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Power and Personality in China: Mao Tse-tung, Liu Shao-ch'i, and the Politics of Charismatic Succession *

The controversy between Mao Tse-tung and Liu Shao-ch'i seems to have been more meaningful than the recent power struggle between Mao and Lin Piao, in view of the deep cleavages that the dispute brought to light among the Chinese masses. The controversy may be understood on many levels. On an ideological level, it symbolized the broader clash of the Cultural Revolution—a clash between differing conceptions of revolution, between differing strategies of development, between differing visions of China's future. On a political level, it represented a cleavage between the bureaucratic officialdom that has led China's social and industrial revolution since 1949 and those whom that revolution left behind: work-study students, temporary contract workers, junior officials without prospect for upward mobility, stigmatized social groups (e.g., the "five black classes") who were recurrent targets of social discrimination, and a prematurely superannuated Chairman concerned over the malaise of the revolutionary ideals he

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stood for. One can trace the roots of the split to the disparate experiences of each man in the "red" and "white" areas during the Sino-Japanese war, to their different areas of specialization and interest since 1949, or simply to their different responses to the failure of the Great Leap Forward. All of these perspectives help to illuminate the controversy, though no single one of them can fully explain it. One fruitful line of analysis, which has heretofore been explored only tangentially, might focus on the way in which differences in *personality* shaped the shifting relationship between the two men, contributing on the one hand to their long and successful collaboration, and on the other to the cleavages in political outlook that finally ended it.

This article has two objectives. First, we shall try to demonstrate that although their differences were grotesquely exaggerated by Red Guard polemicists, Mao and Liu were indeed basically different kinds of men, and that their differences led to recurring friction in specific issue areas—without, however, making the outbreak of open conflict inevitable. Second, we shall show how role constraints and role performance facilitated successful cooperation for more than two decades, and how a premature succession crisis fostered a situation of structural ambiguity that undermined those constraints and permitted hitherto concealed incompatibilities of personality to manifest themselves, bringing the two men into a conflict involving the entire political system. In view of data limitations we cannot yet reconstruct the genesis of these personality differences, beyond observing that a Marxist analysis does not seem to be particularly fruitful in this case, since both men had similar class backgrounds (rich peasant) and class experience (both joined the Party at about the same time and spent the rest of their lives as professional revolutionaries). Although some excellent secondary analyses have appeared,¹ this study is based mainly on primary sources, relying for the most part on published writings and speeches, but also resorting occasionally to credible Red Guard documents, personal reminiscences, and anecdotal data.

Personality Differences and Policy Friction

To summarize the differences between Mao and Liu in their starkest form, we may classify Liu as a "compulsive" character, who "relies

1. E.g., see Stuart Schram, "Mao Tse-tung and Liu Shao-ch'i, 1939-1969," *Asian Survey* (hereinafter *AS*), XII, 4 (April 1972), pp. 275-294; Peter Cheng, "Liu Shao-ch'i and the Cultural Revolution," *AS*, XI, 10 (October 1971), pp. 943-958; Stuart Schram, *Mao Tse-tung* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967); and Jerome Ch'en, *Mao and the Chinese Revolution* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965).

upon rigid, obsessive ways of handling human relationships," and Mao as a "dramatizing" character, whose "unifying feature is the demand for immediate affective response in others." According to Harold Lasswell:

The compulsive inclines toward carefully defined limits and a well-worked-out ordering of parts; the dramatizer excels in scope and abundance of loosely classified detail. The hallmark of the former is the imposition of uniformity, while the latter tolerates diversity and excels in nuance. The compulsive desubjectivizes a situation, while the dramatizer remains sensitized to psychological dimensions; the one denies novelty, while the other welcomes it; one squeezes and compresses the dimensions of the human situation which the other complies with and allows to spread. The compulsive monotonizes the presentation of the self to the other, while the latter multiplies the faces and facades which can be presented to other persons.²

As we hope to indicate in greater detail in the following pages, Liu Shao-ch'i closely approximates the compulsive character: he is restrained, self-controlled, cautious, conscientious, resilient, thorough, rational, and orderly. His commitment to norm-regulated action is apparent in his consistent dedication to principled struggle, to the drafting of constitutions, and to the formulations of directives qualified for every conceivable contingency;³ it is also sometimes manifest in a tendency to accord priority to the letter rather than the spirit of the law, to red tape rather than creative achievement (i.e., "obedience must be unconditional and absolute"). Liu is said to be "shrewd, practical, clear-thinking, unemotional and exceptionally able in the quick analysis of complicated questions in simple language clear to all."⁴ One of his overriding concerns, particularly in unstable situations, is with balance. He never opposes a policy directly, but formulates a solution incorporating part of the rejected proposal at one end of a continuum—not x , but both x and y , or a middle point between them. Both his writings and his speeches are dry, lucid, ideologically and logically compelling, but sometimes they are repeti-

2. Harold D. Lasswell, *Power and Personality* (New York: Norton, 1948), p. 62.

3. E.g., during Liu's stewardship, the following Central Committee directives were adopted: "Sixty Articles on Agriculture" (March 1961), "Sixty Articles on Universities" (March 1961), "Seventy Articles on Industries" (June 1961), "Fifty Articles on High Schools," and "Forty Articles on Primary Schools" (late 1962).

4. Edgar Snow, *Red China Today: The Other Side of the River* (New York: Random House, 1962), p. 336.

tious in style, often containing long, technical lists.⁵ They are usually addressed to Party members, and are primarily concerned with two issue areas: the "unity, predictability, and effectiveness of organization," and the cultivation of a universalistic official morality among elites.⁶ His attention span has extensive historical *longitude*—his memory is quite accurate and he perceives events with a sense of perspective—but restricted spatial *latitude*—his attention is narrowly focused and insulated from irrelevancies, creating systematic blind spots in his vision. He tends to repress incalculable emotions and to evince only equable and stern intensity. The common feature of these traits is that control is valued more highly than expressiveness.

Mao Tse-tung in most respects approximates the "dramatizing" character. His attention span has wide spatial latitude—he has a somewhat emotion-tinged but perceptive, synthesizing grasp of the situational *Gestalt*, including nuances of mood apparently inaccessible to Liu—but limited historical longitude—though his mind ranges along the entire course of human history, his memory is selective, and he will not hesitate to take a forthright stand in favor of something he only recently opposed (hence Teng T'o's satire, "A Special Treatment for Amnesia"). His interests are "omnivorous," his writings logically imperfect but more ideologically imaginative and much more wide-ranging than those of Liu, both in their audience and in their subject matter. They include classical poetry, military-political strategy, Marxist epistemology and dialectics, and simple hortatory parables addressed to the masses at large. His style is alive with metaphors of both scatological and classical derivation, reflecting his peasant background and his literary aspirations. His emotional life is mercurial, ranging from enthusiasm to fury, from euphoric confidence to deep depression; moreover, his moods seem to affect the thrust of his policy initiatives, resulting in a "general line" of sometimes startling zig-zags. He tends to attribute exaggerated efficacy to the repetition of set formulae and gestures, to colorful pageantry and mass spectacles.⁷

5. E.g., "It is also necessary to learn some common knowledge, for example, soil science, plant cultivation, insectology, animal husbandry, and rice seed" (speech in Kwangsi, 1964); "Just as peasants exercise control over the supply of grain to us, so we must also exercise decisive control over the things the peasants need—such as cloth, salt, coal, oil, matches, farm insecticides, chemical fertilizers, farm tools, electric appliances, etc." (Directive given to Conference on Prevention of Commodity Black Marketing, October 22, 1961).

6. Ying-mao Kau, "The Organizational Line in Dispute," *Chinese Law and Government* (hereinafter *CL&G*), V, 1 (Spring 1972), p. 8.

7. For a more extended analysis of these points, see my *Liu Shao-ch'i and the Chinese Cultural Revolution: The Politics of Mass Criticism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, forthcoming), Chap. 5.

Mao's emotional liability may be due to certain sharp, unresolved contradictions in his nature, which he seeks to resolve in the political arena.

Inasmuch as people naturally tend to be more sensitive to the distortions of a personality typology than to the similar distortions of, say, a typology of electoral systems or political parties, it may be advisable at this point to enter a few methodological caveats. First, a typology is a deliberate simplification of reality which is useful for analytical purposes, but it cannot do full justice to the complexity and ambiguity of human motivation. Liu Shao-ch'i, for example, despite his characteristic caution, at times made radical and consequential decisions, as when he joined the Party in 1922 and dedicated his life to the implausible prospect of its success, or when he linked his fate to Mao's in the 1930s and refused publicly to disavow his support thereafter, even when Mao led a campaign against him. Second, to assert that Mao and Liu had distinctive personalities that sometimes affected their choice of policies is not to assert that those policies are therefore any less valid by objective criteria (i.e., politics may not be reduced to psychology). Finally, one cannot infer from their personality differences that they were destined to come into open conflict sooner or later or even (*pace* Chang Kuo-t'ao) that they disliked each other; in fact, for a long time they were close personal friends as well as colleagues.⁸ What one *can* infer is that in certain issue areas they were characteristically predisposed, *ceteris paribus*, to respond differently to similar problems. We shall now try to demonstrate the validity of this inference in a number of key issue areas, in each case beginning with an identification of a specific character trait and then showing how this trait was translated into divergent policies.

Emotional Expression and Control

Although the image that Mao presents to the public is one of calm, almost passive benevolence, those who have met both men usually report that Mao is much more emotionally expressive than Liu. His feelings range over a wider gamut. In outbursts of "intense and with-

8. Chang Kuo-t'ao wrote: "Basically, the characters of Mao and Liu were antithetic, and Liu was never much of an admirer of Mao. He once told me that, in his opinion, Mao was somewhat illogical in his approach to problems, stubborn, indiscriminate in his choice of means, and lacking in self-cultivation." This judgment was made in hindsight, however, and Chang left China before the Mao-Liu collaboration really began—Liu's first mention of Mao in his writings was in 1941. A Chinese Communist source reported that it was only Liu in the Party who was able to speak with Mao unreservedly; this cooperation

ering fury," his "command of irony is said to be classic and lethal"; in moods of dismay or compassion, he has been known to weep publicly.⁹ Mao's moodiness has left different rapporteurs with varied impressions of the man: to Snow, he was an informal man who removed fleas from under his trousers while chatting with him and even removed his trousers altogether one hot day while talking with Lin Piao and studying a map; Agnes Smedley, on the other hand, considered him "inscrutable," "sinister," his humor "grim and sardonic": "As Chu Teh was loved, Mao Tse-tung was respected."¹⁰ About the projects of greatest moment to him, such as the future of socialism in China, he deems it necessary to convey an air of public confidence, but in private conversations his judgment has ranged within a few months from sublime optimism to resigned pessimism.¹¹

Liu Shao-ch'i seems to have a narrower range of emotional response; people who have met him typically report that he is impersonal, courteous, and rather cold. Chang Kuo-t'ao, who first met him at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East in Moscow, recalls his first impression:

In 1922, the Communists were passionate and full of verve; but he seldom displayed any excitement. He was somewhat bookish, thoughtful, rather taciturn, but clearly persevering. His friends soon recognized these characteristics as genuine, cultivated from childhood. Some people, however, found him a bit too glum and devoid of youthfulness. . . . Confucius said: "The ardent will advance and get what they want; the stoical will refrain from doing what they do not want." Liu Shao-ch'i belongs to the latter category. . . . All his successes and failures are closely connected with his stoical character.¹²

Even in the wake of the crisis that was to spell his undoing (early August 1966, following the withdrawal of work teams), Liu's daughter reported (in her public renunciation of Liu) that although he became

continued until 1959, when Liu became Chief of State. Chang Kuo-t'ao, "Introduction," in *Collected Works of Liu Shao-ch'i* (hereinafter *CW*) (Hong Kong: Union Research Institute, 1969), p. ix; *Yomiuri*, December 16, in *Daily Summary of the Japanese Press* (hereinafter *DSJP*) (Tokyo: U.E. Embassy), December 22, 1966, pp. 1-4.

9. Edgar Snow, *Red Star over China*, 5th ed. (New York: Grove Press, 1961), pp. 76-78.

10. Agnes Smedley, *Battle Hymn of China* (New York: Knopf, 1943), pp. 168-170.

11. Cf. Snow's interview in *The Sunday Times*, London, February 14, 1965, p. 11; *CL&G*, I, 4 (Winter 1968-1969), pp. 17-21.

12. Chang Kuo-t'ao, "Introduction," *CW*, p. i.

“even more laconic” and extremely “vexed,” he never lost his iron self-control.¹³

How were these differences in emotional tone transposed to the political arena? An examination of each man's emotional semantics suggests that Mao tends to identify with the disprivileged sectors of society and to attribute to them the emotional vitalism and political generative powers that propel the polity toward socialism. Thus he traces many political vices (“revisionism,” “bureaucratism”) to the tendency of ruling elites to “divorce” themselves from the masses. At times, Mao's concern with maintaining immediate elite-mass contact seems to border on the obsessive, as when he said that medical doctors should not wear gauze masks because these screened them off from the people.¹⁴ Mao's ideal of an unmediated relationship between elites and masses may have achieved its highest degree of personal realization during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR), when the Chairman's “latest directives” were transmitted throughout the country almost instantaneously. To be sure, this was in many respects an exceptional episode, and in fact Mao usually spends no more time mingling with the masses than anyone else of Politburo rank—he may actually be the most conspicuous victim of the bureaucratic “divorce,” since he often secludes himself for such long periods that rumors of his death arise. Since the GPCR's conclusion, Mao has continued to insist that Chinese elites maintain intimate relationships with the masses while he himself “lives in seclusion, rarely appears in public, conceals his movements with mystery, and is guarded by tight security.”¹⁵ He has permitted only one foreign newsman (Snow) to interview him since 1968, and none to quote him directly. Despite this exception to the rule of immediacy, perhaps justified on grounds of expedience, it should be granted that by throwing his personal support behind such indigenous organizing techniques as the “mass line,” the “campaign” [*yiün-tung*], and (since the GPCR) the “open-door rectification” [*k'ai-men cheng-feng*] Mao has probably done more to enfranchise China's peasant majority than any other Chinese leader.

Liu Shao-ch'i's more emotionally withdrawn personality manifests itself in a tendency to *mediate* and *formalize* relationships with people.

13. Liu T'ao, “Rebel Against Liu Shao-ch'i, Follow Chairman Mao To Make Revolution for Life—My Preliminary Self-examination,” *Chingkuang-shan* (Tsinghua University, Peking), December 31, 1966.

14. “Instruction on Health Work” (June 26, 1965), in *Current Background* (hereinafter *CB*), No. 892 (October 21, 1969), p. 20.

15. “Struggle To Smash the Lin-Ch'en Anti-Party Clique's Counterrevolutionary Coup (Materials, Part II),” in *CL&G*, V, 3-4 (Fall-Winter 1972-73), p. 50.

For example, when his son wrote to him from his dormitory at the University of Moscow complaining of the "drunk and rowdyish" behavior of a Soviet roommate, Liu offered this paternal advice:

In handling the disputes between Chinese students and Soviet students, you must follow an even more well-organized method: you must first refer [the matter] to the Chinese Youth League organization to which you belong, then the CYL organization or Party organization will refer [it] to the League organization or Party organization under its subordination, and then the Soviet League organization or Party organization will criticize him, educate him.¹⁶

Liu's aptitude for such ceremonious formality facilitated his working relationship with other elites, but it affected his approach to the masses in a way that was to prove critical. Particularly after the failure of the Great Leap, he grew increasingly dubious of the wisdom of arousing the "subjective initiative and creativity of the masses" in the absence of "the concentrated leadership of the CCP," and increasingly chary of the sort of spontaneous affective response that Mao considers indispensable. These doubts became evident both in Liu's routine implementation of policy and in his organization of mass movements.

In his routine implementation of policy, Liu's tendency was to interpose intricate policymaking and implementing institutions between elites at the top and the masses, making it possible for the masses to participate only differentiatedly, more on some issues and less on others, and indirectly, through a hierarchy of specialized institutions.¹⁷ He tended to ignore the use of direct ideological appeals or political commands in favor of the calculated manipulation of contractual or market mechanisms whose workings were fully understood only by the bureaucratic officialdom, resulting in a subtle transformation in the popular impact of a policy whose basic objectives both Mao and Liu perhaps agreed upon. For example, the 1960s confronted the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) with what both men agreed was a problem: the migration of farm laborers seeking higher-paying factory jobs to the cities faster than the industrial sector could absorb them, faster than adequate housing could be built. In the countryside, agriculture suffered because departing manpower, however underemployed

16. "Three Letters to His Son" (May 6, 1955), *CW*, Vol. II, p. 318.

17. Byung-joon Ahn, "Adjustments in the Great Leap Forward and Their Ideological Legacy," in Chalmers Johnson (ed.), *Ideology and Politics in Contemporary China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973), p. 299.

it had been, was not replaced rapidly enough by mechanization and improved land use. The departure of youth to the cities left a residual peasantry and created disparities of age, income, and education between city and countryside. Liu resorted to manipulation of the labor market to resolve this contradiction, introducing a wage differential between unskilled contract workers and skilled union workers in order to reduce the incentives for unskilled farm hands to migrate (except during seasonal slack periods, when no opportunity costs were incurred). Mao resorted to the more direct, political solution of transferring redundant urban labor, deviant cadres, idealistic or troublesome youth, and the like to the countryside en masse for permanent relocation.

As a second example, the Leap's debacle and subsequent economic retrenchment resulted in "demand-pull" inflation caused by the shortage in commodities. Rather than appeal to the idealism of the people to get them to invest rather than consume, Liu proposed in 1963 that commodity prices should be raised by 50 percent, and that the volume of currency in circulation should simultaneously be increased. A rise in the selling prices of commodities would have drained off from the factories and urban consumers a greater volume of cash, part of which the state could then have used to raise output in the villages through higher purchase prices for commodities. Rural living standards would have risen at the expense of the town dwellers' real income.¹⁸

The differences between implementation tactics seldom occasioned open conflict between Mao and Liu, partly because they were subtle, partly because whenever Mao voiced a specific objection Liu would undertake to accommodate him. In the implementation of the mass movement, however, Liu's reservations about the expression of spontaneous, popular emotions eventually led him into direct confrontation with Mao's notion of a mass upsurge. Mao's openness to the excesses of popular enthusiasm is well known from his early essay, "Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan," in which he echoed Bakunin's enthusiasm for the spontaneous revolutionary potential of the peasantry and chided those who felt qualms lest the masses should carry class vengeance "too far," reminding them that revolution is not a teaparty.¹⁹ Liu Shao-ch'i has in contrast always subordinated the expressive dimension of the movement to its

18. *Kuang-ming jih-pao* [Enlightenment Daily] (hereinafter *KMJP*), March 14, 1970, quoted in Leo Goodstadt, *Mao Tse-tung: The Search for Plenty* (London: Longmans, 1972), p. 156.

19. Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works* (hereinafter *SW*) (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1965), Vol. I, pp. 25-30.

instrumental dimension, conceiving the movement to be a means of implementing stipulated tasks in an orderly manner. "The masses are like wild horses and will cause trouble when mobilized," he allegedly warned during the Socialist Education Movement, placing first priority on rectification of the CCP and the training of "professional revolutionaries," then dispatching Party work teams to the grass roots to assist local cadres in "tempering the movement." "Replacing the four clean-ups with the study of Chairman Mao's writings" was deemed an extraneous diversion from the assigned agenda; only the "twenty-three articles" should be studied.²⁰

During the "50 days" when he took charge of the GPCR, Liu's tendency to repress disruptive emotion apparently led him disastrously to misconstrue Mao's purpose in launching the movement. That Mao's purpose was in this case largely expressive, the Chairman himself revealed in subsequent conversations with his colleagues. Noting that he had already written several polemical articles for anonymous publication in *People's Daily* and *Liberation Daily*, he complained that they failed to attract attention. Only the wall poster and the Red Guards "immediately aroused everyone's attention," he declared with evident satisfaction, adding that now "you could not ignore it."²¹ Liu Shao-ch'i could not comprehend, however, how a movement might be "run" that had the deliberate purpose of encouraging a rebellious spirit; after he had sent work teams to shore up embattled local authorities and subdue "unruly," "illegal" activities and restore order, the Chairman returned to Peking and promptly sided with the troublemakers. On the day of his arrival, Mao reportedly telephoned the following message to rebels at Tsinghua University:

It seems to me that I must personally think about the end of the revolution. Am I on the side of the Rightists?—No! Will China at the end of the movement be no longer proletariat, but bourgeois? Absolutely not! What am I afraid of? Haven't we seen what they want after the first phase? Intrigues, threats, "black materials". . . . We have already received blows and wounds on the head. We have heard the curses of a big general [Liu Shao-ch'i]. . . . Those who in the first period were labelled counterrevolutionaries and bad elements have no fear of death.

20. Speech in February 1966, quoted in "Down with Liu Shao-ch'i—Life of Counterrevolutionary Liu Shao-ch'i," Chingkangshan Fighting Corps of the Fourth Hospital, Peking, May 1967, in *CB*, No. 834 (August 17, 1967), p. 26.

21. "Speech at Work Conference" (October 25, 1966), in *CL&G*, I, 1 (Spring 1968), p. 7.

If the people have no fear of death, where is the threat of death?
 What will be seen in the final period?

The heavens cleansed of dust

The plains full of sunlight and flowers

And when the mountain flowers bloom, the plum blossoms
 laugh with them.

And if you don't believe me, then watch out and wait awhile! ²²

With the self-discipline that had in the past made him so valuable to Mao, Liu immediately reversed himself and helped implement the withdrawal of the work teams. Three months later he repudiated his actions in a written self-criticism, but he was not immediately clear as to the nature of his mistake. "You ask me how to carry out the revolution," he replied to cadres on July 29. "Honestly I'll answer you: I don't know it either. I just don't know. Nor does any of the working personnel of the Party Center." ²³

The Cultivation of Ambition

It is safe to assume that both Mao and Liu were ambitious men, but it is equally clear that Mao's ambitions were much vaster than Liu's. "In him was none of the humility of Chu [Teh]," recalls Agnes Smedley. "Despite that feminine quality in him, he was stubborn as a mule, and a steel rod of pride and determination ran through his nature. I had the impression that he would wait and watch for years, but eventually have his way." ²⁴ Utterly lacking in personal vanity, Mao aspires to glory on a more cosmic scale, his poetry resounding with such adjectives as "lofty," "towering," "soaring," "inaccessible," "myriad," and the like. "To find men truly great and noble-hearted/We must look to the present," he wrote in 1945, with imputed reference to himself and Chiang Kai-shek. ²⁵ As these lines suggest, Mao aspires to feats "without equal in any previous historical period," thus achieving emancipation from the oppressive weight of the past. For Mao, the *summum bonum* of ambition is power, which must be attained through popularly legitimated violence, and his professed

22. Giovanni Blumer, *Die chinesische Kulturrevolution, 1965-67* (Frankfurt/M.: Europaeische Verlagsanstalt, 1968), p. 146.

23. Speech at People's Great Hall, July 29, 1966, in "Selected Edition on Liu Shao-ch'i's Counterrevolutionary Revisionist Crimes," August 18, Red Rebel Regiment of Nank'ai University, April 1967, in *Survey of Chinese Mainland Magazines* (hereinafter *SCMM*), No. 651 (April 22, 1969), p. 20.

24. Smedley, *Battle Hymn*, p. 169.

25. "Snow," in Stuart Schram, *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung* (New York: Praeger, 1963), p. 108 including footnote.

motive for seizing it consists, in part, of spite for the previous powerholder.

Liu's ambitions are more modest than Mao's. First, in contrast with the Maoist longing for the wholly new, Liu's ambitions are derivative, for "all major problems of principle in the world have been solved."²⁶ Second, perhaps because his experience as leader of underground forces in the "white" areas during the war sensitized him to the need for communication security, Liu emphasizes careful attention to detail²⁷ (rather than coordinated assaults on vast projects) and shows a sardonic scorn for ostentation. "Do more daily trifling and troublesome work and utter less smart words," he advises, quoting Lenin.²⁸ In his only published poem (which appears by courtesy of the Red Guards) he writes in the second person (nearly all of Mao's poetry is in the first) and winds up mocking his own "misty" feelings: "Your aspirations are foolish, and your sentiments silly."²⁹ Finally, whereas for Mao ambition is realized by violence to seize power, for Liu the object of ambition is status, the appropriate mode of realization labor—his obliviousness to power was amply demonstrated during the GPCR.

As to attitudes toward the ambitions of others, Liu shows considerable tolerance for ambition, but he also hamstringing his tolerance with complicated qualifications. First, he seems to draw a basic distinction between the elite and the masses: from the former he demands purely altruistic motives, whereas to the latter he permits a wide diversity of ambitions:

Among the masses, there are various kinds of people (workers, peasants, merchants, small craftsmen, teachers, students, etc.) and thus also various different demands. For organizing the masses, various methods and forms shall be applied based on the masses' various demands. For instance, we will organize political parties for the masses who have political demands, organize study societies, libraries, singing teams, athletic clubs, etc., for those with cultural demands, organize economic units for those with economic demands, such as labor unions, peasant associations, etc.³⁰

26. "Selected Edition," in *SCMM*, No. 651, p. 25.

27. "The difference between making contributions and causing calamity is determined by small things that have far-flung consequences," "Liu Shao-ch'i's Speech at the Security Personnel Training Class at Yencheng" (April 29, 1941), in Warren Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party* (Taipei: Institute of International Relations, 1971), Vol. IV, p. 480.

28. "Training in Organization and Discipline," *CW*, Vol. I, pp. 402-403.

29. "On the Tientsin Bridge" (1921), *CW*, Vol. I, p. 2.

30. "Work Experiences in the North China War Zone" (1938), in Henry G.

These demands should be rewarded with pecuniary sums according to the principle, "equal pay for equal labor." "Wages must be paid," he retorted when some children volunteered to work three months without recompense. "They must not be too high or too low."³¹ Though later decried as "revisionism," the sincerity and constancy of Liu's concern for the material welfare of the masses cannot be gainsaid; during his frequent visits to the countryside he would frequently inquire whether living standards had been raised, including such specific queries as how many meals per month people ate meat. Even when during the GPCR his oldest daughter began publicly exposing him in big-character posters and criticizing him to his face, he remained mindful of her welfare: "If you feel this family hampers you, you may renounce it," he told her, "and if you are not financially independent, I can give you money." Since financial rewards were to be distributed in some proportion to the worker's contribution to the public weal, the worker was encouraged to optimize his gain: "The Soviet Union is free of exploitation; one who dresses himself beautifully . . . is one who labors well," he reportedly remarked in 1958.³²

Liu justified this accommodation of material ambitions on the basis of an assumption of the ultimate compatibility or "merging" of individual ambitions and the public interest. The distinction between mass and elite mentioned earlier is based on a differential insight into a broader, more inclusive conception of self-interest, a "class" consciousness. The uncultivated masses are assumed to have ambitions that are essentially limited to invidious "economic demands," but their "level of consciousness" can be gradually raised from this stage until they come to realize that the interests "of the community, of the state, and of themselves are one." This "raising the level" does not occur in a rush as in a tempest, but through a series of locks and dams: "When the masses begin to take action on one simple demand, we must lead the masses in fields related to their actions on this simple demand, so that they can understand better a series of problems and further push their actions to a still higher stage." Overseeing this pro-

Schwarz, *Liu Shao-ch'i and "People's War": A Report on the Creation of Base Areas in 1938* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1969), pp. 51-52.

31. "A History of Crimes of Opposing the Party, Socialism, and Mao Tse-tung's Thought," *August 18, Red Guard*, No. 68 (May 13, 1967), in *SCMM*, No. 587 (August 8, 1967), p. 34.

32. "A Full Account of the Heinous Crimes Committed by Liu Shao-ch'i at Hungshunli," in *SCMM*, No. 584 (July 17, 1967), p. 31; Liu T'ao, "Rebel Against Liu."

cess is the Party, where individual and collective interests perfectly coincide. The function of the Party leadership is to enlighten people about the natural coincidence of individual and collective interests, and to reconcile apparent discrepancies to minimize any possibility of conflict. "There is a saying that it doesn't pay to be honest. The question is that we must not allow an honest person to suffer and a naughty person to reap advantage."³³ For Party cadres as well, life was so arranged that if they devoted themselves unreservedly to the public interest (as defined by the Party), the Party would provide for them.³⁴ A hierarchy of authority supposedly based on altruistic efficiency was thus reinforced by a covert underpinning of paternalism, which tended to obscure the distinction between altruism and careerism by appealing to both motives at once.

These ideas about ambition and its cultivation collide with those of Mao in at least two respects. First, by tacitly distinguishing between a moral basis for vertical mobility among Party members and a material basis for mobility among non-Party masses, Liu provided an idealist legitimation for authority, undermining Mao's tenet that the sole acceptable basis of legitimacy is mass support, while also permitting income differentials to arise among the masses based on efficiency or skill rather than political virtue. Second, by reinforcing the hierarchy of political authority with an ideology of altruistic efficiency augmented by organizational sanctions and material/status rewards, Liu created a vast organizational hierarchy exclusively oriented to superior command, hence insufficiently sensitive to either extraorganizational ideological appeals from the Chairman or grievances from the grass roots.

In their critique of the Liuist compromise with ambition, the Maoists sometimes proposed outright "destruction of the ego" [*hsiao-mieh tzu-wo*], but Mao's own attitude toward individual ambition is not this extreme. He periodically encourages ambition (as when he urged Red Guards to "seize power"), but it must meet high qualifications. It must be dramatically inspiring, usually of limited duration (as in martyrdom), and utterly altruistic—that is, it should not merely transcend but should contradict the actor's own interests. There must either be lofty ambition or complete altruism—the Maoists despise Liu's niggling admonition to "lose a little to gain a lot." The rewards of successfully consummated ambition are limited to praise (with

33. "A History of Crimes of Opposing," *August 18 Red Guards*, No. 68 (May 13, 1967), in *SCMM*, No. 588 (August 14, 1967), p. 31.

34. "Report" (August 18, 1964), in "Selected Edition," April 1967, in *SCMM*, No. 653 (May 5, 1969), p. 7.

which the regime is in fact quite munificent) and the vicarious satisfactions of identification with the Chairman, for any more substantial reward might throw doubt on the purity of the actor's motives.

Truth and Virtue, Learning and Teaching

Although such a juxtaposition undoubtedly overstates the case, it would seem that Mao and Liu have quite different conceptions of the locus of truth: for Mao, the human spirit is the wellspring of truth; for Liu, truth abides in the world. To Liu, reality is external, hard, and clearly defined; our appropriate relationship to it is to "adapt ourselves to reality and know reality, to seek existence and development in reality." Like many emotionally repressed persons, Liu thus tends to deny the reality of internal feeling-states, advocating rather that subjective fantasies, wishes, and feelings must undergo "steeling" and "tempering" in the face of an essentially discouraging and obdurate reality. In *How To Be a Good Communist*, he approvingly cites the injunction from the Confucian *Book of Odes* that one should cultivate oneself "as a lapidary cuts and files, carves and polishes." What is being "cut and filed, carved and polished" is the (instinctual) self, by controlled, sustained exposure to hard reality. An exchange between Liu's wife Wang Kuang-mei and her Red Guard interrogator during her April 1967 "trial" further highlights the difference between Maoist and Liuist perceptions of reality:

Wang Kuang-mei: Facts are facts, conclusions should be drawn according to facts. This is the Thought of Mao Tse-tung.

Interrogator: No, the standpoint is most important. Taking the reactionary stand, you see only the seamy side of the revolution.³⁵

Implicit in the interrogator's reply is the Maoist assumption that reality is not hard, but protean; one can change it by changing the way one thinks about it ("taking a correct standpoint"). Because the subject is the decisive factor in determining the character of reality, "as long as there are people, every kind of miracle can be performed . . . all pessimistic views are utterly groundless."

If for Mao truth dwells within man, he is not thereby an idealist. His conception of truth is in fact quite visceral, as he makes explicit in one of his first essays, "A Study of Physical Education" (April

35. "The Trials of Wang Kuang-mei," compiled by the "South Sea Great Wall" Fighting Detachment of the Ching kangshan Corps of Tsinghua University, in *CB*, No. 848 (February 27, 1968).

1917). Reason and virtue, he contends, proceed "from the heart." Inasmuch as truth is based on authentic feelings, and feeling is somatic rather than mental, Mao urges his countrymen to "strengthen the muscles and the bones; as a result, knowledge is enhanced, the sentiments are harmonized, and the will is strengthened."³⁶ In a gloss to Paulsen's *System of Ethics*, Mao wrote: "No crime is greater than the repression of man's nature, either by oneself or by someone else."³⁷ Given the accuracy and potency of internal feeling-states, Mao expresses suspicion of a facile adaptation to reality:

He who pays no attention to ideology and politics and becomes immersed in daily work can turn into an economist and technician who has lost his bearings, which is very dangerous. Ideology and politics are the leader and the soul.³⁸

The practical implications of these differing assumptions about the locus of truth are discernible in four policy areas: (1) budgetary policy, (2) journalism and the arts, (3) education, and (4) political rectification.

Given their different assumptions about the nature of reality, Mao tends at times to be unrealistic (i.e., to ignore adverse aspects of objective reality),³⁹ whereas Liu shows a corresponding inclination toward what Sartre calls "seriousness" (i.e., he tends to deny the reality of the subject). Because of Liu's low estimation of the potential of internal energies, he shows undue solicitude about their possible depletion. Mao said in 1958: "Strike while the iron is hot; better to get it done in one stroke than drag on. . . . Zeal should be bolstered, not dampened."⁴⁰ Liu advised students a few months earlier: "As zeal is essential, so is sobriety. When zeal rises high, it is necessary to see it does not go beyond limit. Life is a long way to go, and there is no need for haste. . . . You must do what your capacity permits and do it

36. "A Study of Physical Education," in Schram, *The Political Thought*, pp. 98-100.

37. Li Jui, *Mao Tse-tung t'ung-chih ti ch'u-ch'i ko-ming huo-tung* [Comrade Mao's Early Revolutionary Activities] (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1957), pp. 42-43.

38. "Who is the Chief Culprit?" Ching kangshan Corps of Tsinghua, in *KMJP* (Peking), April 4, 1967.

39. Mao is sometimes unrealistic in his approach to socio-economic development, but regarding conflict, whether military or political, he has always been highly realistic.

40. "Chairman Mao's Criticism of the P'eng-Huang-Chang-Chou Anti-Party Clique," in *CL&G*, I, 4 (Winter 1968-1969), p. 14.

carefully and cautiously.”⁴¹ This concern for pace and measure first came into conflict with Mao’s more impetuous nature following Liu’s approval of the disbandment of 200,000 cooperatives in 1955; but it was most clearly manifested following the Great Leap Forward, when Liu showed a constant preoccupation with the costs of things (which had been blithely ignored under the Maoist assumption that human potential is boundless): “No matter what we do, we should consult the abacus.”⁴² According to Liu’s later self-criticism, his undue concern with expenditures led him to excessive pessimism upon the discovery of a large deficit in February 1962, whereupon he rescinded so many Great Leap projects that “a reverse current, a spirit of going it alone [*tan kan feng*] arose.”⁴³ Mao, on the other hand, with his more expansive view of human nature, tends to overlook costs and other such “small” points—he prefers to “talk only of large matters—the nature of man, of human society, the world, and the universe.” In evaluating projects like the commune, he said at Lushan in 1959, “it seems to be impossible to judge the results if economic accounting is applied.”⁴⁴

Liu’s evaluation of the cultural superstructure was that it was “harmless”; since cultural artifacts were reflections of socio-economic realities, the cultural relicts from earlier socio-economic systems could be left to spontaneous extinction. “There is nothing to fear from propagandizing feudal art . . . haven’t we triumphed after all?” he commented in 1949. Although he gave relatively little attention to the fine arts, he apparently opposed political censorship and sanctioned the importation of advanced Western art and the revival of revolutionary Chinese literature of the 1930s. He sponsored a humanistic “professional training for writers” while permitting them to evade labor among workers and peasants. Science and journalism he placed in another category as reality-testing disciplines, as developments of “cultivation” to a higher plane. In a series of speeches to journalists given in 1948, 1956, and 1961, Liu criticized “one-sided” reportage and encouraged “objective news coverage” with features designed to appeal to the “common interest.” “We are unwilling to admit or tend

41. “Address to 1957-Class Graduates,” *CW*, Vol. II, p. 426.

42. “Talk to Students Prepared for Taking Up Higher Studies in the Soviet Union” (Summer 1957), in “Selected Edition,” *SCMM*, No. 653 (May 5, 1969), p. 3.

43. “Tzu-wo chien-ch’a” [Self-examination] (October 23, 1966), in *Liu Shao-ch’i wen-i tzu-liao chuan-chi* [Collection of Materials on Liu Shao-ch’i] (Taipei: Chung-kung yen-chiu tsa-chih she, 1970), pp. 621–625.

44. “Mao Tse-tung’s Speech at the 8th Plenary Session of the CCP 8th CC” (July 23, 1959), in *CL&G*, I, 4 (Winter 1968–1969), p. 38.

to discount our difficulties for fear that giving a true picture of our difficulties would make our cadres lose confidence," he complained with reference to the universal silence of the media about the failure of the Leap. Even TASS, he decided, was "too rigid and sterile" to serve as a model for the New China News Agency, which he proposed be made a "non-governmental" news agency modeled after the "dynamic" Western wire services.⁴⁵ Though Liu's subordinates did not venture to implement this last suggestion, their liberalization of cultural and news policies was later alleged to be responsible not only for the poisonous weeds that bloomed during the Hundred Flowers campaign, but for the subtle intellectual criticisms of Mao's personality cult that followed the Great Leap. In a nation in which 80 percent of the intellectuals had been Western-educated, to permit a free press based solely on merit, or to allow the scientific disciplines to develop autonomously, was to give way to a form of "bourgeois dictatorship," according to the Maoists.

Whereas for Liu, the isolation of the emotions from the processes of perception and judgment made it possible for various intellectual disciplines to develop in a value-free (i.e., apolitical) context, to Mao the processes of perception, feeling, and motivation are integrally linked; consequently, the role of culture and the mass media is to create an artificial environment corresponding to the emotional state of enthusiasm appropriate to heroic achievements. "If the newspaper you are publishing will print only bad news, and if you have no heart to work, then it won't take a year, but it will perish within a week's time," he claimed in 1959.⁴⁶ Mao's reason for launching the GPCR was, of course, to revolutionize the bourgeois cultural superstructure and force it to conform with the socialist base, under his assumption that "under given conditions, such aspects as the productive relationships, theory and superstructure" can play a "decisive" role.⁴⁷

In educational policy, it should already be clear from the foregoing that Liu's theory of learning stresses emotional repression and ego adaptation. Accordingly, he has tended to subordinate morale-building ideological campaigns and manual labor to intensive intellectual diligence, advising students to "ignore the state and their parents" and "hammer away at study and labor," openly adverting to the correlation between educational attainment and occupational mobility as a

45. Wu Leng-hsi, "Confession," *Hung-se hsin-hua* (Red New China), No. 43 (May 1968), in *CL&G*, II, 4 (Winter 1969-1970), pp. 63-87.

46. Cf. *CL&G*, I, 4, p. 35.

47. Quoted in Ho Tso, "Exposing the Towering Crimes of China's Khrushchev in Undermining the Agricultural Cooperative Movement," *KMJP*, July 22, 1967, in *CB*, No. 836 (September 25, 1967), p. 42.

positive incentive. According to Maoist criticisms, he consistently defended "quality" education ("it doesn't matter how many years they study, but quality must in no case be lowered"), accommodating Mao's pressure to extend the educational base with a compromise double-track system that foresaw the expansion of an economical work-study program while reforming the full-time system but maintaining it indefinitely.⁴⁸

Mao's well-known antipathy for China's intellectual community is justified in his own eyes by his finding that direct experience is a better teacher than emulative book learning, a conclusion that is no doubt reinforced by the criticisms he has repeatedly suffered from that quarter. As a youth, Mao was "interested mainly in speculative subjects, such as world and national politics," through which he was able to emancipate himself from the toils of the traditional belief system; now, as a contributing author and principal beneficiary of an even more all-encompassing belief system, he has come to feel that "those who are most divorced from reality are the ones in the departments of arts, be they students of history, philosophy, or economics."⁴⁹ Mao's intolerance for speculation coexists in restless contradiction with his continuing attachment to intellectual innovation: "Young people should dare to think, speak, act and enkindle an indomitable creative spirit, and should not be cowed by celebrities and authorities."⁵⁰ During the GPCR, Mao made these sentiments the basis for a sweeping critique of China's education system:

The students should be allowed to doze off when lessons are taught by teachers. Since you are unable to teach well, rather than to require others to listen to your tasteless lectures, it is better for them to doze off and take a rest. . . . The period of schooling is too long and there are too many courses of study. . . . The students should be allowed to whisper to each other in an examination since they are only trying to find out from others what they

48. Shih Yen-hung, "Down with the Chief Backer of the Revisionist Education Line," *Peking Daily*, July 18, 1967, in *CB*, No. 836 (September 25, 1967), pp. 15-17; "Chairman Mao on Revolution in Education," in *CB*, No. 888 (August 22, 1969), *passim*.

49. "Talk with the Nepalese Delegation on Educational Problems" (1964), in *CB*, No. 891 (October 8, 1969), p. 46; Ch'en, *Mao and the Chinese Revolution*, p. 53.

50. "Mao Tse-tung's Instructions Concerning the GPCR" (pamphlet, n.p., n.d.), in *CB*, No. 885 (July 31, 1969), p. 16. In a 1964 conversation with his niece, Mao encouraged her to read *Dream of the Red Chamber*, T'ang poetry, and the Bible. "Dialogue Between Mao Tse-tung and Wang Hai-yung," *Issues and Studies*, IX, 8 (May 1973), pp. 93-98.

do not understand. . . . It is also fine for me to copy what others have done. We can try this.⁵¹

In the wake of the GPCR, a new educational approach has been launched that is more in accord with Mao's wishes. It features an impressive expansion of the educational base and a corresponding derogation of higher education, including the apparent elimination of the liberal arts curriculum.⁵²

A similar contrast is apparent in another realm of learning—political rectification. As the Party's outstanding organizational theorist, Liu Shao-ch'i had a formative impact on the rationalization and moderation of "inner-Party struggle." Liu drew a distinction between "principled" struggle (which involved generalizable issues) and "unprincipled" struggle (which concerned idiosyncratic practical problems), and decreed that the latter should be compromised and that only the former should be resolved through conflict. This conflict should be impersonal (first "against things," afterward "against men") and rational ("All must be reasonable! If not, nothing can be accomplished!"). It should preferably avoid "organizational solutions" (i.e., purges) and should permit the representative of a defeated position to "retain his opinion" for later reconsideration even while faithfully executing the majority decision.⁵³ The practical impact of Liu's formulation was to confine authoritative decisions to a circumscribed set of elites but to permit the expression of a wide range of opinions in an atmosphere of free debate and to provide for resolution with minimal sanctions against losers, creating the basis for long-term incumbency of the same leaders in an interrelationship of constantly shifting coalitions masked by apparent solidarity.

Mao's attitudes toward rectification were given their definitive form in his theory of contradiction. Whereas Liu distinguished between conflicts that should be compromised and conflicts that should be fought according to a set of formal rules, Mao distinguished between conflicts that could be resolved by educating the loser ("non-antagonistic contradictions") and conflicts that must proceed to his suppres-

51. "Chairman Mao on Revolution in Education," in *CB*, No. 888, p. 11.

52. Cf. Ellen K. Ong, "Education in China Since the Cultural Revolution," *Studies in Comparative Communism*, Vol. 3, Nos. 3 & 4 (July/October 1970), pp. 158-177; also W. A. C. Adie, "Youth, Education and Politics in China," in G. F. Hudson (ed.), *Reform and Revolution in Asia* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1972), pp. 57-96.

53. "On Inner-Party Struggle" (July 1941), in Boyd Compton (ed.), *Mao's China: Party Reform Documents, 1942-44* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1952), pp. 188-239.

sion ("antagonistic contradictions"). He offered no formal or objective way of distinguishing between the two, preferring to decide this himself on the basis of the opponent's comportment and the substantive issues involved.⁵⁴ Using an explicitly therapeutic vocabulary, Mao indicated that non-antagonistic contradictions could be resolved through a "long-term, patient and painstaking" process of "curing the sickness to save the patient." At times, however, his proclivity for involving the emotions in the learning process led him to advocate a more abrupt approach: "The first thing to do in the reasoning process is to give the patient a good shake-up by shouting at him, 'You are ill!' so as to administer a shock and make him break out in a sweat, and then to give him sincere advice on getting treatment."⁵⁵

In their actual handling of contradictions, the two men diverge even more sharply in practice than they do in theory. The available information on Liu's conduct in inner-Party struggle suggests that he tends to avoid conflict whenever possible (as he did in the opening stages of the GPCR) and to resolve unavoidable conflict by treating high-ranking deviants with lenience (usually reinstating them to lesser positions of leadership) while submitting their followers to intensive re-education sessions.⁵⁶ Before 1949, Mao was also known among foreign correspondents and others for his inclination to compromise with rather than to destroy possible rivals;⁵⁷ but following his destruction of foreign and domestic enemies he has continued to find new antagonistic contradictions, in increasing proximity to himself. To resolve them, he resorts with increasing explicitness to tactics drawn from his extensive military experience, such as "luring them in deep." When P'eng Te-huai submitted some tactful but implicitly damaging criticism of the Great Leap in 1959, Mao advised his confederates:

When I was young and in the prime of my life, I would also be irritated whenever I heard some bad remarks. My attitude was that if others do not provoke me, I won't provoke them; if they provoke me, I will also provoke them; whoever provokes me first, I will provoke him later. I have not abandoned this principle even now, though *I have learned to listen*. Let us stiffen our scalps

54. "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People" (February 27, 1957), in *Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tsetung* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1971), pp. 432-480.

55. *SW*, Vol. III, p. 50; *SW*, Vol. III, p. 56.

56. In fact, one of Liu's major sources of friction with Mao after 1959 was his excessive lenience toward P'eng Te-huai and his supporters.

57. Benjamin I. Schwartz, *Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 178.

to stand it and listen to them for a couple of weeks, and then counterattack.⁵⁸

And when the counterattack came, it was withering:

P'eng Te-huai's letter of opinion constitutes an anti-Party outline of rightist opportunism. . . . It is by no means an accidental or individual error, but is planned, organized, prepared, and purposeful. Taking advantage of a difficult time in the Party, which was under a double attack, both internally and externally, he . . . attempted to seize control of the Party, and they wanted to form their own opportunist party.⁵⁹

By introducing outside constituencies to the inner-Party dispute, by using the authority of his office to apply class labels, and by bracketing dissident colleagues with foreign opponents, Mao seems to have so thoroughly compromised the format of inner-Party struggle that the distinctions between antagonistic and non-antagonistic, between people and enemies, have degenerated into vague tactical signals of Mao's battle plans. The disintegration of the original parameters of conflict has in turn made intra-elite suspicion so endemic that by 1971 the PRC was apparently for the first time faced with the prospect of a military coup d'état. Lin Piao cited as his principal justification for resorting to such means the unfair tactics and treachery of the Chairman:

Today they use this group to attack that group; tomorrow they use that group to attack this group. . . . They manufacture contradictions and splits in order to attain their goal of divide and rule, destroying each group in turn and maintaining their ruling position. . . . Looking back at the history of the past few decades, [do you see] anyone whom he had supported initially who has not finally been handed a political death sentence? . . . His philosophy of liquidating people is either don't do it, or do it thoroughly . . . once he hurts you he will hurt you all the way, and he puts the blame for all bad things on others.⁶⁰

58. *CL&G*, 1, 4, p. 33, emphasis added. As Mao once put it, extending Clausewitz: "Politics is war without bloodshed, while war is politics with bloodshed." "Problems of War and Strategy," in *Selected Military Writings* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1963), p. 227.

59. "Criticism of P'eng Te-huai's 'Letter of Opinion' of July 14, 1959," in *CL&G*, I, 4, p. 25.

60. Cf. note 15, p. 54.

One pertinent implication of these differences in rectification styles was that, as soon as Mao announced his decision to retire, the ruling elites promptly abandoned him (with the exception of a few cronies) and coalesced around Liu Shao-ch'i. In 1936, Snow was struck by Mao's easy camaraderie with his colleagues, but by the early 1960s that relationship had degenerated to one of respect and avoidance, leading Mao to complain in 1966 that they treated him "as one's parents who are about to be buried," that "Teng Hsiao-p'ing has never come to consult me," and the like.⁶¹ These men now found it easier to relate to Liu Shao-ch'i, despite his lack of warmth. "When Chou [En-lai] had dinner with CC leaders at Restaurant Chuan chu-te in Peking, they called Mao by the name of 'Chairman' and Chou by the name of 'Prime Minister' but called Liu 'Shao-ch'i' familiarly," relates the secretary of Hong Kong's *Ta-kung pao*. "They adored Mao religiously and showed great respect for Chou but regarded Liu as an existence closer to them."⁶²

The Roots of Cooperation and Cleavage

We have tried to establish that Liu Shao-ch'i and Mao Tse-tung were quite different types of men, and to show how their differences characteristically predisposed them to select different policies in response to similar problems, even when their conscious ideologies coincided. Given their apparently diverging policy propensities, how were they able to work together for so long, and what was the source of Mao's change of heart? According to Fred Greenstein, there are only certain situations in politics when personality is likely to affect events decisively; these are typically unstable, transitional periods when the environment admits of restructuring by forcible individual actors.⁶³ We shall argue here that the reason diverging character propensities remained so long concealed lay in a felicitous arrangement of authority roles, and that the decisive disequilibrating factor was the 1959 adjustment in the role structure which promoted Liu Shao-ch'i to the Chairmanship of the CPR while leaving Mao in a semi-retired position. We shall first examine the arrangement of roles that facilitated cooperation, then analyze its disintegration.

61. Snow, *Red Star over China*, p. 92; "Talk at a General Report Conference," October 24, 1966, in Jerome Ch'en (ed.), *Mao* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), pp. 93-97.

62. Chou Yu-jui, "Wanderings and Choice," quoted in *Tokyo Shimbun*, December 23, 1966, in *DSJP*, January 5, 1967, pp. 21-23.

63. Fred I. Greenstein, *Personality and Politics: Problems of Evidence, Inference, and Conceptualization* (Chicago: Markham, 1969), pp. 40-45.

In the pre-GPCR division of authority within the Politburo, Mao's role was roughly analogous to that of a plebiscitary president in a parliamentary form of government, Liu's to that of a prime minister (in military terms, Mao would be commander-in-chief, Liu chief-of-staff). Although Liu began taking charge of the daily work of the Central Committee (CC) upon his election to the Secretariat and the Military Affairs Commission as early as 1943, this division of functions did not become formalized until 1956 when Teng Hsiao-p'ing, in his report to the Eighth Party Congress, announced setting up "additional central organs in the CC owing to the pressure of Party work." In this reorganization, greater power was delegated to Liu, as senior vice-chairman of the newly created Standing Committee of the Politburo, and to Teng, as General Secretary. The Politburo was also divided into two "lines," with Mao alone moving to the "second line" where he could devote himself to long-range planning while leaving practical problems of implementation to the first line.⁶⁴ Mao gave his staff great latitude in the area of policy implementation, the details of which no longer interested him, while his staff in turn implicitly accepted Mao's preeminence in policy formulation. Only when someone failed to adhere to his role requirements did a possibility arise for the divergent political implications of personality to become manifest—as when in the summer of 1956 Liu approved a *People's Daily* editorial opposing "reckless advance" with the instruction in the margin that the manuscript be reviewed and approved by Mao; Mao wrote "pu k'an-le" (didn't read) on the manuscript, then protested when it appeared in print.⁶⁵

The reality of roles in any social system depends on the actors' perception of that reality.⁶⁶ To ascertain how Mao and Liu perceived their roles, a brief review of their career patterns is in order. Liu Shao-ch'i seems to have been almost oversocialized to his role. According to Chang Kuo-t'ao, "he ascended step by step, not by obvious talents but by solid hard work." As a low-ranking subordinate, "Liu Shao-ch'i not only obeyed the decisions of superiors and carried them out, but also proposed his own ideas in proper ways."⁶⁷ As a high-ranking senior official, "unlike Mao, Liu is frequently present at

64. A. E. Kent, *Indictment Without Trial: The Case of Liu Shao-ch'i* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1969), Working Paper No. 11, pp. 22ff.

65. Cf. note 44, p. 72.

66. Classically formulated by W. I. Thomas, in E. H. Volkart (ed.), *Social Behavior and Personality* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1951), p. 81.

67. Chang Kuo-t'ao, "Introduction," *CW*, pp. i, iii.

important conferences and moreover, says very many important things. . . . Whatever is or is not said, he is clearly informed.”⁶⁸ In short, Liu ascended the hierarchy by playing strictly according to the rules and by accommodating himself to his colleagues and subordinating himself to his superiors, a course of action which he has been quite free in recommending to others. When he merged his organization from the White areas with Mao’s Red guerrilla armies at the Seventh Party Congress in 1945, he stilled complaints among his followers by enforcing organizational discipline: “The policy has been decided at the Center, you cannot discount it [*ta che-k’o*] in the slightest,” he told cadres in Shantung. “There is nothing left to consider” except tactics of implementation.⁶⁹ Although his strict regimen drew fire during the GPCR for contributing to a “docile tool” mentality, there is no hint of Mao’s dissatisfaction with excessive compliance (though there were differences on substantive policy issues), and we can only assume from Liu’s ever-expanding responsibilities that his leadership style was basically compatible with Mao’s objectives at the time.

It is perhaps not unfair to characterize Mao’s attitude toward authority as “that of a person who without any respect for abstract authority is naturally led to make an exception of the authority which destiny has placed in his own hands.”⁷⁰ His harmonious relationships with superiors can be counted on the fingers of one hand, and these superiors were typically remote figures whom he could respect without necessarily obeying. All his life he has fought with authority figures, beginning with his father, followed by his teachers and by most of the early Party leaders. Three times he was expelled from the CC for “insubordination,” and he admitted he “had no right to speak in the CC” from 1931 through 1934.⁷¹ Upon meeting insuperable opposition, his repeated pattern has been to retire with “illness” and mobilize his forces for a counterattack.⁷² As the first CCP leader to gain power without Moscow’s investiture, he rose not by ingratiating himself with

68. Chao Kuan-i, “Liu Shao-ch’i,” in *Chung-kung jen-wu ssu-miao* [Sketches of Chinese Communist Leaders] (Hong Kong: Freedom Press, 1952), pp. 1–5.

69. Hsü Kuan-san, “Yenan shih-tai ti Liu Shao-ch’i” [Liu Shao-ch’i in the Yen’an Period], *Jen-wu yü ssu-hsiang* [Men and Ideas], No. 38 (May 15, 1970), p. 16.

70. Roberto Michels, “Authority,” *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, edited by R. A. Seligman (New York: Macmillan, 1930), Vol. II, p. 319.

71. “Summary of Chairman Mao’s Talks to Responsible Local Comrades During His Tour of Inspection” (mid-August to September 12, 1971), *CL&G*, V, 3–4 (Fall–Winter, 1972–1973), p. 34.

72. Cf. Snow, *Red Star over China*, pp. 160–161, 166–167, 177; Ch’en, *Mao and the Chinese Revolution*, pp. 96, 139, 141–142, 173.

his superiors, but by attacking them at a moment of vulnerability. The military defeat inflicted by the fifth Kuomintang encirclement campaign discredited the incumbent leadership and enabled disgruntled People's Liberation Army generals to "pack" the meeting and elect a rebellious outsider from their own ranks.⁷³ Once ensconced in a position of authority, Mao provided highly effective revolutionary leadership; but having succeeded in deposing all rivals and establishing his supremacy, he began to betray a certain ambivalence, or at least uncertainty, concerning his role. In the periodic campaigns that he initiated he was able to lead the masses against new oppressors: the landlords, the age-old ravages of nature, the residual influences of deposed enemies (whom he recurrently discovers). In his passing references to classical Chinese literature, Mao reveals that among his role models are illustrious Chinese emperors; and in view of his work style, the analogy is not inapt. Bored with the routine of formal conferences, he retreats for long periods to his various homes to dedicate himself to the study of philosophy, history, and literature, casually proposing his ideas through whatever medium seems convenient at the time: marginalia on reports submitted to him, short notes to colleagues, speeches to various political organs, and the like—often shortcircuiting regular channels to call ad hoc meetings of his more complacent subordinates or "leaking" an idea to the public before formally submitting it, confronting the rest of the leadership with a *fait accompli*.⁷⁴ As noted above in the discussion of rectification styles, Mao's relationships with his colleagues have tended to be rather mistrustful: he apparently monitors their personal activities closely, conceals his intentions, and issues anonymous public threats.⁷⁵ At the first sign of serious popular opposition to his regime in 1959, he threatened to vacate his post and join the prospective rebels.

When Liu became Chairman of the CPR, he began using his authority to convene conferences, select speakers, and secure passage of the measures he supported; the diverging action-implications of his personality, hitherto not salient in his subordinate role, now had an

73. Dick Wilson, *The Long March, 1935: The Epic of Chinese Communism's Survival* (New York: Viking, 1971), pp. 97ff.; James P. Harrison, *The Long March to Power: A History of the Chinese Communist Party, 1921-72* (New York: Praeger, 1972), pp. 234-235.

74. Cf. Michel C. Oksenberg, "Policy Making Under Mao Tse-tung, 1949-1968," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (April 1971), pp. 323-361.

75. He could describe the contents of a letter from Liu Shao-ch'i to Chekiang Party Secretary Chang Wei-ch'ing, for example, while another time he noted the number of ounces of meat that Chu Teh ate daily. *CL&G*, I, 4, p. 30. Mao's secretiveness during the opening stages of GPCR was, of course, a prominent reason for Liu's blunders.

unimpeded opportunity to manifest themselves in actual policy formulation. At the same time, Mao's retirement, which he (Mao) soon began to reconstrue in terms of having been forced from office by ungrateful and ambitious subordinates, aroused all his old rebellious attitudes toward authority. He began to see Liu from an entirely new perspective, no longer as a loyal and self-effacing disciple, but as a leader in his own right.

At the same time there are indications that Mao may have been going through something of an identity crisis in his own life, a crisis of "ego integrity versus despair."⁷⁶ He visited his father's grave, had bouts of debilitating illness, and occasionally ruminated with foreign visitors about the future of socialism in China after his death. At an unconscious level, he may have sensed a resemblance between Liu and his father, whom he had earlier described as cold, strict, methodical, and very thrifty⁷⁷—it is striking how closely this description fits the caricature of Liu that emerged during the GPCR. For Mao to see the values that his father stood for prevail at a time when he sensed his own death impending may have aroused a dread of self-annihilation, justifying desperate countermeasures. By rising once more in a recapitulation of his early revolutionary triumph against heavy odds, Mao may have sought to achieve personal as well as historical integrity.

For Liu Shao-ch'i, of course, the result was an unmitigated disaster. Liu had apparently so completely sublimated his power drive in everyday work that he failed to notice Mao's discontentments, and he was caught by surprise. A man who had dedicated his life to bringing order to a world in flux saw his own life wrenched from his grasp and rudely transfigured before the public; Liu withdrew, fell ill, unsuccessfully attempted suicide, and finally died under house arrest in the summer of 1972.

Conclusions

From our study of Mao Tse-tung and Liu Shao-ch'i we shall now endeavor to derive some general propositions about the nature of charismatic leadership and the problems attending its routinization. First, purely as a matter of stipulative definition, we suggest that the subjective component of charismatic leadership, which Weber chose

76. Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, revised and enlarged edition (New York: Norton, 1963), pp. 268, 274; also Robert J. Lifton, *Revolutionary Immortality: Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Cultural Revolution* (New York: Vintage, 1968), *passim*.

77. Snow, *Red Star over China*, pp. 130-135.

to define only objectively (in terms of the sociological conditions for its legitimation),⁷⁸ corresponds to the "dramatizing" character, and that the subjective component of rational-legal leadership corresponds to the "obsessional" character. On the basis of these definitions we may now proceed to a more precise description of the psychological characteristics of those who fit them.

The dominant characteristic of the dramatizing character seems to be his emotional empathy, by which he can sense and give articulate symbolic form to the deepest yearnings of the masses, while at the same time, by inspiring them with his own feelings, he can move them to act without the inducement of coercion or remuneration. How does a man become so passionately moved that he is impelled to convey his emotions to the public and persuade anonymous multitudes to share them, and what is the nature of the inner drives that so move him? This question has not yet been systematically investigated. In Mao's case, the contradictions between his private life and his public ideology are so striking⁷⁹ that we would suggest, as a preliminary hypothesis, that the psychological function of politics for the dramatizing character is one of emotional *compensation* for sharp, unresolved internal conflicts.

If the dominant psychological characteristic of the dramatizing character is emotional empathy, the dominant characteristic of the obsessional character is emotional control. The emotional contradictions evident in Mao seem to have been repressed or elaborately balanced in Liu Shao-ch'i, whose private life as well as public career unfolded with remarkable consistency. This leads us to hypothesize that the psychological function of politics for the obsessional character is *complementary*: having brought a certain order to his own life, he seeks to impose it on everyone else.

78. Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, translated by A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons, edited by Talcott Parsons (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), pp. 360-364.

79. A few examples: (1) School was Mao's route of emancipation from traditional authority, and he went on to become a radical pamphleteer, a poet of some distinction, and an extremely widely read thinker and writer; yet he has made a determined attempt to obliterate China's intellectuals as a distinct class and to oblige Chinese youth to do the manual labor his father forced him to do. (2) As already noted, the main proponent of close relationships between elites and masses remains as remote as any emperor and seems to have a suspicious and sometimes patronizing or even bullying relationship with colleagues ("rectify painfully," he advised Chang Wen-t'ien). (3) Connoisseur of fine food and Cuban cigars, owner of China's only Mercedes-Benz 600SL, villas in Shanghai (with indoor pool) and on Lake Hangchow, Mao is incensed at any sign of privilege among elites. (4) Among China's most iconoclastic critics of authority, he has become one of its great despots (and woe betide anyone who criticizes him!).

Our study also suggests a number of hypotheses concerning the routinization of charismatic leadership. Contrary to the expectations nurtured by an ideal-type methodology, leadership types and administrative staffs do not necessarily conform to the same principles: a rational-legal bureaucracy and a charismatic (or traditional) leader may function in mutually complementary symbiosis. In political systems in which the masses have not been socialized to accept rational-legal formalism as a legitimation for political domination, the bureaucratic administrative staff must operate under the aegis of the charismatic or traditional legitimation supplied by the leader, leaving the bureaucracy in an exposed and dependent position.⁸⁰

Nevertheless, if a charismatic leader has the opportunity to select his own successor, he is likely to select a member of his own administrative staff, particularly in revolutionary regimes that have destroyed competing authority structures. Yet the socializing effect of a bureaucratic career and the jealousy and headstrong vainglory of the charismatic leader will combine to ensure that his choice will be limited to self-effacing, patient types who display the administrative and technical skills in which the charismatic leader is most deficient. Such an antipodal choice offers the attractive prospect of ensuring a smooth succession and stable consolidation of the fruits of revolution. Yet if the charismatic leader survives this succession he is likely to regret it, and he may even try to reverse it. This is not merely because he has grown inured to power and cannot relinquish it, but also because his successor, lacking his charismatic grace, is obliged to resort to coercive or remunerative sanctions to promote compliance and create legitimacy, gradually transforming the spirit of mass-elite relationships and leading to the institutionalization of vested interests and stable ruling structures. This development tends to excite the destructive aspects of the charismatic leader's inherently ambivalent attitude toward authority, and he is tempted to switch roles from tyrant back to rebel.

Other succession crises to which these hypotheses concerning power and personality might conceivably apply are the cases of Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft, Hitler and Doenitz, Stalin and Malenkov, Adenauer and Erhard, and DeGaulle and Pompidou.

80. This is because its operational code tends to conflict with its legitimating principles. Operating routinely on criteria of purpose-rational efficiency which the public considers amoral, if it is acquainted with them at all, the bureaucracy is subject to censure on the basis of the value-rational principles from which it derives its legitimacy.