

and factory work was found for many of them.

A big percentage of these young people whose studies were organized by our office later assumed posts of considerable importance back in China, such as ministers, ambassadors, regional governors, professors, artists, heads of industry, and a good many now hold high positions under the Communists as political leaders, army generals, and the like. Of the early members of our Hsin Min Study Association, Ts'ai Ho-shen, his mother, his sister, Ts'ai Ch'ang, and his sweetheart, Hsiang Ching-yu, were sent to Montargis Middle School, which developed into a center of Communist propaganda for Chinese students.

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### *Mao Tse-tung Remains Behind*

While Ts'ai Ho-shen, Hsiung Kuang-ch'u, and others worked with me to organize the student-workers' preparatory classes, Mao Tse-tung was helping, but after several discussions with Ho-shen and me, Mao finally decided not to go to France, saying he preferred to remain behind in Peking.

He gave four good reasons for this decision. First was the problem of passage money. Mao had no money at all and despite the appreciably reduced fare, a couple hundred  *yuan* represented a very large sum for him, and he knew no one who might lend him that much. Second, he was by no means proficient in languages. At school he had not been able to manage even the very simplest forms of English pronunciation. Third, in Peking, he could carry on with his studies and would at the same time be able to recruit new members for our Hsin Min Study Association, and, of course, we who went to France would need a reliable contact in Peking. Fourth, he had always remembered the almost prophetic words of Tan Wu-pien that day in the Tien Hsin Ko, "the building which reaches the heart of Heaven." Tan had said that to be successful in politics, study or learning was of itself not too much help, that the essential thing was one's ability to organize a party and to gather together a great number of faithful

followers. Fundamentally, Mao was a man of action who was not cut out to be a scholar. In a word, he was not interested in going abroad for the sake of study. Study was simply a means to an end, and it was without doubt Tan Wu-pien's formula for success in politics that influenced Mao more than anything else to make his decision. The seeds had fallen into fertile soil.

Ts'ai Ho-shen and I agreed that Mao should remain in Peking to carry out the same work-study program there as we would in France. This brought up the inevitable problem of work for Mao to support himself, and the three of us had several discussions of this problem. At that time we were recruiting members for our Association in Peking National University and we told Mao that in our judgment the best thing he could do would be to get a job in the University itself. We thought of a classroom-cleaner job because he could listen to the lectures, even as he carried out his simple tasks. It was the practice of the University to employ a person to clean the blackboards and sweep the classrooms after each class. It was light work and had the added advantage of enabling the person who did it to be in constant contact with the professors and students of the several classrooms under his care. We all agreed that this arrangement would be ideal for Mao.

How to obtain the job was the immediate problem. We discovered that the person whose responsibility it was to engage people for such tasks was a very highly placed professor who had at the same time many more important responsibilities, and we did not know quite how to approach him about such an insignificant job. When we finally thought of our friend Rector Ts'ai, who had already been so very kind and generous to us, we wrote a letter directly to him asking if it would be possible for him to give the order for one of our colleagues to be employed as a classroom cleaner. The Rector was an admirable person who understood our problem immediately. However, he had a better idea: rather than ask for a job as classroom-cleaner, he suggested that Mao work in the library. He therefore sent a note to Mr. Li Ta-chao, Director of the University Library, "Mao Tse-tung requires employment in the University in pursuance of a work-study program. Please find a job for him in the library. . . ." The Rector made no mention of the fact that Mao came from Changsha, nor that he was a "youth leader." Li Ta-chao obediently gave

Mao the task of cleaning the library and keeping the books tidy, really a very simple job. This was all accomplished through an intermediary, since Li was a very highly placed person and had no direct contacts with hiring of menial workers.

In 1921, Li Ta-chao with Ch'en Tu-hsiu also became the secret Communist leader in Peking, while Mao Tse-tung occupied a similar position in Hunan. I had several long talks with Li in 1921 before I went to France the second time, and when I returned, we worked together from 1924 to 1926 for the revolution against Generalissimo Chang Tso-lin. Often we had to hide from military authorities and we were obliged to meet in secret. We discussed Mao Tse-tung and once he said, "When I gave Mao that job of cleaning the library, I was merely obeying the Rector's orders. Naturally I did not know your good friend and I hope you will forgive me." In 1926, Li Ta-chao was arrested in the Russian Legation in Peking by Generalissimo Chang Tso-lin and was hanged.

Mao was always very grateful to Rector Ts'ai. Every letter to him started, *Fu tze ta jen* (My Respected Master). He considered himself the Rector's student and never failed to show great politeness and respect for him. In 1938, about twelve months before Ts'ai's death, when he was hiding in Kowloon (Hong Kong), I often called at his house for an intimate chat, and we talked of Mao on several different occasions. In his old age the Rector had forgotten many details and, while he could still remember Mao's letters to him, he could not recall either his face or his voice.

Mao's activities in the library did not prove to be successful.(29) As we had planned, he endeavored to talk to the students who came in for books, but the results of his efforts to enlist new members for the Hsin Min Study Association were not good. Nor did he make much success with his studies. He wrote me saying that he felt deceived by the students of the National University of Peking, such as Fu, Toen, Lo and the others, as he had heard at Changsha that they were the best students.

In 1919, Mao returned to Changsha and participated in the movement to overthrow General Chang Ching-yao, the tyrannical Governor of Hunan. The only way to get rid of Chang appeared to be to persuade the army, stationed on the Hunan-Kwangtung border, to

march to Changsha to help in the revolution and then it was decided to ask Tan Yen-k'ai, the former governor, to take over again. The principal instigator of the revolutionary movement which developed in educational circles was Professor Yi Pei-chi, who had been Mao's Chinese language teacher in the First Normal School. Practically the whole of the teaching profession was involved, and Chang Ching-yao was declared an enemy of the people of Hunan. Yi Pei-chi, with Mao Tse-tung amongst the students, worked hard planning the uprising to which they referred as their "struggle against evil powers."

As background for understanding Mao's departure from Peking, mention should here be made of the radical leaders in the University: Ch'en Tu-hsiu, who was Dean of Literature, and Li Ta-chao, Director of the Library. Both these men had written articles in praise of the October 1917 Revolution in Russia, and later they were secretly contacted by the Russians who suggested that they assume responsibility for organizing a Communist Party in China, and money was given to them to cover the expenses of such an undertaking. Since they could not openly organize Communist groups, they started a "Marxist Study Association" and also "Socialist Youth Associations," with headquarters in Peking University. Another important step was the starting of a "foreign language institute," the sole object of which was to teach the people Russian. Neither of these leaders considered Mao Tse-tung in his plans, since at that time Mao was merely a servant in the library, and not even registered at the University. Since they did not even notice his existence, Mao realized that in his present status it would be impossible for him to achieve a position of any importance in their eyes. Also, since he had really not been successful at his own enterprise in the University, after only a few months, he decided to return to Changsha in his native province, and there to start all over again. He still had the Hsin Min Study Association as a nucleus on which he hoped to build a strong organization.

Through the revolution against Chang, Mao Tse-tung came into close contact with a large number of young, impractical idealists and he spared no efforts in his attempt to gain their sympathy, which proved not to be too difficult. The majority of them were desperately earnest, impractical and idealistic, full of enthusiasm and ambition. Their primary aim was to rid the Province of Hunan of its tyranni-

cal ruler and, more vaguely, to reform society. They had, however, no definite, long-range plan and no specific political tendencies nor allegiance, and no recognized, trusted leader. Mao had a blind faith in Russian-style Communism and he compared these youngsters to a sheet of blank white paper on which he imagined himself working out his own design in bold, strong red lines. In his mind's eye he drew from left to right and up and down to his heart's desire. In his mind's eye, Mao was their leader and they were as clay in his dexterous hands.

Such was the situation in 1919, shortly after Ts'ai Ho-shen and I arrived in France. We three, Mao, Ts'ai, and I, were still the principal organizers of the Hsin Min Study Association, and while Ts'ai and I recruited thirty or forty new members in France, Mao enlisted over a hundred in Changsha. He had, however, abandoned the restrictive selection to which we adhered and he chose members on the basis of their ideas only. He published a journal, *Correspondence of the Hsin Min Study Association*, consisting of letters and commentaries, and in which members might express their own particular opinions. But this publication appeared only three times.

Outside the Association, while he was preparing for the provincial revolution, Mao published a weekly paper which he called the *Hsiang Kiang P'ing Lun (The Hunan Critic)*.<sup>(30)</sup> The articles in this paper were very radical and greatly pleased his student following. Many of the younger students even volunteered to sell copies of the *Critic* in the streets. Often the letters which I wrote from Paris were published in this weekly for propaganda purposes. It was about this time that he opened the cultural bookstore for the sale of new-thought publications. This shop was managed by his first sweetheart, Tao Szu-yung, our oldest and most respected woman colleague about whom mention has already been made.

The provincial revolution was successful.<sup>(31)</sup> Chang escaped and Tan Yen-k'ai was returned as governor. Yi Pei-chi, the prime instigator and mover in the uprising, himself took over the tasks of five cabinet members in the new Provincial Government: First Secretary to the Governor, First Secretary of the Military Commander, President of the Hunan Educational Association, Director of the Provincial Library, and Director of the First Normal School. The First

Normal School was the intellectual center of Changsha, and Yi appointed Mao Tse-tung as Director of the Primary School Section.

At this time, our old and respected Hsin Min colleague, Ho Shu-heng, or Ho Hu-tzu (Moustache-Ho) as we called him, was made Director of the *P'ing Min Chao Yu Jih Pao*, the *Popular Education Daily News*, which was an excellent medium through which to influence the lower classes, since it was widely read. Ho Hu-tzu worked hard in his new position and did a good job. He secured several very good editors, one of whom, Hsieh Ch'üeh-ts'ai later became Minister of Justice, and then Minister of the Interior in the Peking Communist Government. Hsieh and Ho came from the same town and were good friends. Later Ho introduced Hsieh to us and we became friends, calling him "Hu-tzu" in intimate fashion. These two colleagues were the oldest members of our Association, being about thirty-five, while most of us averaged about ten years younger. Ho was already an intimate friend of mine, since we had taught together in the Ch'u Yi School. Although I did not know Hsieh Hu-tzu so well, I liked him because he was such a good friend of Ho.

The Hsin Min Study Association therefore had now two bases in Changsha: the *Popular Education Daily News* and the Primary Section of the First Normal School. I myself directed the third base in France, assisted by Ts'ai Ho-shen, Hsiung Kuang-ch'u, Hsiang Ching-yu, Li Wei-han, Ch'en Shao-hsiu, and several other new members. Back in Hunan, with Yi Pei-chi and Tan Yen-k'ai running the province, Mao enjoyed a greatly increased freedom of action and as a result he became even more enthusiastic and articulate in his political ambitions.

There was at this time no Chinese Communist organization and all our activities centered in the Hsin Min Study Association, even though many of its members had a blind faith in Russian Communism as the magic wand which could suddenly reform China.

However, two years later, in 1921, the mother association broke up into two separate groups. The larger which was one hundred per cent Communist became the Communist Party in Hunan under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung.