in December 1942 at a conference of senior cadres in the Border Region. Only the first chapter of this treatise was to be included in Mao's post-1949 *Selected Works*, but there is little doubt that the text as a whole is regarded by the Maoists as forming the cornerstone of Mao's claim to competence in the economic field. According to the introductory note to the chapter in the *Selected Works*, Mao "severely criticizes the mistaken notion of concentrating on public revenue and expenditure to the neglect of economic development."²⁷ Since economic development is at the very heart of the Marxist materialist conception of history, Mao could thus be portrayed as having redirected the CCP to the correct economic path under the trying and nearly fatal conditions of the combined Nationalist-Japanese blockade of the Yen-an Border Region.

Mao's emphasis on economic problems in his address to the assembled cadres in December 1942 was directed not at economics as a theoretical concept but at practical economics, based on a shrewd awareness that the material life of the people was inti-

totally ignored in the West." See Gray's chapter entitled "The Thought of Mao Tse-tung," in Jack Gray and Patrick Cavendish, *Chinese Communism in Crisis: Maoism and the Cultural Revolution* (New York, 1968), p. 62. In recent years, Western scholars have shown more interest in Mao's economic thinking.

mately linked to the long-term success of the revolutionary movement. Under the present conditions of general economic hardship, the party should, Mao urged, “organize, lead and help the people to develop production and increase their material wealth. And on this basis we can step by step raise their political awareness and cultural level.” This was the main idea behind Mao’s long report on economic and financial issues.²⁸ Instead of following the usual Marxist-Leninist theoretical framework, this report has a practical political cast, which emphasizes the importance of developing within the new democracy a mixed economy made up of both public and private sectors. Indeed, Mao wants the private sector—essentially agriculture, handicrafts, and commerce—to bear the main responsibility for providing for the livelihood of the people. Light industry could also be stimulated, but in view of the scarcity of investment capital, emphasis would have to be placed on self-reliance and primitive accumulation of capital on a local basis. Lacking funds, the Border Region government would have to stimulate development by other means, such as improved organization, intensive use of labor, and better use of traditional techniques.

Mao was determined that the party, the government, and the army should not become a burden on the struggling peasants in the private sector. Although a certain level of public taxation was necessary, more efforts had to be directed toward making the public sector as self-sufficient as possible. Mao devoted three sections of his economic report to what Andrew Watson terms the “most radical experiment” in economic development during the Yen-an period, namely, the “introduction of self-supporting production in the public sector [which] brought immediate financial returns, created some key public enterprises, and provided a model of decentralized economic growth.”²⁹ Mao’s plan was thus to develop an economic structure that would accommodate both public and private sectors of considerable importance. This fully accorded with the reality of the party’s practical situation, and, equally, with the provision in new democracy for an active role on the part of landlords, capitalists, and other nonproletarian elements. In an editorial note to Mao’s condensed report in the *Selected Works*, it is pointed out that this report of December 1942 (together with two later articles on economic matters)

“formed the party’s basic program for leading the production campaign in the Liberated Areas [which in turn] provided the party with a rich store of experience for guiding economic construction in later years.”³⁰ Thus by the end of 1942 Mao’s key speeches on cultural and economic issues had made good the two glaring deficiencies in his theoretical credentials, and he was ready to take his place as the CCP’s undisputed theoretical spokesman.

In passing, it is worth mentioning that Mao’s belated venture into the economic realm had been preceded by similar efforts on the part of Ch’en Po-ta. As noted previously, Ch’en had turned away from purely cultural issues in late 1939. But whereas Mao’s economic report concentrated on specific economic issues of the Yen-an Border Region, Ch’en’s interest in economics was more historical and theoretical. In a long essay of March 15, 1941, for example, he analyzed the major types of industrial organizations in China and related their differing attitudes toward the war of resistance against Japan to their particular socio-economic interests and concerns.³¹ Two months later, he discussed the transformation of the “feudal” system in traditional China into a “semi-feudal and semi-colonial” system under the impact of Western and Japanese imperialism.³²

It would be reasonable to assume that Ch’en’s prior research in broad issues of political economy proved useful to Mao as he worked on his own report on the Border Region economy, but this must remain speculative. The essays themselves give no clue. Ch’en did maintain his newly developed interest in political economy, however, and in subsequent years he published on a wide variety of economic issues, including agriculture, industry, and taxation, along with Marxist-Leninist economic theory.³³

The High Tide of Rectification

The *cheng-feng* movement developed rapidly following Mao’s two key speeches in early February 1942. In line with its formal decision to move ahead with a rectification campaign, the Politburo passed a special resolution on cadre education (February 28), which clearly delineated the CCP’s dual orientation in study. In ideology, for example, party cadres were to concentrate on “Marxist methodology in thought” and the “history of the development

of Chinese thought in the last hundred years." In political science, the required topics were to be "Marxist-Leninist writings on tactics and strategy" and the "history of our Party's twenty-year struggle."³⁴ Again, the Politburo failed to recommend the study of Mao's writings, but this deficiency was made good a few days later by K'ang Sheng, who emerged as the leading Maoist manager of the campaign. Addressing two large meetings of party cadres in the opening week of March, K'ang provided the study guidelines for *cheng-feng*. Mao Tse-tung's speech of February 1, K'ang said, is "the guide for the ideological reconstruction of the entire party, the primer in the dialectical materialist method for all those who engage in scientific work. It embodies both Marxist-Leninist theory that is genuinely combined with reality, and the development of the party's correct line since the Tsunyi conference."³⁵

In referring to the party's "correct line" since Tsunyi, K'ang was pointedly reminding the cadres that in their eagerness to uproot the three "evil tendencies" in the party, they should not forget to discriminate carefully in their choice of targets. And in case there was any doubt, he made the point again, still referring to Mao's speech of February 1: "When studying this report, one should distinguish between [the periods] before and after the Tsunyi conference, because prior to the conference subjectivism and sectarianism occupied a ruling position in the party, while remaining merely as remnants after the conference."³⁶ The spearhead of the attack during *cheng-feng*, in other words, was to be aimed at the Returned Students, or more specifically, the "mistaken" line they had pursued prior to Tsunyi and the lingering influence it still exercised within the party.

K'ang did not specifically exempt the party's current leadership and policies from criticism, but he left no doubt as to where the bulk of any criticism was to lie. And it was clear that the present dominant line—Mao's line—was not to be the target. Nonetheless, following K'ang's article, a "barrage of critical essays" suddenly flooded the Yen-an press, all of which apparently took no note of K'ang's words of advice and warning. These essays, from the able pens of such prominent left-wing writers as Ting Ling, Hsiao Chün, and Ai Ch'ing, have been studied in detail by Merle Goldman. Goldman has classified them into two types: (1) criticisms

of specific shortcomings of the CCP organization and its cadres, who were depicted as betraying the true ideals of communism in the pursuit of short-term goals; and (2) assertions of the writer's role as the true guardian of man's spiritual needs, and the limitation of the power of the party to his material and physical needs alone.³⁷ These two main types of essays are clearly exemplified in the writings of Wang Shih-wei, the relatively obscure theorist and translator who quarreled with Ch'en Po-ta in early 1941. In an essay entitled "The Wild Lily," which appeared in *Liberation Daily* in mid-March 1942, Wang accused the party leadership of having failed to build a truly classless society, and lamented the fate of the young people who had eagerly come to Yen-an "in search of beauty and warmth, but saw only ugliness and coldness." In another essay, "Statesmen and Artists," also written at this time, Wang called upon his fellow writers and artists to expose publicly the "darkness and filth" of Yen-an society and to play their due role in reforming the Communist movement, for it was they who "stimulated the moral strength of the revolution."³⁸ It is obvious that criticisms of this sort fell far outside the rather definite boundaries that K'ang Sheng had set for the *cheng-feng* campaign. Thus, as Goldman concludes, as of April 1942 the Maoists had not gained the "full concurrence" of the party's intellectuals, but had on the contrary "come up against a hard core of resistance."³⁹

The publication of Wang's articles and other essays of a similarly critical tone had immediate repercussions in the Yen-an mass media. On March 16 the CCP's Propaganda Department issued instructions for reorganizing all party newspapers in accordance with the needs of the Rectification Movement. These instructions, which were made public on April 1 in *Liberation Daily*, spoke of publishing "well-intentioned" opinions different from those of the party, but they offered no specific guidelines.⁴⁰ In the next day's issue, in the report of a speech given by Mao, the guidelines were made clear. Mao commented favorably on the "enthusiastic discussions" that had marked the inauguration of *cheng-feng*, especially in certain organizations, but he said that he felt compelled to upbraid "some people" who had recently been speaking from "incorrect standpoints," for example, the "viewpoint of absolute egalitarianism," and the "method of ridicule and in-

trigue.” The recent demands from these individuals for “absolute equality” were, he said, mere illusion both now and in the future, and their method of criticism was detrimental to the unity of the party.⁴¹ Still, for a few weeks more at least, Wang Shih-wei and his fellow literary leftists, at whom Mao’s comments were clearly directed, continued their barrage. According to Goldman, the stream of critical essays went unchecked until the middle of April, when it “abruptly stopped.”

The literary assault had to come to an end, and the Maoists saw to it, but a good deal of damage had already been done to the Rectification Movement. As Goldman has pointed out, the writers helped to shape the course of *cheng-feng*, for the force of their criticisms turned the attention of the Maoists away from the larger problem of the party’s genuine shortcomings to the much smaller problem of the dissident intellectuals.⁴² Obviously concerned that the movement was creating widespread dissension within the party, the Propaganda Bureau on April 4 approved a report setting out in some detail the precise framework within which the campaign was to unfold. Complaining that the current “revolution in Party thought” was not developing properly, the report laid out a rigorous course of study and struggle, the overriding aim of which was to contribute to the “consolidation of the entire Party.” Eighteen readings (later increased to twenty-two) were listed as being the core of the study materials for *cheng-feng*; of these, six were by Mao Tse-tung. And although about one-fourth of the final list of twenty-two were selections from Soviet writers, they were only brief extracts from Lenin, Stalin, and Dimitrov, and most of them were among the later additions.⁴³

One reason that the party hierarchy seemed to take such pains to respond to the undeniably serious problem of dissidence among the writers may have been that the writers’ attack had given Mao a heaven-sent opportunity to present in a formal way his emerging theories in the cultural field, a subject he had hitherto largely neglected. The writers were, of course, a convenient target for *cheng-feng*, one at whom the spearhead of criticism could be aimed as a negative example without doing much damage to the fabric of the party organization. Also, the Returned Students stood to gain in this, in that attention was thereby at least par-

tially deflected from themselves, and it is to be noted that, although the political power of the Returned Students as an inner-party faction was certainly broken during *cheng-feng*, not one of that group—not even Wang Ming—became a prominent target of public criticism and struggle. That dubious distinction was reserved for Wang Shih-wei, who had survived his quarrel with Ch'en Po-ta in the spring of 1941 but was not to be so lucky during the *cheng-feng* campaign.

Mao Tse-tung's counterattack on the dissident writers was heralded by his opening and closing remarks at the series of forums held in Yen-an during May 1942, when the general field of culture ("art and literature") was discussed. Mao's basic ideas, dealing with the problem of integrating culture with the political needs of the revolution, were not new. As Howard Boorman has well expressed it, Mao's talks in large part "represented his summation of theories which had been widely discussed in leftist literary circles in China since the 1930's."⁴⁴ Indeed, theorists like Chou Yang and Ch'en Po-ta had been debating the CCP's cultural policies since the mid-1930's, and both had become prominent cultural spokesmen after the move to Yen-an. In particular, Ch'en had had a great deal to say about the relationship between content and form in art and literature, although he consistently argued that, provided the political content was correct, a good deal of variety in form could be tolerated. This rather flexible attitude toward form accommodated another problem that Marxist theorists like Ch'en were coping with, namely, the question of intellectual level. Ch'en, who had spent much of his career writing for fairly sophisticated urban audiences, thought that there was no inherent contradiction between elite and popular culture, merely a difference in methods of approach. The educated population could be reached through essays and novels; the illiterate peasant masses could be reached by storytellers and popular drama. The correct political content would inevitably lead to the use of proper cultural forms designed to appeal to the particular audience that was under consideration.

Above all, the political line taken in the cultural field must be the correct one. Ch'en, Chou, and others agreed on this, but their view was in sharp contrast to that of people like Hu Feng and Feng Hsüeh-feng. These latter believed that form had to deter-

mine content—that is, that modern political ideas could not be transmitted in traditional cultural forms because the forms would inevitably corrupt the contents. Therefore it was necessary, they argued, to raise the cultural level of the masses by encouraging them to appreciate the new cultural forms of the West and by discouraging the continued use of China's traditional cultural forms. (They did not accept the distinction between landlord and peasant traditions in literary forms, for example, since they regarded all Chinese literature of the past as being “feudal,” and therefore reactionary.)⁴⁵ Gradually, the position taken by Hu and Feng gave way to the ideas of Ch'en and Chou, which eventually came to represent Mao's own views on the subject. Coming directly from Mao's mouth at the Yen-an forums, these cultural theories now became official CCP policy, and they filled an important gap in Mao's claim to be a leading Marxist-Leninist theorist in his own right.

It should be made clear that in his remarks to these forums, Mao's primary concern was not art and literature at all, but rather politics, to which he always gave priority. In an obvious reference to the dissident writers, Mao insisted that all party members, including those involved in literature and the arts, “adopt the stand of the party, the stand of party spirit and party policy.” Unfortunately, Mao continued, “many comrades have themselves frequently departed from the correct stand,” with the inevitable result that serious defects exist on questions of both content and form in revolutionary art and literature.⁴⁶ On the relative importance of content and form, Mao was unambiguous as to where his priorities lay: “As I see it,” he told his audience, “the political side [i.e. content] is more of a problem at present. Some comrades lack basic political understanding and consequently have all sorts of muddled ideas.”⁴⁷ One of these “muddled ideas” was the tendency on the part of “some comrades” to look down upon the need to popularize art and literature, and to place undue emphasis on the importance of elevation. This erroneous point of view, Mao argued, was due to a failure to understand that “popularization and elevation cannot be sharply separated. . . . The people need popularization, but along with it they need elevation too.”⁴⁸

Mao then went on to praise the ideological struggle that was “already under way in literary and art circles in Yen-an,” describing it as a struggle of “proletarian ideology against nonproletarian ideology.”⁴⁹ This served fair warning that no one was to expect an easy ride if he engaged in oppositional activities, whether in speech, print, or behavior.

Although Mao’s talks on art and literature were not published in *Liberation Daily* until October 19, 1943, nearly eighteen months after he delivered them, the delay seems not to have had any great significance, for certainly there was no delay in stepping up the ideological struggle.* The forum on art and literature was soon followed by another forum on “party democracy and discipline.” This forum, held between May 27 and June 13, 1942, at the Central Research Institute, is much less well known than the famous one that preceded it, but it seems clearly to have been at least as important as the earlier one in the development of *cheng-feng*, if not of greater importance.

It was at this series of meetings that the Maoists drove home their attack on the dissident writers and, through them, on all manifestations of opposition within the party. Fortunately for historians, the *Liberation Daily* reporter Wen Chi-tse has provided a skeleton outline of the forum in his “Diary of a Struggle,” published on June 28 and 29. According to Wen, in its early days the forum concentrated on the general problem of reconciling the need for both democracy and discipline in the party. Very soon, however, the main topic of discussion turned out to be Wang Shih-wei, and as the days went by, exposing him and denouncing him became the chief preoccupation of those participating in the sessions.

A few years later, Mao candidly acknowledged that Wang Shih-wei had become a major problem by 1942: “Remember the article [“The Wild Lily”] that Wang Shih-wei wrote? Many people followed him at the time. Chu Te and I lost. Wang Shih-wei became a ‘marshal’ in Yen-an. So what? The cultural workers did

*The delay was probably due to a lingering reluctance on the part of Mao’s ranking colleagues to support his theoretical claims uncritically, especially in the cultural sphere, which was not really one of his areas of expertise. On this point, see pp. 193–94 following.

not want to labor among the workers and peasants.”⁵⁰ But even in 1945 Mao still seemed troubled by the political difficulties that Wang had created, in particular by his charges that the leading party officials were specially privileged with more generous food and clothing allocations. These accusations apparently caused resentment among the peasants when the party levied new demands on them. As Mao put it: “Then we demanded 200,000 *tan* of food from the people. Then the people complained and asked, ‘Why did lightning not strike Mao dead?’ This aroused us.”⁵¹ Shortly thereafter, the *cheng-feng* and production campaigns were launched, and, as Mao concluded tersely, “the situation changed.”

As Goldman has suggested, there were other reasons why Wang was singled out as the main public target of *cheng-feng*. In addition to being the “most caustic” of the writers in his criticisms of the party, he was one of the least known and hence “most vulnerable” in the group, and there was little doubt that he had at one time had definite connections with Trotskyism. Finally, Wang had been in “constant conflict” with Ch’en Po-ta ever since their quarrel in the autumn and winter of 1940–41. This last consideration may well have been what sealed Wang’s fate.⁵² At least we know that during the campaign Ch’en emerged as the party’s leading spokesman on the “Wang Shih-wei problem,” and his speeches and articles attacking Wang were given due prominence in the Yen-an press. In the summer of 1942, this shy and stammering scholar was to become the pivot of the Maoist purge of ideological dissidence within the party, a role he was to repeat on a much larger scale during the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960’s.

In the course of the forum sessions, Wang was denounced by a wide variety of critics besides Ch’en Po-ta, including, ironically, Ting Ling, Ai Ch’ing, and several other of Wang’s literary colleagues on the left. But the feud between Wang and Ch’en was by far the most bitter. It poisoned the atmosphere of the forum meetings and was at times so vindictive that the debate took on some of the character of a witch hunt. Wang was his own best defender. He complained of having been discriminated against “on all sides” from the time he arrived in Yen-an and of having

been labeled an “opportunist” by Ch’en in their debate on national forms in literature. According to Wen’s account, Wang became at this point very agitated and loudly denounced Ch’en as a “sectarian” to his face, and had to be restrained from further outbursts against Ch’en at that session.⁵³

But Ch’en, too, in spite of his stammer, was an outspoken opponent, and in his major speech to the forum on June 9 he made the most of his skill in the use of invective puns, both witty and vulgar. Playing on Wang’s personal name, he spoke scornfully of “Wang Shit-stench” (*Wang Shih-wei*), who, he said, described himself as a “man of integrity” (*ying-ku-t’ou*)—that is, a man with “hard bones.” Not so, Ch’en said. Not only did Wang not have hard bones, he was little more than a leech, which of course has no bones at all. And though leeches may be small and harmless-looking, they can be very dangerous, for they suck people’s blood and injure them in many other ways. One cannot be too vigilant in guarding against these harmful little creatures, he cautioned the audience, for they are often hidden deep within such seemingly beautiful flowers as “wild lilies”—an allusion to Wang’s by now infamous essay of the same title.⁵⁴

Before launching this viciously clever attack on his opponent, Ch’en had run through a long list of specific charges against Wang. These were duly printed in the extensive excerpts from his speech that appeared in *Liberation Daily* on June 15. Ch’en’s list of charges is so formidable that one can quite understand Wang’s reputed characterization of Ch’en as one of his “biggest enemies” in Yen-an. In a lengthy speech, which Wen Chi-tse described as “brilliant,” Ch’en accused Wang of, among much else, political intrigue, ideological dogmatism, cultural elitism, personal careerism, and disruptive activities directed against Mao Tse-tung. In particular, Ch’en was incensed at what he took to be Wang’s flagrant hypocrisy. Wang posed as a morally superior critic of the party’s shortcomings, Ch’en alleged, but in fact he was an ambitious schemer. For example, while attacking the party’s failure to build a classless society, he made no secret of wanting to eat in the “small kitchen” and wear “cadre clothes” (both being status symbols in the party hierarchy in Yen-an). Also, while proclaiming his own selflessness, he “clamored loudly for

fees” for certain editorial and translation work at the Central Research Institute and even tried to get himself promoted as the director of the institute’s Art and Literature Research Section.⁵⁵

Ch’en’s speech was a powerful combination of theoretical disputation, political maneuvering, and personal vindictiveness, and it set the tone not only for the campaign against Wang Shih-wei but also for much of the ideological struggle that wracked the whole party structure at Yen-an during the remainder of 1942 and the early months of 1943. The unfortunate Wang Shih-wei thus became a model negative example of all that was wrong with the party as the Maoists conceived it. Ch’en’s final pronouncement on Wang was a cutting blow of the harshest sort: “The content of Wang Shih-wei’s ideology is Trotskyism, which is anti-masses, anti-nation, anti-revolution, and anti-Marxist, and serves the ruling classes, Japanese imperialism, and international fascism.”⁵⁶

It was something of a wonder that Wang, with the odds stacked so heavily against him, did not capitulate at once. That he did not is proved by Ch’en’s taking the trouble to complain that even though the essential Trotskyist nature of Wang’s ideological position had been fully exposed, he refused to admit guilt and persisted in his erroneous views. According to Wen Chi-tse, Wang protested that *cheng-feng* was nothing more than a campaign in which “Chairman Mao is uniting the orthodox people [in the party] to oppose those who are unorthodox.”⁵⁷ But Wang’s protests were all in vain. That summer he was arrested. Much later, Mao himself admitted (with regret) that Wang had been executed as a result of a local-level decision by the security organs during the evacuation of Yen-an in 1947.⁵⁸ Where he spent the years 1943–47 can only be guessed at, but most likely he was under some form of detention.

Wang Shih-wei was the outstanding victim of the initial negative phase of the *cheng-feng* movement, a phase that came to an end with the final session of the forum at the Central Research Institute on June 13. Thenceforth, the focus of the movement switched from the heated denunciation of all “incorrect” ideas within the party to the affirmation of what the Maoists perceived to be the “correct” ideological position. Ch’en Po-ta continued to play a prominent role in this more positive phase, and he en-

deavored in the second half of 1942 and early 1943 to define the general guidelines of thought reform among the cadres. In a series of some half-dozen articles and speeches in *Liberation Daily* beginning on June 27, 1942, Ch'en hammered away at one main theme—the importance of eliminating the evil of petit bourgeois ideology from the minds of certain of the cadres within the party. These unfortunate people, in Ch'en's diagnosis, were suffering from the “illness” of dogmatism, and they were in urgent need of the services of a reputable physician. And he of course recommended “Comrade Mao Tse-tung and the party Central Committee” as “good doctors” (*hao ti ta-fu*) in the specialized field of ideological pathology.⁵⁹

The cadres in their quest for mental health should “continuously arm their minds with Marxism-Leninism,” Ch'en urged, for only by doing so could they successfully make the all-important transition from perceptual to conceptual knowledge, thereby achieving a true understanding of the real world. He realized that the transition would not be easily achieved, and he pointed out that although the CCP had over the years produced many notable theorists and leaders, none of those who were active mainly in the theoretical field (i.e. not including Mao) had created a distinctive Chinese revolutionary theory. Even his own efforts to develop a theory had achieved very little, Ch'en acknowledged—but that was because he had not been sufficiently industrious and persistent.⁶⁰ Ch'en's emphasis on the importance of sincere self-criticism among the cadres is a continuing theme in his writings during this period. In one speech in particular he stresses the need for every individual cadre to make a full confession to the party of his personal shortcomings and errors in the past, so as to achieve a “new life” and a “new ideology.”⁶¹

In response to those who might fear that such a total surrender to the party would mean the destruction of human individuality, Ch'en relied on the argument that human nature is essentially the same as class nature; therefore it followed that the character of the Chinese Communist Party was the concentrated expression of the character of the Chinese proletariat, which in turn was the manifestation of the most progressive form of human nature in China. Hence, in surrendering to the Chinese Communist Party, a cadre was not liquidating his own particular individuality but

was in fact filling it with a new content—proletarian human nature. Ch'en never denied the existence of individual character, which is the product of social conditioning, and he urged the party to take into full account the individuality of its many diverse members, but he tried to persuade the skeptics that the basic interests of a truly proletarian political party and its individual members should be identical, and that the individual member should constantly strive to maintain this fundamental harmony. If an individual party member perceived a clash between his personal interests and those of the party, Ch'en said it was incumbent upon him to subordinate his own interests to those of the party.⁶²

In all this disputation on the importance of self-criticism and thought reform, Ch'en did not appear to differ significantly from the views held by other top party leaders such as Mao Tse-tung, Liu Shao-ch'i, and Ch'en Yün, all of whom were currently devoting some attention to similar questions.* Yet, the just-mentioned essay by Ch'en on human nature is of special interest to us, for it has been carefully scrutinized by David S. Nivison, who has concluded that it represents an excellent case study of "Sinification and synthesis" in the Chinese Communist handling of ethical questions.⁶³ Indeed, Nivison claims that Ch'en's essay is "of a piece" with the techniques of the Buddhist missionaries who came to China in the early years of the Christian era. That is to say, Buddhist texts that seemed relevant to Taoist interests were selected for emphasis, and Buddhist concepts, where possible, "were conveyed by equating them with Taoist ones." In effect, argues Nivison, Ch'en "ostensibly picks up the problem [of human nature] where Chinese philosophy leaves off." Of all the ancient philosophers, Ch'en picks Kao Tzu (a heterodox opponent of Mencius) as being closest to the truth in his understanding of

*See, for example, Liu Shao-ch'i's essay of June 1941, "The Class Character of Man." Although Liu's basic understanding of human nature is similar to Ch'en's, it is unlikely that Ch'en would have endorsed Liu's harsh characterization of the "narrow-mindedness" and "backwardness" of the peasantry, and his unfavorable comparison of them with the industrial proletariat, whom he praises lavishly. Unlike Liu, who came from a small landlord background, Ch'en was born into a "poor peasant" family, and he invariably emphasizes the strengths of the peasant masses rather than their weaknesses. Liu's essay is included as an appendix in Liu Shao-ch'i, *How to Be a Good Communist*, (Peking, 1951), pp. 113-20.

human nature; that is, human nature is not cast in an absolute mold but is “good” or “bad” according to the specific circumstances in which it takes form. In Kao Tzu’s view, Ch’en says, human nature is like a stream of water: “Open a way to the east and it will flow to the east; open a way to the west and it will flow to the west.” Kao Tzu’s concept of the relativity of man’s nature is immediately recognizable in Ch’en’s modern Marxist concept of human nature as being “progressive” or “reactionary” according to the special class environment in which it is molded.

In the same way, Nivison argues, Ch’en establishes relationships between past and present in seeming to equate party nature with the Neo-Confucian concept of *li*, the undesirable part of individual human nature with the Buddhist idea of (bad) karma, the desirable part of individual human nature with the Neo-Confucian idea of “individuality” (especially after Wang Yang-ming), and unselfish devotion to the party with the Confucian concept of “sincerity.” Thus in these and other ways, Ch’en Po-ta is able to introduce Marxist concepts of human nature (as he understands them) in a format that would make sense within the Neo-Confucian tradition. Nivison concludes from this that Ch’en, in his Chinese definition of the Marxist view of human nature, knows clearly how Marx differs from Chinese tradition, but he states his definition “in such a way as to make it read easily as a chapter in Chinese ethical literature.” This, of course, was precisely Ch’en Po-ta’s strength as perhaps the CCP’s leading proponent and practitioner of Sinification at the time.

By late 1942 the *cheng-feng* movement had been well and truly launched in Yen-an, and it was decided to extend the campaign to other areas as well. Such was Ch’en Po-ta’s importance that he was sent in late 1942 to launch the Rectification Movement among party cadres and left-wing intellectuals in Chungking, the Nationalists’ wartime capital. Little is known of Ch’en’s specific tasks in Chungking, but he seems to have joined the editorial boards of both the *New China Daily* and the Life Bookstore.⁶⁴ These two organizations were the CCP’s major instruments of propaganda in Nationalist-controlled China, and they were the logical vehicles for the expansion of the *cheng-feng* outside Yen-an. As in Yen-an, the name of Wang Shih-wei was held up to criticism as the model negative example in the campaign, and the same party ideologists—Ch’en Po-ta, Ai Ssu-ch’i, and Chou Yang—remained

his chief accusers. The well-known Communist literary critics Feng Hsüeh-feng and Hu Feng emerged as the party's prime targets on the local scene in Chungking, and they were held up with Wang Shih-wei as the chief symbols of ideological dissidence in the Communist movement. The campaign in Chungking could not be quite as thorough as it had been in Yen-an, but it used the same methods of small-group study and self-criticism.⁶⁵

In addition to his specific *cheng-feng* duties, Ch'en took advantage of this opportunity of living in Chungking to familiarize himself with the general ideological climate within the Nationalist camp. This period of late 1942 and early 1943 was one of intense intellectual activity on both sides in Chungking, for the Nationalists were preparing to capitalize on the increasing evidence of an ultimate Allied victory over the Axis powers. Ch'en was thus in a good position to follow the changing atmosphere among the Nationalists and to learn something about the important ideological offensive that Chiang Kai-shek was to launch with the publication in March 1943 of his key treatise, *China's Destiny*. The CCP's counteroffensive on the ideological front was to be one of the party's primary concerns in the coming years, and Ch'en Po-ta, upon his return to Yen-an, was to play a central role in the unfolding drama. Mao Tse-tung was to be cast as the heroic lead, and Ch'en Po-ta emerged as the acknowledged playwright.

Emergence of a Maoist Cult?

Mao Tse-tung's prestige as the CCP's top leader—and leading theorist—soared to new heights during the Rectification Movement. Mao delivered the keynote speeches calling for *cheng-feng*, and he was the single most important theorist to be studied during the movement. In addition, he set the party's policy in the controversial field of art and literature in May 1942, and he delivered the definitive report on the party's economic work the following December. Moreover, leading party officials like K'ang Sheng had declared the party's general line since Tsunyi to be entirely correct. Mao's growing stature was reflected in seemingly insignificant ways too; on December 14, 1941, for example, *Liberation Daily* revealed that Hsiaò San, a boyhood friend of Mao, had recently completed a long manuscript on his recollections of

Mao as a youth. Pleading lack of space, the newspaper published only a few brief extracts from Hsiao's original text, one of which established Mao's intellectual inheritance from Li Ta-chao, who was himself gradually emerging posthumously as the CCP's official founding father. The article was accompanied by a picture of Mao as a young student. These extracts are apparently the first biographical study of Mao to have appeared in the official CCP press, and they are a marker on the way in the building of the Mao image.* Another marker was the poem "Mao Tse-tung," published sometime in late 1941 or early 1942 by the well-known poet Ai Ch'ing, who later became identified with the leftist dissident writers during *cheng-feng*.⁶⁶ There were other signs, too. A brief news item in *Liberation Daily* on August 28, 1941, revealed the continued existence of the institute for the education of young cadres that had been named for Mao Tse-tung, although it was later amalgamated into the newly created Yen-an University. Also, what appears to be the first official reference to Mao as party "chairman" (*chu-hsi*) dates from 1942—in a headline in *Liberation Daily* for March 10, 1942, which referred to "Chairman Mao and various comrades on the Central Committee." Taken in context, the headline indicates that Mao was now being regarded as the chairman of the party's Central Committee, and not merely of its Military Commission, though his formal elevation to this key position did not take place until about a year later.⁶⁷

The most graphic illustration of the doctrinal implications of Mao's growing supremacy was a cartoon that appeared on page 4 of *Liberation Daily* on April 6, 1942. Franz Schurmann in 1966 made an observation that has relevance here: "If Mao's picture were ever to be ranged alongside the sacred quadrumvirate [of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin], symbolically this would mean that Mao would have become the creator of new theory, binding on all Marxist-Leninist parties."⁶⁸ The cartoon suggests that some

*Hsiao San, "Mao Tse-tung t'ung-chih ti shao-nien shih-tai" (The Era of Comrade Mao Tse-tung's Youth), *Chieh-fang jih-pao*, December 14, 1941, p. 4. During the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960's, Li Ta-chao, Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai, and many other once-revered CCP leaders were downgraded in the Chinese press, but this was only a temporary phenomenon. Like Teng Hsiao-ping, they have since been rehabilitated and have taken their former esteemed place in CCP history.

in the Maoist camp were thinking along these lines as early as 1942, in the midst of the Rectification Campaign. The cartoon (signed Chang O) shows a strutting young man (a Returned Student or a dissident intellectual?) comparing himself with the "greats" of the international Communist movement as he poses before a wall upon which hang portraits of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin—and Mao Tse-tung! The legend makes the point quite explicitly, ridiculing, one infers, the claim of the Returned Students to ideological eminence within the leadership of the CCP and the attempt of the dissident intellectuals to criticize Mao's leadership. At least it ridicules the pretensions of the youth, who is said to regard himself as "Lao Tzu t'ien-hsia ti-liu." In a free translation, he is saying, "I'm the sixth greatest in the world!"

But this was after all only a cartoon. A more substantial indication of Mao's growing prestige as a theorist of distinction was provided in the short essay Chu Te wrote to commemorate the CCP's twenty-first anniversary. Published on July 1, 1942, the essay was evidently the only formal commemoration by *Liberation Daily* of this particular anniversary, and since Chu Te was one of the top figures in both the party and the army, the essay very clearly was being given special prominence not only by the name of its author but also by its being the only commemorative essay that year. The theme of the essay is essentially that of Mao's claim to undisputed leadership.

Never one to dwell unduly on ideological questions, Chu nonetheless is at pains here to point out that the CCP, in its long and arduous years of struggle, had "correctly grasped Marxist-Leninist theory," and had even "created a Sinified Marxist-Leninist theory to guide the Chinese revolution." Then he makes the following observation:

Today, having been tempered by a long period of revolutionary struggle, our party now has its own most talented leader in Comrade Mao Tse-tung. He has genuinely comprehended Marxist-Leninist theory, and moreover is adept at using this theory to guide the Chinese revolution step by step to victory. Not only is he the most authoritative person in our entire party, but he also enjoys the greatest political confidence among the people throughout the country. In addition, a large number of sincere and courageous party cadres, fully experienced in struggle and having close relations with the masses, have been nurtured for the party and the revolution under his education and care.⁶⁹

Mao could not have written a better appreciation himself. Chu depicts him virtually as the soul of the party and the revolution, equally talented as leader, thinker, and educator. Nor was his greatness limited to the Chinese Communist movement: it spread beyond to the whole of the nation itself.

As if following Chu Te's lead, that same month at least two other military leaders praised Mao in the party press. P'eng Te-huai lauded Mao's concept of "new democracy," and argued that he had effectively synthesized Marxist theory and Chinese practice. Ch'en Yi declared that Mao's strategy and the Chinese revolution were of great international significance.⁷⁰ Once again, as in the months following the party's Sixth Plenum in late 1938, it was the military commanders rather than the party's top officials who were taking the lead in advancing the claims of Mao Tse-tung to supremacy within the Chinese Communist movement. It was not until the summer of 1943, fully a year after Chu Te's commemorative essay, that such eminent party officials as Liu Shao-ch'i, Chou En-lai, and Wang Chia-hsiang (and even Po Ku) were to join their military colleagues in the public glorification of Mao.

In fact, in spite of the obvious rise in stature that Mao and his writings experienced during *cheng-feng*, one can detect a reluctance on the part of most leading party officials to push things too far. Although the trend toward the glorification of Mao as the single most important leader was clear enough, there seems at the same time to have been an equally strong tendency to maintain the prestige and authority of the Central Committee. For example, Chu Te did not fail to point out that it was both the "party Central Committee and Comrade Mao Tse-tung" who alerted the party to the dangers of ideological deviance, and he concluded that the successful implementation of *cheng-feng* required the joint leadership of "Comrade Mao Tse-tung and our party Central Committee."⁷¹ Ch'en Po-ta, too, was mindful of the issue of collective leadership; in one speech in particular he attributed the success of the CCP to the key role of the party's "great leaders," represented by "Comrade Mao Tse-tung and others."⁷² Therefore it is not surprising that Mao himself took care not to be seen to place himself above the top party organ. In a Politburo resolution of September 1, 1942, for example (which Mao wrote

himself), it was stated that the ideological education of cadres was to be carried out on the basis of "Central Committee resolutions and Comrade Mao Tse-tung's reports."⁷³ It would appear, then, that even though Mao was not averse to recommending the study of his own writings during *cheng-feng*, he still felt it necessary to acknowledge the collective leadership of the Central Committee.

This constant pairing of Mao and the Central Committee leads us to an important observation, namely, that the Rectification Movement did not by itself lead directly to the unrestrained cult of Mao Tse-tung that burst upon the Chinese Communist movement in the summer of 1943, culminating in the incorporation of "Mao Tse-tung's thought" in the party constitution of 1945. Current interpretations of the *cheng-feng* campaign uniformly tend to view the cult of Mao in 1943 and later as the planned and inevitable result of the movement. Stuart Schram, for instance, reflects this close connection of campaign and cult in declaring that the appearance of Liu Shao-ch'i's unashamedly hagiographic praise of Mao in July 1943 "may be taken as marking the symbolic ending of the campaign."⁷⁴ This appears to be a reasonable conclusion, and one would be hard pressed to deny that some kind of Maoist cult inevitably had to flow from *cheng-feng*. Yet, there are cults and cults, and it seems to me that the cult of Mao that appeared in mid-1943—in the broadness of its claims, the intensity of its propagation, and the variety of its forms—was partly the product of a very special set of interrelated domestic and international conditions that developed over the winter of 1942–43. Had these specific conditions been absent at this time, it is unlikely that the personal cult of Mao would have reached the heights that it did, or that the final triumph of Mao Tse-tung's thought would have been as thorough as it was. In other words, it was because of a particular set of conditions that Mao was able to triumph so spectacularly over the party between 1943 and 1945, and these same conditions were what helped to establish the distinctive relationship between leader and party that was to color much of Chinese politics in the years after 1949.

The Triumph of
 “Mao Tse-tung’s Thought,”
 1943

The Nationalists’ Ideological Offensive

The concentrated program of public glorification of Mao Tse-tung as supreme leader of the CCP that began in July 1943 was truly amazing in its intensity and scope, and it is the major theme of party history during the period 1943–45. This glorification, or cult if you like, can be explained by the impressive control that Mao and his faction had gained over the party by the end of 1942; the Returned Students had been routed, and during *cheng-feng* Mao’s political and military preeminence within the Chinese Communist movement had been augmented on the ideological front. Even in the economic sphere the gods seemed to be smiling on Mao, for by the end of 1942 the worst effects of the Japanese and Nationalist blockades of the Red areas had been surmounted, thus demonstrating the validity of Mao’s economic and fiscal policies. As Mao claimed in his lengthy report on the economy in December 1942, between 1941 and the end of 1942 the “firm foundation of self-reliance in production was laid. . . . We are overcoming difficulties.¹

By the spring of 1943 Mao’s personal position within the party was extremely strong, definite signs of public hero worship had already made their appearance, and the movement showed all likelihood of continuing to grow, given the normal course of events. Many students of Chinese Communism are therefore of the opinion that the “cult” of Mao and his thought was more or less an inevitable product of Mao’s political supremacy within the CCP. Noriyuki Tokuda, for example, seems to reach such a conclusion: “Considered as a consequence of the process of strengthening Mao’s leadership which began in 1935, [the] erup-

tion of the Mao cult indicated . . . that Mao's 'big push' toward his complete domination of the CCP had been successful."²

I do not at all deny that there was a fundamental causal connection between Mao's rise to power in the CCP and the subsequent emergence of his cult, but as I stated at the end of the preceding chapter, it is my conclusion that the rapidity, vigor, and depth with which the cult developed were essentially due to a fortuitous set of circumstances, both domestic and foreign, that took shape in late 1942 and the spring of 1943. These were, most importantly, the Battle of Stalingrad, the publication of Chiang Kai-shek's *China's Destiny*, and the dissolution of the Comintern. By the end of May 1943, these events had conjoined to provide a most suitable environment for the blossoming of the cult of Mao Tse-tung and his thought. These three events have usually been underestimated in most discussions of the appearance of the cult, with the result that there has been too great an emphasis on the apparent inevitability of the cult's emerging from the internal political processes of the CCP. I would suggest that since the CCP, like all complex social organizations, has been shaped in large part by the particular environment in which it has functioned, forces both at home and abroad cannot but have had some influence on the precise configuration of forces that govern its internal evolution.

One of the points that must be borne in mind is that the cult of Mao developed in the context of ever increasing Nationalist-Communist rivalry, in which each side attempted to elevate its leader and ideology to a position of first importance in Chinese political life. A powerful impetus was given this rivalry by the sharp deterioration of the united front, as exemplified in the New Fourth Army incident of January 1941 and in subsequent "incidents" too numerous to mention. But the first part of 1941 was hardly a propitious time for the two rivals to force a showdown. The Japanese were well entrenched in China and were beginning to expand into Southeast Asia with little effective resistance coming from the European powers or the United States. Most of Europe had in fact been conquered by the invading Germans, and Britain was just beginning to recover from the onslaught of the Luftwaffe. Russia had gained an unknown amount of breathing space through its mutual nonaggression treaties with both

Germany and Japan, and the United States appeared disinclined to enter the war unless forced to do so by direct attack upon American soil. With the international situation so menacing, neither the Nationalists nor the Communists were really in a position to drive the wedge between themselves even deeper. Chiang Kai-shek was having to divert a good deal of his energy to the task of repairing the damage done to the Nationalists' image by the defection of Wang Ching-wei and the establishment of his puppet government in Nanking, and Mao Tse-tung was fending off the divisive tendencies within the CCP that were threatening his position as leader. Under these circumstances, it was incumbent upon both leaders to put their houses in order and await a more favorable war situation before forcing a final confrontation with the other.

This more favorable situation began to take shape in the second half of 1941; Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union in June brought the reluctant Russians into the struggle, and Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor in December brought in the equally reluctant Americans. From the point of view of the Nationalists and Communists alike in China, the war could not have taken a better turn, and it is not surprising that they both adopted a scarcely disguised attitude of "sitting on a mountain top to watch the tigers fight." In deciding upon the attack on Pearl Harbor, even the Japanese leaders themselves realized they could not survive a long war of attrition with the United States, and this observation was not entirely lost on their Chinese adversaries.³ The Chinese were disappointed when Washington decided to give immediate priority to the Western front, for this permitted the Japanese a bit more breathing space than would have been the case otherwise. Nonetheless, the Chinese were gratified to see that Japan's reckless overextension of its military capacity gradually began to take its toll, and their thoughts soon turned to the problem of the appropriate offensive response.

The whole process was speeded up by the addition of a most powerful catalyst—Stalingrad. Between September 1942 and February 1943, the beleaguered Russians managed first to stop and then to turn back the German invasion in a heroic victory comparable to the Russian repulse of Napoleon in the autumn and winter of 1812. The Soviet victory at Stalingrad effectively turned

the tide of the war in favor of the Allies, and it had a tremendous psychological impact not only on the Western world but in the Far East as well. Certainly, the momentous significance of Stalingrad was well appreciated by Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Tse-tung, both of whom saw in the Russian victory their own personal opportunity to take the offensive.⁴ The offensive they had in mind, however, was not to be directed primarily at the Japanese, who had been faring rather badly in the Pacific naval war with the United States and whose fortunes had further declined in the wake of Stalingrad, but against one another. The continuing demands of an at least nominal wartime unity may have prevented the upsurge of actual civil war prior to the final defeat of the Japanese, but the two sides were free to carry on a war of words, or a battle for ideological supremacy throughout the nation. The final struggle for the allegiance of the Chinese people was initiated on the ideological front in the spring of 1943, extended to the military sphere in 1946, and finally resolved with the sweeping Communist victory of 1949.

Like Mao, Chiang Kai-shek had a keen appreciation of the value of ideological struggle, but he was on the whole much less adept than his adversary in employing it to effect. Nonetheless, Chiang got the jump on the Communists by publishing, on March 10, 1943, his celebrated book, *China's Destiny*, and simultaneously launching a massive countrywide ideological campaign to promote the book and the Nationalist cause. This book—most of which was probably written by T'ao Hsi-sheng, a long-time Nationalist adviser—was drafted while the Russians were stoutly defending the city of Stalingrad, and it clearly reflects the optimism inspired by the turn in the war against the Axis.⁵ Chiang confidently declares that the “opportunity for the recovery of the nation and the hope of the rebirth of the state are now presented to the citizens of the entire country”—an opportunity on which his book is obviously intended to capitalize.⁶

Though this book was declared at the time to be the “most important book written since the *Three People's Principles* of Sun Yat-sen,” it is often difficult in style and obscure in meaning; accordingly, a catechism, synopsis, and book of notes were also published as reference aids for the book's potential readers. That they were to be numerous was determined by the fact that *China's*

Destiny became required reading for all civil servants, military officers, members of the Nationalist Youth Corps, and students at the party's Central Political Training Institute. Further, the book was designated the "most important extracurricular reading matter" in Chinese schools, colleges, and universities, as well as the subject of formal examinations at all levels of the educational system. It was truly, as Philip Jaffe has said, the "political bible" of the Chinese Nationalists and the centerpiece of their nationwide ideological campaign.⁷

The central thesis of *China's Destiny* is that China must have a correct ideology as the foundation of all revolutionary endeavor and national reconstruction. Chiang says this again and again. "Sun Yat-sen," he declares, "saw that the basis of the success of the revolution lay in the psychological reconstruction of the people."⁸ This is of course a proposition that even Mao Tse-tung (his Marxism notwithstanding) would have endorsed, but it leaves open the question of the specific content of such reconstruction at the psychological level. Chiang quickly dismisses both "Liberalism and Communism" as unsuitable to the tasks ahead, because they are foreign ideologies that are inherently "opposed to the spirit of China's own civilization" and will actually cause the "decay and ruin of Chinese civilization."⁹ Instead, the people must follow the Chinese way:

The psychological reconstruction of the people should be based on the development of an independent ideology, in which the greatest emphasis must be placed on a revival of the nation's ancient culture and the cultivation of genuinely scientific knowledge. . . . The teachings of Sun Yat-sen were based on China's ancient culture, and combined with this the most advanced theories of the world in order to formulate China's superior principles of national reconstruction.¹⁰

With the substitution of Mao Tse-tung's name for that of Sun Yat-sen, this passage could easily have appeared on the editorial page of *Liberation Daily*. It is a striking illustration of the degree to which the Nationalists and Communists had converged on the importance of constructing an official ideology that was at once distinctly Chinese and undeniably modern. The real issue between the two political movements was, of course, the question of which of them best represented the "correct" path for the Chinese people to follow, and which could make the most convincing

case in its favor. *China's Destiny* states the case for the Nationalists: the "highest guiding principle in the War of Resistance is the Three People's Principles, and the highest directing organization is the Kuomintang."¹¹ With this bow to Sun Yat-sen, Chiang steps forward willingly to accept the role of the new father of the nation and the instructor of the masses: "I, Chiang Kai-shek, have been identified from the beginning with restarting the Republic of China on the road to independence and freedom. . . . I wish all my countrymen to examine thoroughly what I have written, and carry these precepts into practice."¹²

One experienced student of modern Chinese history has remarked that it was no coincidence that Chiang became head of the National Central University at Chungking at the same time that he published *China's Destiny* as a textbook. Following an "ancient pattern" in Chinese political leadership, Chiang Kai-shek was inevitably seeking to "progress from the status of Hero to that of Sage."¹³ The observation raises the important but difficult question of whether or not the need to find the "one transcendent leader" is an integral aspect of Chinese political culture. From the point of view of the elite, there is little doubt that the absence (at least since the Ch'in unification in 221 B.C.) of a sharp differentiation between political and ideological authority in traditional China had led to a situation where the emperor was regarded as "a sage within and a king without" (*nei sheng wai wang*).¹⁴ This remains true even if we accept the argument that the totalitarian implications of this formulation were fully exploited only under the Ming dynasty, and perpetuated subsequently by the Ch'ing.

By the early twentieth century, popular submission to an omnipotent and omniscient sage-king was characteristic of Chinese political culture, at least in the opinion of the incisive social critic Lu Hsün. Lu lamented, somewhat caustically, that the Chinese people had been so brutalized over the centuries that they actually welcomed the appearance of such a sage-king, especially during times of great chaos and suffering: "At this point, the only wish of the population is to find a Master, a Master who would deign to accept them as his people—no, not even that—who would deign to accept them as his cattle. The people would be ready to eat grass if necessary; all they ask is that the Master

point out in what direction they must trot."¹⁵ Lu Hsün is indulging in hyperbole here, but there is little doubt that by the twentieth century the concept of the all-powerful sage-king was ingrained to some extent at all levels of Chinese society (notwithstanding Mencius' famous dictum on the right of the people to rebel against oppressive rulers who were believed to have forfeited the Mandate of Heaven). It is thus conceivable that this distinctive political heritage made the powerful cults of Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Tse-tung in the early 1940's almost inevitable. Be that as it may, the special domestic and international circumstances in the spring of 1943 made it very easy for both Chiang and Mao to conclude that the time was ripe to seek the transition from hero to sage.

The propaganda campaign launched by the Nationalist Party to accompany the circulation of *China's Destiny* was hardly under way when another event occurred to heighten the tension between the Nationalists and the Communists. This was the dissolution of the Communist International, which took place on May 15. The Chinese Communists were of course aware of the implications of the KMT campaign; as we know from later events, leading CCP polemicists such as Ch'en Po-ta were commissioned to prepare an official critique of the major points in Chiang's book. The dissolution of the Communist International came as an almost complete surprise in the midst of the growing battle for supremacy in China.

Having come into the war against Germany as a full ally of the Western democracies, the Soviet Union was increasingly obsessed with the struggle in Europe to the relative neglect of the war zones farther to the east. Stalin realized that the Comintern, dedicated as it was to the promotion of proletarian revolution in the very nations with which Russia was allied in the desperate struggle against fascism, was in a somewhat incongruous position, and rather than continue to fend off Allied prompting, he decided to make a gesture of good will (to the United States in particular). Therefore the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Comintern adopted a resolution recommending that the world organization be dissolved.¹⁶

In a sense, the Comintern had been put aside as early as 1935, when its Seventh World Congress emphasized the importance of

strengthening the national Communist parties and encouraging their participation in the anti-fascist united fronts being promoted everywhere by the Soviet Union. Still, the members had to make some formal response to the Presidium's resolution, and on May 26 the Secretariat of the Chinese Communist Party convened a meeting in Yen-an to discuss the matter. The resolution adopted at the meeting fully endorsed the Comintern's decision. Mao was wholly in agreement. He acknowledged that the Comintern had given the CCP invaluable assistance in its early years; nonetheless, the CCP, he declared, was the creation of historic forces within China, and it would have come into existence and prospered even without the help of the Comintern.¹⁷ In fact, he said, now that the Comintern was departing from the scene, there was every reason to believe that the Chinese party would develop even more rapidly than before. As the Central Committee resolution phrased it, the new situation would "further strengthen" the self-confidence and creativity of all CCP members, "further consolidate" relations between the party and the Chinese people, and "further heighten" the party's fighting spirit for the arduous tasks ahead.¹⁸

The CCP's enthusiastic response to the demise of the Comintern was not at all a contrived one, simply to put a brave face on a *fait accompli* on the part of their Russian comrades. It was a genuine statement of relief and satisfaction. The Maoists in the party had long doubted the real value of the Comintern, and they did little to conceal their delight over the fate of this once powerful organization, which had consistently discounted their policies and importance. They applauded the Comintern's nonintervention in the CCP's "organizational affairs" since 1935, and boasted that the Chinese party had matured politically in the course of struggles "even more complex than the Russian revolution." As a result, the CCP had nurtured "its own outstanding and well-tested cadres" and "had done its work very well" in the struggle for national liberation, and it had "no longer any need of this international leading center." Now the task was to strengthen the Communist parties of the various countries and by making them "even more nationalized" (*keng-chia min-tsu-hua*) to bring them up to the needs of national liberation and reconstruction.¹⁹

Though this all sounded very much like what the Marxist lexicon called "petit bourgeois nationalism and chauvinism," the Soviets apparently did not mind. Since 1938, as Charles McLane points out, Moscow had come to accept Mao Tse-tung's leadership of the CCP, and it was "content to let Mao pursue his own course within certain broad limits already well defined and accepted in Yen-an."²⁰ Also, of course, wartime needs were well ahead of questions of ideological rectitude in Moscow's scale of priorities, and the Soviet leaders' specific interest in the CCP hit an all-time low following Germany's invasion of Russia in June 1941. A striking example of indifference amounting to neglect is the fact that the Comintern's major journal (*Communist International*), which had given extensive and continuing coverage of events in China up to 1940, did not carry a single article on China or the Sino-Japanese War between June 1941 and its final issue exactly two years later.²¹

Nonetheless, despite the dissolution of the Comintern—or perhaps because of it?—Moscow did begin to pay more attention to events in China during the course of 1943. The Soviet victory at Stalingrad, the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations in Sinkiang, and the renewal of tensions between the Nationalists and the Communists all tended to encourage a rebirth of Soviet interest in China in the summer of 1943. But the Soviet leaders held back from open commentary on the CCP and its role in China until after the war, presumably for fear of damaging relations with the Nationalist Party and its increasingly enthusiastic benefactors in Washington. McLane points out in particular the "omission of any reference whatsoever in the Soviet press" to the CCP's important Seventh National Congress in the spring of 1945.²² Considering that this was the first national congress held since the Sixth in 1928, and that it was hailed by the CCP as a "Congress of Victory," one infers that the omission must have been deliberate.

Inside China, however, every act of the CCP was being followed carefully by Chiang Kai-shek and his advisers. On July 6, 1943, the Nationalists' Central News Agency issued a release stating that (as *Liberation Daily* reported it) certain cultural organizations in Sian had held a meeting and resolved to send Mao Tse-tung a cable calling upon him to "dissolve" the CCP in conse-

quence of the dissolution of the Comintern and to "abolish the separatist Border Region regime." Mao at once issued a statement declaring that the "meeting" was the handiwork of the KMT secret service.²³ It was clear that the Nationalists were going to do all they could to make use of the demise of the Comintern—and anything else that affected the CCP—in furthering the ideological campaign that had started with the publication of *China's Destiny*.

That the Communists did not treat the matter lightly is evidenced in the concern expressed in a speech of August 1 by Chou En-lai, who had recently returned to Yen-an after a long stay in Chungking. Chou spoke at some length of the problems resulting from the Comintern's disappearance from the international scene, particularly of those "anti-Communist elements inside the country who dare to shout shamelessly for the dissolution of the Chinese Communist Party." "They did not raise the outcry before," he said, "but at a time after the dissolution of the Communist International. They claim that after the dissolution of the Comintern, Communism is no longer fit for China, the Chinese Communist Party has lost its backing, the Chinese Communist Party will split from within."²⁴

"Will there be anyone," Chou cried, "to believe their slanders?" He apparently thought so, for he went on to rebut these "slanders" individually and in some detail. Regarding Marxism's fitness for China, Chou claimed that "owing to the achievements of our party leader Comrade Mao Tse-tung," Marxism had already "closely united" with the needs of the Chinese nation and people and had "become rooted in Chinese soil." On the question of the CCP's popular support, Chou acknowledged the early help from the Comintern, but he added that it was more important to realize that the CCP was a "party of the masses," one that "grows and develops among the toiling masses of China." On the embarrassing charge of party dissension, Chou claimed that the CCP was "united under the leadership of Comrade Mao Tse-tung," and that in the previous three years (1940-43) it had "reached the highest degree of consolidation" in its entire history. To underline this point, Chou referred approvingly to Mao's leadership of the party at least seven times in the course of his address, concluding that after the Comintern's demise the CCP

will be "more responsible and independent to solve the problems of the Chinese revolution."²⁵

To Chou, evidently, the dissolution of the Comintern was an important consideration in the party's decision to endorse the cult of Mao. Yet we have seen that other factors were at work too, in particular the dramatic turn in the global military situation after Stalingrad and the intense Nationalist ideological campaign designed to boost Chiang Kai-shek as China's true national leader. These developments strengthened the already noticeable tendencies toward a Maoist cult that had emerged simultaneously with Mao's personal dominance in the party's top leadership, and they provided the necessary catalyst for the blossoming of the cult in the years 1943-45.

The Birth of "Mao Tse-tung's Thought"

In the spring of 1943 Yen-an was most certainly alive with speculation as everyone—party member or not—awaited the leadership's reaction to the momentous developments detailed above. The initial response, as we know from later revelations, came unannounced to the general public, and probably to many ordinary party members also. Most scholars agree that sometime during the spring Mao Tse-tung was formally elected chairman of the CCP's Central Committee, and of the Political Bureau as well. This probably happened in late May, when the Central Committee met to discuss its reaction to the dissolution of the Comintern. At or about the same time, Liu Shao-ch'i, who was formerly cool to Mao, replaced Chang Wen-t'ien on the five-man Central Committee Secretariat, simultaneously taking over his key position as secretary-general of the party.²⁶ Although there is no evidence of an "explicit bargain" between Mao and Liu, Liu's wholehearted public praise of Mao only weeks after being elevated to the number two spot in the party certainly suggests that there was some sort of arrangement made between them.²⁷ At any rate, agreement was reached, and on July 1, the twenty-second anniversary of the founding of the CCP, Mao announced that the *cheng-feng* campaign of the previous year had "guaranteed ideological and political unanimity in the party, and purity in its organizational composition."²⁸ This announcement was the green

light for the rapid development of the Maoist cult that was to dominate Yen-an for the next two years.

The atmosphere in Yen-an at this time was very much one of the "gathering of the clans" around the mighty chieftain. On June 28, just three days before Mao's keynote speech, the CCP's top-flight delegation to Chungking returned home to Yen-an in time for the anniversary celebration. The mission, headed by Chou En-lai and Lin Piao, claimed to have been unable to discuss a "single concrete problem" with Chiang Kai-shek during their lengthy stay in the Nationalist capital.²⁹ No doubt the timely return of Chou, Lin, and "other comrades" from such fruitless negotiations with the CCP's leading adversary contributed to the general feeling that the party was now on its own. In any event, soon after the delegation's return to Yen-an, all eyes unhesitatingly turned to Mao, the one leader whom all could count on to guide the party safely through to victory over both its domestic and its foreign enemies.

Still, it was somewhat ironic that the tone for the new campaign to glorify Mao and all his works should have been set by one who had for so long refused to endorse Mao's leadership claims, especially in the realm of theory. Liu Shao-ch'i's long essay entitled "Liquidate Menshevik Ideology in the Party" appeared in *Liberation Daily* on July 6, just five days after Mao's anniversary speech. It was Liu's public endorsement of his now acknowledged leader, and in it he spared no words of praise. The CCP had finally found its "own leader in Comrade Mao Tse-tung." Liu declared, and Mao is a truly great proletarian leader who "has stood the test as a strong and great revolutionary, is completely versed in Marxist-Leninist strategy and tactics, and possesses unlimited loyalty to the Chinese working class and the cause of the Chinese people's liberation."³⁰ Furthermore, Liu suggested, the history of the CCP has developed "with Comrade Mao Tse-tung as the center"; Mao had triumphed over "all groups of opportunists" such as those who formerly espoused "dogmatism," and "'left' opportunism of the civil war period"—meaning of course the Returned Students, whom he described indirectly as the representatives of "Chinese Menshivism." The CCP, Liu said, had a "richer experience in revolutionary struggle" than any other Communist party in the world.

Liu still had some criticism of the CCP on the theoretical front. The Chinese party's "preparation in scientific Marxist-Leninist thought had been very inadequate," he said, and he pointed out that the "theoretical level of many party members and cadres is low."³¹ But whereas in 1941, when Liu voiced similar complaints about the party's theoretical level, he had had no positive solutions to offer and could only say that the Sinification of Marxism was "exceedingly difficult" and decry the lack of any "great works" from the pen of a Chinese Communist thinker, now there was no doubt in his mind at all. "All cadres and party members," he advised, "should diligently study and master Comrade Mao Tse-tung's theories of the Chinese revolution and other subjects. They should arm themselves with Comrade Mao Tse-tung's thought, and use Comrade Mao Tse-tung's system [of thought] to liquidate Menshevik thought in the party."³²

Liu's essay was the signal for the other top party leaders to rally around Mao Tse-tung as the undisputed head of the CCP. There followed an avalanche of hagiographic literature from the pens of representatives of the party's most powerful circles—among them, Chou En-lai, K'ang Sheng, and Teng Hsiao-p'ing as spokesmen for the political wing of the party; Chu Te, P'eng Te-huai, and Ch'en Yi representing the military; and people as diverse as Hsü T'e-li, Hsiao San, and the Japanese Communist Okano Susumu (Nosaka Sanzō) on behalf of various other circles within the movement.³³ The Returned Students were represented also, but in a most ununified manner that clearly revealed the state of disarray into which this once cohesive group had fallen by 1943. Wang Chia-hsiang published an article praising Mao Tse-tung's thought on July 8, just two days after Liu Shao-ch'i's essay appeared, and on July 13 an enthusiastic article by Po Ku appeared, but neither Chang Wen-t'ien nor, more importantly, Wang Ming had anything to say in the party press. Their absence from the pages of *Liberation Daily*, though conspicuous, did not dampen the enthusiasm of those leaders who did take pen in hand. The general tone is well illustrated by Po Ku, who took note of the adverse implications the dissolution of the Comintern had for the unity of the CCP, and responded by calling upon the whole party to strengthen its already unprecedented degree of unity by rallying "under the banner of Mao Tse-tung":

“Finally, and very importantly, we have our party leader, the helmsman of the Chinese revolution—Comrade Mao Tse-tung. His direction is the direction of our entire party, and of the people of the whole nation.”³⁴

Liu Shao-ch'i's essay of July 6 has rightly been regarded as setting the tone of the Maoist cult that was to blossom in later months. In addition, it has been pointed out that it was in this essay that the term “Mao Tse-tung's thought” first appeared in Chinese Communist literature. This appears to be true, but it would be a mistake to jump to the conclusion that Liu was the actual creator of the term that was to occupy such a prominent place in modern Chinese intellectual history. It is more likely that the official use of the new slogan was the result of a formal, collective decision among the top party leadership.* In his essay of July 6, Liu referred to “Comrade Mao Tse-tung's thought” (*Mao Tse-tung t'ung-chih ti ssu-hsiang*); yet in an article dated July 5 (though not published until July 8), Wang Chia-hsiang used the more precise form that later became the *terme fixe*, “Mao Tse-tung's thought” (*Mao Tse-tung ssu-hsiang*). In addition, other party leaders and theorists (among them Ch'en Po-ta) began to use the term in their writings at this time, indicating that there had probably been a prior decision on its use coming from high authority.

Regardless of who actually thought up the slogan in the first place and lobbied for its acceptance by the Politburo, it was Wang Chia-hsiang who produced the most interesting and important interpretation of what the term really meant. He did this in a long essay entitled “The Chinese Communist Party and the Road to China's National Liberation.” This is a text of considerable importance in the intellectual history of the CCP, although the

*Noriyuka Tokuda, in the paper he delivered at the Conference on Ideology and Politics in Contemporary China at Santa Fe, New Mexico, in August 1971, refers to “Mao Tse-tung's thought” as “Liu's new term.” (See “Mao Tse-tung's Ideological Cohesion with the Party and the Revolutionary Movement, 1935-1945,” pp. 55-56.) It should be noted, however, that in an entry in his diary dated January 26, 1943, the Comintern representative Peter Vladimirov referred specifically (within quotation marks) to the “thoughts of Mao Tse-tung.” This seems to me to suggest that the term, in some form at least, was in circulation among the party leadership in Yen-an for some time before it was officially adopted in July 1943. See *The Vladimirov Diaries: Yen-an, China, 1942-45* (Garden City, N.Y., 1975), p. 95.

basic ideas in the essay are not original but rather reflect the arguments of Ch'en Po-ta and other "Sinifiers" in the heated debates on theory that had been going on within the CCP from at least 1935. Wang also contributed to these debates from time to time—his article of 1939, for example, "The Three People's Principles and Communism," showed his concern with the need to adapt Marxism-Leninism to the concrete reality of the Chinese revolution.³⁵ His 1943 essay is important because it was the first time that the basic arguments of the Sinifiers were applied to the explicit interpretation of Mao's personal theoretical contributions. Wang's main point is that the essential union of Marxist theory and Chinese reality, which the CCP had been pursuing throughout the twenty-two years of its existence, is to be found in Mao Tse-tung's thought. The party itself recognized what its proper course now had to be: "The correct path in the entire course of China's national liberation—past, present, and future—is Comrade Mao Tse-tung's thought, the path pointed out by Comrade Mao Tse-tung in his writings and practice."³⁶

How does Wang justify this claim in terms of theory? Before going into his argument, we should note the sense of national pride that pervades the entire discussion. China, says Wang, is a "great country," and he infers, somewhat loosely, that the CCP should therefore be a "great party" possessing its own "Chinese Communist theory."³⁷ As proof of the historical validity of this reasoning, Wang points to the gradual formation of Bolshevism in the context of European intellectual trends (especially Marxism) and the practical revolutionary movement in tsarist Russia. "This was the process," Wang concludes, "that gave rise to Russian Bolshevism. It was the union of Western European Marxist theory and Russian revolutionary experience that produced Bolshevism, Leninism."³⁸

Wang does not think the situation is any different in the Chinese case, except that the intellectual and political milieu in which the CCP has developed is perhaps even more complicated than was the case in prerevolutionary Russia. Apart from this, the process is essentially the same: "Chinese communism—Mao Tse-tung's thought—is the product of the combination of Marxism-Leninism and the practical experience of the Chinese revolutionary movement."³⁹

In Wang's opinion, this interpretation of the origins of Mao Tse-tung's thought completely undermines the allegations of those "anti-communist elements" in China who maintain that the "theory of the Chinese Communist Party is the theory of the German Marx and the Russian Lenin, and hence is not suitable to the national situation."⁴⁰ Quite to the contrary, he says: these critics of the CCP have failed to grasp the fundamental truth that "Mao Tse-tung's thought is Chinese Marxism-Leninism, Chinese Bolshevism, Chinese communism."⁴¹ Lest any ambiguity remain, Wang reiterates that Mao Tse-tung's thought is "creative Marxism-Leninism, the development of Marxist-Leninism in China; it is Chinese communism, Chinese Bolshevism."⁴²

There is no ambiguity here: Wang is advancing "Mao Tse-tung's thought" as a substantive replacement for "Marxism-Leninism"—not because he believes that Mao's thought, as pure theory, is in any way superior to Marxism-Leninism but rather because, in the Chinese context, Mao's thought *is* Marxism-Leninism. This is an interpretation that is derived from the familiar Chinese Communist assertion, as expounded by Ch'en Po-ta and others, that there is no such thing as abstract truth or theory but only specific, concrete truths and theories—that is, in a political context, truths and theories in a national form. It follows, then, that Marxism is the appropriate form of proletarian theory for the West Europeans, Leninism (and Stalinism) for the Russians, and Mao Tse-tung's thought for the Chinese. If one accepts this, Wang implies, there is no need to define Mao's political doctrines as representing only *ssu-hsiang* (thought) or, more broadly, only *chu-i* (-ism, i.e. principle, tenet). The two terms are completely interchangeable: Mao Tse-tung's thought is Marxism-Leninism, and vice versa; *ssu-hsiang* is *chu-i*, and conversely *chu-i* is *ssu-hsiang*. It would appear from this that later academic attempts to divide Chinese Communist ideology into two distinct components, namely, "pure ideology" (Marxism-Leninism) and "practical ideology" (Mao Tse-tung's thought) are in error, at least for the period under consideration. Even if these terms are retained for purposes of analysis, we must remember that for Wang Chia-hsiang and his colleagues, Mao Tse-tung's thought is the embodiment of both the "pure" and the "practical" aspects of proletarian ideology in China. A division into "pure" and "practical" would,

furthermore, probably be regarded by most Chinese Communist theoreticians as quite arbitrary and a misinterpretation of the integrated unity inherent in Mao's thought.⁴³

But all this does not explain why the term "Mao Tse-tung's thought" was decided upon in the first place, especially as it was being so definitely equated with Marxism-Leninism. There were other terms available—particularly Chang Ju-hsin's "Mao Tse-tungism," which he used in 1942 as a perfectly logical term for Mao's body of doctrine. Obviously, the choice had nothing to do with "pure" as opposed to "practical" ideology (*chu-i* and *ssu-hsiang*) because Mao's thought represented both. Neither does it appear likely, as some have suggested, that the term *chu-i* carries with it undesirable connotations associated with such "evil winds" as individualism, commandism, tailism, Trotskyism, and so on. After all, the Chinese Communists have consistently used *chu-i* in their translation of such highly respectable ideological currents as Marxism, Leninism, Stalinism, and even Sun Yat-senism, to name but a few.⁴⁴ Rather, it would seem that the use of *ssu-hsiang* was a deliberate attempt to get away from the essential foreignness of *chu-i* and the sense of abstractness associated with it. As James Chieh Hsiung has pointed out, the term *chu-i* was imported into China, possibly via Japanese (*shugi*), in the early twentieth century. In their intense desire to Sinify Marxism-Leninism, it was only natural that the Maoists would want to replace the foreign term with one that was unmistakably Chinese. Hence the use of *ssu-hsiang*.⁴⁵

There was still another reason for the change, however, one that took in the whole question of form and content, both of the term itself and of the concept to which it was applied. Marxism-Leninism was, of course, an ideology that had always been to the Chinese foreign in form; now, with the new formulation of Mao's thought, it had been rendered abstract in content as well. Clearly, if the Maoists could by definition make Marxism and Leninism *solely* the European and Russian forms, respectively, of proletarian ideology, they could deny their concrete existence in China and in that way demonstrate that they must be replaced. Therefore in choosing a new term to represent the concrete nature of Mao's reformulation of the classical doctrines, they had to be careful to avoid close identification with the old terms.

But why the term *ssu-hsiang* to illustrate the unmistakable Chineseness and concreteness of the new orthodoxy? *Ssu-hsiang*, a common word in the Chinese vernacular, met the need for a term that was distinctly a Chinese form, one that would not grate on the Chinese ear or appear strange when written. So far as content is concerned, *ssu-hsiang* lacks the sense of abstract rigidity that had come to be associated with *chu-i*. *Ssu-hsiang* is an anthropomorphic term that fully reflects its vital link with a real, live human being, a specific flesh-and-blood individual—in this case Mao Tse-tung—who is engaged in the continuing process of thought. This in turn suggests a certain dynamism, a feeling that the *ssu-hsiang* in question is acting in response to life, creatively adapting to the changing circumstances with which it is confronted. There is no suggestion in the term *ssu-hsiang* of dogma, of a body of doctrine frozen in time. Rather, it conveys the feeling of open-endedness, the possibility of flexible response, and the promise of a continuing relationship with reality. It is this dynamic fusion of the human mind and external reality that best characterizes the distinctive quality of *ssu-hsiang*, and, I think, of Mao Tse-tung's personality as well. James Hsiung has expressed the relationship very perceptively and I quote him here: "The *ssu-hsiang* perspective conceives of man (the subjective world) and his environment (the objective world) as forming an integral whole. . . . Any analysis that separates ideology in its 'pure' form from ideology in practice fails to capture the true spirit of *ssu-hsiang*."⁴⁶

In a sense, the formal appearance of "Mao Tse-tung's thought" in July 1943 brought to an end a lengthy process of fermentation within the Chinese Communist Party. The demands of Chinese nationalism for the Sinification of Marxism-Leninism had been met, and the fusion of power and ideology that had for so long eluded Mao Tse-tung had at last taken place. Although the Russians maintained their wartime silence on this momentous development within the CCP, Mao's ideological claims received the approval of other sections of the international Communist movement. The American Communist leader Earl Browder, for example, in his introduction to the American publication of Mao's "On New Democracy" in late 1944 declared that Mao's famous essay was "thoroughly Chinese and at the same time thoroughly

Marxian, and proceeds from many assumptions and conceptions of Chinese and Marxian origin."⁴⁷

Nothing has been said so far about Ch'en Po-ta's participation in the wave of official adulation of Mao that swept the pages of *Liberation Daily* and other party publications in the summer of 1943—for the very good reason that he seems to have remained silent. On the surface, this looks odd of one who had for so many years actively promoted Mao's claims. Why would he not have had some eulogy for the press at this time? It seems likely that Ch'en was one of the unspecified "other comrades" who returned to Yen-an from Chungking with Chou En-lai and Lin Piao on the eve of the anniversary celebration. And since Ch'en had been serving in an editorial capacity with various party media in the Nationalist capital since the autumn of the previous year, it seems reasonable to assume that he returned to his former editorial desk at *Liberation Daily*. (One Soviet source says that upon his return to Yen-an, Ch'en assumed the post of editor-in-chief of *Liberation Daily*, but that seems doubtful.)⁴⁸ At any rate, he was surely well placed to contribute his name to the Maoist cult that was fast taking shape. The only logical explanation for his not doing so is that a simple hagiographic essay from Ch'en Po-ta would have gained little prestige for Mao, since Ch'en was already known as a supporter of Mao's claims and carried little authority in his own name. In other words, the Maoists were at this point primarily interested in public words of support and appreciation from the party's most prominent political, military, and factional leaders—a show of symbolic rather than substantive endorsement. Ch'en Po-ta could be counted on to give intellectual substance to the developing cult of Mao Tse-tung and to the fresh concept of "Mao Tse-tung's thought," but for the present the adulation would be more persuasive coming from well-known independent figures than from Mao's political secretary.

Indeed, upon his return to Yen-an, Ch'en entered upon yet another intense period of intellectual endeavor, to some extent comparable to the period 1938–39. There was much to do in the wake of the party leadership's decision to promote the cult of Mao and his thought in response to the new challenge posed by the Nationalists' recent ideological offensive. In the field of ideology, Ch'en's specialty, five major tasks had to be dealt with:

(1) propagation of the cult of Mao and his thought both within and without the party; (2) formulation and propagation of a major critique of Nationalist ideology; (3) provision of historico-philosophical content to the concept of Mao Tse-tung's thought; (4) construction of an official Maoist interpretation of CCP history; and (5) preparation for the long-delayed Seventh Party Congress that would formally ratify the Maoist ascendancy. It is an indication of Ch'en Po-ta's importance in the Maoist camp that he was to assume unquestioned leadership in fulfilling the second, third, and fourth of these tasks, and he probably also played a key role in the first and fifth. He was the one who added the most in the way of intellectual content to the cult of Mao and his thought, and in so doing he markedly strengthened his own unique relationship with the leader.

The Cult of Mao and His Thought

The symbolic rallying around the party's new core, Mao and Mao Tse-tung's thought, was the signal for the Communist offensive to counter the Nationalist surge. This public display of unity had not been a transitory phenomenon; rather, it heralded a massive, two-pronged ideological campaign on the part of the CCP. The unfolding of a well-planned movement to establish Mao Tse-tung's personal image as the brilliant leader of the CCP and the heroic defender of the Chinese nation was only half of this ambitious campaign. Simultaneously, a drive was also launched for the undisguised purpose of destroying Chiang Kai-shek's stature as China's sole legitimate spokesman both at home and abroad. In a very real sense, the Chinese civil war had begun, though there would be three full years of ideological battle before the two sides would oppose each other in armed conflict.

In some ways the word "cult," with its connotations of religiosity and, in a Communist context, Stalinism, may not be appropriate to describe this public glorification of Mao, at least during the Yen-an period. For one thing, as we shall see in chapter 10, Mao was very much merely the "first among equals" in the CCP leadership, which was not so with Stalin during his ascendancy in the CPSU. It is also true that the official promotion of Mao and his thought did not reach its zenith until the Cultural Revo-

lution in the 1960's. Nevertheless, one is hard pressed to come up with a more suitable alternative. To the extent that a "cult" is, at one level of definition, a "great devotion to a person, idea, or thing" (Webster), we are dealing with a cult: Mao is the person, his thought is the idea, and the revolution that they both symbolize is the thing. Devotion in this context need not (and perhaps should not) imply a sense of religious feeling or the idea of an omnipotent leader, but the question can be debated, especially regarding the period of the Cultural Revolution. In the Yen-an era, all the outward signs of the Maoist cult were evident, though they became greatly magnified in the decade before Mao's death in 1976. Most significant of all, what began as a party program caught on, so that the public masses themselves became important promoters of the cult.*

The merging Maoist cult in Yen-an was given a powerful boost by the party's leading cadres, who issued glowing tributes to Mao on every possible occasion. The spectacle of such mature, seasoned Communist leaders trying to outdo one another in the degree of enthusiasm with which they hailed Mao is somewhat puzzling to the outside observer. Yet whatever may have been the precise blend of genuine admiration and political expediency in their motivations, these senior figures in the party helped to set the frenzied tone that was increasingly to characterize the "Mao Tse-tung mania" that swept over Yen-an during 1943-45. Theodore H. White and Annalee Jacoby, two American correspondents who visited the Communist capital in June 1944, were plainly taken aback by the peculiar relationship that seemed to exist between Mao and his senior colleagues. Though they recognized that this show of feeling was attributable "in part to a solid affection," it seemed to be carried to excess: "At public meetings

*In his conversation with Edgar Snow in 1970, Mao candidly admitted to the political uses of the "personality cult" that he had promoted during the Cultural Revolution. He did concede, however, that the cult went to excess at the height of the movement and had to be toned down in subsequent years. Since Mao's death, his cult has declined considerably under the new leadership, although it is unlikely that there will be a "de-Maoization" campaign similar to the campaign against Stalin. Such a development cannot be ruled out, however, especially if it were to prove politically advantageous to one leadership faction or another. Mao's comments are in Snow, *The Long Revolution* (New York, 1971), pp. 168-70.

it was not unusual for other members of the Political Bureau, men of great rank themselves, to make ostentatious notes on Mao's free-running speeches as if drinking from the fountain of knowledge. Nor were panegyrics of the most high-flown, almost nauseatingly slavish eloquence unusual."⁴⁹

With the party's leading personalities setting the pace in such a flamboyant style, the common people in the Border Region could hardly be less exuberant. One is struck by the rapidity with which the campaign to exalt Mao and his thought filtered down to the grass-roots level of party and society alike. In turn, the mass organizations among the people (and individuals as well) responded by echoing back to the party leadership their belief in the greatness of Mao and the absolute correctness of the revolutionary path that he trod. "Mao Tse-tung's personality dominated Yen-an," White and Jacoby reported, and he "was set on a pinnacle of adoration." They also noted of Mao that "his leadership was theoretical," and that his treatise "On New Democracy" (though published in 1940) was "still the Bible of the movement."⁵⁰

Liberation Daily and other sectors of the Yen-an mass media of course functioned as powerful amplifiers to get the message across. Increasingly, items of an overtly hagiographic nature began to appear in the Communist press: tales of Mao's early life and struggles, articles in praise of his personality and thought, woodblock portraits, approving resolutions from various mass organizations, letters from appreciative individuals, and so on. Many songs appeared in praise of Mao, the most famous of which is "The East Is Red," said to be based on a poem written by a young peasant (Li Tseng-cheng), and set to the melody of a traditional country tune.⁵¹

One illustration of the highly expressionistic character of the literature and the unambiguous way in which elite and popular levels were brought together in the campaign was the large conference of "labor heroes," both workers and peasants, that was held in Yen-an in mid-November 1943. Kao Kang, the party official directly responsible for the administration of the Shen-Kan-Ning Border Region, used a resounding rhetorical style to impress upon the delegates the exalted position of their leader. "Who is the leader of the Chinese Communist Party?" Kao asked; and he

answered, "Its leader is Chairman Mao. . . . Chairman Mao is the savior of the Chinese people, the shining light of the workers and peasants, the banner of the broad laboring masses."⁵² The point was well taken: in the collective message to Chairman Mao that the conference delegates published in *Liberation Daily* on November 21, they, too, praised their leader as the "savior of the Chinese people."⁵³

An important part of the campaign was the circulation of Mao's writings, but it took some time for the party to adopt a systematic publishing program for the large and scattered corpus of Mao's work. At first, the items reprinted were apparently selected chiefly for their relevance and popularity. According to one account, for example, in January 1944 the Shansi-Suiyüan branch office of the Politburo printed and distributed five thousand copies of three of Mao's most famous treatises, "On Protracted War," "On the New Stage," and "On New Democracy."⁵⁴ There had, of course, been an attempt at a systematic approach since 1937, when the first small selection of essays by Mao was published, unofficially, in Shanghai; Ch'en Po-ta's larger collection of Mao's works appeared in late 1939 (or possibly earlier, as noted), and these both set a certain precedent for the later selected editions issued officially.

In December 1944 the Shansi-Ch'ahar-Hopei Border Region published the first edition of Mao's *Selected Works* (Mao Tse-tung hsüan-chi). It may be noted here that none of Mao's *Selected Works* was actually published in the Shen-Kan-Ning Border Region, the seat of Mao's power. Jerome Ch'en has concluded that this probably indicates Mao's greater support from the military than from the party. For example, it was Nieh Jung-chen's headquarters in the Chin-Ch'a-Chi region that issued the original edition of Mao's *Selected Works* in 1944, and this lead was later followed by Lin Piao in Harbin, in the Manchurian sector.⁵⁵ There is no doubt that Mao's position was much stronger with the military than it was with the party, but by late 1944 even the party leaders who had heretofore been reluctant were outdoing themselves in the praise of Mao. Therefore the publication of the *Selected Works* outside Yen-an is probably mostly attributable to technical and administrative considerations—the Yen-an press did, after all, have to turn out an enormous amount of work for

the various party organizations. This interesting question aside, however, there can be no gainsaying the remarkable flowering of Mao's cult in the months after July 1943, and its formal confirmation at the party's Seventh Congress in April 1945. Nor can it be doubted that this cult was the conscious product of the Maoist propaganda machine, whose campaign to glorify Mao and his thought was part of the CCP's two-pronged counterattack on the ideological campaign launched by the Nationalists in the spring of 1943.

Ch'en's Critique of "China's Destiny"

Although Ch'en Po-ta does not seem to have participated in the overt campaign to elevate Mao, he was the single most important contributor to the accompanying campaign to discredit Nationalist ideology and the stature of Chiang Kai-shek. The two campaigns were of equal importance, and they were carried on with equal vigor in the second half of 1943 and subsequent years. Mao himself emphasized the dual nature of the effort in his oral report to the Seventh Congress in 1945: "At present, the Kuomintang's influence is declining, but it still has considerable influence and power. . . . We must lower the influence and position of the Kuomintang in the eyes of the masses and achieve the opposite with respect to ourselves. . . . In essence, we must strive to weaken the Kuomintang's influence on mass consciousness and to strengthen our own."⁵⁶

From 1943 on, the Maoists were increasingly outspoken in their criticism of the whole Nationalist side. In an unsigned editorial of July 12, 1943, Mao set the general tone for the bitter debate on ideology that was soon to be launched by Ch'en. The "gentlemen" of the Nationalist Party, Mao declared, have much in common with the various "enemy parties" and "traitor parties" that are selling out the country to the Japanese. Of these "common features," he warned, speaking to the KMT leaders, the "most fundamental is your common ideology, which is anti-communist and anti-people." Indeed, he went on, "you and the enemy and the traitors are exactly alike, in fact, identical and indistinguishable both in your words and in your deeds."⁵⁷ Mao's essay was nothing less than a declaration of war against Chiang

Kai-shek and the Nationalist Party, and it left very little possibility for the continuation of the already tottering united front.

Nine days later, on July 21, Ch'en brought on the heavy artillery in a major attack to which *Liberation Daily* devoted its entire issue. This long analytical essay, entitled "A Critique of *China's Destiny*," summed up the CCP position on the Nationalists and it was to become one of the party's main weapons against them in the polemical war. It was subsequently issued in many pamphlet editions, and it was included in several official compilations of party documents relating to the period in question.⁵⁸ Along with the essay, Ch'en also prepared a sort of study guide to Chiang's work, entitled *An Introduction to "China's Destiny"*. This volume, published shortly after the essay (the preface is dated July 19), is a compilation of lengthy extracts from Chiang's text interspersed with notes and commentary by Ch'en.⁵⁹ It is carefully designed to complement the essay—so much so, in fact, that one wonders how many party readers ever went beyond Ch'en's materials to read Chiang's work at all.

Of the two, the essay is by far the more important of course, and it shows Ch'en at his most scholarly and polemical. It is his and the CCP's response to Chiang's challenge, and its main purpose is to show that for the Chinese people, only one choice—in favor of the CCP—is really possible.

Ch'en begins the essay by reminding his readers that the Chinese Communist Party has been very forbearing in the face of constant Nationalist provocation. For example, he says, "countless Nationalist Party publications" have criticized Mao Tse-tung's "On New Democracy" since its publication in January 1940, but so far the CCP has not made any reply in the interests of preserving the united front against Japan. But now, with Chiang Kai-shek's *China's Destiny* as a point of departure, he (Ch'en Po-ta) intends to express the CCP's opinions on the topics raised by Chiang. It is crucial to answer the charges brought by Chiang, he observes, because there is much more at stake than a mere academic debate; indeed, Chiang's treatise represents "nothing less than the preparation of anti-communist, anti-people, counterrevolutionary ideology." It is no wonder, he says, that soon after its publication in March 1943, the rumor began to spread that it was a "declaration of war against the Chinese people, and

the preparation of ideology and public opinion for the launching of civil war.”⁶⁰

In the study guide, Ch'en urges the Chinese people to read Chiang's new book attentively, paying particular attention to its central message—the call for internal unity if China's destiny is to be assured, and the need to bring about this internal unity within a two-year period. This time limit, Ch'en fears, is a sign that the Nationalist Party wants to “seize everything and consolidate its one-party dictatorship” and that it intends to make its attempt soon; rather than waiting until the Japanese have been defeated and expelled from China, it will try to seize power during the war, at a time when all patriotic Chinese are united to resist the enemy.⁶¹ Can anyone really believe, Ch'en asks, anything other than that Chiang's treatise was “not written to serve the war of resistance, but rather for the purpose of opposing communism, democracy, the masses, and progress?”⁶²

If Chiang Kai-shek wishes to launch a debate about China's destiny, Ch'en declares in the essay, the CCP will be only too happy to respond. Using his familiar biting, mocking style, full of innuendoes regarding the personal and political integrity of Chiang, Ch'en launches into his attack on *China's Destiny*. He suggests that the book was not really written by Chiang at all but by the “traitor” T'ao Hsi-sheng, whom he describes as a notorious fascist whose views Chiang was only too happy to accept as his own. He also comments that the “*Chung-shan* incident” of March 20, 1926, was deliberately fabricated by Chiang to serve as a pretext to suppress the Communist Party, just as Hitler later concocted the infamous Reichstag fire in 1933 for the same purpose. Another charge is that Chiang stooped to cooperate with the despicable traitor Wang Ching-wei long after the Communists broke with him in 1927. And finally, Ch'en says, in spite of his protestations to the contrary, Chiang has repeatedly betrayed Sun Yat-sen and his principles on many important questions regarding the Chinese revolution.*

*For these various charges, see Ch'en Po-ta, *P'ing “Chung-kuo chih ming-yün”* (A Critique of “China's Destiny”), Hong Kong, 1946, pp. 1, 3, 18, 20. The “*Chung-shan* incident” refers to Chiang Kai-shek's sudden crackdown on the CCP and several Soviet advisers following rumors that the Communist commander of the gunboat *Chung-shan* had attempted a coup against Chiang on

Again and again throughout these passages detailing the various charges, Ch'en reminds the reader that the Chinese people must ultimately make a choice between two fundamentally conflicting visions of China's destiny—between, on the one hand, “new democracy,” the ideological system of the Chinese Communist Party as put forward by Mao Tse-tung, which combines the most progressive thought of both the Chinese and foreign intellectual traditions, and on the other, “new absolutism” (*hsin chuan-chih-chu-i*), the “comprador-feudal fascism” of Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Party, which embodies all that is reactionary both in China and abroad.⁶³ By setting up and reiterating this parallel of what he chooses to call “new absolutism” and the well-known “new democracy,” Ch'en effectively contrasts the two competing ideologies and subtly tries to convince the reader that he must make a final, irrevocable stand on one side or the other, that no third choice is possible.

Ch'en rationalizes this need to make a clear choice between the two competing “isms” by raising the question of ideological evolution and synthesis in modern China. Here again, he uses contrast to emphasize a choice: “It is obvious that from the beginning there have been two kinds of traditional thought in Chinese culture. One kind belongs to the people, and is revolutionary and bright; the other is against the people, and is counter-revolutionary and dark.”⁶⁴ To illustrate this basic thesis, Ch'en refers to modern Chinese history, singling out first the Taiping rebels and later Sun Yat-sen as archetypal representatives of the “revolutionary” tradition in Chinese history, with such allegedly infamous personalities as Tseng Kuo-fan and Li Hung-chang representing the “counterrevolutionary” dark side. For Ch'en, it is not sufficient merely to take pride in traditional Chinese history and culture; one has to go beyond this and inquire into the diverse strands in this complex legacy, carefully sifting the wheat from the chaff. Needless to say, it is the Chinese Communists who have emerged as the true inheritors of the progressive strand in

the night of March 18-19 at the Whampoa Military Academy near Canton. The incident has never been satisfactorily explained, but it was utilized by Chiang to his advantage, and it is possible that he concocted it for political purposes.

Chinese tradition and the Nationalists who have fallen heir to its reactionary aspects.

Ch'en then applies this same basic analysis to the question of foreign ideologies and their effects upon China: "The various countries of the world not only have progressive and revolutionary ideologies but also have reactionary and counterrevolutionary tides of thought, and both kinds of foreign thought are naturally reflected in China."⁶⁵ Sun Yat-sen, the leading "progressive" of his time, enthusiastically accepted the liberal "democracy of [Abraham] Lincoln and others," and later on also absorbed the "experience of the Russian revolution." The Chinese Communists went further than Sun Yat-sen and assimilated the more advanced ideology of "scientific communism—Marxism-Leninism." As for the "reactionary" side, Ch'en points out that Chiang Kai-shek has openly denounced both Western liberalism and Soviet communism in his recent book, and the Chinese Nationalist Party is busily "propagating on a large scale the fascism of Hitler and Mussolini, and describing Hitler and Mussolini as two of the 'six great leaders' of the world."⁶⁶ And of course, he says, will not the publication of Chiang's book greatly please people like Wang Ching-wei, Hitler, Mussolini, and Tojo, and equally disappoint Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin, and all other anti-fascists?

Ch'en thinks it is not important whether a particular ideology is Chinese or foreign in origin; the question is whether or not it is progressive or reactionary, beneficial or harmful to the Chinese people and nation. For example, although there was a certain amount of foreign thought (namely Christian theology) in the ideology of the Taipings, their slogan of "liberty, equality, [and] fraternity" genuinely represented the aspirations of the Chinese people. On the other hand, although people like Tseng Kuo-fan spoke constantly of traditional China's "benevolence, righteousness, [and] morality," in practice he was no more than "twice a slave, a slave to both the Manchus and the foreigners."⁶⁷

Having dispensed with these illustrations from history, Ch'en then turns to the aspect of the subject that interests him most, the importance of having a truly Chinese communist party:

The ideology of the Chinese Communist Party is Mao Tse-tung's thought—Sinified Marxism-Leninism. As a Marxist-Leninist ideology, [Mao Tse-tung's thought] not only is identical [*hsiang-t'ung*] to the

ideology of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, it is also identical to the ideology of the Communist parties of the various countries throughout the world. However, scientific Marxism-Leninism demands that the Communists in each country put forward political programs and decide upon policies in accordance with their own national conditions, rely on the people, and educate themselves. In its work in China, the Chinese Communist Party does exactly this [and] is truly a one hundred percent revolutionary political party of the Chinese people themselves, "learning for China and applying its learning for China." It no longer finds comparison in China!⁶⁸

Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Party, Ch'en says scornfully, are simply "*ju chu ch'u nu*"—proud before one's countrymen but submissive before foreigners. Arrogant and dictatorial at home, they have successively placed themselves in dependence first on the Russians, then on the Japanese and Germans, and finally on the Americans.⁶⁹ (In the preface to the study guide, Ch'en adds to this point the comment that *China's Destiny* of course tries to cover up this ugly truth, and it makes use of the age-old practice of "fabricating facts, and confusing truth and falsity" in order to do so; but the effort fails, because Chiang's book, "between the lines, reveals its hatred of the revolutionary people" of China, and they are not deceived.)

Ch'en Po-ta's critique of *China's Destiny* is of considerable importance both in the evolution of Chinese Communist ideology and in the history of CCP-KMT relations. It presented in sharp contrast the conflicting visions of Mao Tse-tung and Chiang Kai-shek regarding China's immediate and long-range future. By presenting Mao's "new democracy" and Chiang's "new absolutism" (as Ch'en dubbed it) as being totally irreconcilable choices, Ch'en offered the Chinese people a powerful ideological rationale for the breakup of the wartime united front. After decades of bitter dispute over China's future, the educated public to whom Ch'en addressed his appeal were increasingly anxious to resolve the issue one way or the other, even if it meant having to make a choice between the Nationalists and the Communists. To this extent Ch'en's polemic caught them at an opportune moment.⁷⁰ As an effective propagandist, Ch'en was highly adept at presenting complex issues to the public in a form that would elicit the desired response, and his handling of *China's Destiny* is an excellent illustration of this.

After the publication of Ch'en's treatise attacking Chiang Kai-shek, little possibility remained of genuine cooperation between the two warring parties. United States Ambassador C. E. Gauss commented to that effect in a dispatch to Washington on October 6, 1943, in which he gave details of the polemic between the Nationalists and the Communists over *China's Destiny*: "Possibilities of any agreement between the two parties are expected to be lessened by the increasing bitterness likely to result from this propaganda war."⁷¹ Along with the memorandum the ambassador included a copy of Ch'en's review of Chiang's book, which he described as "bitterly critical" of the Nationalists and representative of the CCP's counterattack against the Nationalists' recent propaganda offensive.

It was not long before the new, harsh attitude toward the Nationalists expressed in Ch'en's *Critique* and other CCP writings began to filter down to the grass-roots level. Clare and William Band, two British teachers who had been living for some time in Yen-an, noticed the change in the Communists' public attitude as early as September 10, 1943. Attending a mass meeting at Paoteh on that day, they were surprised to see Chiang Kai-shek's portrait missing from the usual "gallery of honour." Not only that, the local guerrilla leader opened the meeting by violently denouncing Chiang and the Nationalist Party, and the agitated crowd responded by crying, "Down with Chiang Kai-shek! Long live Mao Tse-tung!" To the Bands, it seemed obvious that the Communists were finally dispensing with the limitations of the united front and were "thoroughly enjoying themselves for a change."⁷²

Even before Ch'en's *Critique* appeared, the American Embassy in Chungking had alerted the State Department in Washington to the growing trend against Chiang. In a confidential dispatch dated May 31, 1943, the chargé d'affaires, George Atcheson, Jr., noted the role of the "reactionary T'ao Hsi-sheng" in the writing of *China's Destiny* and the "narrowness of the views" expressed therein, as well as the "widespread and strong resentment against the book among Chinese intellectuals" and the "unfavorable foreign reaction" anticipated even by the Nationalists themselves. The dispatch also pointed out that the Chinese Communists regarded the book as the "best possible source of propaganda for

their cause.”⁷³ After Ch'en's *Critique* appeared and began to gain a reputation in China as a result of its dissemination by the CCP, foreign agencies picked it up. United Press International transmitted an English version, extracts from which were used in the American press; the U.S. State Department also published the English version in one of its documentary series. And, not surprisingly, it also appeared in at least one journal of the American Communist Party.⁷⁴

Thus Ch'en Po-ta, long regarded as a theoretician of considerable significance within the Chinese Communist movement, was now achieving a measure of international prominence as a Chinese Communist spokesman of national stature. Yet no sooner had this happened than Ch'en retreated once again within the confines of the CCP. Between 1943 and 1944 his tasks were interlinked and of the utmost importance to the Maoist cause, but they were essentially scholarly and in no way public. He was to prepare a formal historico-philosophical exposition of “Mao Tse-tung's thought” and simultaneously draft an official Maoist reconstruction of the party's history from its founding in 1921 to date. During the long period of the building up of Maoist fervor and the denunciation of Chiang's philosophy, which figured prominently in the Communist press during these two momentous years, Ch'en labored patiently in private. For the time being, the products of Ch'en's new researches were strictly “inner-party” documents; it was only in the early 1950's, long after their conclusions had been largely ratified by the Seventh Plenum in 1945, that they were made available to the public, Chinese and foreign alike.

The Reconstruction of Party History, 1943-1944

The Movement to Study Party History

By the autumn of 1943 the Maoists were in firm control of the Chinese Communist Party, and the twin campaigns to praise Mao Tse-tung and damn Chiang Kai-shek were making good progress. Yet if Mao's commanding position in the party were to be consolidated and his leadership to weather the many storms that would come after the Japanese had been defeated, more was required than the mere glorification of Mao and his thought in slogan and song. What was needed was an intellectual rationale that would justify the dual cult the party was promoting, that is, the cult of Mao the correct leader of the Chinese Communist movement, and the cult of Mao's thought as the ideological manifestation of this correct leadership.

In their quest for this rationale, it was only natural that the Maoists should turn to history, particularly the history of the CCP. Indeed, the combination of Chinese tradition and Marxist theory made history particularly important to the Chinese Communists. For most of the Chinese people, history had always been much more than mere chronology; behind every event lay a truth that transcended it and gave it meaning. In this perspective, the study of history was no less than the study of the universal laws that governed the rise and fall of civilizations, and the destiny of man himself. For a Marxist, history is the laboratory of the social scientist, the fundamental source to which one turns in the search for basic truths of individual and social behavior.*

*Of course, in the same way that a natural scientist can "doctor" a laboratory experiment in order to produce a desired (if false) result, a social scientist can deliberately "misinterpret" history in order to arrive at a predetermined conclusion for some ulterior purpose. Even so, history remains central to the social scientist, regardless of his ideological disposition.

Certainly, the Chinese Marxists did not need to be reminded of the alleged hollowness of "abstract" truth divorced from its historical context; if, as they were now claiming, Mao's thought represented revolutionary truth in China, its ultimate validity would be demonstrated in the "concrete" historical process that nurtured and tested the Chinese Communist Party. Therefore a thorough review of the CCP's twenty-two-year history ought to reveal the intricate relationship between Mao's correct leadership of the practical movement and the correct thought that guided, and, paradoxically, was created by this leadership. For Karl Marx and his Chinese disciples alike, history was the great arbiter of human destiny: reactionaries and their ilk would surely be cast into oblivion, but the true proletarian revolutionary would win an honorable place in posterity.

If the experience of Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union was anything to go by, the Maoists' expectations along these lines were likely to be fulfilled. Stalin emerged supreme in the CPSU after a fearsome struggle with Leon Trotsky and nearly all the "Old Bolsheviks" who engineered the revolution in 1917. His official *History of the CPSU* was published in 1938, and thereafter it became the only orthodox version of the party's turbulent past, and was assigned for study at all levels of Soviet society. Needless to say, this version of history showed Stalin as the only true successor to the revolutionary legacy of Marx and Lenin, and no one challenged the account until after Stalin's death in 1953.¹

Mao and his colleagues in Yen-an had been aware of these endeavors on the part of Stalin since late in 1938, when long extracts from Stalin's *History* accompanied by commentary appeared regularly in *Liberation* in Yen-an. The entire volume was eventually translated into Chinese and assigned as required reading during the cadre education movement of 1939-40.² By the time of the *cheng-feng* campaign in 1942, there were probably very few literate cadres in the CCP who were not familiar with at least the main outline of Stalin's interpretation of CPSU history. In all likelihood, the Maoists were influenced by the Soviet model in reconstructing party history. We already know, for example, that in 1938, the same year that Stalin's *History* was published in Russia, Ch'en Po-ta published a preliminary Maoist version of CCP history. The CCP also at that time launched an

intensive search for the raw materials (documents, polemics, reminiscences, and so on) from which to compile a more definitive version of the party's struggles since 1921. With this background, Ch'en's reappearance as the leading party historian in the spring of 1944, when he completed the study he first took up in 1938, was not surprising.

The imperatives of Chinese tradition, Marxist theory, and Soviet example thus combined to urge upon the Maoists the necessity of rewriting the history of the CCP in the wake of their final victory over all inner-party opposition. The initiative to review the party's history came in the autumn of 1942, immediately after the high tide of *cheng-feng*. The anti-Maoist factions in the party had been routed, and they would have to suffer the ignominy of having their names—and their errors—recorded as negative examples in the proposed Maoist chronicle. Surprisingly, the impetus for this historiographical review came not from the Politburo but from a lengthy “senior cadres conference” called to deal with local problems concerning the Shen-Kan-Ning Border Region. In a three-month session, which lasted from October 19, 1942, to January 14, 1943, this meeting tackled and solved three major problems facing the local party organization: the quest for unified leadership, the definition of the party's present tasks in the area, and the revision of party history in the Border Region.³ Representing the Politburo and the Northwest Bureau of the CCP, respectively, Mao Tse-tung and Kao Kang emerged as the two dominant figures at the conference. Mao in particular gained new stature by delivering his long report on economic and financial problems of the Border Region—a report, as we saw in Chapter 8, that was of some significance in Mao's rise to power. Nothing more needs to be said about Mao's report here, but Kao Kang's role at the conference requires some elaboration.

Kao, a native of north Shensi and an experienced guerrilla fighter in the Yen-an area, had much to gain from a review of the history of the party in the Shen-Kan-Ning Border Region. Like Mao himself, Kao had suffered persecution as a “rightist” during the era of the Returned Student leadership and shortly thereafter, and he had been rehabilitated only after Mao and Chu Te arrived in the Yen-an area at the end of the Long March. Kao felt that the individuals responsible for the “leftist” line in the

Border Region had not been adequately exposed and censured, and he also thought that the official history of the local party organization needed revising to include the exoneration of Kao and his comrades and the formal condemnation of those who had been in error. The conference of senior cadres was an excellent chance for him to raise these questions. In a lengthy speech to the assembled cadres (which was said to reflect their collective opinion), Kao vindicated the so-called border area "loyalists" centered around Liu Chih-tan (and Kao himself) during the guerilla struggles prior to 1935, and Kao then had the satisfaction of seeing the conference formally censure the Central Committee representatives, in particular Kuo Hung-t'ao and Chu Li-chih, who had suppressed the "loyalists" among the local partisans.⁴ Now all that remained was to have an appropriate entry made in the forthcoming party history.

Kao was not alone in his condemnation of the "leftist" leadership in the north Shensi area. In an elaboration of Kao's strictures, Jen Pi-shih spoke of these local errors as the consequences of the incorrect line prevailing in the highest echelons of the party from the "September 18th incident" (1931) to the Tsunyi conference in 1935.⁵ The interesting thing about Jen's comments is that they pinpoint the parallelism between Mao Tse-tung, the national leader, and Kao Kang, the regional leader, that was brought out in the debate on local party history. The newly emergent orthodoxy claimed that Kuo's and Chu's leadership in the north Shensi area had been characterized by "left opportunism" before 1935, and by "right opportunism" after the policy of the united front had been decided upon. It was not until May 1938, when Kao Kang replaced Kuo Hung-t'ao as party secretary of the Yen-an region, that the local party organization began to follow a "political and organizational line which was entirely correct."⁶ This interpretation of events is, of course, identical with the critique of the Returned Student leadership that Mao and his colleagues had gradually constructed since Mao's victory at Tsunyi.

Both Mao and Kao Kang, it was said in the course of the debate, had pursued correct policies during the early 1930's, both were censured by the Returned Student leadership or their representatives, both were removed from their positions of authority,

and both were subjected to some form of disciplinary action. Finally, both men were completely vindicated after the party belatedly awakened to the erroneous line of the Returned Students, removed them from their positions of authority, and placed the destiny of the party in the hands (at their respective levels) of the two former victims. This unambiguous parallelism between Mao and Kao certainly did much to strengthen Kao's position as the undisputed leader of the party organization in the Border Region, but it had another significance as well. Since an intensive campaign to study party history was inaugurated at the highest levels immediately after the conclusion of the conference of senior cadres, it would appear that the revision of local party history initiated by Kao Kang served as an accepted model for the new campaign then being planned.

Mao probably used Kao's examination of local party history to test the atmosphere among the party elite before launching his own campaign at the national level. Certainly, the fact that it took two and a half years (autumn 1942 to spring 1945) to arrive at some degree of consensus on the question of party history to present to the Seventh Plenum does suggest that time was required to bring everyone around to the new point of view. Nonetheless, whatever serious opposition Mao encountered in the initial stages of the campaign to examine party history, all doubts evaporated after the Central Committee's decision in the spring of 1943 to launch a campaign for the public glorification of Mao and Mao's thought. Faced with this decision, Mao's former enemies in the party had to abandon their opposition, although their individual reactions varied—Po Ku, for example, called upon the party to rally “under the banner of Mao Tse-tung,” whereas Wang Ming simply dropped out of active political life in the upper echelons of the party.* If Wang's later recollections are to be believed, both he and Mao were fully aware of the importance of controlling the party's history. Mao, Wang claimed, wanted to revise party history to ensure the “especially high and unshak-

*Wang was apparently seriously ill during much of 1942–44; in any case, he was deliberately isolated from normal intercourse with other party leaders and was often out of touch with what was going on in Yen-an. On this point, see *The Vladimirov Diaries: Yen-an, China, 1942–45* (Garden City, N.Y., 1975), pp. 110–13, and numerous other references.

able place of Mao Tse-tung in the CCP.” On the relationship of Mao’s ideological claims to the revision of party history, Wang was also explicit, paraphrasing Mao to the effect that “if the services of other persons in the history of the CCP and the Chinese revolution were recognized then ‘there would be no Maoism.’”⁷ Ironically, the services of Wang and his fellow Returned Students were not to go unrecognized in the new Maoist history, though their main role was to serve as negative examples whose experience was to be carefully studied and avoided.

Official sources have revealed that the discussion of party history at the higher levels was initiated by the Politburo sometime in 1942.⁸ No specific date is given, but these discussions probably followed soon after Kao Kang’s report to the senior cadres conference in the autumn of that year. Kao’s report received official approval from the party’s Northwest Bureau (which Kao headed) in June 1943, and was designated a formal study material in the *cheng-feng* campaign under the bureau’s jurisdiction.⁹ Then in July, when the cult of Mao and his thought burst forth, the movement to study party history got a further boost from Liu Shao-ch’i, whose laudatory essay on Mao made such an impact. In this essay of July 6 Liu mentioned the pressing tasks on the historical front, demanding that “all cadres and party members should study the twenty-two-year historical experience of the Chinese party diligently.” He declared that the intensive study of the party’s rich store of historical experience was “one of the most important tasks” facing the party, because a “Marxist-Leninist summary of these experiences is the most important condition for the consolidation, education, and elevation of the entire party for the attainment of victory in the Chinese revolution.”¹⁰

This was not new ground, of course, but the guidelines that Liu proposed to assist the cadres in their perusal of the party’s arduous years of struggle were new. In their study of the CCP’s past, cautioned Liu, there were several things that the cadres should always bear in mind:

The history of the Chinese party should be the history of the development of Marxism-Leninism in China; it should also be the history of the struggle of Marxist-Leninists with all groups of opportunists. Objectively, this history has developed with Comrade Mao Tse-tung as the center. The history of the various opportunist factions in the party

certainly cannot become the history of the party, and the system and tradition of party Menshevism certainly cannot become the system and tradition of party thought.¹¹

If, even in the wake of *cheng-feng* and Kao Kang's revision of local party history, the Returned Students still had one faint hope that they would be given an honorable, if secondary, place in the new party history that was being compiled, the anthology issued by the Central Committee in the autumn of 1943 ended that hope. This anthology, entitled *The Two Lines* in an obvious allusion to Wang Ming's historical treatise of 1931, was a collection of documents relating to the history of the CCP from its origins to the present, designated for study by high- and middle-ranking cadres. The two main themes were the evolution of Mao's own interpretation of Marxism-Leninism ("Mao Tse-tung's thought"), and his constant and unrelenting struggle against erroneous factions such as the Returned Students. According to Peter Vladimirov, who apparently acquired a copy of *The Two Lines*, the main purpose was to "laud Mao Tse-tung's policy and fiercely denounce Wang Ming's 'sedition'." From what we know of other texts in the movement to study party history, there is no reason to question Vladimirov's characterization of the book.¹²

It was on the basis of Liu Shao-ch'i's guidelines, which no doubt reflected the Politburo's collective opinion, that the next stage of the "party history study movement" got under way. After holding a number of special sessions of their own on the question of party history, at which they reached the general conclusions represented in Liu's speech, the members of the Politburo then led the senior cadres of the entire party in holding similar discussions in the autumn of 1943 and the spring of 1944. These sessions apparently went well for the Maoists, for official sources later characterized them as "important preparation for the Seventh National Congress of the party in 1945, enabling it to attain an ideological and political unity without precedent in the Communist Party of China."¹³ Nonetheless, the harshness of the guidelines laid down by Liu caused some problems. At the final spring session, held on April 12, Mao, in an important address summing up the discussions, acknowledged the need to tone down some of the hostility that the cadres were venting on the Returned Students and other members of the losing factions. After applauding

the success of the discussions to date, Mao reminded the senior cadres present that they must not be too antagonistic in assessing the errors of the past. They should not place so much emphasis on the individual responsibility of the cadres who committed mistakes, and they should adopt a sincere attitude of "curing the sickness to save the patient" rather than one of vindictiveness and exclusionism.¹⁴

Finally, in an attempt to weaken the extreme factionalism that was causing tension among the cadres, Mao in a simple declaration brought to a startling end a whole era in party history: "It should be stated," he said, "that as a result of the series of changes since the Tsunyi conference, the factions which formerly existed and played an unwholesome role in the history of our party no longer exist. . . . The old factions are gone."¹⁵

This at least offered token satisfaction to such leaders of the "old factions" as Li Li-san, Wang Ming, and Po Ku in that they were no longer to be labeled as negative examples in day-to-day party affairs, subject to criticism (and self-criticism), although they would still have to bear the ignominy of the label in the forthcoming revised party history. In a last attempt to lay the past to rest and turn the mind of the party to the new tasks ahead, Mao revealed that the long-awaited Seventh National Congress "will probably be held soon," and among the main items on the agenda there would certainly be the "problems of strengthening our work in the cities and winning nationwide victory."¹⁶

Ch'en Po-ta and the Maoist Myth

For some curious reason, Mao in this speech to the last special session of the senior cadres in the party made no attempt to give a comprehensive summary of the conclusions that had emerged in the course of the year-long discussions on party history. Even in his remarks on the controversial 1931-34 period, when the Returned Students were in the ascendancy, Mao was content to refer briefly to the Political Bureau's earlier conclusion—that the "provisional central leadership that was formed in Shanghai in 1931 and the Fifth Plenary Session that it subsequently convened [were] legal," but that the "procedures for the election were in-

adequate and that this case should be taken as a historical lesson."¹⁷ This seems a very mild way to deal with a period that supposedly had been one of the most controversial and one of the main items in the campaign to revise the party history. Surely, Liu Shao-ch'i's essay of July 6, 1943, had suggested a much harsher verdict than mere admonishment for "inadequate procedures" on the part of the errant party leaders.

But Mao knew what he was about. Though the cadre sessions were ending, the debate on party history was far from over. Within the Politburo and the Central Committee, much discussion still lay ahead—and would in fact continue from the late spring of 1944 to the convening of the Seventh Congress in April 1945. The congress would have the responsibility of making the final judgment on the interpretation of the party's history. But Mao's remarks about the "legality" of the Returned Students' tenure in the top leadership posts during 1931-34 were of great help in clearing the air in Yen-an. However mistaken the Returned Students may have been in political and military policy, their leadership was legally established and not completely at variance with established party procedures; certainly there would be no question of criminal prosecution and physical punishment, a fate that most of the "Old Bolsheviki" in the Soviet Union had not so luckily escaped at the hands of Stalin.

In the course of his April 12 speech, Mao revealed that the Politburo was chiefly concerned with drawing conclusions only with regard to the party's history prior to Tsunyi. According to the emerging Maoist consensus, the development of the CCP since January 1935 did not present any fundamental problems regarding interpretation. The Maoists claimed that the party took the "correct" path after Tsunyi, and that between 1935 and 1937 the "leftist" policies of the party leadership were replaced by those of Mao and his supporters. As for the years since the Japanese invasion in July 1937, Mao believed there were no real problems in their proper periodization and characterization: 1937-40, the overcoming of the "right deviation"; 1941-42, the suppression of the "ultra-left deviation"; and 1943 to the present (April 1944), a period of "no basic deviations."¹⁸ The formal resolution on party history adopted by the Central Committee a year later made no attempt to confirm, reject, or amend this ten-

tative periodization but merely noted that it was “appropriate to postpone to a future date” the drawing of conclusions regarding the party’s history after Tsunyi. The main attention was given to the pre-1935 period, especially the Returned Students’ tenure of office.¹⁹

Apart from this apparent consensus regarding the party’s history after 1935, there would appear to have been another important reason for the decision to focus the review on the years prior to 1935—that reason being the lingering doubts within the CCP leadership regarding Mao’s personal stature as a Marxist-Leninist theoretician. This sensitive matter was confronted directly by Ch’en Po-ta in a series of three integrated treatises on party history, which were issued subsequent to Mao’s speech in April 1944. These important publications established Ch’en as the chief arbiter of the new interpretation of party history and the foremost creator of the Maoist myth. In a revealing passage—which was later deleted in the revised version of the particular text—Ch’en showed the extent of his commitment to the myth:

Without any doubt, it is completely contrary to historical fact to recognize Comrade Mao Tse-tung only as a practical activist of the revolution [*ko-ming ti shih-chi hsing-tung-chia*], or to maintain that Comrade Mao Tse-tung became a theorist only during the period of the war of resistance and was not a theorist previously, and in this way to hold that Comrade Mao Tse-tung’s practice and theory took shape and emerged only then [i.e. during the anti-Japanese war].²⁰

There had of course been many within the party elite who seriously questioned Mao’s claim to theoretical leadership. None of the Returned Students, certainly, had bothered to conceal their disdain for Mao’s abilities as a theorist, and even such relatively ardent supporters of Mao as Chu Te acknowledged Mao’s importance in the ideological sphere only under the pressure of the *cheng-feng* campaign. But by the spring of 1944, when Ch’en wrote this passage, the party leadership had come around (however reluctantly) to Mao’s position, and most of them had thrown themselves into the campaign to glorify Mao and his thought. In other words, there could not have been at this time any significant skepticism about setting up Mao as the foremost ideologist of the CCP. But there were still a few problems about how to periodize Mao’s intellectual and theoretical development as a revolutionary

leader. Ch'en's comments seem to imply that there were some party leaders who accepted Mao's ideological claims, but only with reference to the post-Tsunyi period when the problem of the anti-Japanese resistance assumed first place on the agenda.

Mao's reputation as a theorist was, as we have seen, largely based on his voluminous literary output dating only from 1936, when he wrote his famous military treatise, "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War." The *Essays of Mao Tse-tung*, published in Shanghai in late 1937, was the first known anthology of Mao's writings, but neither this nor Ch'en Po-ta's compilation published in 1939 (*On Mao Tse-tung*) contained anything written prior to Tsunyi. Even during the *cheng-feng* campaign and after, when Mao's theoretical stature came to be recognized within the party, references were nearly always made to such post-Tsunyi writings as "On Protracted War" (1938), "On the New Stage" (1938), and his influential essay "On New Democracy," issued in 1940. Chang Ju-hsin, who published the first systematic study of Mao's "theory and strategy" in early 1942, failed to mention a single writing of Mao prior to 1935. When excerpts from one of these early works ("Kut'ien Resolutions") were assigned for study during *cheng-feng*, no indication whatsoever was given that they had come from Mao's pen. There would appear to be considerable basis, then, for Ch'en's lament that Mao's theoretical contributions prior to 1935 were being largely ignored by the party.

But why should this have been of such concern? Ought not the Maoists have been well content to see their leader's theoretical correctness established for the post-1935 period, when he attained a commanding position in the party's leadership? Was it necessary also to stake a claim for his correctness in the years prior to Tsunyi, when the party's fortunes wavered erratically between success and failure? Ch'en (and Mao) apparently thought so.

Not the least of their reasons was, I believe, the fear that continued silence regarding Mao's early activities in the revolution would prompt either of two unwelcome interpretations, if not both. In the first place, continued silence on the early period would imply that in the first fifteen years of his revolutionary career, Mao did not make any significant contributions to the development of Marxist-Leninist theory in the context of Chinese

reality—that, in other words, he did not effectively combine the foreign theory with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution and thus failed to develop a correct theoretical understanding of the inner dynamics of the revolutionary movement. This proposition would have serious implications for anyone with even a rudimentary grasp of Marxism-Leninism, especially its insistence that correct revolutionary practice inevitably gives rise to correct revolutionary theory, which in turn guides new practice toward new theory in an endless chain of dialectical interaction. Thus the slightest hint that Mao's theoretical abilities prior to 1935 were open to question would immediately suggest that his concurrent leadership of the practical movement was equally uncertain. For a Marxist, theory and practice must be combined; either Mao Tse-tung was correct in *both* theory and practice prior to 1935, or he was mistaken in both. He could not under any circumstances be right in one and wrong in the other, and this conclusion was unlikely to be passed over by Mao and his colleagues.

This lingering ambiguity concerning Mao's historical role prior to Tsunyi would have proved a nagging burden to the Maoists, who had only recently launched their massive campaign to elevate Mao as both leader and thinker. Any suggestion whatsoever that Mao was only a "half right/half wrong" leader would have been certain to tarnish his new image as the undisputed leader of both the party and the nation, and it could in time have led to a host of unsettling questions relating to the many bitter struggles that had tormented the CCP in the first fifteen years of its existence. Doubtless, people like Wang Ming and Po Ku (not to mention Li Li-san) would have taken great satisfaction in an interpretation of party history that, while proving them wrong, did not prove Mao right. Also, an interpretation of that sort would have taken the conviction out of the Maoist stand on the errors of the Returned Students, and would undoubtedly have sidetracked the party into yet another round of acrimonious debate over the past.

A second reason for establishing Mao's claim must have been the worry that any suggestion that neither the Returned Students nor Mao himself was completely right or wrong would lead inevitably to unwelcome speculation as to just where the "real"

locus of correct theory and practice was in early party history. There had to be a "real" locus somewhere, since there was common agreement that, in spite of numerous setbacks since its founding in 1921, the CCP's record had ultimately been one of genuine growth and success. Therefore, if the mantle of correct leadership were to be equally denied to Mao Tse-tung and to his many opponents in the 1921-35 period, one would be compelled to search for this correct leadership outside the ranks of the CCP. Inevitably, the search would have shifted to the Comintern, and thence to the Kremlin in Moscow, the accepted center of the world revolution during the period in question. For a host of reasons with which we are familiar, this would have been totally unacceptable to Mao and his supporters, who had spent the years since Tsunyi establishing the CCP's virtual independence from the CPSU in matters of both theory and practice. To admit at this stage that in all the years prior to 1935 the CCP was too incompetent to nurture its own indigenous leaders, and had had to rely on foreign guidance on both theoretical and practical matters, was simply unthinkable. Such a suggestion was undoubtedly repugnant to the Maoists from either a Marxist or a nationalist point of view. The decision to rewrite the early history of the CCP was, therefore, not simply an exercise in the glorification of Mao (although a strong element of this was certainly present); rather, it was a final task of considerable importance in the Sinitification of Marxism. The revised party history would demonstrate the distinctive national origins of a "Chinese type" of Marxism, namely, Mao's thought.

In many ways, Ch'en was the obvious person to be assigned the task of reconstructing the early history of the party. As an able Moscow-returned student who was fluent in Russian, Ch'en was well versed in the history of the Russian revolution, and the CPSU in particular. In addition, his intimate contact with the Returned Students during his years at Sun Yat-sen University had given him a degree of personal knowledge of—and hostility toward—Mao's key opponents that was probably unsurpassed in the party. As early as 1937, when Ch'en first came to Yen-an, he participated in research and teaching on party history, and in 1938 he published an initial draft of the Maoist version of the CCP's history. During *cheng-feng*, Ch'en emerged as one of the

leading polemicists in the Maoist camp, and in his celebrated critique of Chiang Kai-shek's *China's Destiny* he achieved a prominent reputation both in China and abroad as a leading CCP theoretician. Most important, in the years since 1937 Ch'en had established a close intellectual link with Mao, had influenced his thinking in certain respects, and was perhaps more privy to the nuances of Mao's mind and personality than any other member of the party.

Ch'en's task in the preparation of the history was twofold. First, he was to demonstrate that in the fifteen years from the founding of the CCP in 1921 to the Tsunyi conference in 1935, it was essentially Mao Tse-tung alone who developed a correct theoretical, strategic, and tactical understanding of the proletarian revolution in China. Second, in accordance with the first proposition, Ch'en was to present the party's history prior to 1935 essentially as the history of the gradual evolution of Mao's correct line, and its struggle for supremacy against all the incorrect lines that rose to challenge it. Ch'en regarded the history of the CCP as being above all an intellectual history; it was a chronicle of one man's mind writ large, the drama of which was to be found not in the detailing of military campaigns but in the unfolding of a greater (Hegelian?) Idea that contained the entire revolutionary process within it. How else are we to interpret Ch'en's remarkable statement regarding the theoretical import of Mao's "Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan" (1927)? "Without doubt," Ch'en says, "this historical document is the equal in brilliance and glory of the tumultuous revolution of 1924-27 created by all the comrades in our party."²¹ Implied in this sweeping comparison, of course, is the proposition that the value and significance of the revolution of 1924-27 was that it provided the historical context that gave rise to the political theories of a single individual, Mao Tse-tung. This followed from Ch'en's notion that history was above all the incubator of ideas, and that the task of the historian was to extract them from the raw, experiential matter in which they were embedded.

Before going into a detailed examination of Ch'en's reconstruction of party history, a few textual questions should be cleared up. As mentioned earlier, Ch'en wrote a series of three integrated treatises for the consideration of the higher party cadres. That

they were of a controversial nature is suggested by their classification as *tang nei kan-pu tu-wu* (“inner-party reading material for cadres”), and by the delay in publication. None of them was issued publicly (and only then in revised form) until the early 1950’s. Two date from the spring of 1944 and were issued under Ch’en’s own name; the third dates from the spring of 1945, and was issued in the name of the Central Committee. The first of the trilogy is *A Study of “Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan”*; this was later published with the same title in 1951. The second, entitled *Counterrevolution and Revolution in the Civil War Period*, was belatedly published in 1953 with a new title, *On the Ten-Year Civil War*. The year 1953 also saw the appearance of the well-known “Resolution on Certain Historical Questions,” adopted by the Seventh Plenum of the CCP Central Committee on April 20, 1945, just prior to the party’s Seventh National Congress.²² Assigning this important resolution to Ch’en Po-ta’s authorship is a somewhat controversial step, but for a variety of reasons it would appear to be a reasonable one. I shall, however, delay discussion of the evidence for Ch’en’s authorship of the resolution until we are in a position to discuss its substantive content.

Just how extensive the revisions of the 1950’s were is, of course, a matter of great interest; but for two of the treatises, the study of Mao’s “Hunan Report” and the resolution of the Central Committee, only the revised versions, dating from 1951 and 1953, respectively, are available in the West, the original texts being still, it seems, locked in the official files of the CCP. Fortunately, however, we do have access to the original text of *Counterrevolution and Revolution*, and with this as a point of comparison we can draw a few general conclusions concerning all three treatises.²³ Without going into too much detail, it would seem that there are few significant differences either in factual material or in interpretation between the original and the revised texts. The revised version shows evidence of a certain amount of bringing up to date, some deletion of nonessential material, and a general attempt at tidying up the presentation. The most important difference in the two versions is readily apparent—a distinct tendency in the revised version to modify somewhat the claims for Mao’s theoretical originality and to add some emphasis to the omnipresent ideological influence of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and

especially Stalin. This is but another example of the well-known touching up of early CCP documents—especially with regard to Mao's early works—in the interests of Sino-Soviet harmony after 1949.²⁴ It seems fair to assume that, in a similar fashion, Ch'en's claims regarding Mao's ability or originality as a theorist were modified in the revised texts of his study of the "Hunan Report" and the "Resolution" on party history, and the deference shown to the foreign masters of Marxism, Stalin in particular, somewhat enhanced.

One example drawn from the conclusion to *Counterrevolution and Revolution* will show what sort of revision was made. In the original text of 1944 (p. 63), Ch'en speaks boldly and categorically of Mao's achievement in the years following the CCP's Sixth Congress in 1928: "Comrade Mao Tse-tung solved the fundamental problems of the revolution in both theory and practice, in a more comprehensive way, and in their entirety." In the revised text of 1953, *Ten-Year Civil War* (p. 66), the sentence has been changed to read: "Applying the methods and theories of Marxism-Leninism and following and developing Stalin's teachings regarding the Chinese revolution, Comrade Mao Tse-tung then solved, in a more comprehensive way, the fundamental problems raised by the revolution at that time."

Not only does the addition of the two participial phrases regarding Marxism-Leninism and "Stalin's teachings" place Mao in the debt of the Russian leaders as a theorist, but also the substitution of "at that time" for "in their entirety" lessens the brilliance of his solutions to the basic problems of the revolution. The point should be made, however, that although these revisions are significant, they did not come about until 1953, nine years after Ch'en wrote his original treatise, and in the meantime, it was the original and more forthright text that was avidly studied and assimilated by the CCP membership during the movement to study party history. In 1944, Mao's singular importance was at the center of their concerns, with Stalin and the Marxist-Leninist heritage very much in the background.

Mao's Early "Bolshevism"

As Noriyuki Tokuda has pointed out, it was in his important treatises in the spring of 1944 that Ch'en Po-ta attempted to "re-

construct Mao's thought systematically for the first time within the Party."²⁵ At the same time, Ch'en had to familiarize the party members with Mao's long-neglected writings prior to 1935; consequently, Ch'en's texts are interlarded with copious citations from those writings that Ch'en deemed the most important of Mao's early work, especially those dating from 1927-30. Ch'en's usual vigorous prose style suffers somewhat under the weight of all the lengthy quotation, but it seems obvious that the purpose was to get Mao's own words into print in some form, pending the publication of the early writings.

Ch'en also wanted to present Mao in a serious, scholarly fashion, and to place him within the context of Chinese revolutionary history. In *A Study of "Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan"* he begins by pointing out specifically that the province of Hunan has been one of the "focal points" in the struggle between "progressive and revolutionary" and "conservative and counterrevolutionary" forces in modern China. Indeed, Hunan has witnessed "typical struggles" between these contending forces in the past century. Furthermore, Hunan has witnessed the "emergence of various personalities typical of both the revolution and the counterrevolution." Ch'en declines to name Mao specifically as one such "typical" personality on the "revolutionary" side, but the point is clearly made when he refers to Mao's "Hunan Report" as "one of those works in which is crystallized the best thinking of the finest people in China's history." In any event, Mao's Hunan origins were well known, as was the prominent place of Hunan in China's modern history, a fact often noted by Chinese and Western writers alike.²⁶ Merely by alluding to Hunan's important place in Chinese history, Ch'en establishes an almost mystical connection between Mao Tse-tung and China's romantic and glorious past.

Lest the reader stray into thinking, from this colorful allusion, that he is possibly suggesting some vague connection between Mao and the traditional type of Chinese rebel, perhaps in the style of the nineteenth-century Taipings, Ch'en quickly turns to a neat parallel between Mao and the Chinese Communist Party. From its founding in 1921, Ch'en says, the CCP has developed through three distinctive stages: (1) the urban working class movement, (2) the Nationalist-Communist united front, and (3)

the peasant movement in the countryside. This periodization of the party's history is completely orthodox, but then Ch'en adds his own novel suggestion: "From the founding of the party up to the 1924-27 revolution, the revolutionary activities of Comrade Mao Tse-tung also went through these three main phases. First, he participated in the working class movement; next, in united front work; and then in the peasant movement."²⁷

Since Mao's early career did in fact follow this general pattern, Ch'en's attempt at establishing the parallel is not without considerable justification. But Ch'en seems to be suggesting by this parallel that there is some sort of higher connection—even an almost organic relationship—between Mao and the party, the individual and the collective. And he further seems to be suggesting that there was in the development of Mao and the party some essential mutuality of need. That is, Mao depended on the existence of the party as a necessary condition of his own existence, but likewise the party depended on the existence of Mao. Ch'en does not at all deny the collective nature of the party and the integral, yet subordinate, role of its constituent members, but by singling out the decisive role of one individual he comes very close to saying that the party had to have Mao, to begin, and develop, and arrive at its present state. In each of the three phases in the CCP's history between 1921 and 1927, he says, Mao Tse-tung consistently "stood at the foremost and most important post . . . came into the closest contact with reality . . . and pondered most profoundly over the [problems of] the revolution."²⁸

It is interesting that in mustering the proof of Mao's contributions to Marxist theory in the early stages of the Chinese revolution, Ch'en completely ignored all of Mao's writings in the period under discussion up to March 1927. One can only assume that he, and Mao as well, regarded these texts as being in some degree immature, or undistinguished, or erroneous.²⁹ The omission is of little consequence, however, for the deficiency is more than made up by a single writing of Mao's, namely, his "Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan," dating from March 1927. Ch'en obviously regards this work as being of considerably more importance than its title would suggest. Indeed, he says that this study "sums up" the experience of the "mass struggle throughout the country during the period of the 1924-27

revolution" and "represents the essence of that whole epoch, that entire historical period."³⁰

A skeptical reader might ask, of course, how it is possible that a report on the peasant movement (as opposed to the urban working class movement) can, in the eyes of a seasoned Marxist, be regarded as representing the "essence" of even the early stages of a potential proletarian revolution in China. Further, was it possible for Mao Tse-tung, a petit bourgeois intellectual with unmistakable rural origins, actually to write such an important work? Ch'en has already anticipated these troublesome questions at the outset by explaining that it was "as the representative of the Chinese proletariat that Comrade Mao Tse-tung in this report presented a complete solution to this central problem [i.e. the peasant question] of the revolution (which was also the most pressing problem of the day)."³¹ Therefore since Mao is the "representative" of the Chinese proletariat, and since the peasant problem is the "central problem" of the proletarian revolution in China, it is logical to conclude that Mao's "complete solution" to this particular problem virtually amounts to the complete solution to the entire proletarian revolution. It is for this reason, Ch'en says, that Mao's "Hunan Report" can be accurately described as a "generalization of the Bolshevik strategy and tactics of the Chinese Communist Party" and a "summary of our party's Bolshevism" in the period of the 1924-27 revolution.³²

These are lofty claims, but Ch'en has proof to offer. The verification, he argues, is to be found in three distinctive elements in Mao's thinking in the 1924-27 period: (1) his possession of a revolutionary methodology; (2) his recognition of the essential importance of the peasants; and (3) his advocacy of a dictatorship of the revolutionary people. Let us consider these three elements in turn. According to Ch'en, Mao's "revolutionary methodology" is none other than the mass line: "Be students of the masses, concentrate the experience of their struggles and their views, and in turn become their teachers." Such a methodology is essential to the success of the revolution, Ch'en says, because it prevents genuine revolutionaries from falling into the "bookish dogma" of those, like Ch'en Tu-hsiu, who are ardent practitioners of their own distinctive "Menshevik methodology."³³ As for Mao's emphasis on the peasantry, this is due to his recognition that in a vast

agricultural nation like China, "if the Chinese proletariat proves unable to lead the peasant revolution, it will certainly be unable to consummate the cause of the nation and the proletariat [itself]." Ch'en bases this proposition on Mao's observation of the need to depend on the "rising of the peasants" to destroy feudalism and imperialism in China, which, he observes, is at complete variance with Ch'en Tu-hsiu's persistent underestimation of the key role of the peasants in the Chinese revolution.³⁴ Finally, Ch'en points to Mao's constant espousal of Lenin's theory of the "dictatorship of the revolutionary people," which, in the context of the peasant movement in China, amounts in actuality to the "dictatorship of the revolutionary peasantry." To put aside any doubt as to this equivalence, Ch'en reminds the reader that the "dictatorship of the revolutionary people described by Lenin is the very dictatorship of the revolutionary people lauded by Comrade Mao Tse-tung."* This theory is of course vastly different from that of Ch'en Tu-hsiu, who was violently opposed to the peasants' interfering in administrative affairs in the course of establishing their revolutionary power.

Throughout his discussion, Ch'en at no time claims that Mao actually created new revolutionary theory as of 1927. Nor does he mention the "Sinification of Marxism." By 1944 this particular terminology had been largely dropped from the CCP's lexicon, probably in recognition of its excessively parochial connotation. (See p. 276 following for a discussion of this issue.) Yet Ch'en is careful at every point to demonstrate the compatibility of Mao's own ideological reformulations with the classic theories of Marxism-Leninism, as well as with the policies of Stalin and the Comintern during the period in question. Despite this funda-

*Ch'en Po-ta, *Tu "Hu-nan nung-min yün-tung k'ao-ch'a pao-kao"* (A Study of "Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan"), Peking, 1951, pp. 21-24, 29-30. As Stuart Schram has pointed out in a private communication, Lenin never talked about the "dictatorship of the revolutionary people," nor did Mao ever mention the "dictatorship of the revolutionary peasantry." These "heresies" on the part of Ch'en simply highlight his pronounced populist attitudes toward the peasantry and "the people" in general. Ch'en in later years showed similar populist sentiments in his espousal of the Paris Commune model during the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960's, among other things. On this point, see the reference to Ch'en in John Bryan Starr, "Revolution in Retrospect: The Paris Commune Through Chinese Eyes," *China Quarterly* 49 (January-March 1972): 116-17.

mental unity of theory and strategy between the Comintern and Mao's "Bolshevik" line, this does not preclude considerable diversity in the specific tactics adopted in light of the concrete demands of time and place. For example, Ch'en says, the tactics used by the Chinese proletariat in dealing with the bourgeoisie are by necessity "vastly different" from the tactics adopted by the Russian proletariat in dealing with their own bourgeoisie.³⁵ How is it, then, the reader might ask, that although the tactics of the international Communist movement and those of the Chinese party can at times be "vastly different," a basic underlying harmony in theory and strategy can still be maintained?

In answering this important question, Ch'en gives the reader an insight into his conception of the nature of Mao's thought. Speaking with reference to the "question of power," a central problem in all political theory and practice but here specifically in the Chinese revolution, Ch'en says: "The characteristic of Comrade Mao Tse-tung's thought, like that of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and all other most outstanding communists, is that it is capable of drawing conclusions by generalizing direct, vital, and concrete reality, thus further concretely developing the general line laid down by the Communist International regarding the question of power."³⁶

Even though Ch'en is making no claims that Mao had created any new theories as of 1927, this passage seems meant to imply that such a possibility existed. That is, Ch'en wants the reader to know that in 1927, when Mao emerged as the outstanding scientist of the proletarian revolution in China, his mental constitution was identical to that of Marx and the other classic masters of proletarian theory and he had the ability to "generalize" from reality (i.e. to create theory). His distinctive generalizations had the power actually to "develop" the existing body of proletarian theory regarding, for example, the decisive question of political power. Thus, Ch'en goes on, one arrives at an inevitable conclusion: "With the birth of the party, [Mao Tse-tung] emerged as the most outstanding Bolshevik representative in the party, and by the time of the 1924-27 revolution he had already emerged as the major theorist [*chi-ta-ch'eng-che*] of Bolshevik ideology in our party."³⁷

Ch'en's use of the term *chi-ta-ch'eng-che* to describe Mao deserves some comment. *Chi-ta-ch'eng-che* can be loosely translated as "one who gathers many proposals and formulates theories from them."³⁸ This immediately suggests one of the characteristic features of traditional Chinese philosophy, namely, its emphasis on the synthesizing of individual, highly eclectic ideas into a single, comprehensive, and integrated world view, whether it be that of Tung Chung-shu of the Han dynasty or K'ang Yu-wei of the late Ch'ing. In using this distinctive term, is Ch'en suggesting, if only unconsciously, that Mao Tse-tung's qualities as a theorist have much in common with the theorists of China's past? Is the fundamental cast of Mao's mind substantially different from that of Tung and K'ang, or is it, despite the new Marxist content, largely in the same tradition?

That Ch'en perceives a basic similarity between Mao and the ancient philosophers is dramatically suggested in a revealing passage in Ch'en's essay of April 1939, "The Philosophic Thought of Confucius." In this essay, Ch'en maintains that it was during the Spring and Autumn period in ancient Chinese history that "feudal ideology developed to the [stage of] 'theory' [*chi-ta-ch'eng-ti fa-chan*]." During this period, Chou, the feudal state in which Confucius was educated, can be regarded as a "typical" state in the prevailing system on the East Asian mainland. Hence, it was possible for Confucius, the product of a "typical" feudal state in a period of ideological development, to become the "representative" of this feudal ideology precisely at the moment when it was developing to the stage of theory. In this way, Ch'en demonstrates that Confucius became the "theorist [*chi-ta-ch'eng-che*] of the ruling feudal ideology" by synthesizing diverse elements from the Shang dynasty, which first gave rise to the "feudal cultural system," and from the Chou dynasty, during which this cultural system reached its full development.³⁹

Just as Ch'en had previously described Confucius as the "theorist" of the Chou feudal system, he now singles out Mao Tse-tung as the "major theorist" of the contemporary era of the proletarian revolution in China. Nowhere does Ch'en suggest (even indirectly) that the ideological content of Mao's thought bears any similarity to that of Confucius. Mao is not a Confucian, nor was

Confucius a Marxist. The sole point of comparison between the two individuals, Ch'en suggests, is the similarity in their roles, within their specified historical contexts, as the outstanding ideological spokesmen of their own ages. It is in this light that Ch'en can claim that Mao's political thought, as represented in his "Hunan Report," can be seen as embodying the "essence" of the "entire historical period" that gave birth to the Chinese Communist Party and witnessed its early years of trial and growing maturity.

Thus does Ch'en establish Mao Tse-tung's ideological supremacy within the CCP from its founding in 1921 to its virtual destruction by the Nationalists in 1927. But this catastrophe is in no way attributable to Mao, Ch'en cautions, for the CCP was "still young," and "history had not reached a stage where the conscious Bolshevik political line of Comrade Mao Tse-tung could assume organized, concentrated rule over the entire party."⁴⁰ On the contrary, it was the "Menshevik line" (which was at one and the same time also a "Trotskyist line") of Ch'en Tu-hsiu that dominated the party leadership during the period in question and was fully responsible for leading the party to disaster in 1927. Nonetheless, these years of trial and error were not without positive result, for they alerted the party's true Bolshevik members to the erroneous policies of Ch'en Tu-hsiu and his fellow Mensheviks, and in so doing prepared the way for the reconstruction of the party along correct lines. Therein lies the decisive importance of Mao's historic "Hunan Report," Ch'en concludes, for it is a document that manifested the "open ideological split" between these two contending forces within the party, and prepared the soil for the ultimate victory of "Bolshevik truth as represented in China by Comrade Mao Tse-tung."⁴¹ The "Hunan Report" is thus to be regarded as a momentous document in the history of the CCP and, more importantly, in the intellectual evolution of Mao Tse-tung as the preeminent theoretician of the Chinese revolution.

Mao's "Revolutionary Wisdom"

For all these claims about Mao's "Hunan Report" of March 1927 as marking the emergence of Mao as the CCP's leading theo-

retician and placing the party firmly on the road to revolutionary success, Ch'en does not at all suggest that Mao's thought had developed fully as of 1927. It was only during the next period, 1927-30, that Mao's thought reached a relatively mature stage, and Ch'en's second treatise on Mao, *Counterrevolution and Revolution in the Civil War Period*, is devoted to demonstrating how, during the period 1927-30, Mao's thought "took a big stride forward in the course of actual struggles."⁴² It was during these few years, Ch'en says, that Mao was able to solve, "in their entirety, and in a more comprehensive way, the fundamental problems of the revolution in both theory and practice."⁴³ Therefore, he explains, although some fifteen years have elapsed since this decisive period in Mao's intellectual development, the articles he wrote between 1927 and 1930 contain "many fundamental principles" of the Chinese revolution. Even though these intervening years have brought "many changes" in the course of the revolution, Mao's articles from this period have not by any means been reduced to the level of mere historical documents. Rather, their intrinsic significance transcends the limitations of time, and they are as important today (1944) as they were when they were first composed.

Just in case there are any comrades within the party who might be apt to slight these early writings of the chairman in favor of his well-known treatises of the late 1930's and early 1940's, Ch'en sets the record straight:

The theoretical work in which [Mao Tse-tung] engaged during the early stage of the Soviet movement was in actual fact the total theoretical and strategic basis of the ten-year internal revolutionary war. . . . If one does not clearly understand Comrade Mao Tse-tung's theory and strategy of the early period of the Soviet movement and the Red Army's wars, then one cannot fully comprehend the creation of the forces of the Chinese revolution, or the reasons for the [gigantic] scale of the present-day revolution in China. Nor can one clearly understand Chinese Bolshevism in its entirety, nor the goal of Bolshevization, which our whole party is pursuing at the present time under the direction of Comrade Mao Tse-tung.⁴⁴

Ch'en believes that Mao's writings of the 1927-30 period are of the utmost significance in the ideological history of the CCP, not only because they solved the "fundamental problems" of the Chinese revolution but because they epitomize for the present

day the essence of the CCP's history during its first two great revolutionary periods (1921-27 and 1927-37). Thus they give all party members a "clear understanding" of the party's tasks in the current (post-1937) stage of its development and of the future goals it is trying to achieve on behalf of the Chinese people.

In addition to the "Hunan Report," Ch'en singled out five other writings of the 1927-30 period as providing the basis of Mao's revolutionary thought: (1) a resolution drafted for the Second Party Congress of the Hunan-Kiangsi Border Region (October 5, 1928); (2) a report submitted to the CCP Central Committee on behalf of the Chingkangshan Front Committee (November 25, 1928); (3) an ordinance of the Red Army's Fourth Army Headquarters (January 1929); (4) a resolution drafted for the Ninth Party Congress of the Fourth Army of the Red Army (December 1929); and (5) a letter written by Mao to Lin Piao, at that time a young Red Army commander (January 5, 1930). With the exception of the third item—the Red Army ordinance—all these writings are included in the official *Selected Works*, and they are, in fact, the only writings in the *Works* from the period 1927-30. This official seal of endorsement by Mao and the party elite had a great deal to do with Ch'en's subsequent high reputation as the CCP's leading interpreter of Mao's thought.*

Why did Ch'en (and presumably Mao also) hold these early writings in such high regard? The answer lies in Ch'en's *Counter-revolution and Revolution*, where he reveals his belief that it is in these writings that Mao arrived at a series of decisive decisions regarding the character of the Chinese revolution and the appropriate role of the CCP in the difficult years after its near-destruc-

*The only article written by Mao prior to the "Hunan Report" to be included in the official *Selected Works* is his "Analysis of All the Classes in Chinese Society," first published in February 1926. The official version of this early essay has been so extensively revised, however, that it "bears little resemblance to the original." On this point, see Stuart Schram, *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung*, 2d ed. (Harmondsworth, Eng., 1969), pp. 210-14. The Red Army ordinance was made up of a series of short slogans, and was probably excluded from the *Selected Works* because of its relatively insubstantial content. The original text of this ordinance is in *Mao Tse-tung chi* (Collected Works of Mao Tse-tung), 10 vols. (Tokyo, 1970-74), 2: 71-72. The other four items can be consulted in revised form in *Mao Tse-tung hsüan-chi* (Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung); 4 vols. (Peking, 1967), 1: 47-104; and *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, 4 vols. (Peking, 1961-65), 1: 63-128.

tion in 1927. In brief, Ch'en argues that Mao's correct estimate of the character of the new Nationalist "dictatorship" led him to a correspondingly accurate appraisal of the whole revolutionary situation as it then existed, and with this correct understanding he was able to work out a suitable long-range strategy and devise a set of appropriate tactical principles to guide short-term policies. Finally, and very importantly, Mao succeeded in formulating a correct "methodological key" that would unlock the door to the eventual triumph of the true revolutionary forces in China. With this key in hand, the proletarian revolutionaries went on to build up a dynamic Communist party, consolidate and expand a powerful people's army, and achieve unprecedented success in carrying out mass work in the rural areas. In other words, these early writings contain the outline of the entire later history of the Chinese revolution, and the CCP in particular, and they are therefore immortal works whose luster has in no way diminished with the passage of time, and which still possess "great practical significance" for the revolutionary cause.⁴⁵

The details of this reasoning deserve a close examination. After the failure of the revolution of 1924-27, Ch'en says, it was necessary for the CCP to answer a series of critical questions concerning the precise nature of the victorious Nationalist leadership. "Our party had to answer these questions," he explains, "because this would determine the basis of our party's overall policies." It was Mao Tse-tung who correctly answered these fundamental questions by concluding that the Nationalist regime was one of the "new warlords," a "new counterrevolutionary military dictatorship of the big compradors and the big landlords."⁴⁶ Ch'en gives a number of statistics to prove that these "new warlords" systematically stepped up their oppression and exploitation of the Chinese people after achieving power in 1927, and then he goes on to reassert the validity of Mao's conclusion at the time that China still needed a genuine "bourgeois democratic revolution" under the leadership of the proletariat. Though acknowledging correctly that after 1927 the revolution "temporarily entered a low tide," Mao nonetheless demonstrated that the foundations of the new Nationalist regime were inherently "weak and unstable" and could be undermined by correct revolutionary strategy. Hence, Mao was able to refute in a decisive manner the

alleged Trotskyist claims that the victory of the Nationalists in 1927 represented a "victory for the bourgeoisie," and that the "[proletarian] revolution is already dead."⁴⁷

Having arrived at this correct appraisal of the nature of the revolution in China, Ch'en continues, Mao could not stop half-way; he now had the task of formulating an appropriate strategy to guide the CCP through the revolutionary labyrinth and on to final victory. From the point of view of strategy, Ch'en argues, the "most fundamental problem" of any revolution is the problem of power. In the context of China in the late 1920's, the central question was whether or not "Red political power could exist for a long time and develop despite its encirclement by White political power."⁴⁸ Starting from his earlier proposition (in the "Hunan Report") that the Chinese revolution was essentially an agrarian revolution led by the proletariat, Mao worked out the concepts of the "agrarian revolution of the peasants, the arming of the revolution, and the [establishment of] revolutionary base areas as the trinity [*san-wei-i-t'i ti tung-hsi*] by which to establish the political power of the masses."⁴⁹ In this way, Ch'en continues, Mao established the central strategic concept of an "armed independent regime of the workers and peasants" and planted the CCP firmly on the path to the practical realization of this strategic goal.⁵⁰ Mao worked out this correct strategy in the face of repeated challenges from a myriad of mistaken opponents: Chinese Narodniks, who underestimated the role of the proletariat; Chinese Trotskyists, who slighted the importance of the peasantry; Li Li-san, who denied the possibility of an independent Red regime; and, finally, the "third 'left' opportunist line," which failed to grasp the protracted, zigzag nature of the revolution in China.⁵¹

But Mao's task was not over. He still had to fashion a correct set of tactics with which to implement the strategy that he had worked out from his appraisal of the nature of the revolution. At this point, Ch'en, so far logical and clear in his analysis, becomes a little vague, claiming only that Mao espoused a "flexible policy" (*ling-huo ti cheng-ts'e*) toward the inherent contradictions within the enemy camp. This flexible policy, he says, allowed Mao to analyze and utilize effectively the contradictions within and between the Nationalists and their allies, thus enabling the

CCP to maintain and even expand "Red political power." And this policy was in complete contrast to the "rigid policy" (*chih-hsien ti cheng-ts'e*) of the left opportunists, who consistently allowed their ignorance of Chinese society and the Chinese revolution to lead them to underestimate the opportunities presented by the contradictions not only within the ruling classes but within the broad fabric of Chinese society as a whole. Consequently, these left opportunists rejected the flexible—and correct—tactics of Mao Tse-tung at various times during the civil war period (1927-37).⁵²

Ch'en fully realizes that, however correct they may be, Mao's analysis of the Chinese revolution, and the strategic and tactical principles he devised accordingly, are above all intellectual concepts, for he points out that mental abstractions must be realized through concrete organizations and behavioral modes. If the revolution is to be realized in practice, he says, "it is necessary to build up a very good party, establish an excellent revolutionary army, and carry out effective work among the masses."⁵³ Of these three concerns, Ch'en thinks that party building is the "essential key" to guide the revolution to victory; further, because the CCP is being built up in a rural environment, proper ideological education of all party members assumes a position of the utmost importance. Indeed, so concerned was Mao with this point that as early as December 1929 (the Kut'ien conference), he "elevated theory and ideology to the first position in the problem of building up the party and the army."⁵⁴ By emphasizing ideological training above all else, Mao led the entire party in combating left and right "subjectivism" on the one hand, and left and right "sectarianism" on the other. Thus, Ch'en concludes, the party that Mao built up in the rural base areas is a "revolutionary party guided by Marxism-Leninism and possessing strict, centralized proletarian discipline."

As for the Red Army, protracted struggles also proved necessary against two particular deviations within its ranks, namely, "warlordism" and "roving rebel ideology." Ch'en gives Chu Te a certain modicum of credit for building up the army, but he takes some of it back by adding that he had great help from Mao, the CCP, and the "entire body of officers and men in the Red Army."⁵⁵ He then goes on to say that whether one is speaking of

success in building up the party and the army or success in carrying out revolutionary tasks in other fields of concern, there is no real substitute for effective work among the masses. The Chinese revolution is above all a mass movement for national and social liberation, and its organizational forms—the CCP and the Red Army—depend upon the masses for their existence and growth. Just as the key to revolutionary success is effective mass work, says Ch'en, so also is Mao Tse-tung's "mass line" the key to good work among the masses. "There is no other way," he concludes: "The mass line is the key to activating work of all types; it is also the key to Comrade Mao Tse-tung's correct leadership of the Chinese revolution. Having grasped this key, we can have a good party, a good army, and can do good work among the masses."⁵⁶

How, the reader might ask, was Mao able to acquire such a penetrating understanding of the inner laws of the Chinese revolution? Ch'en claims that "almost the entire history" of the period of the civil war (1927-37) was foretold in the short letter Mao wrote to Lin Piao in January 1930.⁵⁷ Ch'en attributes Mao's remarkable insight to what he calls his singular development of "revolutionary wisdom" (*ko-ming ti chih-hui*) in the course of his long years of arduous struggle. To illustrate this important point, Ch'en offers a comparison between Mao and Sun Wu-kung, the fabulous "Monkey King" from the well-known Chinese novel *Pilgrimage to the West* (*Hsi yu chi*). Like Mao, he says, Sun Wu-kung was a revolutionary, for he launched a "revolution against the Emperor of Heaven"; also like Mao, he was possessed of a certain wisdom to help guide his struggle, only his was "supernatural wisdom" (*shen t'ung*). But whereas Sun's revolt against the Emperor of Heaven failed in the end, Mao is guiding the down-to-earth Chinese revolution to certain victory.

Ch'en then explains why Sun was defeated and Mao is successful. The explanation rests in the difference between the "supernatural" wisdom of the one and the "revolutionary" wisdom of the other. Mao's wisdom—a superior wisdom—is based not on the supernatural but on a "grasp of the totality of historical and actual existence"; consequently, it is "omnipotent and without equal." "With this wisdom," Ch'en says, "one may lead the revolutionary forces from weakness to strength, and change defeat into victory. Without such wisdom, the revolutionary forces can

be led from strength to weakness, and victory can be changed into defeat."⁵⁸

Ch'en quickly answers any uncomfortable inference that he may be about to claim quasi-supernatural powers for Mao. There is no unfathomable mystery to Mao's wisdom, he declares, for it is based squarely on the scientific principles of dialectical materialism and on their practical application in real life. By way of illustration, he points to Mao's "theory and policy" on utilizing the fissures within and between the forces of reaction to develop the forces of revolution. Mao's effective use of contradictions in this case, he contends, "is an example of the greatest Marxist-Leninist wisdom, and, at the same time, it has further concretely strengthened the application of Marxism-Leninism in China. All revolutionaries and Communist Party members very much need to understand this point."⁵⁹

Not at all surprisingly, Ch'en believes that the party's former top leaders have proved incapable of developing this "revolutionary wisdom" based on true Marxist-Leninist principles. He is by no means completely ungenerous toward all of them. He mentions especially several prominent martyrs—"outstanding statesmen" like Li Ta-chao, "brilliant mass leaders" like P'eng P'ai, and "numerous theorists and propagandists" like Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai.* He also singles out among the living Chu Te and Liu Shao-ch'i, whom he praises for their correct policies in the military and urban spheres, respectively. Presumably in acknowledgment of Liu's rather belated alignment with the Maoist camp, he also gives Liu special credit for having developed a proper urban strategy within the broad context of Mao's theoretical analysis of the revolution as a whole. This limited praise was no doubt part of the price Mao had to pay for Liu's eulogy to Mao's "genius" at the party's Seventh Congress in 1945.⁶⁰ Aside from these few limited concessions, however, Ch'en's appraisal of the party's former top leaders is uniformly negative. Ch'en Tu-hsiu and Li Li-san had both failed to nurture within themselves the

*Ch'en Po-ta, *Nei-chan shih-ch'i ti fan-ko-ming yü ko-ming* (Counterrevolution and Revolution in the Civil War Period), Yen-an, 1944, pp. 65-66. The revised text of this study refers to Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai only as an outstanding "propagandist," not as a "theorist" as well. By 1953 the only eminent "theorist"—living or dead—in the CCP was Mao Tse-tung. See Ch'en Po-ta, *Kuan-yü shih-nien nei-chan* (On the Ten-Year Civil War), Peking, 1953, p. 69.

“revolutionary wisdom” personified in Mao, and this was true also of “some comrades” in leadership positions during the civil war period.⁶¹ Ch’en certainly has in mind here the Returned Students, Wang Ming and Po Ku in particular, but apparently the Maoists were not yet ready to censure them by name.

In an indirect acknowledgment that he is writing with the benefit of hindsight, Ch’en does admit that popular understanding of Mao’s “revolutionary principles” (*ko-ming chu-i*) was perhaps not so profound in the early years as it is at the present time. Although Mao’s revolutionary line as it emerged in the 1927-30 period was based on a correct Marxist-Leninist analysis of China’s unique “national situation,” this was not immediately appreciated by many members of the party. In fact, Ch’en confesses, it was “simply very difficult” at the time to estimate the impact that Mao’s line would have on “transforming the entire [course] of Chinese history,” or to evaluate its potential “role and influence in the past, present, and future” of China.⁶² Yet, he continues, if a certain degree of uncertainty in the past over the correctness of Mao’s line is at least understandable, if not excusable, the same is not true today, because all members of the party, regardless of the errors they may have committed in the past, are now able to emulate the “revolutionary wisdom” that they now perceive in Mao. How can they do this? Very simply, Ch’en says: “If one wishes to acquire wisdom, one must study Comrade Mao Tse-tung. One must study his method of thinking, his theories [*li-lun*], his policies, and finally, one must study his working style. Making mistakes is undesirable, but if we regard these errors as experience and learn from them, and hence grow in wisdom and improve ourselves, then we can transform the undesirable into the desirable.”*

*Ch’en Po-ta, *Nei-chan shih-ch’i ti fan-ko-ming yü ko-ming* (Counterrevolution and Revolution in the Civil War Period), Yenan, 1944, p. 45. In passing, it should be noted that *chih-hui*, Ch’en’s term for wisdom, has a close affiliation with the conservative “New Confucianism” (*hsin ju-chia*) so popular in the 1920’s and 1930’s and alive even today. According to Hao Chang, the term implies a combination of “intellect” and “sympathy” in understanding China’s unique cultural tradition. In Ch’en’s analysis of Mao’s understanding of China’s “revolutionary tradition,” are these key concepts represented by Mao’s “theories” and “working style”? See Hao Chang, “New Confucianism and the Intellectual Crisis of Contemporary China,” in Charlotte Furth, ed., *The*

Ch'en's call for all CCP members to take Mao Tse-tung as their model for emulation raises the question of the position of Stalin and the classical masters of Marxism-Leninism in the new scale of values among the Chinese Communists. Clearly, for Ch'en, there is no fundamental conflict of loyalties; Mao is the undisputed leader of the Chinese Communist movement, but he himself is the self-acknowledged disciple of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin. Yet although Ch'en refers frequently to this foreign triumvirate, and to Stalin especially, their writings do not constitute an integral part of his general line of reasoning. They are merely introduced from time to time to underscore the claim that, in spite of his own "revolutionary wisdom," Mao remains firmly within the international Marxist tradition. For example, Ch'en stresses the importance of Mao's military strategy and its intimate relationship with his broader political thought, but he does acknowledge a direct link on this issue between Mao and Stalin. Mao's entire military thinking on the Chinese revolution, Ch'en says, is the product of the "concrete, practical application and development" of Stalin's general observation in 1926 that the essential character of the Chinese revolution is that of an armed struggle between the forces of progress and reaction.*

Yet with this example as with others, Ch'en hardly goes farther than a matter-of-fact statement of the relationship between Stalin's thought and Mao's thought. One can see that Ch'en would not feel it necessary to go into a long documentation of the precise relationship between Mao's thought and the writings of the foreign masters, since this might suggest, however indirectly, that substantial differences did in fact exist. Also, Ch'en would regard any pedantic approach to the study of Mao's

Limits of Change: Essays on Conservative Alternatives in Republican China (Cambridge, Mass., 1976), pp. 287-88.

*Ch'en, *Fan-ko-ming yü ko-ming*, p. 30. It is true that Stalin's observation was made in the context of the revolution of 1924-27, when the Nationalist Party represented the progressive side and the various warlords the side of reaction. Nonetheless, Stalin's characterization of the Chinese revolution as an armed struggle remains valid, and this is the context in which one must view Ch'en's remarks. For Stalin's original comments on this issue, see J. V. Stalin, "Prospects of the Revolution in China" (November 30, 1926), *Works* (Moscow, 1954), 8: 379.

thought as being excessively mechanical, for it would tend to negate the innate spark of creative genius that Mao brought to his handling of Marxist-Leninist theory.* Instead, Ch'en expresses his agreement with Wang Chia-hsiang's earlier evaluation of Mao's thought, quoting Wang's essay of July 8, 1943, to the effect that "Mao Tse-tung's thought is Chinese Marxism-Leninism, Chinese Bolshevism, Chinese communism."⁶³ In other words, whatever the exact relationship may be between Mao's thought and that of the foreign masters, still, Mao's thought is Chinese Marxism-Leninism, and not simply Marxism-Leninism in China. Therein lies the decisive difference between Mao's treatment of Marxism-Leninism and the treatment of the Returned Students and other unsuccessful leaders of the CCP; the latter were perhaps more faithful to the letter of Marxism-Leninism, but Mao had proved more loyal to the spirit. It is primarily at this level of mental abstraction, Ch'en says, that one discovers the essential unity between Mao and his illustrious predecessors: "The most outstanding characteristic of Comrade Mao Tse-tung's thought—precisely the same as the most outstanding feature of the thought of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin—is the total unity of theory and practice."⁶⁴

This alleged unity of theory and practice in Mao's thought brings us to Ch'en's concluding summation of Mao's stature within the CCP. It must be realized, he says, that Mao Tse-tung is both the "practical, political leader" of the party and its undisputed "theoretical leader." Mao's dual claim to leadership is not lightly made but is based on something that is now common knowledge: "Since the founding of our party, it is Comrade Mao Tse-tung who has proved able to solve the problems of Chinese society and the Chinese revolution at the theoretical level in a comprehensive, integrated, and philosophical way. Consequently,

*In an important essay of 1949, Ch'en particularly emphasizes Mao's intellectual creativity and independence. Mao was not able to make a "systematic study" of Stalin's writings on the Chinese revolution until the time of the *cheng-feng* campaign in the early 1940's, he says, "but despite this situation Comrade Mao Tse-tung has been able to reach the same conclusions as Stalin on many fundamental problems." See Ch'en Po-ta, "Stalin and the Chinese Revolution" (December 15, 1949), in Ch'en Po-ta, *Stalin and the Chinese Revolution* (Peking, 1953), pp. 24-25, 27.

it is he who has been able consistently to lead forward and advance China's revolutionary cause."⁶⁵

Ch'en's two treatises in the spring of 1944 constitute the first major attempt to provide historico-theoretical content to the concept of "Mao Tse-tung's thought." They are also, very importantly, a substantial reappraisal of Ch'en's earlier draft Maoist history of the CCP, and their specific conclusions were to be very much a part of the Seventh Plenum's resolution on party history adopted in April 1945.

In concluding this chapter, mention should be made of the pioneering study of the origins of Mao Tse-tung's theory and practice published by Benjamin I. Schwartz in 1951. Schwartz placed great emphasis on the years 1927-30 as the creative period in the evolution of the "essential features of Maoism." The "basic elements" of the Maoist strategy, he says, were in evidence well before Mao actually assumed the leadership of the party following the Tsunyi conference in 1935, and in fact the essential features of Mao's thinking can be traced to the report he wrote for the Central Committee on behalf of the Chingkangshan Front Committee (October 5, 1928).⁶⁶ All this is very reminiscent of Ch'en Po-ta's conclusions in 1944, but since we know that Ch'en's two studies were not made public until the early 1950's (after Schwartz's study), any connection seems impossible. Indeed, Schwartz does not even mention Ch'en Po-ta or his two studies of Mao either in the first edition of 1951 or in the second edition of 1958, although by that time Ch'en's earlier works were well known to scholars outside China.

With all due allowance for the substantial differences in intellectual orientation, the similarities in the conclusions that Ch'en and Schwartz reach about the origins of Mao's thought are quite as striking as are the differences in their interpretations. Ch'en, for example, argues that Mao's strategy called for Marxist-Leninist "leadership" of the peasant masses; for Schwartz this amounted to the "imposition" of a Marxist-Leninist party onto a peasant base. But both Ch'en and Schwartz agree on the importance of the peasant masses to Mao's thinking, and on the importance of a strong party, a powerful army, strategically located and self-sufficient base areas, and so on. In any case, although Schwartz's

study should be regarded as a pioneering work in the context of Western scholarship, due acknowledgment must be made of Ch'en Po-ta's intellectual labors some years earlier within the Chinese Communist movement itself.

A Congress of Victory, 1945

Ch'en Po-ta and the Resolution on Party History

Ch'en Po-ta's treatises on Mao Tse-tung's role in the early years of the Chinese Communist Party were more than simply studies of a single individual; they were, in addition, advance drafts of the new Maoist version of party history that was to become the official orthodoxy. With Ch'en's essays before them, party members could view CCP history as one momentous process—the emergence and struggles of Mao's correct line prior to 1935, and its initial triumph and gradual, victorious development since Tsunyi. If one understands this point, one can understand the later Maoist claim that the movement to study party history, of which Ch'en's studies were the major intellectual products, played an "important role" in preparing the stage for the long awaited Seventh Congress of the CCP.

This was not the only reason that prompted the Maoists to give the green light for the congress, a meeting they had seen fit to delay since 1938, when it was first mooted and then canceled because of "wartime pressures." Indeed, it was the rapid lifting of these pressures that made the further postponement of the congress both unnecessary and undesirable. Despite the widespread impact of the final Japanese offensive in China in the spring and summer of 1944 (Operation Ichi-gō), it was evident to all that Japan had exhausted its military potential. The disasters it had been suffering in the Pacific were gradually taking their toll, and the defense of the home islands was fast becoming Japan's first priority. Likewise, the war in Europe was rapidly coming to a head; Italy had been knocked out of the conflict in the summer of 1943, and the once-invincible Germans were being pushed back toward their own borders. It was only a matter of time before Germany would be defeated by the combined strength

of the Allies; this would isolate Japan and bring upon it the joint American-Soviet offensive it had persistently tried to ward off.

With victory over the enemy so close at hand, it is not surprising that the Chinese Communists chose the spring of 1945 as the moment to renew their claim to be a truly national force in China's political destiny. The holding of the CCP's Seventh Congress, the first in seventeen years, would provide the party with an unequalled opportunity to display its internal unity and sense of purpose and to appeal for popular support in the postwar realignment of forces within China. It was perhaps merely coincidental that in mid-May 1945, when the Seventh Congress was getting into stride, Marshal Zhukov was leading his Soviet troops into the suburbs of Berlin. It was not fortuitous, however, that at the very same moment Chiang Kai-shek was exhorting delegates to the KMT's Sixth National Congress to "redouble efforts for the early achievement of final victory" on all fronts.¹ Chiang's assembly, held simultaneously with the Communists' meeting in Yen-an, served notice that its major tasks on the eve of final victory over Japan included "seeking a political solution of the Chinese Communist problem with renewed vigor."² It is in this context of intensifying competition for national (and international) attention between China's two major political movements that we should view the CCP's Seventh Congress and the strident claims that its main speakers made on behalf of their leader and his thought.

Plans for the congress had been under way for some months prior to its convocation in April 1945, and there was little doubt that Mao could expect a strong display of support from most of the party. What little overt opposition remained was expressed not by the defeated Returned Students but by P'eng Te-huai, long a leading figure in the Maoist military establishment. However, P'eng apparently withdrew his opposition at a forty-day North China work conference held in Yen-an just prior to the Seventh Congress.³ With P'eng back in the fold (if only reluctantly), the Maoists convened the Seventh (and final) Plenum of the Sixth Central Committee, which had not met in full assembly since the Sixth Plenum in 1938. The major task of this plenum was to prepare the way for the convening of the Seventh Congress, at which the party would chart its new course for the postwar

years ahead. The key document of this plenum is, of course, the well-known "Resolution on Certain Historical Questions," adopted on April 20, 1945. From the point of view of the Maoists, it was vitally important that such a resolution be passed, for it would bestow the formal approval of the Central Committee on the Maoist version of party history that had been in the making since Ch'en Po-ta's first draft in 1938. Such approval would render final judgment on the various issues of contention between the Maoists and their erstwhile opponents within the party, and would terminate once and for all the endless debate over who was right and who was wrong. With this debilitating debate behind them, all members of the party, regardless of their previous factional affiliations, could unite as one to meet the pressing challenges of the future.

The "Resolution on Certain Historical Questions" is one of the Central Committee's rare departures into the historiography of the CCP. Yet, though it is often referred to and often quoted, little effort has been made to determine just exactly who wrote it. Since it appears as an appendix to one of Mao's speeches in the *Selected Works*, it has been widely assumed to reflect the opinions of Mao himself, if not actually to have issued from his hand. A closer study of the treatise, however, reveals that the author is in all likelihood Ch'en Po-ta, and that its arguments reflect Mao's opinions only in part. According to Peter Vladimirov, the "Resolution" was based on a draft report presented to the Seventh Plenum by Jen Pi-shih, under the title "On the Political Line of the Party Between 1931 and 1935." (Although this report was probably drafted by Ch'en Po-ta, he was not a member of the Central Committee at the time, and therefore he did not have sufficient rank to present his report in person to the Seventh Plenum. Jen, on the other hand, was both a close associate of Mao and a member of the Politburo, so he was in a position to address the Central Committee with considerable authority.) The report sparked off a vigorous debate, and it was in anticipation of this that Mao had previously arranged for the debate on party history to be moved to the Seventh Plenum from its original place on the agenda of the forthcoming congress. In the much smaller plenum, Mao was in a better position to control the discussion, and with his personal intervention the heated debate was finally

wound up, with the plenum endorsing the main conclusions of the draft report. There was apparently sufficient disagreement on the original draft to dissuade the plenum from endorsing it entirely; instead, the members adopted their own resolution based on the original draft report, but differing from it to a significant extent.⁴

There are a number of reasons for believing that the "Resolution" was most likely drafted by Ch'en Po-ta, or at least under his personal influence, but that the final text was somewhat modified by the Central Committee. To begin with, the "Resolution" fits neatly with Ch'en's two major studies discussed in the preceding chapter to provide a full study of the entire period from the founding of the party in 1921 through the early years of the revolution up to Tsunyi. The "Resolution" clearly points out that it is only party history prior to Mao's ascendancy at Tsunyi in 1935 that is the subject of review; the party's development after 1935 is characterized by the "entirely correct" line of Mao Tse-tung and will not be reviewed by the Central Committee until a "future date."⁵ To explain further: Ch'en's study of Mao's "Hunan Report" attempts to sum up the period 1921-27 (with particular emphasis on 1924-27), and his commentary on the civil war period concentrates almost exclusively on the years 1927-30; the "Resolution" states its intention of dwelling particularly on the period "from the Fourth Plenum of the Sixth Central Committee to the time of the Tsunyi conference," that is, from 1931 to 1935.⁶ The three works thus provide total coverage of the 1921-35 period of the CCP's history, when Mao's leadership was not universally accepted as being correct at all times.

That Ch'en did intend to supplement his two earlier studies with one on the 1931-35 period is strongly suggested in the closing comments to his *Counterrevolution and Revolution*. After saying that this study has been an attempt to discuss some "fundamental political questions" in early party history, he concludes by suggesting rather cryptically that, "as for certain [other] questions, it is best to await another time to subject them to scrutiny."⁷ This surely was a reference to the problem of the Returned Students, whose dominance of the party line during 1931-34 Ch'en felt constrained to ignore in his first two studies except for a few random allusions. Since several of these former leaders still occu-

pled high positions of authority in the party, a detailed study by Ch'en would have to await the sanction (if only nominal) of the Central Committee, the party's highest authority.

Further credence is given to the suggestion of Ch'en's being the author of the Central Committee "Resolution" by certain textual similarities between the "Resolution" and Ch'en's earlier studies. For example, in *Counterrevolution and Revolution* Ch'en claims that Mao's resolutions at the Kut'ien conference in 1929 "elevated theory and ideology to the first position in the problem of building up the party and the army." In the "Resolution" it is said that Mao's Kut'ien resolutions "raised party building to the plane of ideological and political principle, and firmly upheld the leading role of proletarian ideology."* Also in *Counterrevolution*, speaking of the party's work in the urban centers after the failure of the revolution in 1927, Ch'en argues that "history has proved that . . . Comrade Liu Shao-ch'i was right, and the Li Li-san line and the new Li Li-san line were wrong." In the "Resolution," the opinion is expressed that, with regard to urban work at this time, the "principal policies should have been those advocated by Comrade Liu Shao-ch'i," and not those of the "various 'left' lines."⁸ These are only two examples of rather specific judgments that appeared first in Ch'en's essay of 1944, and were then repeated in the "Resolution" a year later. Indeed, the "Resolution" seems not to add anything new to Ch'en's previous analysis of party history between 1921 and 1930; since the two earlier studies dealt fully with this nine-year period, the "Resolution" was evidently limited intentionally to a full consideration of the 1930-34 period.

Ch'en had already demonstrated the essential correctness of Mao's strategy prior to the ascendancy of the Returned Students, so all that remained was to illustrate the erroneous nature of their particular lines. Accordingly, the bulk of the "Resolution"

*Ch'en Po-ta, *Nei-chan shih-ch'i ti fan ko-ming yü ko-ming* (Counterrevolution and Revolution in the Civil War Period), Yenan, 1944, p. 65; *Mao Tse-tung hsüan chi* (Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung), 4 vols. (Peking, 1967), 3: 937. The passage cited from *Fan-ko-ming* was deleted in the revised text published in 1953, probably because it suggested that ideology is more important than class composition in determining the "proletarian" character of a communist party. This idea was highly suspect in the eyes of the CPSU.

is devoted to a detailed discussion of the “main content of these lines where they were contrary to the correct line politically, militarily, organizationally, and ideologically.”⁹ The “Resolution” is proof that the Central Committee had given its formal approval to the critique of the Returned Students that had been gradually developed by the Maoists. The party’s ill-fated Fourth Plenum of January 1931, for example, which ratified the Returned Students’ ascendancy, is described as having played “no positive or constructive role” in the development of the revolution, but, on the contrary, only to have reinforced the dominance of the third (and most serious) “left” line of the “two dogmatists, Comrades Ch’ên Shao-yü and Ch’in Pang-hsien.” It is largely because these two individuals have “completely distorted the history of the party” in their efforts to legitimize their erroneous line between 1931 and 1934 that the Central Committee has decided to set forth “formal conclusions” regarding their tenure in the party’s top posts. The mention of Ch’ên Shao-yü and Ch’in Pang-hsien immediately brings us to the “Resolution’s” main contribution to the debate on party history. For the first time in a decade of argument and innuendo, the two principal leaders of the so-called “third ‘left’ line” were formally named in an official Central Committee document. Mao must have taken great pleasure in this official disposition of his case against his two leading opponents in the party, and in the Central Committee’s confirmation that the political line of the party under the leadership of Mao had been “entirely correct.”*

Yet the “Resolution” lacks equal decisiveness in evaluating Mao’s contributions to the revolution in the years 1921–30, the period that is the focus of Ch’ên Po-ta’s two known studies of party history. The “Resolution” credits Mao with “concretely summing up” the essence of the revolution in the early years—1924–27 in particular—and with registering “brilliant achieve-

**Mao Tse-tung hsüan-chi* (Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung), Peking, 1961–65, pp. 920–22. According to Vladimirov, K’ang Sheng told him that Wang Ming had asked Mao “not to accentuate . . . or, at least, to mollify” the discussion of his past mistakes and errors at the Seventh Congress. Mao appears to have kept his promise to “take every precaution to prevent an anti-Wang Ming conflict” at the congress, but not to the extent of withholding Wang’s (and Po Ku’s) name from the official record. On this point, see Peter Vladimirov, *The Vladimirov Diaries: Yenan, China, 1942–45* (Garden City, N.Y., 1975), pp. 197–98.

ments" in establishing his correct line in the years after 1927; but that is about as far as it goes. It has little to say about Mao's achievements during the nine years between 1921 and 1930, and it does not mention any of Mao's writings prior to his "Hunan Report." This is perhaps not curious in itself, if we regard the "Resolution" as the third part of a full survey of Mao's work up to Tsunyi, but we also note that the "Resolution" specifically makes the first two-thirds of this nine-year period an exception to Mao's leadership. During the years 1921-27 and especially 1924-27, the "Resolution" says, the Chinese revolution was "correctly guided by the Communist International and influenced, impelled forward, and organized by the correct leadership of the Chinese Communist Party," and it adds that it was only during the final six months of this period that the party leadership developed a "capitulationist" line and refused to carry out the "many wise directives of the Communist International and Comrade Stalin, and refused to accept the correct views of Comrade Mao Tse-tung and other comrades."¹⁰ This conclusion, in which no less than three sources of "wise directives" and "correct views" are credited in addition to Mao himself, may well be part of the 1953 revision, made at a time when the CCP had a policy of deferring to the Soviet Union; but it also accords with the rather indecisive attitude of the Central Committee in 1945 toward Mao during these early years, and it is wholly consistent with the "Resolution's" evident lack of interest in promoting Mao's claims to theoretical leadership during that period.

This is of course a greatly different attitude from the particular interest that Ch'en Po-ta had shown in projecting Mao's early achievements in his two known studies, and it might seem to invalidate my contention that the "Resolution" is probably based on a report drafted by Ch'en himself, or under his direct guidance. But one must remember that Ch'en complained specifically in the earlier studies of a persistent tendency within the party to date Mao's theoretical achievements from *after* the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, and it seems probable that he wrote those studies partly in hopes of offsetting this tendency. One can conclude, therefore, that they were not completely successful in achieving this goal. Though they may well have been influential in encouraging the publication, in December 1944, of

the first edition of Mao's *Selected Works*, they did not wholly eradicate the tendency to downplay Mao's early years. In the first edition of the *Selected Works*, for example, only the "Hunan Report" and the "Kut'ien Resolutions" were included from among the early texts. This was of course a step in the right direction from the point of view of the Maoists, but nonetheless it continued the neglect of the other early texts to which Ch'en Po-ta had attributed so much importance in the formulation of Mao's thought.¹¹

This leads to an interesting question of the motivations of the Seventh Plenum in issuing a formal resolution not on the entire span of party history prior to 1935 but only on the 1931-34 period. Even though Ch'en's two treatises and the "Resolution" together form an integrated study of party history (and Mao's role therein) for the entire period from 1921 to 1935—one that certainly can be assumed to have been, so far as the Maoists were concerned, the definitive history of the party during this controversial period—the limiting of the "Resolution" to the final stage indicates a definite decision by the Central Committee to downplay the Maoist interpretation. It also provides a clue as to why neither the Seventh Plenum nor the Seventh Congress following it produced a comprehensive and definitive party history along the lines of Stalin's *History of the CPSU*. Is it not possible that certain powerful figures in the CCP, though quite prepared to accept the Maoist critique of the Returned Students, and willing to agree with Mao's claims to correct leadership since Tsunyi, balked at the suggestion of extending the claim of Mao's infallibility all the way back to the founding of the party? That this is probably the case is suggested by the speeches of Liu Shao-ch'i and, even more, Chu Te, who, as we shall see, qualified their overt praise of Mao with reservations as to the extent to which such praise was to be taken. In any event, the limited nature of the "Resolution" adopted by the Seventh Plenum clearly indicates the Central Committee's reluctance to hand Mao the entire history of the CCP on a platter, as had been the case with Stalin and the CPSU in 1938. In other words, although Mao's triumph over the party and its history was substantial, it was not absolute.

A footnote to this, again provided by the Russian observer Vladimirov, substantiates the notion that the "Resolution" was

considered inadequate by the Maoists. According to Vladimirov, Mao later told him personally that he (Mao) hoped to write a book "on all the phases of the Chinese Revolution," presumably along the lines of Stalin's history of the CPSU. This wish does not appear to have been realized, however, and to this day the CCP has not issued an official history of the scope and importance of the Soviet party's account of its historical development.¹²

The Leader Becomes the Sage

I do not wish to give the impression that Mao was treated badly by the Seventh Plenum, only that its appraisal of his contributions to the revolution prior to 1931 was perhaps less positive than he and Ch'en Po-ta had hoped for. And the plenum certainly showed no reluctance in declaring its support of Mao as the undisputed leader of the party, in a statement that set the tone for the congress that was to follow: "Today, with unprecedented unanimity the whole party recognizes the correctness of Comrade Mao Tse-tung's line, and with unprecedented consciousness rallies under the banner of Mao Tse-tung."¹³

The Seventh Congress, described by the New China News Agency (NCNA) as "one of the most important events in the history of modern China," met for a full fifty days, from April 23, to June 11, 1945. Its 752 regular and alternate delegates represented a total party membership of some 1.2 million, in addition to the regular army, people's militia, and nineteen "liberated areas" with an overall population of 95.5 million. Such a congress, reported the NCNA, was one of "solidarity and victory," a congress built firmly on "Mao Tse-tung's line and Mao Tse-tung's thought as guiding principles" and representing the interests of all the Chinese people. As for the concurrent Sixth Congress being held by the Nationalists in Chungking, it was plainly a congress of "hypocrisy and intrigue," whose main aim was to instigate "large-scale civil war" throughout the country.¹⁴

The four main items on the agenda of the CCP congress were Mao Tse-tung's political report, Chu Te's report on military affairs, Liu Shao-ch'i's commentary on the revision of the party constitution, and, finally, the election of the new Central Committee. Besides the three main speakers, many other delegates

addressed the assembly, some of whom “engaged in criticism and self-criticism in regard to past mistakes of the Party. Even those unable to attend because of illness presented their opinions in writing.” Individual self-criticisms were delivered by such former Returned Students as Po Ku and Lo Fu; and others, including Wang Chia-hsiang and, most importantly, Wang Ming, sent letters of repentance. Despite the plethora of individual speeches, there was no doubt as to whose was the most important; Mao’s report, it was claimed, was the “central idea of this Congress,” and the assembled delegates declared themselves “entirely satisfied” with its content and insisted that the “tasks pointed out in the report be carried out in the practical work of the Party.”¹⁵

Mao’s report, “On Coalition Government,” delivered on April 24, the second day, emphasized the host of concrete tasks that lay before the party in the political, economic, and social spheres. In particular, Mao declared that the establishment of a “democratic coalition government” in China had become a “matter of deep concern for the Chinese people and for public opinion in the allied countries.”¹⁶ But Mao did not go out of his way to accommodate the Nationalists on the question of the precise form this coalition government should take. He abruptly dismissed the recently announced Kuomintang proposal to convene a national assembly as nothing more than an attempt to dominate and control whatever government would eventuate. Instead, Mao called for a “provisional democratic coalition government” that would represent “all parties and groups and those without any party or group affiliation.” A “national representative assembly” would then be convened on a “broad democratic basis” through “free and unrestricted elections,” and this assembly in turn would establish a “formally constituted democratic coalition government.” Mao told the congress that the CCP would confine its present demands to the minimum program of new democracy; the transition to socialism and ultimately communism was still “several decades” away, he said.¹⁷

But even though Mao did not call openly for Communist hegemony in the new coalition government, his repeated emphasis on the need to establish a “new-democratic state system” amounted to the same thing, since proletarian leadership was an integral part of the new-democratic revolution.¹⁸ In this way he made it

clear to the KMT that the struggle for supreme power in China was not going to end with the creation of a coalition government but would simply be taking a political instead of a military form. The only "genuine" form of coalition government that Mao could possibly envision was one that, directly or indirectly, was under the increasing ascendancy of the CCP. This was only one reason among many why the Nationalists failed to respond enthusiastically to Mao's call for increased cooperation in the aftermath of the war. They, too, had their plans for national reconstruction after the departure of the Japanese, and these most certainly did not include provision for an armed, independent Communist movement.

Befitting the CCP's new status as a major political and military force in postwar China, Mao also covered the international scene. He called for a new China that was independent, prosperous, and strong, and expressed the hope that Korea and the nations of Southeast Asia would be liberated from imperialist oppression. He urged that there be improved relations between China and the Soviet Union, and he also lauded the founding of the United Nations, in which China would be a prominent participant. Then, having surveyed the entire range of tasks facing the Communist Party and the Chinese nation in the immediate postwar years, Mao returned in his concluding remarks to one of his favorite themes. "Ideological education," he said, "is the key link to be grasped in uniting the whole party for carrying out [its] great political struggles. If this task is not solved, the party cannot accomplish any of its political tasks."¹⁹

Mao's concluding remarks on the importance of ideology and ideological education provided Chu Te with an appropriate point of departure for his speech on the military situation, which immediately followed Mao's. Chu declared that his military report was based on the "spirit and policy of the political report by Comrade Mao Tse-tung," and he proved the remark by making frequent flattering references, throughout the long speech, to Mao's important theoretical contributions not only in the sphere of politics but also in "military science."²⁰ The "new" military theory of the Chinese Communists, Chu said, is not based on "unchanging dogmas" from foreign countries; rather, it is one that has "absorbed experiences in all fields and best suits the

needs of the Chinese people." Modestly declining any credit for himself in the creation of this new military science, Chu declared that its "representative works" are to be found in the "many books on warfare written by Comrade Mao Tse-tung." Accordingly, he concluded: "All army units, all military schools, and all military training classes must regard the military teachings of Comrade Mao Tse-tung as a basic textbook and the soul of education, so that we may equip ourselves ideologically for the defeat of the enemy."²¹

Still, I do not think it is farfetched to suggest that, despite his blanket endorsement of Mao's claims as the party's preeminent military theorist, Chu had some private reservations. I make this suggestion more for what Chu did *not* say than for what he did say, but he did make one brief and rather pointed reference to a problem that evidently troubled him, that of Mao's continual emphasis on ideological education within the army. "Formerly," Chu noted, "there was a tendency in the army to make light of the need for a strong physique and technique. It seemed quite enough for the army to possess political consciousness. This is very wrong."²² This incorrect attitude had been overcome in "recent years," he hastened to add. But the point had been made, and it is hard to believe that it passed unnoticed.

What one notes especially as not having been mentioned is the term "Mao Tse-tung's thought." This had been used increasingly within the party since July 1943, but Chu seems almost to be making a point of avoiding it, as a way, perhaps, of showing his disapproval of the trend toward elevating Mao's individual policies—however correct they might be—into a formal ideological concept that would be applied universally, and not at all scientifically, to build up the cult of Mao.

Since Chu was by no means the only military leader hostile to the whole idea of raising Mao's thought to the status of "Truth," his implied disapproval, if that is what it was, was certain to meet with some agreement. Nor was it especially reckless. Even P'eng Te-huai, who had fallen out with Mao on several important issues over the years and had only recently emerged from a lengthy process of self-criticism, ventured little more. Though P'eng is said to have made his self-criticism "reluctantly and resentfully" and not to have been suitably chastened by the experi-

ence, at the Seventh Congress he could only remark that “99.9 percent of Mao Tse-tung’s thought is correct, but 0.1 percent of it is not.”²³ (In later years, and probably at the time as well, even this was taken as a “malicious attack” on the thought of Mao.)

Chu’s avoidance of the term “Mao Tse-tung’s thought” was more than made up for by Liu Shao-ch’i in his major report to the Seventh Congress, “On the Party,” on May 14. Liu used the term liberally, as did the new party constitution, the interpretation of which was the main topic of his speech. Let us consider the new constitution first, for it contains a troublesome provision that Liu hailed as a “most important historical characteristic of our present revision of the party constitution.”²⁴ This of course refers to the now famous stipulation in the preamble to the constitution that formally designates “Mao Tse-tung’s thought” as the single ideological guide for the CCP in all its work. The particular sentence containing this provision has been troublesome because it has been frequently mistranslated in English, and this faulty translation has been used erroneously in Western scholarship. This is best illustrated in the work of Franz Schurmann, who has translated the sentence in question thus: “The Chinese Communist party takes the theories of Marxism-Leninism and the unified thought of the practice of the Chinese Revolution, the thought of Mao Tse-tung, as the guideline for all of its actions.”²⁵

This translation, with its compound object of the verb *takes*, clearly has the CCP taking not one but *two* ideological systems—Marxism-Leninism and the thought of Mao Tse-tung—as its theoretical guides; from this reading, Schurmann concludes that “the Chinese Communists, in their official labeling of doctrine, have always regarded the total structure of their ideology as consisting of two major components.”²⁶ He then proceeds to elaborate a sophisticated interpretation of Chinese Communist ideology that emphasizes its two distinct aspects, the “pure” and the “practical.” This is mistaken. As I have shown, Mao Tse-tung’s thought as it evolved within the party during the years 1935–45 was regarded by its exponents as the sum total of party ideology. In China, Mao Tse-tung’s thought *was* Marxism-Leninism; it did not simply coexist with Marxism-Leninism as one of two official ideologies guiding the CCP. And an accurate translation of the sentence in

the preamble shows that the authors had no intention of leaving this point ambiguous.

A more precise rendering is as follows: "The Chinese Communist Party takes Mao Tse-tung's thought—the thought that unites Marxist-Leninist theory and the practice of the Chinese revolution—as the guide for all its work, and opposes all dogmatic or empiricist deviations."²⁷ In other words, there is no compound object and no dualistic ideology: the CCP accepts the integrated thought of Mao Tse-tung as its guide, and its only guide, for "all its work." With this reading in mind, we are in a position to understand the significance of the constitution's injunction that the first duty of every party member is to "vigorously raise the level of his own consciousness, and to master the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tse-tung's thought" (not, it should be noted, Marxism-Leninism *and* Mao Tse-tung's thought).²⁸ In this perspective, we can readily appreciate that the new CCP constitution of 1945 was truly a Maoist, as opposed to a Marxist-Leninist, document.

In more recent years, observers have been aware of a certain amount of confusion and/or disagreement within the CCP regarding the status of Mao's thought. Some official translations of the term "Mao Tse-tung's thought" have been rendered consistently as "Mao Tse-tung's theory" or, even more limiting, "Mao Tse-tung's theory of the Chinese revolution."²⁹ In this and other ways, the full equivalence of "Mao Tse-tung's thought" with "Marxism-Leninism" has been seriously attenuated, with Mao's thought representing merely the parochial Chinese variant of the classic theories coming from the West (including Russia). This attenuation of Mao's thought probably reflects the fears of non-Maoist factions within the CCP that the party was setting up Mao Tse-tung's thought as the substantive equivalent—and almost total replacement—of Marxism-Leninism in China. As this study has I think made clear, this is precisely what the Maoists were doing, but not with the enthusiastic support of all factions in the party, nor, of course, of the CPSU in Moscow.

The whole concept of Mao's thought suffered its most severe setback in 1956, when, apparently with the urging of Liu Shao-ch'i, P'eng Te-huai, and other leaders, the term was totally excised from the revised party constitution.³⁰ The removal lasted nearly

a decade, until the Cultural Revolution that began in the mid-1960's, when the term was not only restored to its original meaning and significance but, under the Maoist rule, extended. Whereas it had formerly meant simply the embodiment of Marxism-Leninism in China, in the "Lin Piao" constitution of 1969 it was defined as "Marxism-Leninism of the era in which imperialism is heading for total collapse and socialism is advancing to worldwide victory." It was also described as the development of Marxism-Leninism to a "higher and completely new stage," which made it the most advanced form of scientific socialism and proletarian revolutionary theory in the contemporary era.³¹ The CCP Tenth Congress in August 1973 accepted this revised interpretation of Mao's thought in approving a new party constitution, which stipulates that the CCP "takes Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought as the theoretical basis guiding its thinking." Mao Tse-tung's death in 1976 did not bring any change. Thus, the constitution adopted by the Eleventh Congress in 1977 stipulates that "Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought is the guiding ideology and theoretical basis of the Communist Party of China."³² This ingenious if somewhat clumsy terminology (carried over from the 1969 constitution) contrives to give due recognition to the status of both Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tse-tung's thought and at the same time to suggest the superiority of the latter. In the same way that "Marxism" was hyphenated when it was enriched by the theory and practice of Lenin and the Russian revolution, so too is "Marxism-Leninism" hyphenated in recognition of the fresh contributions of Mao Tse-tung's theory and practice of the Chinese revolution. Thus, Mao takes his place as the outstanding exponent of scientific socialism in the second half of the twentieth century.

Returning to 1945, we will recall that Liu Shao-ch'i was a tardy convert to the Maoist side, but if he still had any reservations about the swelling cult of Mao and his thought, he disguised them carefully. Whether, as Han Suyin has suggested, Liu's speech to the Seventh Congress was cynical praise simply to ingratiate himself with Mao is a moot point, but the sheer extravagance of the praise is not to be disputed.³³ "Our Comrade Mao Tse-tung," he intones, "is not only the greatest revolutionary and statesman in Chinese history, but also the greatest theoretician and scientist

in Chinese history.”³⁴ Indeed, Liu’s speech is important in party history not because of anything original he says, for he simply repeats the arguments regarding Mao and his thought that the pro-Maoists had gradually built up over the previous decade, but because it was made by the party’s number two leader and was unanimously approved and accepted by an official party congress. The key to Mao’s greatness, says Liu, lies in his brilliant synthesis of Marxist-Leninist theory and the actual practice of the Chinese revolution. The glittering product of this synthesis is, of course, “Mao Tse-tung’s thought, Comrade Mao Tse-tung’s theories and policies regarding Chinese history, [Chinese] society, and the Chinese revolution.” Mao’s thought, he says, is an “outstanding example” of the “nationalization” and the “Sinification” of Marxism. “It is as Chinese as it is thoroughly Marxist.”³⁵

Liu’s use of the term “Sinification of Marxism” in direct reference to Mao’s thought seems almost anachronistic in 1945. As we have seen, this term had generated a good deal of controversy in the party ever since Mao first endorsed it in 1938, and it appears that sometime during or shortly after *cheng-feng* the party began removing it from official documents. The reasons for this are not entirely clear, but the logical supposition is that the literary origins and cultural (not to say nationalistic) connotations of the term were judged unsuitable for a supposedly “scientific” theory that was intended to have universal application. Nonetheless, although the term itself was largely abandoned, the general ideas behind it were not; as Liu’s comments make clear, Mao’s thought was still held to be both scientific and Chinese. On the other hand, with the rapid rise of the CCP as a major contender for national power—and with the growing belief within the party that Mao’s thought was applicable to the wider colonial world—a theoretical formulation that overemphasized the distinctive Chinese dimension was obviously inappropriate. Increasingly regarded as being parochial, the term “Sinification of Marxism” has not been used officially by the CCP since the new regime was established in 1949. Certainly, it is not an expression that was well received by Soviet leaders and theoreticians, and this too must have hastened its demise.³⁶

In his speech to the Seventh Plenum, Liu specified two major facets of Mao’s thought, the diagnostic and the prescriptive; it

was, he said, composed of Mao's "analysis of the present world situation and China's national situation," and his "complete theory of revolution and national reconstruction for the Chinese people." The key elements in Mao's prescription for the Chinese people's revolutionary cause included the "theory and policy regarding new democracy, the emancipation of the peasantry, the revolutionary united front, revolutionary wars, revolutionary bases, the establishment of a new-democratic republic, party building, and culture."³⁷ The absence in this list of Mao's contributions to "revolutionary science" of any achievements in the field of dialectical materialist philosophy is consistent with Liu's emphasis on Mao's strength as a leader of the practical revolutionary movement. Apart from the perfunctory reference to "culture," Liu's list is very specific and practical, not theoretical. Similarly, Liu's catalogue of Mao's achievements is essentially domestic in scope. And yet he also notes that "Chinese communism—Mao Tse-tung's thought" arose in China from the union of Marxist-Leninist theory and Chinese revolutionary practice, just as "Russian Bolshevism—Leninism-Stalinism" was born of the union of Marxist theory and the practice of the Russian revolution. But the similarities between Russian Bolshevism and Chinese communism do not end here, he suggests: just as Leninism-Stalinism has played a guiding role in the emancipation of the people of Russia and the whole world, so too will Mao Tse-tung's thought make "great and useful contributions to the cause of emancipation of the peoples of all countries, and especially the cause of liberation of the various nations of the East."³⁸

In his concluding remarks on the question of ideology, Liu notes that Mao is a loyal "disciple" of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, but he asserts in no uncertain terms that he is designating the writings of the disciple, and not those of the four masters, as the proper course of intellectual study for party members in the future. The main task now, he says is to "mobilize the entire party to study and disseminate Mao Tse-tung's thought." In order to expedite the performance of this duty, Liu issued a specific set of instructions for the immediate years ahead: (1) all party cadres are to study Mao's writings "systematically"; (2) all party schools and training classes must adopt Mao's writings as "basic teaching material"; (3) all sections of the party press are to propagate

Mao's thought "in a systematic manner"; and (4) in order to facilitate all the above tasks, the party's propaganda organs are to edit Mao's important works "in the form of popular reading matter adapted to the level of the average party member."³⁹

Nothing could be more definite than this as a prescription for party loyalty to a chosen leader. And yet on one occasion in this long and highly laudatory speech—in a passage that has been much commented on—Liu seems rather to be warning the party (and even Mao himself) that it must not be carried away in its zeal to create a cult of Mao—that Mao is no more than they are. "Comrade Mao Tse-tung is the leader of our party," Liu says, "but he is also an ordinary member of our party. He is under the direction of the party [*tsai tang ti chih-p'ei chih hsia*], and adopts a most scrupulous attitude in observing party discipline in every respect."⁴⁰ However, since the report as a whole largely negates the impact of this warning, its significance may easily be exaggerated. Liu's comments on the nature of the CCP's organizational unity, for example, a subject on which he has long been regarded as the party's outstanding spokesman, again specifically place Mao at the center and head of the whole party structure and party thought: "The party's organizational unity is above all based on the premise of the ideological unity of party members as laid down by Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tse-tung's thought, without which the party's unity in organization and action has no foundation."⁴¹

As Liu knew only too well, organizational unity in the CCP was guaranteed by the practice of democratic centralism. This provides that all party members are encouraged (at least in theory) to participate actively in all decision-making processes within the party. But democratic centralism also stipulates that once a final decision has been made by the Central Committee (in practice, the Political Bureau or the individual leader), all party members must respect this decision. In case of doubt, the standard practice is that the individual obeys the collective, the minority obeys the majority, lower organs obey higher organs, and the whole party obeys the Central Committee (or its leading figures).⁴² A serious contradiction had thus crept into Liu's reasoning: in the interests of organizational unity, even the top

leader of the CCP was to submit himself to the discipline of democratic centralism, though at the same time the "thought" of the top leader was to provide the basis of this organizational unity. But what would happen if the top leader were to disrupt the existing organizational unity of the party, and at the same time justify this breach of democratic centralism by declaring that this existing organizational unity was not genuine or desirable—that is, did not correspond to his "thought" at that given moment in time? The implication of this line of reasoning is quite clear: under such circumstances, the top leader could in effect set himself against the discipline of the party, and at the same time justify his actions by appealing to the authority of his own "thought." This fundamental contradiction in Liu's argument may have been overlooked in 1945, but exactly twenty-one years later it was to contribute to the temporary destruction of the CCP at the hands of Mao Tse-tung, and the abrupt termination of Liu's own career.⁴³ Even Liu, swept up in the euphoria of the Seventh Congress, apparently had no notion of how far the swelling cult of Mao and his thought might eventually be carried.

After many weeks of discussion, the Seventh Congress fulfilled its final duty by electing a new Central Committee of forty-four regular and thirty-three alternate members. Of the regular members, Mao Tse-tung, Chu Te, and Liu Shao-ch'i ranked first, second, and third, respectively; Ch'en Shao-yü and Ch'in Pang-hsien were ranged forty-third and forty-fourth. This was no surprise.* Of the alternates, the top three listed were Liao Ch'eng-chih, Wang Chia-hsiang, and Ch'en Po-ta. After eight years of intensive work on behalf of Mao and his claims to ideological supremacy within the CCP, Ch'en was given a formal status in keeping with the importance of the largely informal roles he had been playing during these eight years. As luck would have it, Ch'en did not have to wait long for full membership in the Central Committee: upon the death of Wang Jo-fei in 1946 Ch'en was immediately

*It was surprising, however, that although Li Li-san was ranked high at the fifteenth position, Chou En-lai only managed the twenty-third spot, and P'eng Te-huai had to settle for the thirty-third rank. For statistics on the new Central Committee elected by the Seventh Congress, see the New China News Agency dispatch of June 13, 1945, in Conrad Brandt et al., *A Documentary History of Chinese Communism* (New York, 1971), p. 292.

elected a full member of the party's highest body.* For the shy and stammering scholar-revolutionary from Fukien, the decade from 1935 to 1945 had been a period of almost feverish work, and few would have predicted that he would rise so high. Ch'en's close personal relationship with Mao was surely unique within the party, and as Mao's star rose even higher Ch'en's rose with it.

At the first plenary meeting of the new Central Committee, which met shortly after the conclusion of the Seventh Congress, Mao was confirmed in the highest offices the party could bestow. One after another, he was named chairman of the Central Committee, of the Political Bureau, of the Central Secretariat, and, finally, of the Revolutionary Military Committee.⁴⁴ Yet Mao probably (and Ch'en Po-ta most certainly) took greatest satisfaction from the singular honor the Seventh Congress had conferred upon him by ratifying the insertion of "Mao Tse-tung's thought" into the new CCP constitution. Mao had become more than a mere mortal within his own lifetime, more even than simply the leader of the Chinese Communist Party. True to the ancient Chinese impulse that had fired the dreams of his rival Chiang Kai-shek, Mao Tse-tung had achieved the ultimate transformation: the leader had become the sage, and Marxism-Leninism had become Mao Tse-tung's thought.

**Ibid.* It is a remarkable coincidence that Yeh Ch'ing, Ch'en's longtime rival in Marxist polemics, was elected an alternate member of the new Central Executive Committee elected by the Sixth Congress of the Nationalist Party, which was held in Chungking in May 1945. On this detail see Howard L. Boorman and Richard C. Howard, eds., *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China* (New York, 1967), 2: 219.

Conclusion and Epilogue

Conclusion

By 1945 Mao Tse-tung's thought had emerged as an enormously powerful phenomenon within the ranks of the Chinese Communist movement. Nor was this to prove temporary, for right up to his death in 1976 Mao's thought remained one of the most distinctive aspects of Chinese politics. Today, of course, the new leadership in Peking is reassessing the place of Mao's thought in the Chinese political system, and some diminution of its role is in sight. It is unlikely, however, that there will be any "de-Maoization" campaign as in the case of Stalin after his death in 1953. Mao's thought has become an integral part of Chinese political culture, and even if the actual term is abandoned much of its substance will undoubtedly remain. In this study, I have analyzed the ideological and political process that gave rise to Mao's thought within the CCP, with special reference to the years 1935-45. This decade, known as the Yen-an period, opened with Mao's rise to power at the Tsunyi conference and closed with the formal incorporation of his thought into the new constitution adopted at the CCP's Seventh Congress.

There is little doubt that Mao Tse-tung played a strong personal role in fostering the cult of his own person and thought. But he also received the enthusiastic support of a small group of party intellectuals who gathered around him, of whom the most important was Ch'en Po-ta. The conclusion emerges that the cult of Mao and his thought was not merely a simple concomitant of Mao's rise to power during this period. Rather, the dual cult was consciously created and propagated within and without the CCP as a deliberate act of policy on the part of the ascendant Maoists, with Mao and Ch'en very much at the core of this policy.

Throughout the analysis, I have said a good deal about the evolution of ideas and also the struggle for power within the CCP, and, to a lesser extent, between the CCP and the Chinese Nationalist Party. As the study progressed, it became apparent that it fell naturally into two distinct periods, each with its own specific character. The first period (1935–40) was one of ideological creativity, when Mao Tse-tung and his associates worked out the basic elements of their distinctive ideology, namely, “Sinified” Marxism-Leninism. With the publication of Mao’s “On New Democracy” in 1940, this initial creative period came to a close; although the new concept of the “Sinification of Marxism” was not yet widely accepted throughout the CCP, the basic thinking and writing had been done. The second period (1940–45) was essentially one of ideological consolidation, when the ascendant Maoists responded to a series of challenges by remolding the ideology of the CCP along the lines that had been worked out previously. The task now was to systematize and disseminate the basic concepts of Sinified Marxism-Leninism throughout the CCP, and beyond it to Chinese society as a whole. The term finally decided upon to symbolize this new Chinese type of Marxism-Leninism was “Mao Tse-tung’s thought.” This period closed in 1945, when Mao’s thought was incorporated into the new party constitution and the Chinese people were exhorted to rally under the banner of Mao Tse-tung.

From time to time, developments within the CCP, in Chinese domestic politics, and in the international arena intervened to accelerate or retard the Maoists’ deliberate campaign to foster the ascendancy of Mao’s thought. By the time of the CCP’s Seventh Congress in 1945, however, the victorious Maoists had succeeded in their joint drive for the “primitive accumulation” of political and ideological power. Mao’s ascendancy within the CCP was perhaps not as absolute as it appeared in later years, but there can be no gainsaying the fact that the CCP—and shortly thereafter the nation itself—had entered the era of Mao Tse-tung and Mao Tse-tung’s thought.

As this study suggests, there were important conditioning factors that facilitated the rise of Mao’s thought as the official ideology of the CCP. In the first place, the creation of a truly distinctive Chinese communist ideology had great appeal to many of

the party's urban intellectuals, who sought some visible symbol of China's cultural independence from the West, including the Soviet Union. Second, Mao and his close supporters were aware of the need for Mao to build up a distinctive ideological character as a weapon against the power of the Moscow-oriented Returned Students, and indeed of Moscow itself. Third, most members of the CCP, regardless of their personal views, appreciated the need for the CCP to offer a relatively coherent ideological doctrine that would win the allegiance of China's masses in competition with the ideological blandishments of Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalists. The theoretical key that opened the door to the creation of Mao Tse-tung's thought was of course the concept of the Sinification of Marxism. Based on the ideas of both Mao and Ch'en Po-ta, the Sinification of Marxism allowed for the formulation of an interpretation of Marxism-Leninism that was claimed to be at once distinctly Chinese and indisputably scientific. Not until the foreign Marxist theory had been tested in the crucible of Chinese revolutionary practice, it was argued, would a new living body of theory emerge having the clear stamp of Chinese genius. Given Lenin's dictum that without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement, we can appreciate Li Wei-han's later claim: "The establishment in the Party of the idea of integrating the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution was the most fundamental question—a question of decisive significance—in building the Communist Party [of China]."¹

The path from the Sinification of Marxism to the creation of Mao Tse-tung's thought was by no means inevitable, but Mao and his close supporters made certain that there would be no serious opposition to Mao's claim to political and theoretical supremacy within the CCP. When outright opposition did surface, as in the case of Wang Ming and the Returned Students, or Wang Shih-wei and other dissident intellectuals, it was vigorously opposed and ultimately suppressed. Yet such action was exceptional; as much as anything, the triumph of Mao's thought was due to years of painstaking ideological and political work on the part of the Maoists, and, most importantly, to the growing realization within the CCP that in the final analysis Mao's ideas seemed to work. Had Mao's leadership and policies suffered a

severe setback between 1935 and 1945, his thought might well occupy the place in the official history of the Chinese revolution now taken by that of Ch'en Tu-hsiu. In the evolution of Mao Tse-tung's thought as the CCP's official doctrine, as in most other historical phenomena, one is hard put to avoid the conclusion that nothing quite succeeds like success.

In sum, this study contributes to our understanding of the Chinese Communist movement in four distinct areas. It develops previous discussions of the ideological history of the CCP, especially regarding the emergence of the concepts of the "Sinification of Marxism" and "Mao Tse-tung's thought." In particular, it relates the idea of Sinification to the rising nationalist sentiment among China's intelligentsia in the 1930's, and traces its evolution from the literary ideas of Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai to Ch'en Po-ta and eventually to Mao Tse-tung himself. Further, the concept of Mao's thought is established as a direct outgrowth of Sinification, as is its interpretation by the ascendant Maoists as a new body of theory in the Marxist-Leninist tradition. In this view, Mao Tse-tung was the latest "creative" theoretician in the succession from Marx-Engels and Lenin-Stalin, and not simply a local Chinese practitioner of universal and unchanging revolutionary principles from Europe and the Soviet Union. Although Stalin and the CPSU eventually acknowledged Mao's leadership of the CCP, the seeds of later ideological conflicts were sown when Mao's thought was designated the official guiding ideology of the Chinese party.

In using these ideological concepts as points of reference, this treatment offers a distinctive approach to the analysis of elite politics within the CCP (and, to a lesser extent, between the CCP and the KMT as well) during the Yen-an period. Mao's growing ideological claims during these years were a critical element in his leadership, and at the same time provided his opponents with a focus of attack. Indeed, attitudes toward Mao's ideological formulations can be used as a convenient benchmark to estimate pro- and anti-Maoist forces within the party. The Returned Students, for example, ridiculed Mao's status as a theoretician, many of the party's intellectuals were skeptical of the idea of the Sinification of Marxism, and even important leaders favorably disposed toward Mao (for example, Liu Shao-ch'i and Chu Te) were hesitant to give a full endorsement to the concept of Mao Tse-

tung's thought. For all these reasons, the official resolution on party history adopted by the Seventh Congress was somewhat reserved in its appraisal of Mao's theoretical claims, especially in the important pre-1931 period of party history. In this light, the role of staunchly pro-Maoist elements in the party center (such as Ch'en Po-ta and his colleagues) in pushing Mao's claims upon the other leadership factions is made all the more apparent.

Mao Tse-tung's personal role in fostering the twin cult of himself and his thought is brought into sharp focus in this discussion. By the early 1930's Mao was in a particularly difficult position; although he had himself concluded that ideology was critical to the successful pursuit of the revolution, he chafed under the low position he enjoyed as a theoretician in the eyes of most of the party leadership, and of Stalin also. One of Mao's major concerns during the Yen-an period was to remedy this situation. By 1938, having undergone a "crash course" in Marxist-Leninist philosophy and having enlisted the assistance of young theoreticians like Ch'en Po-ta, Mao was ready to stake his claim as the party's leading theoretical spokesman. The Sinification of Marxism, new democracy, Mao Tse-tung's thought, the resolution on party history, and the party constitution of 1945—all these departures were designed to establish Mao's theoretical supremacy. Individuals and factions that stood in his way, such as Wang Ming and the Returned Students and Wang Shih-wei and the dissident intellectuals, were systematically removed from power and subjected to public criticism and repudiation. By 1945, Mao was indisputably the first among equals, and even prominent theoreticians and leaders like Liu Shao-ch'i did not challenge him openly, though some had private misgivings. There is no evidence to suggest that Mao was personally opposed to his increasing glorification and made any effort to curb it; on the contrary, it would appear that he was fully behind it, and clearly understood its role in helping consolidate his ideological and political leadership.

Finally, this study considerably enhances our knowledge of the early career of Ch'en Po-ta, particularly regarding his role as party theorist and historian in the service of Mao Tse-tung. It is quite clear, for example, that Ch'en had emerged as a Marxist theoretician and party activist prior to meeting Mao in mid-1937,

and also had developed an antagonistic relationship with the Returned Students as far back as the late 1920's. Both of these qualities recommended him to Mao, and upon Ch'en's arrival in Yen-an he quickly became established as Mao's political secretary and theoretical adviser. Ch'en edited the earliest version of Mao's selected writings in late 1937, and in subsequent years he worked with Mao in developing the ideas behind the Sinification of Marxism and new democracy. During the *cheng-feng* campaign, Ch'en rose to prominence as the leading Maoist critic of dissident elements within the party, and he undertook the key role in campaigning against the KMT's ideological challenge to the CCP, especially after the party's promotion of Mao Tse-tung's thought in 1943. Finally, Ch'en emerged as the leading architect of the "Maoist myth," which has dominated the official history of the CCP right up to the present day. The intimate relationship that Ch'en established with Mao Tse-tung at Yen-an persisted down through the postwar years, and it was only during the tumult of the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960's that the two men finally parted company.

Epilogue

A detailed study of the political relationship between Mao Tse-tung and Ch'en Po-ta from 1945 to Ch'en's eclipse in 1970 would require a book nearly as long as the present one. Yet something should be said about their later collaboration, especially during the period of the Cultural Revolution, the greatest upheaval in China since the Communist victory in 1949. This final section is an attempt to sketch the main outlines of the working relationship of these two Communist thinkers from the time of the Seventh Party Congress to Ch'en's fall from power in 1970.

As I have already pointed out, although a great deal has been written about Mao Tse-tung as leader and thinker, very little has been written about Ch'en Po-ta. Certainly the high points of Ch'en's postwar career, and his relationship with Mao, can be pieced together from a wide variety of sources, including secondary accounts, official and unofficial documents, and Mao's and Ch'en's own writings and speeches. But since Ch'en was not nearly so prolific a writer after 1949 as he had been earlier, owing to his

growing administrative responsibilities and the highly confidential nature of his inner-party activities, we are on somewhat less certain ground here than we are in dealing with the earlier period. Thus the following discussion will be in some respects tentative and speculative.*

Ch'en emerged as a leading party spokesman in the immediate postwar years, and in his writings he employed Mao's thought as a mechanism of mass mobilization in the various new campaigns launched by the CCP. He never abandoned this political tactic, and he used it with particular effectiveness during the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960's. The bulk of Ch'en's efforts immediately after the war, however, was devoted to continuing the work he had commenced in 1943, namely, the destruction of the ideological appeal of Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalists. Ch'en was an effective polemicist, and the techniques he worked out against the Nationalists stood him in good stead when he turned his invective against "Soviet revisionism" during the Sino-Soviet dispute in the 1960's. As the civil war between the Nationalists and Communists intensified in the late 1940's, and with victory in sight, Ch'en returned to his earlier interest in economic questions. He called for a new study campaign that would stress the mastery of economic work through exposure to the ideas of the major Marxist thinkers, including Mao Tse-tung, and in time, Ch'en got the opportunity to put his economic ideas into practice, especially in the agricultural sector, during the Great Leap Forward in the late 1950's.

Following the Communist victory in 1949, Ch'en's major task was to establish an agreeable relationship between Stalin and Mao in the realm of Marxist-Leninist theory. In two essays published on the eve of Mao's visit to the Soviet capital in December 1949, Ch'en implied that Mao and the CCP were ready to accept their place in the Soviet bloc, but only on the basis of equality, and not subordination. But though the CCP wanted above all to maintain its independence from Moscow in ideological matters,

*Since this concluding section stands apart from the main study, I am not documenting my assertions or interpretations, although they are based on the best available information at the time of writing. Those who wish to pursue the Mao-Ch'en relationship further are advised to consult the biographical sources listed in the Bibliography.

the alliance with the Soviets was followed by a wave of Russian influence in China. To help counteract this trend, in mid-1950 the party launched a new movement for the study of Mao Tse-tung's thought, culminating in late 1952 with the publication of the first three volumes of Mao's *Selected Works*.* Ch'en Po-ta was enlisted to lead off the campaign, and on July 1, 1951 he issued an important work (popularized under the title *On Mao Tse-tung's Thought*) in commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the CCP. The burden of this work is that Mao "developed and advanced" Marxism-Leninism as an "independent" thinker and revolutionary, and that his thought represents the path that should be taken by colonial and semi-colonial peoples throughout the world.

These bold claims on Mao's behalf were not at all liked by a good many persons within both the Soviet and the Chinese leadership. For the time being, however, the issue was not raised publicly, and Ch'en worked with Mao on a number of other tasks, including drafting a constitution for the new People's Republic. Though Mao was at the head of the special committee set up to write the constitution, the official commentary that accompanied the initial draft when it was released in March 1953 was written by Ch'en, and Ch'en was probably the principal author of the draft. A more significant appointment for Ch'en was in 1955-56, when he served as the deputy director of the party's Rural Work Department. Mao was meeting a good deal of resistance from top party leaders who favored a cautious approach to reforming agriculture, and during these years Ch'en spent much time traveling around the countryside as a representative of Mao's more radical line. In two important reports on agricultural policy in late 1955 and early 1956, Ch'en argued that a bold policy of speeding up the process of conversion to rural cooperatives would vastly increase China's agricultural productivity.

At the CCP's Eighth Congress, held in late 1956, although Ch'en's work was partly undone when "Mao Tse-tung's thought" was dropped from the new party constitution adopted by the con-

*According to one Soviet China expert with whom I have consulted, Ch'en Po-ta was a prominent member of the special party commission set up to edit Mao's works for publication and dissemination throughout the country.

gress, Ch'en himself was elected an alternate member (ranked fourth of six) of the Political Bureau approved by the new Central Committee. This placed him in the party's highest organ of power and added considerably to his stature within the party's top leadership circles. Not long after this, it became clear that Ch'en was a central figure in Mao's attempt to resolve the two major issues that were causing him trouble in his leadership of the party. These were the controversies over his increasingly radical rural policies and his claim to be the CCP's undisputed theorist, and, since the death of Stalin, the top spokesman of the international Communist movement. Ch'en and Mao attempted to find a solution to both these problems in the "people's communes," a brilliant idea that was to prove less than successful in actual practice.

In the wake of the Eighth Congress, Ch'en issued a series of articles and speeches in which he called upon the nation to unite "under the banner of Mao Tse-tung." In forceful language, Ch'en claimed that Mao's "creative development" of Marxism-Leninism in China had led to his discovery of a special road that would allow China to advance to communism "in the not distant future." This new discovery was the concept of "people's communes," a term that first appeared in Ch'en's writings at this time. The commune idea aptly met Mao's needs for a theoretical justification both for his ideological supremacy and for the collectivization of agriculture, and he espoused it with great enthusiasm. The Soviet leaders and others in the top ranks of the CCP were very skeptical of both these propositions, however, and their skepticism was confirmed when the communes ran into difficulty during the Great Leap Forward.

In spite of these growing problems with the commune experiment, the movement to elevate Mao as the leading theorist in the international Communist movement proceeded apace. Ch'en Po-ta's established position as a top party ideologist was confirmed with his appointment in mid-1958 as the editor-in-chief of *Red Flag* (Hung-ch'i), the new party journal of theory and policy. From this strong platform, Ch'en was able to play a key role in the growing Maoist effort to establish Mao's theoretical supremacy over the incumbent Soviet leaders (especially Nikita Khrushchev), and even to challenge Stalin's position as heir to Lenin in the

field of theory. It is now reasonably certain, in fact, that Ch'en was Mao's major collaborator in preparing the lengthy series of polemical articles aimed at the Soviet party that appeared during 1960-63. Other leaders, notably K'ang Sheng, were also closely involved in this enterprise, and this probably accounts for both Ch'en's and K'ang's prominent roles in the Cultural Revolution a few years later. These polemics, which show a level of theoretical sophistication and grasp of historical detail characteristic of only a few top CCP leaders, precisely stated the Chinese objections to "Soviet revisionism," and called for renewed efforts to prevent the growth of revisionism in China and other parts of the socialist camp.* The polemics thus effectively laid the theoretical basis for the coming Cultural Revolution and helped to polarize opinion within the party's highest echelons over the issue of revisionism at home and abroad.

But though they had been aggressive and successful in the Sino-Soviet dispute, Mao and Ch'en were losing ground on the domestic front as a result of the economic problems growing out of the Great Leap Forward and the commune movement. It was at about this time that Mao began talking about a new "cultural revolution" that would regenerate socialism in China and eliminate what he perceived to be growing signs of revisionism. This idea, which would involve a major rectification of the party itself, met little enthusiasm among the top leaders, but in early 1966 a "Central Cultural Revolution Group" (CCRG) was established with Ch'en as its director. Thus, Ch'en, in cooperation with Mao's wife, Chiang Ch'ing, and a small number of other Maoist appointees in the group, emerged as the major spokesman of the now-official "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," and was poised to play the most dramatic political role of his career.

Liu Shao-ch'i, Teng Hsiao-p'ing, and other top party leaders were determined to keep the Cultural Revolution in check. At the hastily convened Eleventh Plenum of the party in August, the Maoists managed to outflank Liu and Teng and bring about their downfall, and Ch'en Po-ta was elevated to the standing committee of the Politburo, ranking fourth after Mao, Lin Piao, and

*During the Cultural Revolution, it was said that Ch'en Po-ta was working on a theoretical study of the social origins of "Soviet revisionism," but after his fall from power in 1970 nothing further was heard of this project.

Chou En-lai. With the opposition quelled in Peking, Ch'en was able to move ahead with the mobilization of the nation's youth to combat the increasing sense of caution displayed by the party's regional leaders and organizations.

By the opening days of 1967, the student Red Guards had been joined in this "revolutionary" drive by the nation's industrial workers and, to a lesser extent, by the peasants, and the movement showed signs of getting out of control in Shanghai and other major cities. Under Ch'en's leadership, the CCRG offered a new, urban version of the people's commune as a political structure that would replace the "revisionist" party organization in China's largest city. Such a commune was inaugurated in Shanghai in February 1967 (and in a few other cities as well), but soon thereafter Mao vetoed the commune idea as being too premature for the situation in China. Ch'en and his group, after some experimentation, eventually found a substitute for the commune system in the organs of power that became synonymous with the Cultural Revolution, namely, the "revolutionary committees."

Even though he had been rebuffed by Mao on the matter of the communes, Ch'en Po-ta was still at this point one of the most influential men in China, and at the peak of his power. On the other hand, the army proved reluctant to support the radical leftists, and the military rebellion in Wuhan in the summer of 1967 was directed at Ch'en Po-ta's CCRG. Not long after this, Mao, for the first known time in his long association with Ch'en, called him officially to task. He upbraided him for having failed to control student and worker violence and for having antagonized the army, and he demanded that he and Chiang Ch'ing make official self-criticisms. Ch'en duly acknowledged that he had indeed failed to control many of his radical subordinates in the CCRG; several of them were then saddled with the blame for the Wuhan incident and abruptly removed from power.

Ch'en only just barely survived this crisis. The humiliating self-confession was not the worst of it; his tight little empire in the CCRG was severely weakened, with Chiang Ch'ing in particular being ordered to take a rest "for health reasons," and *Red Flag*, Ch'en's prestigious mouthpiece, was suspended indefinitely pending "reorganization." Furthermore, Ch'en's longtime relationship with Mao had been placed under great strain, and his

numerous enemies in the party and military hierarchies were more than ever resolved to bring about his downfall.

But Ch'en did find one powerful ally at this trying time, namely, Lin Piao, the army leader and newly designated successor to Mao. Lin and Ch'en apparently came to an understanding that if they cooperated, Lin, after Mao died, could become both party and army leader, and Ch'en could replace Chou En-lai as prime minister. The cooperation seemed to be working: at the party's Ninth Congress in April 1969, Lin was officially confirmed as Mao's successor and Ch'en was reappointed (ranked fourth) to the reduced five-man standing committee of the Politburo. To all outward appearances, Ch'en had weathered the storm in fine style.

All this was mere temporary illusion. In spite of his apparent success at the Ninth Congress, Ch'en was in deep trouble. He had helped Lin Piao draft his major political report to the congress, in which he argued that the "major contradiction" in China at that time was not between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie but rather "between the advanced socialist system and the backward productive forces of society."* Mao and Chou En-lai shrewdly realized that this was an argument for more radical restructuring of China's socioeconomic system and forced Lin to accept a much revised, more moderate version of the political report. Ch'en then made the fatal mistake of not accepting this revised report drawn up with Mao's personal approval; and not only did he not accept it, he openly opposed it in ensuing discussions, apparently with Lin's tacit support.

The details of Ch'en's last days in power remain obscure, but it is possible to piece together a fairly plausible picture from subsequent revelations in the Chinese press and other sources. Ch'en stubbornly refused to abandon his radical stance. At the party's Second Plenum, held in August 1970, some sixteen months after the Ninth Congress, Ch'en again advocated a radical line (again with Lin Piao's tacit approval), and he also developed at some length the theory of Mao's Marxist-Leninist "genius." The defunct post of chairman of the republic should, Ch'en said, be restored and occupied by Mao. Mao, no longer sympathetic, inter-

*After his fall from power, Ch'en was accused of having introduced the same theory into the political report Liu Shao-ch'i presented to the Eighth Party Congress in 1956.

preted this seeming flattery from Ch'en as a plot to have him (Mao) shunted aside as a figurehead, leaving Lin in a good position to take over the chairmanship of the party and appoint Ch'en prime minister in place of Chou En-lai.

Mao was also disturbed by Ch'en's enthusiastic advocacy of "extensive democracy" at the plenum, which Mao thought amounted to calling for the creation of mass-based political organizations throughout the country *prior* to the rebuilding of the party itself. Mao was strongly opposed to this proposal, believing that Ch'en and his mentor Lin Piao were attempting to perpetuate a weak party in favor of powerful mass organizations, which could be dominated (as in the case of the revolutionary committees which had sprung up all over the country) by the army under Lin's growing control. These suspicions led Mao to the conclusion that Ch'en (and Lin) had gone too far this time and were actually stooping to "intrigue and duplicity" for ulterior motives. In other words, they were urging certain courses of action not because of their intrinsic political merits but because these policies served their personal power interests.

The bitter atmosphere at the Second Plenum left a bad taste in Mao's mouth, and he determined to destroy Ch'en and Lin once and for all. Ch'en, being much the weaker of the two, was the first to go. Within little more than a month, Mao had seen to it that his erstwhile confidant was censured and removed from the Politburo by the members of the plenum, and he called for a complete review of Ch'en's career and writings. In September Mao inaugurated a top-level campaign to criticize Ch'en, and he advised those leaders who had supported Ch'en in the past to make a clean slate of things. Ch'en's case was further discussed at a North China work conference in December, and his final removal from power was confirmed at the "meeting of the ninety-nine," including top party and military leaders, in April 1971. As Mao later revealed, he deliberately used the criticism of Ch'en Po-ta as a means of "casting stones" at Lin Piao, Ch'en's alleged backer, in preparation for a final confrontation with Lin later that year.

With Ch'en's formal removal from power, all that remained was to destroy his lingering political prestige and authority. The official verdict of the party's Tenth Congress in 1973 was that

Ch'en was a "principal member of the Lin Piao anti-party clique, anti-communist Kuomintang element, Trotskyite, renegade, enemy agent, and revisionist." Ch'en was ordered "expelled from the party once and for all, and dismissed from all posts inside and outside the party." His many writings have since been removed from public circulation in China, his role in the party's history is being revised, if not eliminated, and Mao's works are apparently being scrutinized to remove Ch'en's alleged influence.

The eradication seems very thorough. It is true, of course, that many party leaders and others who were vigorously denounced during the Cultural Revolution have been rehabilitated in recent years. Some, such as Teng Hsiao-p'ing, have even been restored to high positions—to the senior deputy premiership, in Teng's case. With Mao's death and the new pragmatic course being pursued by Hua Kuo-feng, more and more victims of the past decade of turmoil are being brought out from disgrace. Thus one can concede that it is possible that some day Ch'en Po-ta, too, might be rehabilitated; but the possibility seems extremely remote. By and large, the new party hierarchy is composed of those "moderate" elements to whom Ch'en's name is anathema. They made this very clear in 1976, when they moved immediately after Mao's death to purge the so-called "Gang of Four," all of whom, like Chiang Ch'ing, had been close associates or subordinates of Ch'en. These individuals, all members of Ch'en's celebrated CCRG, represented the final hope that Ch'en might have been rehabilitated in the not too distant future. Had they remained in power after Mao's death, and possibly assumed supreme power within the party, it is conceivable that Ch'en's reputation might have been restored. With their departure—apparently for good—the chances for Ch'en's rehabilitation practically vanished.

In conclusion, I would like to make a few remarks about the personal side of the relationship between Mao and Ch'en. This is not an easy task, for there is a near total absence of material of this sort. This is not an unusual situation with the leaders of the CCP, except that Ch'en is even more inaccessible than other leaders, whose roles were more in the public eye. Still, we can draw some tentative conclusions about their relationship from the evidence we have, bearing in mind that some imaginative reconstruction is unavoidable. It is unlikely that a great deal of

additional information will be forthcoming from the party files in the foreseeable future, so we shall have to be content with what is available to us at present.

It would appear that Mao and Ch'en had much in common upon which to build a substantial relationship. In a country where such things matter, both men were of distinctly southern origin, Mao from Hunan and Ch'en from Fukien. Also, both came from families that were rural and agricultural, although Mao's origins were rather more prosperous than Ch'en's. Yet, although their roots were southern and rural, the two men were not cast in a traditional mold; they had been born into a dynamic and turbulent era, and had enthusiastically embraced the "new learning" from the West, especially its Marxist-Leninist variant. To some extent, too, their education was similar, since both were graduates of a normal, or teacher training, college. Mao's formal education came to an end at this level, however, whereas Ch'en went on to three years' study at Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow. And whereas Mao had an early, if intermittent, career in primary and adult education in Changsha, Ch'en became a lecturer in Chinese philosophy at China University in Peking.

This contrast in their educational experience highlights an important difference between the two men. There is little doubt that Ch'en was more cerebral and scholarly than Mao and placed more importance on pure intellectualism than Mao did. Mao was more a practical activist than Ch'en, and he tended to value intellectualism only to the extent that it was of immediate political concern. In later years, this difference in intellectual orientation apparently became a source of severe tension between the two men, but in the period of their closest cooperation, it seems for the most part to have been the basis of their "symbiotic relationship." Mao could draw freely on Ch'en's theoretical abilities without fearing an eventual political challenge from him, and this understanding provided the security Ch'en needed as he rose in the party hierarchy as a theoretician and a political leader in his own right.

There had to be more than these formal similarities and complementary attributes, however, to give a foundation to a relationship as long-lived as that between Mao and Ch'en. The great bond was, I think, the spirit of the revolution, a closeness of emotional and intellectual attitude toward China and the revo-

lution. Both Mao and Ch'en were, unquestionably, fervent nationalists, devoted to China's unification and liberation from the warlords and the imperialists. In addition, they both approached unification and liberation from an essentially populist perspective; they placed their faith in the grass-roots mobilization of the common people from which they sprang, and not in the leadership of the rural landlord or urban capitalist classes. These nationalist and populist sentiments strongly influenced their interpretation of the role of Marxism-Leninism in China. The imperatives of nationalism demanded that the foreign doctrine be shaped to reflect the historical and cultural characteristics of the Chinese people. This would not only be intellectually and emotionally satisfying to most Chinese; it would in addition make the new doctrine more accessible to and accepted by the common people, without whose support the revolution would ultimately fail.

In time, both Mao and Ch'en were increasingly drawn to the idea of the Sinification of Marxism and to the concept of Mao Tse-tung's thought as the concrete manifestation of this idea. Their predisposition to favor such an ideological transformation was reinforced by their mutual antagonism to the Returned Students, who adamantly opposed the ideas of Mao and Ch'en regarding Sinification. To some degree, at least in the early years, the Mao-Ch'en relationship was probably strengthened by their mutual conflict with the Returned Students.

But even with all these areas of agreement and cooperation between Mao and Ch'en, there were the problems and tensions of personality and inclination. Ch'en's aloofness and intellectual intensity, so different from Mao's more relaxed gregariousness, were from the first days in Yen-an something of a barrier to a full and friendly relationship. And the combination of emotional aloofness and intellectual intensity also made Ch'en rather more dogmatic than Mao; to a certain extent, flesh-and-blood individuals and concrete practical experiences were subordinate to Ch'en's ideological concepts. In this sense, Ch'en was somewhat of an idealist, for he had a tendency to force people and reality onto the Procrustean bed of his own ideas, rather than shaping his ideas on the basis of the people and experiences in the real world around him.

Mao, too, was to a certain degree an idealist (as was Marx himself), but even so, Ch'en often seemed to be in advance of Mao's own idealistic impulses. During the Great Leap Forward, for example, Ch'en emerged as a leading theoretical spokesman on the question of the people's communes, and during the Cultural Revolution he actively promoted the idea of the Paris Commune and its embodiment in Shanghai. If Mao went along with the commune idea during the Great Leap Forward, he apparently changed his mind during the Cultural Revolution. Indeed, when Mao called on his theoretical adviser to make a self-confession, he revealed that he and Ch'en had often not seen eye to eye in the past. He acknowledged that in the long years of their collaboration they had often disagreed on important issues, though they had usually been able to resolve their differences and agree on a common course of action. Although Mao made this revelation in order to dampen rumors about the intensity of his quarrel with Ch'en during the Cultural Revolution, it indicated that they had in fact had substantial differences in the past.

It was undoubtedly the increasingly chaotic and violent excesses of the Cultural Revolution—for which Ch'en was, of course, partly responsible—that most seriously eroded the relationship between Mao and Ch'en. Ch'en was placed in an exceedingly difficult position, for his leadership of the Cultural Revolution made him a central target for those powerful leaders who opposed the movement but for various reasons could not break openly with Mao. Ch'en undoubtedly knew that it would be he, not Mao, who would bear the brunt of responsibility for the excesses of the Cultural Revolution, and that only Mao's continued support could save him from his enemies. Unfortunately for Ch'en, Mao was having second thoughts about Ch'en's handling of the movement, and about his radical political ideas as well. On top of this, Mao was approaching his eighties and his health was visibly fading; there were even suspicions that he was rapidly growing senile. All in all, the situation was hardly favorable to Ch'en's future, and he must have realized that time was not on his side.

Partly from calculation, partly from sheer desperation, Ch'en made the choice of detaching himself from Mao and casting his lot with Lin Piao, Mao's appointed heir and seemingly the most

powerful leader in the country. Since Lin appeared to some extent to share Ch'en's more radical approach to politics, Ch'en could look for the time when, as Mao's health declined, perhaps rapidly, Lin would be named to replace him and Ch'en could thus emerge as Lin's chief lieutenant. But fortune was not on Ch'en's side. Mao was still wholly in charge. He rallied his forces, Lin watched his power crumble, and Ch'en was sacrificed to the moderates as a prelude to the ultimate destruction of Lin himself. The "humble little commoner" (as Ch'en liked to style himself) had acted out his last scene on the stage of Chinese history, and he was unceremoniously cast into political oblivion.

Nonetheless, the last word has yet to be written on Ch'en Po-ta and his elusive but critical relationship with Mao Tse-tung. It is not easy even for the Chinese Communists to erase all traces of an intimate association in revolutionary endeavor that lasted nearly thirty-five years. Ch'en Po-ta is one of the most important "scholar-officials" of modern China, and his life represents a coherent attempt—in both word and deed—to span the enormous gap between historical China and its modern transformation under the impact of the West. As such, he will be of continuing interest to students of modern Chinese history, especially during the dramatic period now characterized as the "Maoist era." Also, although his radical, populist brand of Sino-Marxist philosophy may not suit the current pragmatic mood of China, there can be little doubt that the ideas Mao and he espoused will figure prominently in any future attempt to revive the radical impulse in the Chinese people.

Notes

Notes

Complete authors' names, titles, and publication data for the works cited in short form are given in the Bibliography, pp. 327-43. I have used the following abbreviations in the Notes and in the Bibliography.

- CB* *Current Background*
CCWW *Chinese Communist Who's Who*
CF *Chieh-fang* (Liberation)
CFJP *Chieh-fang jih-pao* (Liberation Daily)
Chi *Mao Tse-tung chi* (Collected Works of Mao Tse-tung); 10 vols., 1970-74
CKYC *Chung-kung yen-chiu* (Studies in Chinese Communism)
CQ *China Quarterly*
FCYC *Fei-ch'ing yen-chiu* (Studies in Bandit Affairs/Studies in Chinese Communism)
FEQ *Far Eastern Quarterly*
HC *Mao Tse-tung hsüan-chi* (Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung); 4 vols., 1967
IS *Issues and Studies*
JAS *Journal of Asian Studies*
SW *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*; 4 vols., 1961-65
WWCC *Who's Who in Communist China*

Chapter One

1. Even after reading Tan Chung's erudite critique, I still use this term, but I do so with greater reservations. See his two articles in *China Report* as cited in the Bibliography.

2. For an introduction to the study of "transnational relations," see Keohane and Nye, especially pp. ix-xxix.

3. The classic treatment of the decline of Confucianism and the rise of modern Chinese nationalism is Levenson's *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate: A Trilogy*.

4. Obviously, I am not equating the contents of Confucianism and Mao Tse-tung's thought, but simply suggesting that the two ideologies performed the same structural function of providing Chinese society with an orthodox belief system as the basis of private morality and public policy. For a discussion of the socio-cultural importance of ideology

as opposed to its specific intellectual content, see Geertz, especially pp. 60-65.

5. On this issue, see Bridgham.

6. Tokuda's paper, delivered at the Conference on Ideology and Politics in Contemporary China, Santa Fe, New Mexico, Aug. 1971, was originally published in Japanese as *Mō Taku-tō-shugi, 1935-1945* (The Formation of Mao Tse-tungism, 1935-1945) (Tokyo: Keiō Tsushin, 1971). Part of the original study was also published in English in Japan, entitled "Yenan Rectification Movement: Mao Tse-tung's Big Push toward Charismatic Leadership during 1941-42," *The Developing Economies* (March 1971): 83-99. See also the brief article by K'ung Te-liang.

7. The Vladimirov diaries have sparked off considerable debate as to their authenticity. Though it is likely that they have been judiciously edited by the Soviet authorities, much of what is said in the diaries does ring true, and I shall refer to them from time to time when they seem to clarify particularly foggy matters. That the diaries serve to blacken Mao Tse-tung's personal character and leadership is only too obvious, but this need not deter us from using them as an additional source on the Yenan period.

8. Schram's well-known study is *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung*. Three other titles that should be noted are Cohen's *The Communism of Mao Tse-tung*, Wakeman's *History and Will: Philosophical Perspectives of Mao Tse-tung's Thought*, and *The Logic of "Maoism": Critiques and Explication*, edited by Hsiung.

9. For an extended and occasionally heated discussion of the relationship between Marxism and Mao's thought, see the "Symposium on Mao and Marx" in four issues of *Modern China*, 1976-77.

10. For a provocative discussion of various ways of classifying Mao's thought, see Starr, "Mao Tse-tung and the Sinification of Marxism."

11. See Oksenberg, "Policy Making Under Mao," p. 98, and "The Political Leader," p. 94.

12. Two prominent biographies of Mao are those by Jerome Ch'en, *Mao and the Chinese Revolution*, and Schram, *Mao Tse-tung*. A detailed treatment of Mao's later career is Rice, *Mao's Way*. Other studies of Mao's rise to power will be cited later on. For a comprehensive evaluation of Mao's career, see the anthology edited by Wilson.

13. Parris H. Chang's article is perhaps the only special study of Ch'en Po-ta, but it focuses on Ch'en's role in the Cultural Revolution in the 1960's and has little in the way of detailed background information on him.

14. As is the case with most CCP leaders, biographical sources on Ch'en Po-ta are not particularly substantial, but a good deal of information can be gleaned from those that are available. Among the most useful sources are the relevant entries in Boorman and Howard, 1: 221-23; *CCWW* 1: 104-5; *IS* 6, no. 7 (April 1970): 87-93; Klein and Clark, 1: 122-25; Li Feng-min, pp. 81-100; and *WWCC* 1: 94-95. See also Hsüan

Mou [1] and Shao Nan. Additional sources can be found in later notes to this chapter, and in the Bibliography.

15. Ch'en's original name (*yüan-ming*) is Shang-yu; his alternate name (*yu-ming*) is Chih-mei; his pen name (*pi-ming*), and the one by which he is commonly known, is Po-ta. See the biography of Ch'en in *FCYC* 2, no. 2 (Feb. 1968): 97.

16. Most sources agree that Ch'en joined the CCP in 1927 (presumably before it was suppressed in April of that year), but he may have joined a little earlier. See, for example, Klein and Clark, 1: 122; *Gendai Chugoku jimmei jiten* (Biographical Dictionary of Contemporary China), p. 488; and *Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopedya* (Large Soviet Encyclopedia), 47: 488. Many thanks to David Barrett for translating the third source from the Russian.

17. For an account of Ch'en's imprisonment and release, see Shao Nan, p. 86.

18. Ch'en Po-ta [39].

19. The faction led by Wang Ming and Po Ku are referred to simply as the "third 'left' line" in official CCP documents. The popular (though disparaging) designations "Returned Students" and "Twenty-eight Bolsheviks" are derived from their years of study in Moscow and their alleged ideological orthodoxy and/or dogmatism regarding Soviet-style Marxism-Leninism.

20. The most detailed account of Sun Yat-sen University in the late 1920's is provided by one of the Twenty-eight Bolsheviks, Yüeh Sheng (Sheng Chung-liang). See his *Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow and the Chinese Revolution: A Personal Account*. See also the recollections of Chang Kuo-t'ao, *The Rise of the Chinese Communist Party*, 2: 88–102.

21. Shao Nan, p. 85, and Hsüan Mou [1], p. 28, are the only sources to say that Ch'en is married. Hsüan identifies Chu Yu-jen as the sister of Chu Yu-lun, the wife of Lo I-nung, the well-known CCP leader who was executed in 1928. For details on Lo, see Boorman and Howard, 2: 431–33; and Klein and Clark, 1: 639–41.

22. *WWCC*, 1: 94–95. It is not known if Ch'en had a secret party name for use in his underground activities in Peking and Tientsin.

23. *IS* 6, no. 7: 87. Nothing much is known about Tun-yu; he apparently taught at an overseas Chinese school in Burma for many years, but eventually returned to China.

24. Ch'en Po-ta [3]. The article, a long critical review of a recent volume edited by the Chinese idealist philosopher Chang Tung-sun, is dated March 14, 1935, but it was not published until more than a year later.

25. *Ibid.*, part 1, p. 54.

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 54–55.

28. *Ibid.*, part 2, p. 40.

29. Ch'en Po-ta [1], pp. 181, 209.

30. The search for precedents of dialectical materialism in China's past was a source of constant fascination for many CCP intellectuals.

For example, the party theorist and historian Hsü Meng-ch'iu once commented to Nym Wales (Helen F. Snow) that as a student in the early 1920's he had read a study entitled *Ancient Communism in Chinese Society*. "It was not correct," he recollected, "but we read it with interest." See Wales, p. 59.

31. Ch'en Po-ta [1], p. 244. The reformer Ts'ai Yüan-p'ei was also impressed by T'an Ssu-t'ung, receiving from him in particular the "inspiration to create a synthesized philosophy." See Sakai, p. 173.

32. Furth, p. 39.

33. Schneider, pp. 85-86.

34. B. Schwartz, "Notes on Conservatism," p. 20.

Chapter Two

1. For a brief but useful discussion of the various schools of thought in the "Controversy on China's Social History," see B. Schwartz, "A Marxist Controversy on China." For a more detailed treatment, see Dirlik.

2. Dirlik, pp. 218-19.

3. *Ibid.*

4. Ch'en Po-ta [2].

5. On the rapid growth of nationalism among the students during the 1930's, see Israel, *Student Nationalism in China, 1927-1937*.

6. For an excellent discussion of the "Nationalist Restoration" in the mid-1930's, see Wright. The quotation from Chiang is on p. 525.

7. Thomson, p. 17.

8. For an account of the New Life Movement, see S. Chu.

9. Sheridan, p. 232.

10. For this quotation, see de Bary et al., pp. 854-56. The original source is "Chung-kuo pen-wei ti wen-hua chien-she hsüan-yen" (Declaration for Cultural Construction on a Chinese Basis), *Wen-hua chien-she* (Cultural Construction), 1, no. 4 (Jan. 1935): 3-5.

11. Eastman, "The Kuomintang in the 1930's," pp. 196-200.

12. See Israel, "The December 9th Movement." For Shih Li-te's comments on Ch'en's role, see Li Chang et al., p. 39. For further details on China University, see Israel and Klein, pp. 79-82.

13. *FCYC* 2, no. 2 (Feb. 1968): 98.

14. For a detailed comparison of the Comintern's and the CCP's attitude toward the new united front, see Benton.

15. For an outline of this literary debate, see Goldman, *Literary Dissent*, pp. 5-17. For more details on Lu Hsün and the league, see Hsia Tsi-an, pp. 101-45.

16. Schneider, pp. 81-82.

17. Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai, especially pp. 887-89. A recent study of Ch'ü's literary ideas has suggested that after working among the peasants in

the Kiangsi Soviet, Ch'ü became "much more flexible" on the question of the language of the peasants. See Pickowicz, p. 309.

18. Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai, pp. 890-92.

19. Mao Tun, p. 75.

20. Goldman, *Literary Dissent*, p. 13.

21. Ai Ssu-ch'i [1], p. 30.

22. The discussion in this paragraph and the next is based on Ch'en Po-ta [5], as reprinted in *CKYC* 5, no. 8 (Aug. 10, 1971).

23. Soon after his fall from power in 1970, Ch'en's support of national defense literature in 1936 was denigrated as an example of "right capitulationism" on the literary front. For an exhaustive discussion of this issue, see Hsüan Mou [2]. Hsüan Mou [1], p. 30, claims that Lu Hsün resented Ch'en's essay because it exposed the struggle for power within the left-wing movement and insinuated that anyone who opposed the slogan of national defense literature was a traitor.

24. Ch'en Po-ta [4].

25. Ho Kan-chih [1], pp. 206-8.

26. Ch'en Po-ta [6]. The text used here is in Hsia Cheng-nung, pp. 67-75. The passage cited is on p. 68.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 73-75.

28. Ho Kan-chih [1], p. 220, refers to these attacks on Ch'en.

29. Ch'en Po-ta [4], p. 453.

30. Ch'en Po-ta [10]. The reference is to p. 128. See also Ch'en Po-ta [7].

31. Ch'en Po-ta [8], p. 21.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

33. *Ibid.*

34. Ch'en Po-ta [4], p. 453.

35. Ch'en Po-ta [9]. The text used here is in Hsia Cheng-nung, pp. 84-99. The reference is to p. 90.

36. Chang Shen-fu, pp. 108-9.

37. Ch'en Po-ta [10], pp. 128-30.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 130.

40. The discussion in this paragraph is based on Hsia Cheng-nung, pp. 207-8.

41. *Ibid.*

42. For a plausible account of Mao's political comeback prior to the Tsunyi conference, see Heinzig.

43. H. Schwartz, p. 560.

44. Hu Chi-hsi, p. 46.

45. Mao, *Chi* 4: 39. This ten-volume collection of Mao's writings in their original form will be used as the standard reference to Mao's works except for those released after 1949, for which the present official Chinese texts will be used. On Mao's position at the Tsunyi conference, see also Jerome Ch'en, "Resolutions of the Tsun-yi Conference," p. 13.

46. Mao, *HC* 1: 128.

47. Mao, *Chi* 5: 36.

48. Snow, *Red Star*, pp. 82-83.

49. Mao's early ideas on the importance of base areas in the revolu-

tion in China are to be found in a number of reports he prepared in the years 1928-30. They can be consulted in revised form in Mao, *SW* 1: 63-128.

50. For one of many Soviet critiques of Mao's handling of the worker-peasant relationship, see Krivtsov and Sidikhmenov, pp. 176-84.

51. For an interesting discussion of how the "Yenan model" in particular influenced Communist policy after 1949, see Meisner.

52. Chang Kuo-t'ao's version of the beginnings of the Mao-Liu alliance is in his introduction to the three-volume *Collected Works of Liu Shao-ch'i*, 1: vi-viii. For further details on this obscure issue, see Harrison, pp. 282-83.

53. Ch'en Shao-yü (Wang Ming) [2], pp. 10, 28.

54. See p. 62 below for a further discussion of this collection.

55. For details, see McLane, pp. 29-34.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

57. For Soviet attitudes on the Sian incident and its aftermath, see *ibid.*, pp. 79-91.

58. Snow, *Red Star*, pp. 85-86.

59. Mao, *Chi* 6: 275.

60. Mao, *Chi* 5: 38. For the Returned Students' earlier critique of Mao's "mistaken viewpoint" on the role of the peasants in the revolution in China, see Ch'en Shao-yü (Wang Ming) [1]. The complete text of this important pamphlet is in Hsiao Tso-liang, *Power Relations Within the Chinese Communist Movement, 1930-34*, vol. 2, *The Chinese Documents*, pp. 499-609. The reference is to p. 559. Vol. 1, *A Study of Documents*, pp. 202-7, contains information on the background to the pamphlet.

61. This view was of course squarely at odds with repeated Comintern directives reminding the CCP that its proletarian nature lay "not only in its political line but in its composition and the role played by the workers in all of its leading organs." For further details on this Comintern resolution of Aug. 26, 1931, see Carrère d'Encausse and Schram, p. 246. For a more recent attack on the allegedly nonproletarian nature of the CCP, see the speech by Otto Kuusinen to the February 1964 Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU, as extracted in *ibid.*, pp. 330-35. As Carrère d'Encausse and Schram point out, however (pp. 86-87), the "divorce between the revolutionary party and the class it is supposed to represent" is in fact "one of Lenin's fundamental innovations, as compared to Marx's own position."

62. Mao, *Chi* 5: 127.

63. Many writers have noted the intimate connection between Mao's military thought and his thinking in general. Stuart Schram, for example, has stressed the "organic link between Mao's military thought and his mind and personality as a whole" (Schram, *Political Thought*, p. 265). The Communist writer Hu Ch'iao-mu (pp. 42-43) has stated that the book based on Mao's military lectures of 1936 constitutes an

“important political and philosophical work, because it makes a penetrating analysis of the laws of the Chinese revolution as a whole.”

64. Mao, *Chi* 5: 96-97.

65. Mao Tse-tung, as reported by Edgar Snow in his interview of July 23, 1936. The passage cited is from Snow's typewritten manuscript, as reproduced in Schram, *Political Thought*, p. 419 (p. 374, n. 1).

66. Mao, *Chi* 5: 102.

67. *Ibid.*, 6: 275.

Chapter Three

1. Mao, *Chi* 5: 204.

2. Schram (*Political Thought*, pp. 84-88) discusses at some length the question of the authenticity of these early lectures on Marxist philosophy, and accepts them as genuine. He rejects in particular John E. Rue's suggestion that they were forged by Mao's enemies in the party with a view to discrediting him as a theorist. On this point, see Rue, "Is Mao Tse-tung's 'Dialectical Materialism' a Forgery?"

3. Mao, *HC* 1: 259, 274. For the argument that these two essays were substantially revised prior to publication, see Cohen, pp. 22-28.

4. Kwok, p. 197.

5. Mao, *Chi* 6: 303.

6. Whiting and Sheng, pp. 229-31. This information is based on the personal recollections of General Sheng Shih-ts'ai, who apparently discussed some of Mao's early philosophical writings with Teng and Chou in late 1939 or early 1940.

7. Chang Ju-hsin [3]. This article will be discussed fully in Chapter 7 in the context of the Rectification Movement of 1942-43.

8. Mao, *Chi* 6: 269.

9. Mao, *HC* 1: 293-95.

10. Mao, *Chi* 6: 269-70.

11. Mao, *HC* 1: 294-95.

12. Mao, *Chi* 6: 300.

13. Boorman and Howard, 1: 221. See also Ch'ao Wen-tao's biography of Ch'en in *Hsin Chung-kuo jen-wu-chih* (Biographies of New China), p. 227.

14. *FCYC* 2, no. 2 (Feb. 1968): 98.

15. *Elegant*, p. 257.

16. *Compton*, pp. xxx-xxxii.

17. Boorman and Howard, p. 221; Ch'ao Wen-tao, p. 227; Klein and Clark, p. 122. *Elegant* (p. 257) mentions the play, but gives no further details.

18. For a valuable discussion of this institute in Moscow, see Yüeh Sheng, pp. 52-56.

19. Mao, [2]. This book is not widely available, but it is on deposit at the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace, Stanford University, Stanford, California.

20. *Ibid.*, v.p.

21. Mao [1].
22. Ch'en's influence is more likely to have been felt in the revision of part of Mao's lectures for publication in 1950 and 1952, but this is a separate question beyond our present concerns.
23. *CF* 13–14–15 (combined issue of Sept. 6, 1937): 166–67.
24. Ch'en Po-ta [25], pp. 310–35. Ch'en's article is part of an appendix to a collection of Sun Yat-sen's writings published in 1945. A note by Ch'en appended to the article explains that the essay was originally drafted in the winter of 1937 (which, for a variety of reasons, I have interpreted as late 1937) but was only published (with revisions) in 1939, when it was assigned as study material for the Red armies.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 330.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 332–34.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 318.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 333–34.
29. This at any rate is Nym Wales's observation, based on her visit to Yen-an in the summer of 1937, and it seems to confirm Chang's continuing status as a top party theoretician. It is equally clear, however, that even he had by this time fallen under Mao's growing shadow. See Wales, *Yenan Notebooks*, p. 200.
30. This interpretation of Stalin's "three-point instruction" is based on the factual account given in Kuo, 3: 326–30.
31. Mao, *HC* 2: 358–64.
32. Benton, p. 94.
33. Chang Kuo-t'ao, 2: 572.
34. Benton, pp. 75, 94.
35. *CF* 28 (Jan. 11, 1938): 21–22.
36. Benton, p. 77.
37. "Lun k'ang-Jih yu-chi chan-cheng ti chi-pen chan-shu—hsi-chi" (On the Raid—the Basic Tactic in the Guerrilla War Against Japan).
38. *CF* 43–44 (combined issue of July 1, 1938): 1.
39. Tokuda, p. 16.
40. There is an extensive literature on Mao's military thinking. For a recent discussion, see Guillermaz.
41. A key Maoist document on the role of ideology in the party and the army is the so-called Ku-t'ien hui-i (Kut'ien Resolutions) of December 1929, in Mao, *Chi* 2: 77–126. An abridged version ("On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party") is in Mao, *SW* 1: 105–16.
42. Mao, *Chi* 6: 164.
43. See the editorial comments in Mao, *HC* 2: 357, 502, 506.
44. Van Slyke, p. 107.
45. For details on this reference, see McLane, p. 34.
46. Ch'en Po-ta [12], p. 136.
47. Ch'en Po-ta [15].
48. Material on the personal aspects of Ch'en's relationship with Mao is extremely scanty. This rare anecdote reflecting Mao's concern for Ch'en is related in Ho Ch'ing-hua's reminiscences of Mao published in 1959; see pp. 52–53.
49. Ch'en Po-ta [15], pp. 74–75, 77.
50. *CF* 43–44 (combined issue of July 1, 1938): 69. This drive to gather documentary material on the CCP's history was of considerable impor-

tance, for nearly all of the party's official records had been lost during the Long March. For Hsü Meng-ch'iu's comments on this problem, see Wales, *Red Dust*, pp. ix, 57, 76.

51. Lin Piao is cited in Jerome Ch'en, *Mao*, p. 20. For Mao's second portrait in *Liberation*, see *CF* 45 (July 15, 1938): 4.

Chapter Four

1. Mao, *Chi* 6: 70.

2. Ironically, the Japanese invaders were the most effective catalysts of Chinese nationalism. On this important point, see Johnson, *Peasant Nationalism*, pp. 69-70.

3. Mao, *Chi* 6: 102.

4. Ch'en Po-ta [11], p. 52.

5. Ch'en Po-ta [14], p. 35. To illustrate his point, Ch'en refers approvingly to two recent literary productions of one Tung Chen-hua, namely, *The Romance of May Fourth* (*Wu-ssu yen-i*) and his *Record of the National Disaster* (*Kuo-nan chi*).

6. Ch'en Po-ta [13], p. 93.

7. Ch'en Po-ta [15], p. 72.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

9. *Ibid.*

10. Chang Wen-t'ien (Lo Fu) [1], p. 68.

11. *Ibid.*

12. For this and other evaluations of the Second Comintern Congress, see Carrère d'Encausse and Schram, pp. 26-31, 149-67.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

14. Even some of the Returned Students were now beginning to adopt a more positive attitude toward China's traditional culture. Po Ku, for example, in an article in the summer of 1938, declared in passing that the Chinese Communists "understand the necessity for respecting and accepting all the good traditions and theories of our nation." See Ch'in Pang-hsien (Po Ku) [1], pp. 22-23.

15. Ch'en Po-ta [16], p. 26.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 26-37.

19. Ch'en Po-ta [13], pp. 93-95.

20. Ch'en Po-ta [16], p. 28. Ch'en further defines "national essence" as *min-tsu ti ching-hua*, a term no more precise in meaning than the more common *kuo-ts'ui*.

21. Ch'en Po-ta [13], p. 93.

22. Mao, *Chi* 6: 216-17.

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 259-60.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 260.

25. *Ibid.*

26. *Ibid.*

27. Schram, *Political Thought*, pp. 112-13.

28. Mao, *Chi* 6: 261.

29. *CF* 57 (Nov. 25, 1938): 41. See also *Ch'ün-chung* (The Masses), 2, no. 12 (Dec. 25, 1938): 593.

30. Schram, *Political Thought*, p. 173. Schram, who first brought this discrepancy to light, was told by Edgar Snow that it might well have

been Po Ku who was responsible for altering the English text of Mao's report, but it is impossible to confirm the validity of this hypothesis.

31. Goldman, *Literary Dissent*, pp. 15–16.

32. *CF* 53: 22.

Chapter Five

1. Ch'en Shao-yü (Wang Ming) [3], p. 13.

2. As quoted in Shewmaker, p. 186.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 189.

4. Mao, *Chi* 6: 343.

5. Goldman, *Literary Dissent*, pp. 15–17.

6. For a somewhat garbled but useful account of the polemic between Ch'en Tu-hsiu and the CCP in the course of 1938, see Kuo, 3: 391–402. For one of the CCP's many attacks on the Trotskyists, see Ch'en Po-ta [18].

7. Rosinger, p. 38.

8. Linebarger, p. 157.

9. Mao, *Chi* 6: 227.

10. Ch'en Po-ta [19], p. 27.

11. Ch'en Po-ta [20], p. 29. A common Chinese term in the 1920's and 1930's for "dialectics" was *tung ti lo-chi*, which can be translated literally as the "logic of motion," or the "logic of change." Clearly, this Hegelian concept of motion and/or change is central to Ch'en's interpretation of the "crude dialectics" of Lao Tzu and certain other philosophers in ancient China.

12. Ch'en Po-ta [21], pp. 19–20.

13. Ch'en Po-ta [17], p. 10. For further details, see Ch'en Po-ta [23] and [31].

14. Ch'en Po-ta [26], p. 60.

15. Ch'en Po-ta [17], pp. 10–11.

16. Ch'en Po-ta [21], pp. 19–20.

17. Ch'en Po-ta [27], pp. 119–22.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 1–2.

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 1–4.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 17–18. See also Leng and Palmer, p. 105.

21. Ch'en Po-ta [27], pp. 4–5.

22. Ch'en Po-ta [21], p. 21.

23. Ch'ao Wen-tao, p. 227.

24. *CF* 57 (Nov. 25, 1938): 41.

25. For further details on the cadre education movement, see Selden, *Yenan Way*, pp. 191–92.

26. Li Wei-han (Lo Mai) [1], p. 7. The speech is dated June 1, 1939. The text referred to by Lo is *Kung-ch'an-chu-i yü kung-ch'an-tang (ts'ao-kao)*, first published in *Yenan* on May 18, 1939, by the Communism and the Communist Party Editorial Committee. A reprint was issued in April 1941 by the Party Life Editorial Committee. The first two chapters of this can be found in *You-guan Zhong-guo gong-chan-dang cai-liao* (Materials on the Chinese Communist Party), reel 12.

27. Li Wei-han [1], p. 10.

28. Editorial, "Chieh-fang erh chou-nien chi-nien" (In Commemoration of the Second Anniversary of *Liberation*), *CF* 70 (May 1, 1939): 7.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
30. Yang Sung, p. 12.
31. Ai Ssu-ch'i [2], p. 17.
32. Cited in Jerome Ch'en, *Mao*, p. 20. Ch'en's source is *CF* 95 (Dec. 30, 1939): 20; the speech was delivered on Nov. 15.
33. The various texts are in Mao, *Chi* 6: 307-10; *Chi* 7: 68-83; *Chi* 7: 147-206; *SW* 2: 403-4; *Chi* 6: 343-48; and *Chi* 7: 57-68.
34. Ch'en Yün, "How to Be a Communist Party Member," as translated in Compton, p. 106.
35. Chang Wen-t'ien (Lo Fu) [2] and [3].
36. Liu Shao-ch'i [1], p. 76.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.
39. Liu Shao-ch'i [8], 1: 207-8.
40. Rue, *Mao Tse-tung*, p. 282.
41. Mao, *Chi* 7: 80.
42. Mao, *HC* 2: 584.
43. Mao, *Chi* 7: 99.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 135.
45. For a brief discussion of this committee on party history, see Kuo, 3: 235.
46. For further details of these important developments in late 1939 and early 1940, see Boyle, pp. 286, 295-297; and Van Slyke, pp. 111-12.
47. Mao, *HC* 2: 584.
48. Mao, *Chi* 7: 129.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 164. For a full discussion of the evolution of Mao's united front policy, see Van Slyke, pp. 99-116. The importance of the united front in Mao's strategy is also discussed at some length in Kataoka, pp. 143-228.
51. Mao, *Chi* 7: 163-64.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 173.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
54. *Ibid.*, pp. 201-2.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
56. Eastman, *Abortive Revolution*, p. 151.
57. Wang Ming is cited in Benton, pp. 83-84; for Po Ku, see Ch'in Pang-hsien [1], pp. 30-31.
58. Brière, p. 81; Kwok, p. 192, n. 48; *Gendai Chugoku jimmei jiten*, p. 488.
59. Ch'en Po-ta [30], p. 19. On Ch'en's election to this new association, see the communique issued in its name on Feb. 20, 1940, in Mao, *Chi* 7: 252. On the 45-member Executive Committee, Ch'en was ranked 30th.
60. Editorial, "Chan tsai Chung-hua min-tsu chieh-fang shih-yeh ti ch'ien-chin kang-wei shang" (Standing in the Advanced Position in the Cause of China's National Liberation), *CF* 100 (Feb. 29, 1940): 3.
61. Linebarger, pp. 167-68.
62. Ch'en Kuo-hsin (Yeh Ch'ing), "A Discussion of Mao Tse-tung's Comments on the Present State of International Relations," as translated in Linebarger, pp. 403-17. The quotation is from pp. 416-17. Stuart Schram, in a private communication, has suggested to me that

“Ch'en Kuo-hsin” is probably a mistransliteration (or a variant) of Jen Cho-hsüan, the real name of Yeh Ch'ing. I have substituted “Sinification” for Linebarger’s “Chinafication,” which is obviously a literal translation of “Chung-kuo-hua.” For a fuller discussion of Yeh’s critique of Mao and his theory of Sinification, see pp. 140-47, below.

63. Krivtsov and Sidikhmenov, p. 70.

64. *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

65. Schram, *Mao*, p. 216.

Chapter Six

1. The entire question of Chinese-Japanese collaboration and the role of Wang Ching-wei is discussed in Boyle.

2. Johnson, *Peasant Nationalism*, p. 57.

3. *Ibid.*

4. Wang Shih et al., p. 214.

5. *Ibid.*

6. The Maoists have singled out P'eng Te-huai as the leading culprit in this matter. See the Red Guard materials collected in *CB* 851 (Aug. 26, 1968): 6, 28; and also in *The Case of P'eng Teh-huai, 1959-1968*, pp. 191-93, 212. According to these documents, P'eng admitted to his errors in the Hundred Regiments Offensive in the course of a “self-examination” at the Lushan Plenum in 1959.

7. Ch'en Shao-yü (Wang Ming) [1]. The title *The Two Lines* was also used for a second edition printed in Moscow in 1932.

8. Mao, *Chi* 7: 83.

9. As quoted in Kuo, 2: 264; revised translation based on the Chinese text, 2: 209-10. For more details on Wang’s book and its role in CCP history, see Hsiao Tso-liang, 1: 202-7.

10. For a discussion of the “rally of internal opposition against Mao” at this time, see Kataoka, pp. 156-63.

11. Ch'en Shao-yü (Wang Ming) [4], p. 319.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 320-21.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 321-23.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 323-24.

15. Mao, *Chi* 7: 252. As noted earlier, Ch'en Po-ta was also elected to the Executive Committee of this new association.

16. Kataoka, p. 228, n. 184.

17. Tokuda, p. 34.

18. Mao, *HC* 2: 723-24.

19. Johnson, *Peasant Nationalism*, p. 140. Ironically, Hsiang Ying, the deputy commander of the New Fourth Army who was killed during the clash, was (like Wang Ming) a strong supporter of the united front with the Nationalists. He was apparently identified with Wang’s final burst of opposition to Mao in 1939-40. See Kataoka, pp. 159-61.

20. Mao, *HC* 2: 742.
21. For details of the Japanese *san-kō-seisaku* policy and its impact on the Communists, see Johnson, *Peasant Nationalism*, pp. 55-59.
22. Selden, *Yenan Way*, pp. 180-81. Selden has collected a great deal of economic information on the Shen-Kan-Ning Border Region for the years 1935-45.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 177.
24. For these details on Yeh Ch'ing's career, see the listing under Jen Cho-hsün in Boorman and Howard, 2: 218-19.
25. Jen Cho-hsüan (Yeh Ch'ing), *Mao Tse-tung p'i-p'an*. Yeh's book was completed in March 1941 and published immediately thereafter in Chungking and other places throughout China. It has gone through many revisions since then, largely involving the addition of new material rather than substantive alteration of the original text. For details on the book's publication history, see Yeh's preface to the 5th edition (1961) used here.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
33. *Ibid.*
34. For a general discussion of the international significance of Sun Yat-sen's ideology, see Kindermann.
35. Stuart Schram has also suggested that the publication of these lectures in early 1941 might have symbolized the de facto end of the Nationalist-Communist united front. See Schram, *Mao*, pp. 218-19.
36. Mao, *Chi* 7: 298.
37. Ch'en Po-ta [37]. Although published only in July 1942, the article is dated Jan. 7, 1941. The references are to the first part of the essay.
38. Goldman, "Writers' Criticism," p. 210.
39. Ch'en Po-ta [35]. This is a speech given by Ch'en on June 9, 1942, at a meeting held at the Central Research Institute in the course of the campaign against Wang. See also Ch'en Po-ta [37]. Wang's revised essay was published in *Chinese Culture* 2, no. 6 (1941).
40. Ch'en Po-ta [37].
41. *Ibid.* See also Ch'en Po-ta [35].
42. Ch'en Po-ta [35].
43. Goldman, *Literary Dissent*, p. 37.
44. Mao, *Chi* 7: 315. This controversial speech did not appear in *Liberation Daily* until March 27, 1942, when it was published in revised form under the title "Reform Our Study" (Kai-tsu wo-men ti hsüeh-hsi). By that time the *cheng-feng* campaign was well under way, and Mao had no need to be concerned about the adverse reactions of the Returned Students.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 317.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 324.

47. Ironically, the issue over Mao Tse-tung's theoretical position has come full circle. The Revolutionary Communist Party, U.S.A., for example, now claims that Mao's "revolutionary line" has been betrayed by the "revisionist line" of Hua Kuo-feng and the current Chinese leadership. The dispute over fidelity to Marxism-Leninism in the 1940's has become an argument over loyalty to Mao Tse-tung's thought in the 1970's. See the "Special Mao Tsetung Memorial Issue" of *Revolution*, the organ of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party, U.S.A., Sept. 1978, pp. 1-3.

48. Shih Fu, "Take Hold of Creative Marxism," *CF* 123 (Feb. 16, 1941), as cited in K'ung Te-liang, p. 37.

49. Chang Ju-hsin [1], pp. 17-21. For an interesting discussion of the "Chinese model" and its formal appearance in the CCP during 1939-41, see Goldstein, pp. 605-16.

50. Editorial, "Chi-nien Chung-kuo kung-ch'an-tang nien chou-nien" (Commemorate the Twentieth Anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party), *CFJP*, July 1, 1941, p. 2.

51. Chang Ju-hsin [2], p. 45.

52. Chu Te [1].

53. Liu Shao-ch'i [4], p. 385.

54. Liu Shao-ch'i [3].

55. "Central Committee Resolution on Strengthening the Party Spirit" (July 1, 1941), in Compton, p. 159; "Central Committee Resolution on Investigation and Research" (Aug. 1, 1941), in *ibid.*, p. 73.

Chapter Seven

1. Compton, p. xlv.

2. Ch'en Shao-yü (Wang Ming) [5], p. 46.

3. Selden, "Yenan Legacy," p. 111.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 110-12.

5. Selden, *Yenan Way*, pp. 211-12.

6. Seybolt, p. 657.

7. Selden, "Yenan Legacy," p. 104.

8. The organizational problems resulting from rapid party growth are treated in Compton, pp. xxviii-xxxiii.

9. Mao, *HC* 2: 736.

10. Benton, p. 88; see also Tokuda, p. 48.

11. Mao, *HC* 3: 903.

12. Harrison, p. 334.

13. Mao, *HC* 3: 893-94.

14. Chao Han, *T'an-t'an Chung-kuo kung-ch'an-tang cheng-feng yün-tung* (Talks on the Chinese Communist Party Rectification Movement), Peking, 1957, p. 19. Cited in Harrison, p. 334.

15. Jen Pi-shih, "Kuan-yü chi-ko wen-t'i ti i-chien" (Opinions on Several Problems), 1943. Cited in Tokuda, p. 47.

16. Harrison, p. 334.
17. Editorial, "Fan-tui hsüeh-hsi chung ti chiao-t'iao-chu-i" (Oppose Dogmatism in Study), *CFJP*, Sept. 2, 1941, p. 1.
18. On this point, see Schram, *Mao*, p. 233.
19. Mao's two speeches inaugurating the *cheng-feng* campaign are "Reform in Learning, the Party, and Literature" (Feb. 1, 1942) and "In Opposition to Party Formalism" (Feb. 8, 1942). Both are translated in Compton, pp. 9-32, 33-53. The passages cited are on pp. 9-12.
20. Compton, pp. 30-33.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
23. See the relevant news item in *CFJP*, Feb. 10, 1942, p. 3.
24. Compton, p. 13.
25. Chang Ju-hsin [3].
26. During the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960's, certain Red Guard groups used the term "Mao Tse-tungism" in some of their writings, but this usage was never approved officially and it quickly passed from the scene. For a discussion of some problems of terminology relating to "Mao Tse-tung's thought," see Hsiung, *Ideology and Practice*, pp. 126-47.
27. See the editorial comments in Mao, *HC* 3: 846-47. The full text of this report ("Ching-chi wen-t'i yü ts'ai-cheng wen-t'i") is in Mao, *Chi* 8: 183-354. A revised version of the first chapter of the original report is in Mao, *SW* 3: 111-16.
28. Andrew Watson, who has recently analyzed this report in some detail, has kindly sent me a copy of the lengthy introduction to his translation of the complete text of Mao's report. Watson's manuscript is due to be published in the near future by Cambridge University Press, but my citations are to the mimeographed manuscript, p. 23 in this instance.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
30. Mao, *HC* 3: 846-47. The two other articles are "Spread the Campaigns to Reduce Rent, Increase Production, and 'Support the Government and Cherish the People' in the Base Areas" (Oct. 1, 1943) and "Get Organized!" (Nov. 29, 1943); Mao, *SW* 3: 131-35, 153-61. For a discussion of Mao's early economic thinking, see Gurley, and for a recent evaluation of Mao's economic thought, see Howe and Walker.
31. Ch'en Po-ta [32]. This essay was first published in pamphlet form in 1941 and was then revised slightly and reprinted in five installments in *Liberation Daily* in February 1942.
32. Ch'en Po-ta [33].
33. Of these writings, one of the best known is *Chin-tai Chung-kuo ti-tsu kai-shuo* (1947). See Ch'en Po-ta [48].
34. Compton, p. 86.
35. K'ang Sheng [1]. See also K'ang Sheng [2], especially p. 102.
36. K'ang Sheng [2], p. 102. For a great deal of information (and hos-

tile comment) on K'ang Sheng's key role in directing *cheng-feng*, see the Vladimirov diaries, *passim*.

37. Goldman, *Literary Dissent*, pp. 21-22. Goldman provides complete bibliographical information on a number of these critical essays (*tsa-wen*).

38. *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

40. See the relevant news item in *CFJP*, April 1, 1942, p. 2.

41. See the report on Mao's speech in *CFJP*, April 2, 1942, p. 1.

42. Goldman, *Literary Dissent*, p. 33.

43. For a full translation of this report, see Compton, pp. 1-8.

44. Boorman, p. 24.

45. Goldman, *Literary Dissent*, pp. 15-17.

46. Mao, *Chi* 8: 112.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 129.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 146.

50. Mao Tse-tung [5], p. 22. These notes, here translated by Steven Levine, were originally taken down by Peter Vladimirov, the Comintern representative in Yen-an who attended the congress.

51. *Ibid.*

52. Goldman, *Literary Dissent*, p. 37.

53. *Wen Chi-tse*, part 2.

54. Ch'en Po-ta [35].

55. For details of these and other charges against Wang, see *ibid.* See also Ch'en Po-ta (Po-chao pseud.) [34].

56. Ch'en Po-ta [35].

57. *Wen Chi-tse*, part 1.

58. According to Mao, the decision to execute Wang "did not come from the Centre." Wang's unfortunate case later became a prime example of how not to treat political deviants within the party. On this matter, see Mao Tse-tung, "Talk at an Enlarged Central Work Conference" (Jan. 30, 1962), as translated in Schram, *Chairman Mao Talks to the People*, pp. 184-85.

59. Ch'en Po-ta [36]. Ch'en's strong emphasis on the need for petit bourgeois intellectuals to remold their ideology led to a brief debate with Yü Ping-jan, who took the more moderate view that every individual should be judged on the basis of his own merits, not of his class background. See the exchange of articles by Yü Ping-jan and Ch'en Po-ta in *CFJP*, July 23, 1942 (Ch'en Po-ta [38]).

60. Ch'en Po-ta [39].

61. Ch'en Po-ta [41].

62. Ch'en Po-ta [40].

63. The discussion in this paragraph and the next is based on Nivison, pp. 35-41.

64. Boorman and Howard, p. 221; Klein and Clark, p. 123.

65. See Goldman, *Literary Dissent*, pp. 51-66, for a discussion of the

impact of *cheng-feng* on party intellectuals in the Nationalist-controlled areas, especially Chungking.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

67. For this reference to “Chairman Mao,” see the news item on the funeral of Chang Hao, a Central Committee member who had recently died, in *CFJP*, March 10, 1942, p. 3. This date is a little more than a month earlier than the date Jerome Ch’en cites (April 15) as the first occurrence of the term “Chairman Mao” in a *Liberation Daily* headline. See Jerome Ch’en, *Mao Papers*, p. 177, item 216.

68. Schurmann, p. 29.

69. Chu Te [2].

70. Both P’eng Te-huai and Ch’en Yi are cited in Tokuda, p. 52.

71. Chu Te [2].

72. Ch’en Po-ta [41], p. 17.

73. Mao, *Chi* 7: 162.

74. Schram, “Cultural Revolution,” p. 22.

Chapter Eight

1. Mao, *Chi* 8: 187.

2. Tokuda, p. 55.

3. For this interpretation of Japanese war strategy, see Hosoya.

4. On the Communists’ appreciation of the significance of the Battle of Stalingrad, see the special editorial written for *Liberation Daily* by Mao Tse-tung entitled “The Turning Point in World War II,” *CFJP*, Oct. 12, 1942. Translated in Mao, *SW* 3: 103–7.

5. The suggestion that T’ao Hsi-sheng drafted *China’s Destiny* was widely accepted at the time, and was noted by Philip Jaffe in the introduction to his English translation of the work (1947), p. 21. I use Jaffe’s translation as the standard reference, but see also the authorized English translation of the later revised version, by Wang Chung-hui.

6. *China’s Destiny*, Jaffe trans., p. 43.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 185.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 100.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 163.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 222.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

13. Fairbank, p. 404.

14. See the discussion of this interesting concept in Furth, *Limits of Change*, pp. 40–41, 293–94.

15. Lu Hsün, “Teng-hsia man-pi” (Random Thoughts Under the Lamp), as translated in Leys, pp. 200–201.

16. For the text of this important resolution, see Degras, pp. 476–79.

17. Mao, *Chi* 9: 16, 22. Stuart Schram first drew attention to this important speech by Mao in 1963, when he included extracts from it in the first edition of his *Political Thought*. For this extract, see the second edition (1969) of Schram’s study, pp. 421–23.

18. Mao, *Chi* 9: 23.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 17-19.
20. McLane, p. 155.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 157. Even if McLane has inadvertently overlooked a certain amount of incidental coverage of China in this journal during the period in question, his general point regarding Comintern indifference is still valid.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 174-76.
23. Mao, *Chi* 9: 44.
24. Chou En-lai, pp. 177-78.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 179.
26. See, for example, the biographical dictionaries of Boorman and Howard, 2: 408 and 3: 15; and Klein and Clark, 2: 621, 683.
27. For this interpretation of the Mao-Liu arrangement, see Schram, "Mao Tse-tung and Liu Shao-ch'i," pp. 280-81.
28. Mao, *Chi* 9: 39.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
30. Liu Shao-ch'i [5], p. 54.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 56, 60.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64.
33. Tokuda, pp. 54-57.
34. Ch'in Pang-hsien (Po Ku) [2].
35. Wang Chia-hsiang [1].
36. Wang Chia-hsiang [2], pp. 43-44.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
41. *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
43. One of the best-known attempts to analyze Chinese Communist ideology into separate "pure" and "practical" elements is in Schurmann, pp. 23-24.
44. On the alleged idiosyncratic quality of *chu-i*, see Hsiung, *Ideology and Practice*, pp. 129-30.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 129. See also Altaisky and Georgiyev, pp. 26-28.
46. Hsiung, *Ideology and Practice*, pp. 146-47.
47. See Browder's introduction to Mao Tse-tung, *China's New Democracy*, p. 48.
48. Moscow Radio, "Mao Tse-tung's Trustful Bodies" a talk broadcast in Mandarin, May 19, 1969, as cited in *IS* 6, no. 7 (April 1970): 89, 93.
49. White and Jacoby, p. 230.
50. *Ibid.*, pp. 229-30, 234.
51. For further details on these popular manifestations of the cult of Mao Tse-tung, see Tokuda, pp. 55-57, 70. According to a study published in China, by 1951 over 500 poems in praise of Mao Tse-tung had already been collected, most of them written by peasants in the 1940's. On this point, see Ting Yi, pp. 274-76.
52. This passage from Kao Kang's speech is cited in Selden, *Yenan Way*, p. 204.
53. See the relevant news item, "Mao Tse-tung t'ung-chih shih Chung-kuo jen-min ti chiu-hsing" (Comrade Mao Tse-tung Is the Savior of the Chinese People), *CFJP*, Nov. 21, 1943, p. 2.
54. Jerome Ch'en, *Mao*, p. 52.

55. Jerome Ch'en, "Tsun-yi Resolutions," pp. 37-38; also Jerome Ch'en, *Mao*, pp. 22, 53. This first edition of *Mao Tse-tung hsüan-chi* was published by the *Chin-Ch'a-Chi jih-pao* (Shansi-Ch'ahar-Hopei Daily).

56. Mao [5], pp. 12-13.

57. Mao, *Chi* 9: 46-47.

58. Ch'en Po-ta [42]. The text used here is a 1946 reprint of the original, published in Hong Kong. An at times faulty English translation of the entire text is in Gelder, pp. 256-90.

59. Ch'en Po-ta [44].

60. Ch'en Po-ta [42], p. 26.

61. Ch'en Po-ta [44], pp. 1-2.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

63. Ch'en Po-ta [42], p. 1.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

66. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

68. *Ibid.*

69. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

70. Of course, the issue was not quite that simple, and many people continued to waver over the question of supporting either the KMT or the CCP. For the case of the urban intellectuals during the civil war period, see Pepper.

71. See the brief summary of Chiang's book in Dispatch No. 1651 from Ambassador Gauss to the Secretary of State, in *Foreign Relations*, pp. 347-48.

72. *Two Years with the Chinese Communists*, pp. 210-11.

73. See Dispatch No. 1220 from Atcheson to the Secretary of State in *Foreign Relations*, pp. 244-45.

74. Ch'en's critique of *China's Destiny* was published in the January 1944 issue of *The Communist*, the leading theoretical journal of the American Communist Party. It was also issued in 1944 by the People's Publishing House, Bombay, India. Incidentally, in his remarks on the CCP's own theoretical journal (also *The Communist*), Jerome Ch'en (*Mao*, p. 18) has confused the two separate publications. Ch'en Po-ta's scathing review of Chiang Kai-shek's book was reprinted in the American journal, but not (so far as I know) in the Chinese publication of the same name.

Chapter Nine

1. For Stalin's official history of the Soviet party, see Communist Party of the Soviet Union, *History*.

2. For further information on this point, see Tokuda, pp. 61, 86.

3. For details of this conference, see Selden, *Yenan Way*, pp. 200-207.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 202-5.

5. This opinion is attributed to Jen Pi-shih by Tokuda, p. 59. Tokuda does not cite any source, although Jen's comments are presumably from a speech he made at the senior cadres conference.

6. Selden, *Yenan Way*, p. 204.

7. Ch'en Shao-yü (Wang Ming) [5], p. 49.
8. For further details, see the editorial note in Mao, *HC* 3: 891–92.
9. Tokuda, p. 60.
10. Liu Shao-ch'i [5], p. 54.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
12. Vladimirov, pp. 180, 182.
13. See the editorial note in Mao, *HC* 3: 891–92.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 892.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 893–94.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 900.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 893.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 895–97.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 922.
20. Ch'en Po-ta [46], p. 65.
21. Ch'en Po-ta [45], p. 42.
22. Ch'en Po-ta (?) [47]. For a fuller discussion of this text, and of Ch'en Po-ta's probable authorship of it, see pp. 263–69 below.
23. The original text of *Counterrevolution and Revolution in the Civil War Period* can be found in *You-guan Zhong-guo gong-chan-dang cai-liao* (Materials on the Chinese Communist Party), reel 12. The preface to this text is dated May 1, 1943, but this is obviously a misprint for 1944: in his concluding comments (p. 66), for example, Ch'en refers to Wang Chia-hsiang's article on Mao Tse-tung's thought, which was published on July 8, 1943, that is, some two months after the date given in the preface. For this and other reasons, we can safely assume that Ch'en's text was first issued on May 1, 1944.
24. For numerous examples of later alterations to Mao's original writings, see Schram, *Political Thought*, pp. 150–51, 174, 252, 276, etc.
25. Tokuda, p. 62.
26. Ch'en Po-ta [45], pp. 43–44. For a stimulating discussion of certain distinctive characteristics of Hunan province in modern Chinese history and their possible effect on Mao Tse-tung, see Jerome Ch'en, *Mao*, pp. 1–7. For a paean to the stirring qualities of the Hunanese, see the essay by Ch'en Tu-hsiu, "Salute to the Spirit of the Hunanese" (May 1920), in Carrère d'Encausse and Schram, pp. 211–12.
27. Ch'en Po-ta [45], p. 43.
28. *Ibid.*
29. This judgment of Mao's early texts appears not to have changed in later years: only one of Mao's writings dated earlier than March 1927 is included in the official *Selected Works* published after 1949, and even then in a highly revised form. For further details, see the footnote on p. 250.
30. Ch'en Po-ta [45], p. 44.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 1–2.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 19–20.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
38. This is the relevant translation of the term suggested by Mathews in his well-known *Chinese-English Dictionary*, p. 66. A more literal translation of the verb would be "to crystallize," "to be a concentrated expression of," etc. See, for example, *Han-Ying shih-shih yung-yü ts'e-hui* (A Chinese-English Dictionary of Current Events Terminology), p. 175. In essence, the term implies the amalgamation of existing ideas and/or theories and their development to a more advanced level of cognition.

39. Ch'en Po-ta [22].
 41. *Ibid.*
 43. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
 45. *Ibid.*
 47. *Ibid.*, pp. 15-18.
 49. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
 51. *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 36-37.
 53. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
 54. *Ibid.*, p. 65. Ch'en is probably exaggerating Mao's emphasis on ideology here, for the original Kut'ien resolutions were as much concerned with organization as with ideology in the building up of the party and the army. Still, in his later use of these resolutions (as during the *cheng-feng* campaign), Mao chose to emphasize their ideological aspects, especially regarding the indoctrination of cadres and officers, rather than their concern with organization. It is significant that in the official *Selected Works*, only the ideological section of the resolutions has been retained, under the title "On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party." See Mao, *SW*, 1: 105-16.
40. Ch'en Po-ta [45], p. 45.
 42. Ch'en Po-ta [46], p. 33.
 44. *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.
 46. *Ibid.*, pp. 2-4.
 48. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
 50. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
 52. *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.
55. Ch'en Po-ta [46], pp. 59-60.
 57. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
 59. *Ibid.*
 61. *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.
 63. *Ibid.*, p. 66.
 65. *Ibid.*, p. 66.
 66. *Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao*, pp. 189-90.
56. *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63.
 58. *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.
 60. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
 62. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
 64. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

Chapter Ten

1. "Political Program and Policies," as proposed by Chiang Kai-shek and adopted on May 18, 1945, by the Sixth National Congress of the Chinese Nationalist Party, in Tong, p. 41.
2. "Resolution on the Communist Problem," adopted on May 17, 1945, by the Sixth National Congress of the Chinese Nationalist Party, in *ibid.*, p. 53.
3. A good deal of material on P'eng's alleged conflicts with Mao over the years has been compiled by students at Tsinghua University, and translated in *CB* 851 (Aug. 26, 1968). For these and other documents on P'eng, see *P'eng Teh-huai*, especially pp. 190-94. For Mao's rather off-color comments on his 40-day conflict with P'eng, see Schram, *Chairman Mao Talks*, p. 194.
4. Vladimirov, pp. 374, 389-95. For some detailed comments on the "Resolution on Certain Historical Questions" (April 20, 1945, in Mao, *HC* 3: 904-53), see Rue, *Mao in Opposition*, pp. 8-11 and elsewhere in the book. A Red Guard claim that Hu Ch'iao-mu drafted the "Resolution" is probably a guess based on Hu's later study of party history in 1951, and can be dismissed as such. For the Red Guard reference, see Harrison, p. 591, n. 85.

5. Mao *HC* 3: 921-22. According to Vladimirov (p. 349), prior to the Seventh Plenum certain "discrepancies" arose in connection with the evaluation of the party's history after Tsunyi, and this may have inhibited the Central Committee from dealing with this period in detail.

6. Mao, *HC* 3: 907.

7. Ch'en Po-ta [46], p. 66.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 12; Mao, *HC* 3: 927.

9. Mao, *HC* 3: 922.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 939.

11. Tokuda, p. 72.

12. The most comprehensive study of the history of the CCP to have appeared in China is Ho Kan-chih, *A History of the Modern Chinese Revolution* (1959). Ho adheres closely to the Maoist interpretation of party history, but his study is "unofficial" in that it was published in his own name and not in the name of the CCP Central Committee. Likewise, Hu Ch'iao-mu's much shorter study, to which I have already referred, also lacks the authority of the CCP's highest body. For Vladimirov's comments, see the diaries, p. 517.

13. Mao, *HC* 3: 950.

14. See the dispatches of the New China News Agency concerning the Seventh Congress, as translated in Brandt et al., pp. 287-95.

15. *Ibid.* For the references to individual Returned Student leaders, see Vladimirov, p. 467, and *passim*.

16. Mao, *Chi* 9: 184.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 186, 228, 235-36.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 218 and *passim* for references to "new democracy." As Stuart Schram has indicated, overt claims regarding the CCP's leading position in the new coalition government were later added to the revised text of Mao's report in the *Selected Works*. Schram, *Mao*, pp. 234-35.

19. Mao, *Chi* 9: 269-71.

20. Chu Te [3], especially p. 34.

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64, 90-91.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57.

23. For this and other material on P'eng Te-huai at the time of the Seventh Congress, see *CB* 851 (Aug. 26, 1968): 7; and *P'eng Teh-huai*, pp. 193-94.

24. Liu Shao-ch'i [6], p. 31. This also contains the new party constitution adopted by the congress on June 11, 1945.

25. Schurmann, p. 21. Schurmann's translation also omits the last part of the original sentence, but this has no bearing on the present discussion.

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

27. See "Chung-kuo kung-ch'an-tang tang-chang" (Statutes of the Chinese Communist Party), in Liu Shao-ch'i [6], pp. 145-76, especially p. 147.

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 151-52.

29. A good example of this attenuation of Mao's thought is the English translation of Liu Shao-ch'i's report to the Seventh Congress ("On the Party"). See Liu [8], 2: 26-31 and *passim*.

30. For comments and references on this deletion of Mao's thought

from the 1956 party constitution, see Hsiung, *Ideology and Practice*, pp. 133–34. For an important Red Guard document accusing P'eng Te-huai, Liu Shao-ch'i, and Teng Hsiao-p'ing of coordinating the attack on Mao's thought at the party's Eighth Congress in September 1956, see *P'eng Teh-huai*, p. 201.

31. For this definition of Mao's thought, see the party's short-lived "Lin Piao" constitution adopted at the CCP's Ninth Congress in April 1969, as reprinted in Chai, p. 431.

32. For the CCP constitution of 1973, see *The Tenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China: Documents*, especially pp. 61, 65. For the most recent constitution (1977), see *The Eleventh National Congress of the Communist Party of China: Documents*, pp. 121, 140.

33. Han Suyin, p. 489.

34. Liu Shao-ch'i [6], p. 37.

35. *Ibid.*, pp. 33, 37.

36. For example, the term "Sinification of Marxism" was deleted from the revised version of Mao's report of 1938 ("On the New Stage") in the *Selected Works* published after 1949. (Mao, *HC* 2: 499–500). For a critical Soviet analysis of "Sinified Marxism," see Krivtsov and Sidikhmenov, pp. 62–72.

37. Liu Shao-ch'i [6], pp. 35–36.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

42. For Mao's own discussion of democratic centralism very much along these lines, see Mao, *SW* 3: 44.

43. For a good analysis of the changing relationship between party and leader in the history of the CCP, see Schram, "The Party in Chinese Communist Ideology."

44. On Mao's formal assumption of these key positions within the CCP, see Boorman and Howard, 3: 15; and Klein and Clark, 2: 683.

Chapter Eleven

1. Li Wei-han [2], p. 98.

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