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**THE LITTLE RED PAPER: A BRIEF SKETCH AND
ANALYSIS OF THE THOUGHT AND ACTION OF
CHAIRMAN MAO**

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Mao Tse-tung was "a genius at not sinking."¹ At countless points in his life, Mao seemed to be facing the certain death of his cause and even his own demise. However, Mao single-handedly carried China into the twentieth century, out of the quagmire of warlord politics and imperialist threats. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) survived and grew because of Mao's pure will power and his ability to harness the masses. A large part of this innate talent was the publishing and distribution of Maoist literature. Mao found it was much easier to effectively govern an informed nation, with a population that knew his political philosophy and goals, than it was to lead an uninformed nation. There is a general rule both to Mao and to Maoist thought. All of Mao's actions can find substantiation in his contemporary and earlier writings. Still, many in the West would label Mao a dictator, as they would any communist leader; he was, however, considerably more enlightened intellectually than the average head of state. In fact, an ideal leader to Mao would "take the ideas of the masses and concentrate them (through study) then go to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast to them and translate them into action."² He certainly endeavored to carry out this ideal.

Mao was born in 1893, and he did not arrive on the national stage until the early 1920s. Mao was a "member of the May Fourth generation,"³ the generation of revolutionaries who would replace Sun Yat-sen and Li Tai-chao. They were inspired by the revolutionary thought of the past and present communist thinkers. Mao and others were especially influenced by the newspaper *New Youth*. This paper encouraged "political mobilization,"⁴ and the exploration of any "radical ideals of foreign origin."⁵ It was with socialism and communism that Mao found his intellectual niche and greatly influenced his political thought.

First, he participated in the mobilization of his rural home province of Hunan. During this mobilization Mao first put his thoughts on paper. His writings from Hunan are the cornerstone of his political thought and are applied over and over again in his

1 Jonathon D. Spence, "Mao Zedong," *Time*, 13 April 1998
<<http://www.time.com/time/time100/leaders/profile/mao.html>> (accessed February 25, 2008).

2 Mao Zedong. "Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership."

3 Stuart Schram, *The Thought of Mao Tse-Tung* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 13.

4 John E. Wills Jr., *Mountain of Fame: Portraits in Chinese History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 336.

5 *Ibid*, 338.

actions. In Hunan, he described the “peasant movement...[as] a colossal event.”⁶ He established the necessity of including poor peasants in the revolution, saying that there “can be no revolution”⁷ without them. Here the rule of Mao is first evident; he wrote about the crucial role of the peasants in the revolution and he then set about using them in the initial opposition to the Kuomintang⁸ and Chiang Kai-shek. Later, during the Long March, Mao further demonstrated his leadership abilities. This was a massive retreat of the communist forces through the monotonous countryside of China, with Kuomintang forces in close pursuit.

While the Long March is no carefully reasoned policy, Mao’s leadership would never be put on a finer stage. He single-handedly led the CCP through this retreat from “near certain annihilation” with “extraordinary courage, discipline, and skillful leadership.”⁹ After the retreat, Mao would emerge as leader of the party. He continued his fight against the Koumintang, with a perfectly reasoned strategy. Military activity and violence was justified because the nationalists “deprived [the peasants] of all political freedoms and rights to take any peaceful action.”¹⁰ Mao would later brand them traitors for their complicity in Japanese invasion and occupation, a sentiment that would grow amongst the people. The CCP gradually continued to build up resistance to the Kuomintang by playing to anti-Japanese sentiments and demonstrating a marked respect for the land and property of the peasants. Again, Mao recognized the peasants as important cogs in his revolutionary machine just as he did first in his writings in Hunan.

The communists fought the Japanese when the inevitable invasion and occupation occurred. When WWII ended, the CCP emerged with a stronger hold over China than at the beginning of the war. They had entered the war a depleted force, but exited it stronger than ever. The continued conflict between the two parties from 1946-9 resulted in an outcome that was predicted in the West. The CCP, under the leadership of Mao, triumphed over the war weakened Kuomintang and on October 1, 1949, Mao declared the founding of the People’s Republic of China (PRC).¹¹ The formation of the republic was the concrete fulfillment of the aspirations Mao first formulated in Hunan, “the peasant association becom[ing] the sole organ of authority.”¹² Mao believed that he was creating “a new-democratic society under the joint dictatorship of all Chinese

6 Mao, “Report on an Investigation of the Hunan Peasant Movement,” in *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, Vol. II, William Theodore de Bary, Wing-tsit Chan, Chester Tan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 205.

7 Ibid.

8 The Chinese Nationalist Party, headed by Chiang Kai-shek. They had been uneasy partners during the 1920’s, a relationship held together by the wishes of the Comintern. However, in 1927 a schism occurred which separated the two permanently and weakened the CCP.

9 Wills Jr., *Mountain*, 342.

10 Mao, “Report”, 219-20.

11 Wills Jr, *Mountain*, 349.

12 Mao, “Report,” 205.

revolutionary classes headed by the Chinese proletariat.”¹³ Mao’s theory of government was becoming reality; his actions were grounded in the political philosophy he wrote about years before.

The PRC quickly developed a system of reconstruction for their homeland. In fact, the “Communist[s] showed amazing zeal and political competence...[and] in many ways they followed common-sense reconstruction policies that were pragmatic.”¹⁴ However, the American war in Korea and the fortification and protection of Taiwan forced Mao to change the direction of his country. Mao implemented a strict culture that did not tolerate any behavior that could be considered seditious. These constraints, however, meant the restriction of opposition parties and many intellectual pursuits. Mao recognized the need for complete support of his government without damaging criticism. He previously stressed that “the public can only praise the association and must not condemn it.”¹⁷ As leader of the PRC he now required obedience to this rule.

This was not the only public policy that the Korean War and the threat from the nationalist state of Taiwan inspired. Land distribution to the masses was quickened, and the villagers became emotionally invested in the process. This allocation led to violence in the countryside as “local bullies and bad gentry and lawless landlords”¹⁸ received their communist comeuppance, actions that Mao had supported since his youth. His writings advocated “adopt[ing] certain necessary measures to confiscate the land of landlords and distribute it to those peasants having no land or only a little land.”¹⁹ There were also impressive steps made in mass education and public health. This new emphasis on education, again, was not surprising. Mao had already recognized the need for an education during his early years, where he supported the founding of “peasant schools.”²⁰ Now, he supported an education system that would allow the peasants to adjust and learn his new policies. Mao’s commitment to learning changed to a more radical form in the Socialist Education Campaign.²¹

13 Mao, “On New Democracy,” in *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, Vol. II (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 223.

14 Wills Jr., *Mountain*, 350.

15 Chiang Kai-Shek and the Kuomintang had escaped here after Mao’s coup. The Americans used Taiwan as their Isle of Wright and used it as a base of operations in the Korean War.

16 Wills Jr., *Mountain*, 350.

17 Mao, “Report,” 206.

18 Ibid, 205.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid, 215.

21 This policy would be a facet of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. It was first mentioned in 1963, and it was designed to be part of the recruitment tool to return the people to Maoism. It stressed the ongoing nature of class struggle, which was a major part of the Cultural Revolution, and the return to the works that Mao felt were the basics of socialist and communist thought. These works, namely his own, would aid in the restoration of communism in China.

Maoism further developed in the late 1950s. Mao's previously theorized concept of communal agriculture manifested in the Great Leap. It was a policy of rapid economic growth in both industry and agriculture. There was mass land cultivation and creation of thousands of land communes. Mao believed that the future lay with these communes, where the workers labored together. Industry was supported in each of these communes, making them fairly self sufficient. Mao's theory of "collective leadership"²² came to bare here. This was a decentralized policy; each of the communes had its own local government. He supported this new policy by citing previously existing successful communes in "On the Cooperative Transformation of Agriculture."²³ Mao also stressed the notions of "diligence and frugality,"²⁴ in "Running a Co-Operative Diligently and Frugally." Here his previous writings on the importance of the peasant communities, the redistribution of land, the system of government and infrastructure came to facilitate his actions.

The Great Leap was apparently not the best plan for the PRC. In fact, the policy was an unmitigated failure. Mao himself had predicted that there would be problems, but he felt that they would be overcome by "positive help."²⁵ However, it was enacted too fast, which resulted in poor administration and results in the communes. There were "early optimistic production figures,"²⁶ but the first year of good crop weather was followed by several poor years. The reason for the Great Leap's failure was simple mixture of bad weather and planning. Though Mao was a careful thinker, who wanted to revolutionize China through socialism, he apparently could not properly execute his ideas. He did not create the proper administration in the countryside, even though he knew that it was necessary.²⁷ In 1958, in the midst of the success of the Great Leap, Mao's popularity reached an intense fervor. By the end of the year, his policy was branded a disaster. Mao resigned as head-of-state of the PRC shortly thereafter, and he was succeeded by Liu Shao-ch'i.

Mao retained his position as chairman of the CCP, an organ distinct from the PRC, and so kept a large modicum of potential influence. The new government started to move away from the policies of Mao, who quickly struck back against the "revisionist" government. The "Maoists believed that...Shao-ch'i [and others] had used their high offices to support anti-proletarian ideas."²⁸ His successors, Mao felt, only "paid lip service to Marxism."²⁹ In response, Mao initiated the Great Proletarian

22 Mao *Quotations from Chairman Mao* (Peking: Peking Foreign Languages Press, 1966).

23 Mao "On the Cooperative Transformation of Agriculture," trans. David J. Romagnolo (Peking: Peking Foreign Language Press, 1977).

24 Mao, *Quotations*.

25 Mao, *Quotations*.

26 Wills Jr., *Mountain*, 355.

27 Mao, "On the."

28 Manoranjan Mohanty, *The Political Philosophy of Mao Tse-Tung* (Delhi: MacMillan, 1978), 78.

29 Mao, *Quotations*.

Cultural Revolution in an attempt to return China to Maoism. He targeted the "superstructure"³⁰ of the PRC, which he felt was not properly consolidating the socialist system, and giving way to bourgeois interests. Mao publically disparaged and accused the government of not properly excluding the bourgeois, the very people he had called "undesirables,"³¹ decades ago. His long held belief that even after the defeat of the bourgeois, they would "engage in sabotage and create disturbances in various ways and [would] try every day and every minute to stage a comeback,"³² appeared to be fast approaching a reality, at least as Mao viewed it.

The Cultural Revolution was largely a youth based movement,³³ a factor not lost on Mao who remembered the role of the youth in the fight against the Kuomintang. Once again, Mao recognized the need to harness the people by information. *Quotations from Chairman Mao* was published in the early 1960's during the Cultural Revolution. It was designed to educate every citizen as to what Maoism was. The book contained thousands of quotes and extracts from Mao's speeches and treatises on socialism and communism. Mao believed that if the people knew what he believed in and would do for them, they would flock to his cause.

The entire country soon felt the effects of this revolution as disorder and chaotic behavior swept the countryside. Violence raged against those who were still considered an elite class in Chinese society. In fomenting the Cultural Revolution, Mao was clearly motivated by what he felt was a perversion of the PRC he envisioned, and the return to the socioeconomic order he fought against. Finally, in 1967, the PRC government yielded to the pressure of Mao and his revolutionaries and conceded to a new system of government that "would consolidate the gains of the Cultural Revolution and prevent the revival of centralized system of authority."³⁴

Mao died in 1976, mourned by many of the Chinese people. He once accused the bourgeois of "doing whatever they like and turning everything upside down."³⁵ It is ironic that his own actions merit the same criticism, for the China of the mid-twentieth century looked nothing like China of centuries or even decades ago. His policies, which were so fundamentally grounded in his political thought, left deep marks on the "new" China. Mao was a great political theorist and scientist. However, even the best reasoned public policy, theorized on paper, does not always translate into prosperity in the forum. Mao's policies and actions did not always achieve the intended goals. They were always, however, reasoned and based on his political theorizing. His works and life embodied his own statement, "We communists never conceal our political views."³⁶

30 Mohanty, *The Political*, 78.

31 Mao, "Report," 206.

32 Mao, *Quotations*.

33 Wills Jr., *Mountain*, 357.

34 Ibid.

35 Mao, "Report," 208.

36 Mao, *Quotations*.

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**"CHOLERA AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF
PUBLIC HEALTH IN AMERICA"**

Suzanne Vroman

INTRODUCTION

At the end of the Civil War in 1865, Americans could finally look forward to a peaceful summer for the first time in five years. However, as news swept through the nation of a prevailing cholera epidemic already present in much of Europe, the country once again prepared for battle. Unlike the cholera outbreaks of 1832 and 1849, in 1866, the United States was prepared for the arrival of the third pandemic. Largely in part to European influence, the nation understood the dangers of the unsanitary conditions present in the city slums during the mid 1800s. However, the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 hindered any hopes of nationalizing public health in the United States. Despite these setbacks, advocates of public health reform felt a new surge of confidence in the winter of 1865 to 1866. During this time the combination of the known success of the European sanitation movement as well as the threat of another pandemic led to a rapid incorporation of European public health standards in American cities. The following decade would mark an interesting period in American medicine as empirical science would gradually take the place of traditional medical practices that focused on religious values and the cleansing of moral impurity. The founding of Johns Hopkins University in the following decade exemplified these changes and would define the extent at which the nation would accept or reject this new influx of scientific ideology sparked by the onset of the 1866 cholera epidemic.

The purpose of this paper will be to answer two questions resulting from the changes in American health care following the Civil War. The first will focus on how the cholera epidemic escalated the rapid assimilation of American cities to the European public health standards. The second will be a case study of the launching of Johns Hopkins University and how it transformed medical education in the late 1800s. Drawing from Charles Rosenberg's writings in *The Cholera Years and Explaining Epidemics*, I will explain how Europe gradually became center of intellectual and scientific thought in the early 1800s. I will use the response to the earlier epidemics in this time period to show the transformation of public health in Europe and how their new scientific methods were later incorporated into methods used during the 1866 epidemic in the United States. In keeping with the same theme, in the second part of the paper, I will be drawing from John M. Barry's novel *The Great Influenza*. Barry argues that the founding of Johns Hopkins University marked a new decade in American medicine as it became the first American university to follow the same scientific curriculum as the best European insti-