

What is Maoism?

A Symposium

EDITORS' NOTE: The massive purge currently sweeping Communist China in the guise of a "great proletarian cultural revolution" has focused increased attention on the personality and, more particularly, the "thought of Mao Tse-tung," now being exalted as never before in Chinese propaganda media as the quintessence of Marxist-Leninist truth and a "guiding light" for all mankind. With a view to identifying the principal characteristics of the Maoist brand of communism, the editors several months ago initiated the present symposium, inviting Messrs. Schram and Cohen, both long-time students of Mao's ideas, to submit papers discussing five specific questions (1) What are the key operative factors in Mao's political thought? (2) What is Mao's view of the role of intellectuals in a "socialist" society? (3) How can one describe Mao's political "style" as reflected in his leadership of the Chinese Communist Party? (4) What is the practical significance of Mao's approach to international relations, especially with regard to "liberation wars"? (5) What is the relative weight of Chinese and Marxist-Leninist components in shaping Mao's motives, thought and personality? Each of the two authors chose his own approach to the questions, Mr. Schram preferring to deal with them in a somewhat different order and in a more generalized fashion, while Mr. Cohen addressed himself specifically to the questions as stated above. Several prominent scholars were then invited to comment on these basic papers, and finally Messrs. Cohen and Schram were asked to reply to each other's original articles as well as to the comments of the other discussants. Although their original articles were written before the current "cultural revolution" in China had assumed such massive proportions, the two authors touch on the significance of these new developments in their concluding remarks. Comments from our readers on the symposium are cordially invited.

The Man and His Doctrines

By Stuart R. Schram

This article is an attempt to define the essential characteristics of Mao's personal contribution to the ideas and methods of Communist China. In it

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I shall employ certain generalizations—some might say "abstractions"—regarding the nature of Mao's thought and its historical role. There are those who consider all such discussions as airy speculations, and who recommend limiting the analysis of Mao's ideas to his "operational code" and the immediate experience from which it emerges. Unfortunately, this approach often leads those who adopt it to

conclude simultaneously 1) that Mao is a hard-bitten revolutionary and nothing else, and 2) that he is above all a "chauvinist." It will be for the reader to judge whether the speculations in which I shall now indulge throw any light on the links between these apparently unrelated attitudes.

The starting point for any attempt to elucidate the nature and significance of Mao's thought must be the fact that he is *both* a Leninist revolutionary and an Afro-Asian nationalist. On the one hand, he pursues radical social change as an end in itself; on the other hand, he is intent on the restoration of national independence and national dignity after the humiliation of Western domination. Being simultaneously a revolutionary and a nationalist, he finds a further justification for revolution in the belief that the nation can be restored and made to flourish only by a change in the social and political system. His aims are thus broader and more radical than those of such revolutionary nationalists as, say, Nasser, Sukarno, or Nkrumah, who do not subscribe to Leninism, and who regard revolution merely as a means of strengthening the nation, and not as an end in itself. But psychologically he also has a great deal in common with them.

The above abstractions do not carry us very far in the understanding of Mao's thought, but they do guide us toward certain basic questions: 1) What is the precise nature of Mao's "nationalist" and "revolutionary" tendencies? 2) How do these strains combine, and what is their relative importance in his thought and action?

These are not easy questions to answer. But to ignore either of the two aspects of Mao's personality, to treat him on one hand as a new Liu Pang or Genghis Khan, or on the other as a "pure" Leninist revolutionary (whatever that may be), is to make certain in advance that everything one says will be at least half false.

Chinese and Leninist Traits

Contrary to what might be assumed at first glance, this is not merely another way of formulating the problem of the relation between the revolutionary and nationalist aspects of Mao's thought. Mao's "Chineseness" is not the same thing as his nationalism. Chinese traditions and Chinese patterns of thought frequently color and shape his modes of reasoning even when his conscious concern is with problems of Leninist theory or with the world proletarian revolution. And conversely, his image of China and his evaluation of the Chinese

heritage are cast to a large extent in Leninist categories. There is thus a subtle counterpoint and not a simple coincidence between the dichotomies "Chinese-Leninist" and "nationalist-revolutionary."

Leaving till the next section a discussion of Mao's "Chineseness"—understood in the sense of an identification with China above all, and therefore as another name for nationalism—what is the importance of the Chinese *form* of Mao's thought in general? Is it merely a matter of folklore and local color, of Chinese decorations pasted on an intellectual edifice basically similar to that of any Russian or European Leninist, with due allowance for the differences resulting from the peculiar tactical problems with which Mao has had to deal?

Undoubtedly there *is*, in Mao's writings, an element of *mere* local color, a conscious exploitation of traditional metaphors and examples, because he knows this will appeal to his countrymen and make it easier for them to assimilate a foreign system of thought. But there is much more to the problem than this. If Mao adapts his mode of expression to the habits of thought of his compatriots, he does so not merely to please them, but also to please himself. An extreme but nonetheless significant example is his composition of poems in classical forms, some of which I analyzed in an earlier issue of this review.¹ Mao could clearly have made himself far more accessible to the majority of today's citizens by writing his poems in the modern spoken language, as others have been doing for nearly half a century, and as he himself advises young Chinese to do. If he did not follow his own advice, it is because he *likes* to write in these forms, and also possibly because in this way he strengthens his image as a leader set apart from his contemporaries, speaking through barely comprehensible oracles. Neither of these motives could be justified in terms of Leninist ideology.

Nor is it merely a matter of the forms of expression which Mao chooses to employ. Not only the form but the substance of his thought is profoundly affected by his Chinese background. One example is the concept of *fu-ch'iang* (literally "rich and powerful"—a contraction of a phrase meaning "to enrich the country and make it strong militarily") which Mao absorbed from the late 19th-century nationalists who influenced him as an adolescent. As recently as 1957, during his visit to Moscow, he hailed the October Revolution for having shown

¹"Mao as a Poet," *Problems of Communism*, Sept.-Oct. 1964, p. 38.

China the road to “emancipation and *fu-ch’iang*.” Both he and Liu Shao-ch’i have often indulged in a type of moralizing which owes more to the Confucian ideal of self-cultivation than to Lenin, for whom that which was moral was simply that which was useful to the revolution. The idea, launched by Mao in 1958, that it was a good thing the Chinese people were “poor and blank” because they could thus be reshaped at will, is totally foreign to the spirit of Marxism, with its insistence on the unique value of Western culture and the importance of a high level of social and intellectual development as a precondition for socialism. While I cannot attempt in this small space to define the antecedents of this notion with any precision, it is certainly more compatible with the traditional Chinese dialectics according to which extremes are transformed into one another, than with Marxist dialectics even as interpreted by Mao. Moreover, the very style in which the Chinese “apply” Marxism—as exemplified by the use of a few sentences from Marx quoted out of context to justify the totally un-Marxist enterprise of the communes—is not unrelated to the handling of quotations from the classics in the Chinese tradition.

Operative Factors

First on the list of the basic operative factors in Mao’s thought must be placed his nationalism, not because it is necessarily the most important, but because it is chronologically and psychologically primary in Mao’s thought. That it is chronologically primary is clear: Mao was a nationalist (and a relatively conservative one) long before he was a Communist or revolutionary of any kind. But, to a large extent, it is also psychologically primary, both for Mao and for the millions of Chinese who take his thought as their guide. In the complex structure of Mao’s mind and personality as a whole, the nationalist components are to be found more or less on the visceral, and the revolutionary components on the cerebral, side. It has been affirmed that to emphasize Mao’s nationalism is meaningless, inasmuch as all national leaders in this world are nationalists. Since World War II, France has been governed both by General de Gaulle and by, say, M. René Pleven. Would anyone suggest that the kind and degree of nationalism manifested by the one and the other was of no practical importance?

Another fundamental concept in Mao’s intellectual world, which is at the same time a symbol for mobilizing political support, is that of the

“people.” Mao’s “populist” tendency—the notion that the overwhelming majority of the Chinese are basically progressive and capable of participating in the revolution—is probably the most important single device by which he reconciles the nationalist and revolutionary halves of his personality. It is, of course, true that Lenin showed him the way by developing the idea that the bourgeoisie, in backward and dependent countries, could collaborate in the revolution during a certain period. But Mao enormously enlarged the scope of this thesis. On the one hand, he extended the definition of the forces in Chinese society which might play a positive role to include, at certain times, not only the whole of the bourgeoisie (“compradores” as well as national bourgeoisie), but even “patriotic landlords.” He has repeatedly affirmed, in a series of utterances stretching over the last 40 years, that 90 or 95 percent of the Chinese people were on the side of the revolution. Secondly, he has proclaimed that collaboration among the four classes (proletariat, peasantry, petty bourgeoisie, and national bourgeoisie) constituting the “people,” as defined since 1949, can continue throughout the whole period of the socialist revolution until all class differences finally disappear. Even if, since 1955, this formula no longer corresponds to any significant reality, it has an important symbolic function. For if virtually all Chinese (except for a handful of reactionaries and traitors) are basically revolutionary, then in defending the cause of China one is in fact advancing the world revolution. This is clearly what Mao and his disciples do believe today.

Another key factor in Mao’s thought is an insistence on the importance of changing the mentality of the Chinese people as an indispensable condition for the modernization of China. Although Mao is proud of the achievements of traditional Chinese culture, and although his own mind is deeply marked by traditional modes of thought, he has been, for nearly half a century, in violent revolt against the stifling effects of such Confucian principles as submission to the authority of the family or the notion that man should adapt himself to the forces of nature rather than seeking to dominate nature. For a brief period in his youth, his revolt against the tyranny of nature and authority took an individualist form. The idea of the emancipation of the individual has, of course, long since been subordinated in his thinking to that of the collective emancipation of the Chinese people, but he has never lost sight of the importance of the individual. The citizen must act in the way required by the exigencies of the system and the aims of the govern-

ment, but at the same time he must act consciously and not merely by rote.

The revolution which Mao has undertaken to carry out in the mentality of his compatriots in order to fit the Chinese nation for survival in the modern world has two aspects which are summed up in the famous phrase “red and expert,” used since the period of the “Great Leap Forward” to define the ideal of excellence in China today. On one hand, Mao wants his compatriots to be expert—that is, to master modern ways of thinking about nature and modern techniques for dealing with nature, as developed in the West. But on the other hand, he wants them to be “red”—that is, filled with revolutionary passion and animated by the conviction that the action of the masses can ultimately triumph over all objective difficulties. To use Mao’s own language, the flagrant opposition between these two exigencies is no doubt the “principal contradiction” in his thought.

Mao’s Leadership Style

The principal traits in Mao’s leadership style grow out of his personality and experience. Perhaps the most important and most characteristic is linked to what I have called his “military romanticism.” By this term, I mean to designate not only Mao’s fondness for warfare as such, but his tendency to envisage political, economic, and even philosophical problems as forms of combat. It is in warfare, he declared in 1938, that men give the full measure of themselves. He would like to infuse the same qualities of heroism and drama into every aspect of human activity.

This attitude has naturally been shaped by Mao’s twenty-year experience of guerrilla warfare, but it also corresponds to the orientation of his personality from the beginning. In the earliest authoritative document available, the article on physical culture which he published in 1917, he appears already as first and foremost a warrior. Mao’s taste and talent for this type of pathos and this style of leadership were unquestionably of immense value to him in the course of the struggle for power. Since 1949, they have been of more dubious utility, at least as regards internal affairs. In the present context, when it is desired to mobilize the population, and to rely on China’s own efforts and resources for modernization in the face of the denial of Soviet aid, this ethic may again be of some use; but at the same time, like the emphasis on “redness,” it may be a hindrance to rational economic

construction. There are apparently those in the Chinese Communist Party who realize this. Mao himself stated in 1958 that a certain number of comrades regarded the effort to make steel by relying on mass enthusiasm as a “guerrilla habit.” But he has given no sign that he is capable, or even desirous, of modifying his personality and outlook.

For the rest, Mao’s style of leadership is in large part a projection of the emphasis on conscious action which marks his thought as a whole. While Mao is resolved that all Chinese shall think alike, and think as he wishes, he wants them to do so spontaneously. To the outside observer, this ambition seems contradictory and absurd, but it is nevertheless a reality in Mao’s mind. It perhaps reflects a nostalgia for the ideal of individual liberation which he espoused in his youth; most certainly, it is inspired by the belief that human beings act effectively only when they act with conviction.

Mao’s recipe for achieving the desired combination of spontaneity and discipline consists, of course, in transforming the attitudes of his fellow-citizens by methods which vary considerably according to the situation at a given moment, the social category involved, and the aims pursued, but which can be broadly designated by the term “thought reform.” As is well known, violence is by no means absent from the techniques employed to change the thinking of the Chinese, but it is a means rather than an end. Ideally, the citizens should not be kept in line indefinitely by sheer fear of police terror; terror is used, in conjunction with various methods of indoctrination, in order to transform their minds and personalities to such an extent that the desired modifications in their behavior will be enforced by internal rather than external sanctions.

This enterprise has so far been neither a total success nor a total failure. Terror and constraint are by no means absent from China today. “Mao Tse-tung’s thought” has certainly not been adequately assimilated by all Chinese, and at various times, notably in the difficult years after the failure of the “Great Leap Forward,” there has clearly been considerable opposition and hostility to the regime. But at the same time, there is probably more consensus, and less blind obedience, than in the Soviet Union at the corresponding stage in its development.

A technique related to Mao’s emphasis on “conscious action,” and to his desire to show that he enjoys the enthusiastic support of the masses, is his practice of allowing policy decisions to filter out at first only partially and indirectly, through

anonymous newspaper editorials summarizing the essential points of his speeches and directives, and his parallel practice of publishing his own words only after a delay of weeks, months, or even years, during which an attempt is made to give the appearance that a movement is developing spontaneously. Examples of this aspect of his leadership style are legion. To cite only two, his speech of February 27, 1957, on the correct manner of resolving contradictions among the people was not published until June of that year, and then in a form revised to take account of the intervening developments; similarly, his speech on art and literature, delivered in May 1942, was not published until October 1943. To be sure, delays in the publication of important documents are not unknown in other countries, particularly the Soviet Union, but they are usually explicable in terms of a desire for secrecy rather than as a deliberate technique for encouraging apparently spontaneous action by the masses to give the impression that the regime is acting in harmony with the masses.

The Role of Intellectuals

“Intellectuals” is here understood in the sense usually employed in talking about Communist countries, that is, to mean any more or less educated and technically competent person. Mao’s attitude toward this category is intimately bound up with his desire to effect a cultural revolution which will make the Chinese both “red” and “expert.” As the carriers of expertness, intellectuals are indispensable if China is to be turned into a powerful modern nation. But in a great many instances expertness does not go hand in hand with redness, and those who are more red than expert may come into conflict with those who are more expert than red. For the moment, it is necessary to live with this “contradiction” in the reality of Chinese society—a contradiction which reflects a similar contradiction in Mao’s thought. Though, on the whole, authority belongs to those who are “red,” the hard lessons of 1959-61 have taught Mao and his colleagues that experts must have a certain amount of freedom to do their job. In the long run, however, such a compromise, such a sacrifice of principle to efficiency, is certainly intolerable to Mao. To admit that managers and engineers are (1) inherently skeptical, and (2) inclined to seek comfortable lives for themselves, to admit that they must be humored indefinitely to some extent in order to keep them working efficiently, would be for him the height of

immorality—a surrender to that very restoration of capitalism which he denounces in the USSR and which he has declared must be fought to the bitter end in China itself.

As for intellectuals in the narrow sense of the word—writers, artists, philosophers, historians, etc.—Mao finds the dilemma even harder. More than average citizens, people in these categories must act consciously and with conviction if they are to play an effective role in society. At the same time, they cannot be allowed to plant “poisonous weeds” instead of flowers in the socialist garden. In the course of the past decade, Mao has repeatedly swung from one extreme to the other, from the liberalism of the “Hundred Flowers” to the extreme regimentation prevailing in recent years, in an effort to find a method of reconciling individual awareness with social harmony. It does not appear that a solution is in sight, but Mao is certainly not prepared to admit defeat. Whenever the choice is between stifling opposition, with force if necessary, and tolerating dissidence which challenges such basic principles of the regime as the predominance of the Communist Party, Mao will choose repression, as his reaction in the latter half of 1957 made perfectly clear. Yet he will never abandon his efforts to persuade people to believe what in his view they ought to believe, so as to avoid having to constrain them to act as though they believed it.

Mao and the World

It is perhaps in the field of global strategy that the interaction between revolutionary and nationalist impulses in Mao’s personality weaves the most fascinating counterpoint. A decisive question that poses itself here is whether we are in fact dealing with only two factors, or with three. It is clear that Mao has three concentric loyalties: to China; to the liberation of the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America; and to world revolution as the joint enterprise of the proletariat of the developed countries and the “oppressed peoples” of the underdeveloped countries. Should this concern with national liberation movements be regarded as a partially independent factor in Mao’s thought? Or is it a projection of his commitment to Chinese nationalism, to world revolution, or to both? No doubt, it is all of these things at the same time. Mao’s feeling of solidarity with other non-European peoples struggling against “imperialism” undoubtedly exists in its own right as a spontaneous reaction. But his formulation of the principle of

solidarity, and his application of it, are shaped by both nationalist and revolutionary considerations. His attitude is marked by nationalism, because to support revolutionary movements in Asia, Africa, and Latin America means to extend Chinese influence in these areas. It is transmuted and rendered more virulent by Mao's commitment to revolution everywhere as a value in itself.

But just how abstract and general is Mao's love of revolution? On the face of it, the anti-imperialist theme appears to be an example of perfect harmony between nationalist and revolutionary motives, for it is at once a basic tenet of Leninism and an emotional necessity for the peoples of Asia and Africa. Yet, though Mao has been a believer in Marxism-Leninism for some forty years and has had a fairly good knowledge of it for some twenty-five, it is not easy to say what this ideological commitment actually means to him. He has given us a clue by affirming: "There is no such thing as abstract Marxism, but only concrete Marxism. What we call concrete Marxism is Marxism that has taken on a national form. . . ." ² If Mao now proposes to encircle the "cities" of Europe and America from the "countryside" of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, is this out of abstract devotion to world revolution—or to gain final revenge for the humiliation which, for over a century, the "cities" inflicted on the "countryside," and on China in particular? Does he really have a feeling of comradeship with the workers of Europe and the United States, and hope for their support at a later stage? Or does he regard them as hopelessly degenerate, cowardly, and *embourgeoisés*, paying lip service to their role in the world revolution only in order to give revolutionary legitimacy and wider appeal to an enterprise which in fact owes more to Chinese tradition than to Lenin?

Some clues regarding these questions can be obtained by considering the actual Chinese attitude toward the Soviet role in the world revolution and comparing it with the attitude that would result from a "leftist" position rooted in fidelity to the letter of Marxist doctrine. Recent Chinese statements do not merely criticize the Soviet leaders for

their "revisionism" and betrayal of Marxist principles; they virtually exclude the Soviet Union from estimates regarding the future course of events. Mao and his comrades regularly denounce the Soviet Union for failing to support "national liberation" movements in Vietnam and elsewhere, but they show no signs of genuinely desiring such action on the part of Moscow, either now or in the future, for it might jeopardize their own professed position as the sole hope and sole guiding center of the oppressed peoples throughout the world. This attitude is in sharp contrast to that of Trotsky, who continued right to his death to denounce in the most scathing terms the "Thermidorean Reaction" existing under Stalin's dictatorship, but who nevertheless affirmed that the Soviet Union was a "workers' and peasants' state," however degenerate, and must therefore be supported in all circumstances. It seems clear that an ultra-leftist view inspired by doctrine alone would today take this same line, proclaiming that the Soviet Union, however timid and selfish its leadership, remains the principal bulwark of the "anti-imperialist" struggle on the world scene. If Mao does not reason in this way, it is because his view of the world is rooted less in theory than in emotion. The assault on "modern revisionism" is a Marxist-Leninist justification for Chinese resentment over the arrogant and high-handed treatment inflicted on China by the Soviet leaders and their refusal to be guided by Chinese counsels, just as anti-imperialism is the expression in ideological terms of resentment against the West.

This does not imply that Mao's ultra-revolutionary verbiage is *nothing* but a fig leaf for the visceral reactions of a Chinese and/or an Asian. In recent years, there has been a tendency, in the interpretation of Chinese communism and the Sino-Soviet dispute, to move from one extreme, which held that ideology was everything, to the opposite extreme, according to which it is nothing. As emphasized at the beginning of this article, I do not subscribe to either view. Nationalist and revolutionary impulses must both be taken into account. In terms of their relative weight, it seems clear that on the world scene, even more than in internal affairs, nationalist passion comes first and revolutionary ideology second. But ideology nevertheless serves a double and important function. It provides a justification in abstract terms for anti-western sentiment, and thereby makes it more virulent. And it dresses up Chinese experience and aspirations in a garb of universality, thereby making it possible for Mao to appeal not only to his compatriots but to the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America as a whole.

² Mao's report of October 1938, as translated in the author's *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung*, New York, Praeger, 1963, p. 114. (This passage has been removed from the current edition of *Mao's Selected Works*.)

In both these roles, Mao's version of Leninism is effective to a certain, no doubt considerable, extent. But in both roles its ultimate effect is problematical. As regards the appeal to other non-European countries, the "Sinification" of Marxism, while bringing it closer to the traditions and experience of the Chinese, may make it more foreign to other peoples. Even more important in this respect than the Sinocentrism of Mao's thought is the Sinocentrism of his action. The open pursuit of specifically Chinese goals may produce a disillusionment on the part of other Asians and Africans anent the purity of Mao's anti-imperialist motives, doing even more to undermine his pretensions to universality than the citations from the Chinese classics with which Peking's ideological utterances are studded.

Is Mao's thinking about foreign policy sufficiently coherent and consistent at the present time to enable one to sum it up in a few clear sentences? I have already said that China is at the center of his world, and I have suggested that the advanced countries of Europe and North America play very little part in his calculations except as enemies to be struggled against or played off against one another. But how does Mao conceive of the relation between China and the other peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America? Does he regard Peking first and foremost as a revolutionary Mecca, even though, consciously or unconsciously, he may wish to propagate revolution primarily in order to increase Chinese influence in the world and not merely out of abstract devotion to "proletarian internationalism"? Or is he inspired by nostalgia for China's traditional position as an empire surrounded by client states?

In the long run, the two goals are obviously related in his mind, for only a Communist state (run, of course, by a genuine, non-revisionist Communist party) could be expected to maintain unwavering solidarity with China as the leader of the genuinely revolutionary forces in the world. But both the ideological line and the actual policies that Mao has

pursued over the past fifteen years have tended to indicate that for a relatively long time he would be satisfied with "bourgeois" governments provided they were oriented toward Peking. Last fall's unsuccessful coup in Indonesia, it is true, raised new doubts on this score. If Peking wanted to overthrow Sukarno, the champion of the "New Emerging Forces," what non-Communist Asian or African leader, however revolutionary, could consider himself safe? The contradiction between this action and Mao's foreign policy as a whole is so flagrant, however, that one is led to wonder whether the Indonesian events were not in fact the result of a miscalculation inspired by Sukarno's very bad health rather than the first manifestation of a new ultra-left line in Peking. This interpretation is supported by China's consistent support of Marshal Ayub Khan's Pakistan as a revolutionary force in the world.

In fact, the foreign policy of Mao's China, like its domestic policy, suffers from an acute contradiction between the style and the substance. In internal affairs, a frantic insistence on the study of Mao Tse-tung's thought as the key to everything has recently gone hand in hand with a relatively realistic economic policy. In foreign affairs, the constant affirmation of implacable hostility to "US imperialism" has not led to any large-scale involvement in the Vietnamese conflict, and Mao appears to be guided primarily by considerations of Chinese interest and Chinese dignity. Of the two, dignity would appear to be the more important to him. But even this may conceivably be changing. An interesting and suggestive example is that of Chinese policy toward Cuba. At first sight, the clumsy and tactless handling of Fidel Castro would appear to reflect above all an exaggerated susceptibility to behavior which Peking judges to be disrespectful. But the decision to reduce sugar purchases may also have been motivated by a desire to bring China's foreign aid commitments into line with her economic capacity. Any such tendency to be guided at least in part by interests rationally understood rather than by nationalist passion or revolutionary zeal would be a hopeful development both for China and for the world.

The Man and His Policies

By Arthur A. Cohen

The political thought of a national leader can be gauged accurately only from his political practice. The key operative factors in Mao's thought are, therefore, the operative factors in his policies.

Mao's policies suggest, first of all, his belief in the efficacy of the human will. He acts on the view that man's will, expressed by deliberate political intervention, is the effective determinant of all social change. This view is reflected in his Stalinist dictatorial rule and imposition of the revolution "from above," in his use of military action to attain political power and military discipline to retain that power, and in his present conviction that, as the only reliable agent of the redemptive Communist historical process in China, he can interfere in all areas of human activity.

Mao's belief in the energized will is revolutionary. That is, it is based on the non-Chinese doctrine of Lenin, who interpreted Marx as having emphasized the *conscious change* of physical reality. Mao has accepted Lenin's enormous stress (in *What is to be Done* and elsewhere) on the "conscious element" of one-party ideology. Today Mao's lieutenants attack the "practicism" of party cadres—the custom of conducting day-to-day work without regard to ideology, more specifically to the "thought of Mao Tse-tung," which alone is said to give that

work a revolutionary meaning and the cadres a determination to prevail against all obstacles.¹

Mao rejects the view that material conditions play the major role in determining change, and he plays down the importance of economic determinants. Marx, in his later years, had tried to achieve a balance between the objective blade (economic "productive forces") and the subjective blade ("man's will") of the dialectical scissors. However, Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin, among others, viewed the subjective blade as the sharper, regarding voluntarist man as the demiurge of revolution and social construction. For Mao, too, revolution must be stimulated rather than awaited, and the most difficult economic goals become attainable provided the will of the masses is mobilized ideologically and politically. His penchant for stressing man's will over material conditions often leads him into absurd extremism—*e.g.*, during the "Great Leap Forward" of 1958, when he tried to substitute highly "conscious" and regimented manpower for modern agricultural machinery, and millions of "revolutionized" backyard iron smelterers for rational professionals.

Mao's dedication to man's revolutionary will also has an ascetic aspect in his view that human nature is at its truest and most intelligible when vexed by

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¹ CCP cadres are told that "Only when the red line of Mao's dialectical views runs through our thinking and practice can we continue to discover, invent, and create things and make progress." *Chieh-fang Jih-pao* (Shanghai), April 8, 1965.