

THESIS

CLAUSEWITZ AND MAO

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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Clausewitz and Mao compares the evolution of the military theories of Carl von Clausewitz and Mao Tse-tung through an examination of their respective experiences with war and revolution. The historical contexts in which each pursued their studies of war receive extensive treatment and serve as a basis for a direct comparison of the military writings of Clausewitz and Mao.

The comparison identifies similarities existing between the theories of Clausewitz in Mao in both a technical and philosophical sense. The relationship between politics and war is emphasized, as is the social nature of war.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SIGNATURE PAGE	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Chapter	
1. Clausewitz.....	4
2. Mao.....	40
3. Conclusions.....	70
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	94

INTRODUCTION

Carl von Clausewitz joined the Prussian army in 1792 at the age of 12, a few months before revolutionary France defeated the Austro-Prussians at Valmy. Within the year he experienced his first combat, serving as a *Fahnenjunker* in Prussia's renewed effort to destroy "this nightmare."¹ For the next 23 years Clausewitz witnessed and participated in the wars of the revolution and the wars of the French Empire. His personal experience with revolution and his personal involvement in the Prussian reform movement conditioned the formulation of the thought and philosophy that resulted in the posthumous publication of On War, judged by Bernard Brody "not simply the greatest, but the only great book about war."²

One hundred years after Clausewitz' initiation into the violent reality of war and revolution, Mao Tse-tung was born in Shaoshan, Hunan Province. Revolution also conditioned the thought and philosophy of the future Chairman of the Peoples Republic, not only as a

¹Roger Parkinson, Clausewitz: a Biography (New York: Stein and Day, 1978), 24. A *Fahnenjunker* was a special non-commissioned officer roughly equivalent to corporal.

²Michael Howard, Clausewitz (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).

participant, but as a protagonist. Without the benefit of any formal military training, Mao formulated his own magnum opus "on war" and applied his theories in over twenty years of constant armed conflict.

Revolutions of world historical importance led Clausewitz and Mao to reach similar conclusions in formulating their respective philosophies of war. Their analysis of the relationship between politics and war, the social nature of armies and the relationship between society and the state are essentially analogous. Clausewitz and Mao identified the inherently violent nature of war and its tendency to become absolute unless limited by political aims. Products of separate cultural and political milieus, they both saw in revolution a stimulus for the transformation of war. If revolution transforms armies and war, then the relationship between politics, society and war must be very close. Clausewitz used the term "Peoples War"³ over one-hundred years before Mao gave it a modern meaning. Mao, without benefit of any direct contact with the works of Clausewitz, expanded his notion of the relationship between policy and war⁴. With Mao war and policy became inextricably intertwined; it was no

³Karl von Clausewitz, On War (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1878), 47B.

⁴Raymond Aron, Clausewitz, Philosopher of War (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1985), 278. For a dissenting view see R. Lynn Rylander, "Mao as a Clausewitzian Strategist," Military Review 81, (1981): 13.

longer possible to differentiate between the soldier and the politician, the military and the political.

The intellectual worlds of Clausewitz and Mao provide the key to understanding the subsequent evolution of their theory and practice. The conditions of war and revolution provided the primary components of those worlds. In tracing the evolution of theory through emphasizing practice, one pays homage to the methodology of both Clausewitz and Mao. Clausewitz's admonition that "knowledge must become capability"⁵ is echoed in Mao's observation that "to learn is no easy matter and to apply what has been learned is even harder."⁶ An examination of the practical experiences of Mao and Clausewitz, their acquisition of knowledge and learning, defines the evolution of their theory.

Rylander argues that because Mao quoted Clausewitz directly on one occasion he may have utilized his ideas in developing his own theory of guerilla warfare.

⁵Clausewitz, War, 147.

⁶Mao Tse-tung, Selected Military Writings, (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1988), 84.

CHAPTER ONE

The emperor reigned supreme in the feudal state...relying on the landed gentry as the mainstay of the entire system of rule--Mao.

Carl von Clausewitz was born into a family of questionable nobility on June 1, 1780, a condition that directly affected the careers of his father and brothers.⁷ The death of Frederick II and the remarriage of Clausewitz's widowed grandmother to a family with a background of unquestionable noble status proved fortuitous: the less oppressive atmosphere of Frederick William III's reign and the new family connection enabled Carl von Clausewitz' entry into Prussian service to go unchallenged.⁸

Lieutenant Frederick Gabriel von Clausewitz, Carl's father, retired from the army following the end of the Seven Years War. Retirement resulted from a debilitating war wound, according to the Clausewitzes, or because of Frederick's non-noble origins, according to the Prussian

⁷Peter Parot, Clausewitz and the State, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 15. The Clausewitz family's origins are still controversial. See Parkinson, Clausewitz, p20, who does not question Clausewitz's noble status.

⁸Parot, State, 15.

army.⁹ Denied a continuous career in the army after the demand for officers during the wars of Frederick ended, Frederick von Clausewitz was appointed a minor tax collector in the town of Burg. The younger Clausewitz described the influence of the elder when he wrote that he "grew up in the Prussian army...saw almost no one but officers...In short, from the beginning national feeling and even caste sentiment were as pronounced and firmly rooted as could be expected."¹⁰

Given the circumstance of profound national feeling and caste sentiment evident from his youth, Clausewitz served the state as member of a privileged class. Lacking the benefits of ownership of land, privilege "was the result of effort and a sense of allegiance that bound him and his family to the state."¹¹

Clausewitz's first experience with war, during the siege Mainz in 1793, influenced the subsequent development of his thought. The bloody Austro-Prussian victory was followed by relative inactivity, when a strong pursuit may have decided the issue.¹² Clausewitz later described the reason for Prussian lethargy: "Prussia had nothing to defend or to

⁹Paret, *State*, 13.

¹⁰Ibid., 17.

¹¹Ibid., 17.

¹²Steven T. Ross, Quest for Victory: French Military Strategy, 1792-1798 (New York: A. S. Barnes 1973).

conquer in Alsace. Her march in 1792 through Lorraine to Champagne had been made in a spirit of chivalry, but since as things turned out that operation promised little more, she pursued the war without enthusiasm."¹³ The lack of a clear political object allowed a French recovery, frustrated Allied intentions and also frustrated the young Clausewitz.¹⁴

Unable to define a clear political object on the Rhine, the Prussians had no such problem finding more compelling political concerns to the east. Rebellion in the Polish provinces, fear of the Austro-Russian alliance and financial problems outweighed current anti-republican sentiment. In 1795 Prussia signed the Peace of Basil and withdrew from the war.¹⁵

For Clausewitz and for Europe the years following 1795 were a period of fundamental change. The advent of Napoleonic warfare destroyed the European balance of power. Recognition of the changes taking place in the European system did not occur among the upper echelons of leadership of Prussia.

One "Prussian" general who was aware of the changes taking place throughout Europe was Gerhard von Scharnhorst.

¹³Clausewitz, War, 831.

¹⁴Parkinson, Clausewitz, 27.

¹⁵Ross, Stephen T. European Diplomatic History 1788-1815 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1888), 108-112. Ross details the lack of coherent policy on the part of either the Prussians or the French.

A Hannoverian by birth, Scharnhorst obtained a commission in the Prussian army after establishing his reputation in the War of the First Coalition.¹⁶ In 1801 Clausewitz gained admittance to the Institution for the Young Officers, which employed Scharnhorst as the superintendent of the artillery.¹⁷ To Clausewitz the influence of von Scharnhorst, "the father and mother and friend of my soul,"¹⁸ was profound. Scharnhorst recognized the abilities of Clausewitz and offered friendship, encouragement and connections to the upper levels of Prussian leadership. In addition Scharnhorst imparted to Clausewitz an "essentially unideological view of social and political arrangements" that paralleled his approach to war.¹⁹

Ideological faith in the abilities of the army of Frederick the Great ensured disaster when Prussia chose to face Napoleon without allies in the fall of 1806. The defeat and subsequent humiliation of Prussia incited Clausewitz. Caste sentiment and provincialism paled in the face of defeat. A radicalized patriot, Clausewitz rejected absolutist Prussia and supported "revolution from above." Clausewitz participated in the reform movement, which

¹⁶Gordon A. Craig. The Politics of the Prussian Army (New York: Praeger, 1988), 25.

¹⁷Parkinson, Clausewitz, 27.

¹⁸Ibid., 33.

¹⁹Paret, Stata, 73.

advocated the arming of a peasant militia, universal service without exemption, admittance of the bourgeoisie into the officer corps and the unleashing of Prussian and German nationalism in order to mobilize the mass of the population against the French.

How ever great the sacrifice..a new world of perpetual peace and brightness already lies clearly before us...our faith in waging this war is based upon the new China--Mao

"A bloody and honorable fight assures the rebirth of the people...such a struggle is the seed of life from which a new tree inevitably will blossom."²⁰ So wrote Clausewitz on the occasion of his resignation from Prussian service following the ratification of the Franco-Prussian Treaty in March of 1812. Three-hundred other Prussian officers, nearly one-fourth of the officer corps, also submitted their resignations.²¹

Napoleon imposed twin military humiliations on the Prussians, at Jena-Auerstadt(1807), and followed them with twin diplomatic humiliations. Clausewitz described the

²⁰Karl von Clausewitz, War, Politics and Power (Chicago: Regnary, 1982), 301. This edition of excerpts from On War also contains the essay *I Believe and profess*, in which Clausewitz denounces the treaty of 1812 in extremely patriotic terms.

²¹Martin Kitchen. A Military History of Germany (Secaucus: The Citadel Press, 1975), 52.

first settlement, dictated by Napoleon at Tilsit (1809), as the only possible result of "the most downright stupidity to which methodicism ever led."²² At Tilsit Prussia lost half of its territory. Required to pay a large indemnity and forced to suffer the costs of occupation, the terms inflicted by Napoleon were "completely shattering and encompassed the destruction of the old Prussian state."²³

Six years elapsed between Jena and the Franco-Prussian Treaty of 1812 which precipitated the exodus of Clausewitz and many of his fellow officers. Prussia sacrificed the reforms achieved during this period to the realities of power, "for that state (Prussia) could at any time be brought to an end by a stroke of Napoleon's pen."²⁴ To avoid a "stroke of Napoleon's pen," the Prussians allowed the French to renew the military occupation of Prussia. In the event of a Russian-French conflict, Napoleon required Prussia to provide him with an army corps.

The aforementioned treaties nearly accomplished the physical destruction of the Prussian state. The feudal Prussian social system, despotic political rule and extremely rigid class structure, conditions largely responsible for Prussian defeat, remained intact. Prussian

²²Clausewitz, War, 210.

²³Craig, Politics, 35.

²⁴Walter Goerlitz, . The German General Staff (New York: Praeger, 1988), 32.

political institutions, especially the army and civil service, continued to dominate the state.

The humiliations at the hands of the French resulted from the deterioration of the Prussian Army beginning with the reign of Frederick the Great. Changes in Prussian service designed to protect agricultural production, ultimately starved the army of recruits. The progressive diminution of the classes of Prussian subjects liable to conscription, in which entire provinces were exempted from service, reduced the national cohesion of the army. By Napoleon's time mercenaries comprised more than half of the soldiers in Prussian army.²⁵ The French accomplished a military revolution during the same period. Political revolution unleashed French patriotism and social reform transformed the military. A vast national army, unfettered by absolutist tradition, had come to dominate Prussia, and all of Europe.

Clausewitz's impassioned call for national resistance and regeneration stands in stark contrast to his better known, unemotional and philosophical analysis of war. His famous aphorism that "war is an extension of politics by other means"²⁶ defines Clausewitz's view regarding the period of military reform. As an observer, Clausewitz

²⁵William Shanahan, Prussian Military Reforms 1788-1813 (New York: AMS Press, 1988), 48.

²⁶Clausewitz, Karl von, On War (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1988), 402.

believed that military reform in early 19th century Prussia was essentially a political problem. The destruction of political and social conventions that made possible the rebirth of the French nation-state also changed the character of that nation's armed forces. Just as war is an extension of politics by other means, so a nation's armed forces are a reflection of that nation's political and social structure. To phrase it another way, a nation's ability to make war is conditioned by and is a direct result of its political and social abilities. Clausewitz analyzed the changes that had taken place in the the nature of war as follows:

The wars of the French Revolution suddenly opened up a whole new world of military manifestations. At first it was somewhat raw and primitive; later Bonaparte crystallized it into a grandiose system that achieved successes which amazed everyone....Very few of the new manifestations in war can be ascribed to new inventions or new departures in ideas. They result mainly from the transformation of society and new social conditions.²⁷

Defeat by and acquiescence to Napoleon radicalized much of Prussia's officer corps. National humiliation led Clausewitz and others to seek re-birth and renewal. The indemnity and treaty limitations on the size of Prussia's armed forces were in part responsible for preventing significant reform and resistance to Napoleon. Greater responsibility for preventing reform rests with King

²⁷Clausewitz, *War*, 515.

Frederick William III in particular and the aristocracy in general, who found in the advocates of reform "Jacobins" and "Revolutionary equality mongering."²⁸

The forces of reaction found an unlikely ally in the person of Napoleon, who forced the dismissal of minister to the king, Karl vom Stein, an advocate of universal service. Illustrative of the attitude of the conservatives were the comments of General York, who pronounced on the occasion of Stein's dismissal, "One mad head is already smashed; the remaining nest of vipers will dissolve in its own poison."²⁹

Ultimately the advocates of reform and of active resistance to Napoleon triumphed. Even General York disobeyed the King's instructions and, in the wake of the destruction of Napoleon's *Grande Armee* in Russia, withdrew his corps from French service. Would-be saviours of Prussia, conservative or otherwise, came to realize that "just as France instituted universal service in 1793 in order to protect the revolution...so universal service was needed in Prussia to protect the state against France."³⁰

The Prussian military reforms were a practical reaction to French military superiority that was clearly the result

²⁸Goerlitz, Staff, 32.

²⁹Peter Paret, York and the Era of Prussian Military Reforms 1807-1815, (Princeton: Princeton University Press) 4.

³⁰Kitchen, Military, 44.

of the social changes brought about by the French Revolution. Military reform was inextricably bound-up with social and political reform, a situation that was as true for Prussia in 1807 as it had been for France in 1792. The French experience with war and revolution was the primary factor that conditioned the Clausewitz response to defeat. The transformation of the French army would serve as model, however incomplete Prussia's emulation, for the new Prussian army.

Clausewitz evaluation of the transformation of war by the French provides insight into the meaning of policy. Participation of the individual French citizen in a war "handed back to the people," implies that policy, and its extension war, is made and carried out by citizens. Participation in the army is a political act, an act of policy, on the part of an individual. Mass participation by revolutionary soldiers pushes war toward the absolute.

By revolutionary methods, the French had burned away the old concept of war, as if with acid. They unleashed the terrible power of war from its former confines. Now it moved in its naked form dragging passive force with it..War was handed back to the people, from whom it had been taken away in part,..Now war had thrown off its shackles. What would be built upon this broader and firmer basis would only become apparent little by little.³¹

Clausewitz's statement is prophetic when viewed from the perspective of modern war. Clausewitz anticipated the mass

³¹Clausewitz, *War*, 228.

citizen armies and the degree of political mobilization achieved by national states in the 20th century.

4

The French Revolution was a nation-wide convulsion as irresistible in its effects as a volcanic eruption-- Napoleon

The transformation of the French military in the years 1792-1806 paralleled that of French society. The radicalism and euphoria, so characteristic of the early years of the Republic and the revolutionary army, gave way to the order, reason and technical virtuosity of the Napoleonic empire. The political radicalism of revolutionary France in which "Tens of thousands of heads had to be lopped off by the guillotine to assure the complete solidarity of the French nation,"³² was matched by an equivalent military radicalism. Massacres of more than eight-thousand *emigres* and Spanish prisoners of war took place on the order of the Convention.³³ Revolutionaries willing to initiate a reign of terror also had no qualms about prosecuting war to its fullest extent. Jacobin egalitarianism, as expressed by Robespierre, would rather "see ten-thousand men perish than a principle."³⁴ The

³²Gerhard Ritter, The Sword and the Scepter (Miami: University of Miami Press, 1989) 44.

³³Ritter, Sword, 45.

³⁴Alfred Vagts, A History of Militarism (New York: Free Press 1958) 114.

radicalism of French Revolution, which Clausewitz detested, provided a concrete practical example of the specter of war pushed by political considerations to its limits. "One might wonder whether there is any truth at all in our concept of the absolute character of war were it not for the fact that with our own eyes we have seen warfare achieve this state of perfection."³⁵

"The French Revolution was the first modern movement where the people sought to worship themselves outside any Christian or dynastic frame work."³⁶ This self-worship, in order to defend the Revolution, enabled the *levee en masse*, which in turn enabled the formation of mass armies. The Revolution became synonymous with the country. Enemies of the revolution also became class enemies, and therefore enemies of France and the people.

Self-worship also initiated specific changes in military tactics for both technical and ideological reasons. Technically, the untrained draftees could not master, without extensive training, the intricacies of formal military drill that had been utilized by the *Ancien Regime*. Throughout the rest of Europe, "the drill of the parade ground actually was used on the battlefield," and not as an instrument of indoctrination and

³⁵Clausewitz, *War*, 580.

³⁶J. Christopher Herold, *The Mind of Napoleon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955) 12.

regimentation of behavior as it is used today.³⁷ The individual soldier should, in the words of the 18th century French Marshal Maurice de Saxe, "be transformed into machines, which can take on life only through the voices of their officers."³⁸

Unable to train and fight in the old manner, the revolutionary soldiers of France, as their contemporaries in the American Revolution, invented new methods. Henceforth the untrained were "led to attack in deep columns, a formation which called for less drill-instilled order, and were preceded and flanked by swarms of *tirailleurs*"³⁹ The *tirailleurs*, or skirmishers, provided the firepower the column could not provide. Scharnhorst compared French tactics to the Prussian as follows:

The physical agility and high intelligence .
of the common man enables the French *tirailleurs*
to profit from all advantages offered by the
terrain and the general situation, while the
phlegmatic Germans, Bohemians, and Dutch form on
open ground and do nothing but what their officer
orders them to do...⁴⁰

This system was both more mobile and more flexible than the old linear tactics epitomized by Frederick the Great's army. In addition, the massed fire tactics of Frederick II,

³⁷Gunther E. Rothenberg The Art of Warfare in the Age of Napoleon, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 15.

³⁸paret, York, 18.

³⁹vagts, Militarism, 115

⁴⁰paret, York, 77.

with opposing "walking batteries" blasting away at close range, had resulted in casualties of up to 50%.⁴¹ The skirmisher's use of available cover also improved the soldier's prospects for survival on the battlefield. Citizen soldiers "indoctrinated now, and for a long time to come with the idea that he as an individual was entitled to live."⁴²

The general chaos and breakdown the French army experienced in revolution led to another innovation. The armies of absolutism relied on the baggage train and on the establishment of magazines as their principle source of supply. The French army in revolution could not rely on regular deliveries of supplies, and in fact suffered greatly because of the breakdown of any coherent supply system. Typically, this condition was exploited by leaders such as Napoleon, as his address to the army of Italy illustrates:

Soldiers, you are in tatters, hungry; the government owes you everything and can give you nothing...I will lead you into the most fertile plains in the world. Rich provinces and great cities will be in your power; there you will find honor, fame and riches. Soldiers of the Army of Italy, will you be found lacking in courage or loyalty?⁴³

To survive in these circumstances the revolutionary armies lived off the land. Foraging became a major pre-

⁴¹Rothenburg, *Warfare*, 12.

⁴²Vagts, *Militarism*, 111.

⁴³Herold, *Mind*, 217.

occupation of the French soldiers. Clausewitz relates that the "French sent their soldiers into the field and drove their generals into battle--feeding, reinforcing, and stimulating their armies by having them procure, steal, and loot everything they needed."⁴⁴

Abandonment of the depot system and baggage train increased the mobility of the French many times over. Freed from the constraints of a traditional supply system, the French were able continually to outmaneuver their opponents both tactically and strategically. In addition enemy territory was expected to bear much of the costs of waging war.

The service least affected by the revolution was the artillery, the most technically advanced service. The artillery had the highest percentage of officers drawn from the bourgeoisie. Artillery officers generally owed their positions to their abilities rather than to social status or origins. Technicians in the army, as well as those in French bureaucracy, tended to support the Republic as the *Ancien Regime* had not provided them with rewards commensurate to their special skills and ambitions. Less affected by the emigration of officers drawn from the nobility than the rest of the army, the artillery was primarily responsible for the successful defense of France

⁴⁴Clausewitz, On War, 313.

in the early years of the Revolution.⁴⁵ Elevation of the artillery to a position superior in status to both the cavalry and the infantry took place in 1797.⁴⁶

The most famous technician to rise through the ranks of the military due to his merit was Napoleon himself, the ultimate example of how tradition had been overcome by the revolution. This lesson could not have been lost on Clausewitz, whose brother had been insultingly turned away from service with the Prussian artillery by Frederick II in 1786, because of his bourgeois origins.⁴⁷

In addition to realizing a modern tactical doctrine, superior mobility and a technical elite, the French army in revolution also acquired a new strategic goal. An unlimited political aim, the exportation of revolution, expressed itself in the prosecution of unlimited wars: wars that were unlimited in that they were designed to achieve the complete destruction of the enemy's military power.⁴⁸ Napoleon's strategy has been described as "the very epitome of resolute militancy"⁴⁹ The contrast between the unlimited political goals of revolutionary France and the

⁴⁵Ross, Victory, 33. see David G. Chandler, The Campaigns of Napoleon (New York: Macmillan, 1868), 357-385 for a complete account of the evolution of French artillery from the revolution through Napoleon.

⁴⁶Rothenberg, Warfare, 108.

⁴⁷Paret, State, 14.

⁴⁸Ibid., 32.

⁴⁹Ritter, Sword, 47.

limited aims of the old states of Europe is no less striking than the contrast between Napoleon's wars of conquest and the "gentleman's war" as practiced in Frederick II's time. According to Clausewitz:

"in the days of the Silesian campaigns, war was still an affair for governments alone...The Generals opposing Frederick the Great were acting on instructions--which implied that caution was one of their distinguishing characteristics. But now the opponent of the Austrians and Prussians was--to put it bluntly--the God of War himself."⁵⁰

This new political aim was reinforced by a radical political ideology. Propaganda became a necessary aid in organizing the population and popularizing the government and the wars of revolution. National honor, moral justice and the liberation of fellow European citizens from feudalism turned the wars of the revolution into wars of ideas. As Joachim Murat saw it "the use of ideas in raising and inspiring armies...(is) an indispensable part of domestic troubles and foreign war."⁵¹

The changes brought by the French revolution greatly affected the nature of war. War as practiced by the French Republic and by Napoleon as "heir and tamer of the Revolution,"⁵² resulted in "twenty years of victories"⁵³

⁵⁰Clausewitz, *War*, 583.

⁵¹R. W. Phipps, *The Armies of the First French Republic*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1928), 278.

⁵²Ritter, *Sword*,

⁵³Clausewitz, *War*, 408.

for the French. Clausewitz summed up the changes in war brought about by the French Revolution as follows:

Suddenly war again became the business of the people--a people of thirty millions, all of whom considered themselves to be citizens...The people became a participant in war...the full weight of the nation was thrown into the balance. The resources and efforts now available for use surpassed all conventional limits: nothing now impeded the vigor with which war could be waged, and consequently the opponents of France faced the utmost peril.⁵⁴

4

Between states there is neither law nor right save the law of the strongest--Fichte.

Military and diplomatic humiliation clearly demonstrated a major failure on the part of the Prussian state. The practical and technical reasons for the humiliation had been made clear, while the root causes of failure were open to interpretation.

The rigid "parade-ground" methods of the Frederickian system proved themselves inferior to the fluid mobility of the French. The Prussian canton system, which had excluded entire provinces from conscription, had also proved inferior to the methods of the French, who were able to raise mass armies through universal service. The "least trained branch of the Prussian army,"⁵⁵ the Prussian Artillery, who dispersed their pieces at the brigade level,

⁵⁴Clausewitz, *War*, 592.

⁵⁵Shanahan, *Reforma*, 22.

proved inadequate to the French, who fought in mass formations with weapons that were technically superior.⁵⁶

Military humiliation also demonstrated, to those capable of thoughtful and unbiased reflection, the unserviceability of the Prussian economy and the provincial character of her social system. The Prussian state could not support a mass army nor could it successfully wage a modern technical war without reform of its absolutism.

In evaluating the causes of defeat in 1806, the reformers of the Prussian army typically differed in their conclusions regarding the nature of and reasons for failure. Conservative generals such as York von Watenburg, Karl Knesebeck and Count H. C. von Lottum, saw no fundamental flaws in the Prussian system as such. Poor leadership and bad luck had led to defeat and no basic changes in the system were required.⁵⁷ The opposite view was based on the belief that military solutions were insufficient and that defeat was the result of the corrupt political policies of the Prussian monarchy. This radical view is best expressed by Clausewitz, who wrote that "the victories of the Revolution are chiefly to be ascribed to the erroneous policy of the Governments by which it was opposed."⁵⁸

⁵⁶Rothenberg, Warfare, 75.

⁵⁷Craig, Politics, 38.

⁵⁸Clausewitz, War, 408.

The Military Reorganization Committee reconciled the proponents of these two contradictory evaluations of utter defeat, one group dedicated to little or no change, the other to a revolution in policy. The committee was initially composed of members of both camps, but came to be dominated by reformers such as Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, Herman von Boyen and C. W. von Grolman. "Reconciliation" was achieved by the reassignment of conservative members of the commission.⁵⁸

The "erroneous policy" that von Clausewitz identified as the cause of defeat was primarily political. The effects of the French Revolution "were evidently brought about much less through new methods and views introduced by the French in the conduct of War than through the changes which it wrought in state-craft and civil administration, in the character of Governments, in the condition of the people, etc."⁶⁰

The reformers saw technical and tactical inferiority as the result of inferior political policy, not as the result of a French monopoly on military prowess. Technical reform of the backward Prussian army required social and political change.

Attempts to change the mechanistic fire tactics inherited from Frederick encountered two major problems:

⁵⁸Shanahan, Reforms, 101-102.

⁶⁰Clausewitz, War, 408.

natural antipathy to change on the part of the Junker class and the severity of Prussian military service. The Junkers saw something valuable in the Frederickian tradition of drill, honorable and distinctly Prussian. "The platoon fire was the true palladium of the Prussians," while the new tactics "might be good for the French, a vivacious race, it dishonors the Germans...it means dishonoring their national character by taking their famous firing away from them."⁸¹

In reaction to this misconception Scharnhorst "employed the word 'line' as a synonym for military reaction," and provided realists with an ideological basis for reform, noting "the pre-Jacobin existence of light troops in Prussia."⁸² By linking tactical reform to the legacy of Frederick, however misleading the factual basis for such claims, Scharnhorst portrayed reform as a logical extension of tradition. The statement is also revealing in that it illustrates that opposition to reform was not a result of honest disagreement regarding technical questions, but was in fact an ideological struggle regarding social change. Garrison duty required that Clausewitz practice the famous Prussian drill. Drill was "the whole basis of the Prussian method of fighting war,

⁸¹Vogts, *Militarism*, 135.

⁸²Paret, *York*, 244.

and Clausewitz drilled it and drilled it until he was sick of it."⁸³ Clausewitz became most critical of the king at this time. One can only speculate on the debilitating effect that constant drill had on the morale of imaginative officers like Clausewitz, who wished to develop new tactical methods to deal with those of the French.

The incorporation of new tactics also required a narrowing of the gulf between the individual soldier and the state. Frederick's army had "consisted of demoralized men, often the dregs of society, press-ganged foreigners and prisoners of war, unwilling peasants and unreliable mercenaries, the whole motley crew held together by violent brutal discipline and ferocious punishments."⁸⁴ Such an army was unable to operate in wooded areas, march by night or perform effective reconnaissance, as large numbers of men would take the opportunity to desert.⁸⁵

The open order of an expanded light infantry, Prussia's answer to the French *tirailleurs*, also increased the opportunity for desertion. Abandonment of or less reliance on the baggage train also had the same result. Unlike the French soldier, who regarded himself as a part of the nation with an interest in the fate of that nation, the typical soldier in Prussian service had no such loyalties.

⁸³Parkinson, *Clausewitz*, 30.

⁸⁴Leonard Krieger, *The German Idea of Freedom* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), 21.

⁸⁵Kitchen, *History*, 22.

It is difficult to foster love of country in an army consisting of 50% mercenaries. In addition the ill effects of brutal treatment on the patriotism of the Prussian soldiers is not hard to imagine. Peter Paret describes the logic of such brutality as follows: "If deserters were whipped or executed even in peacetime, it seemed a small matter to use the cane or the flat of the sword on soldiers who were awkward at drill."⁶⁶ Gneisenau, writing in 1807, described the failure of the Prussian State to incorporate its citizens as willing participants in the state: "every effort has been made to make men useful to the state machine...but so far less has been done to make them free and noble and independent so that they believe that they are part of the whole and that they possess a value in themselves."⁶⁷

The gap that existed between the State and the people also existed between the army and people. In contrast to the melding of army and people that would exist in unified Germany, the mass of the population in Prussia regarded "the army as an alien establishment serving the king rather than the land."⁶⁸ This gap not only existed among the peasants subject to conscription, but also among the wealthy and the middle class. A commercial society in

⁶⁶Paret, York, 18.

⁶⁷Craig, Politics, 41.

⁶⁸Craig, Politics, 40.

Magdeburg had a rule stating "Dogs and Officers not Admitted."⁶⁹

Of all the elements of the Prussian state, only the nobility engaged in a relationship with its government and army based on conviction rather than blind obedience.⁷⁰ The peasantry and the bourgeoisie did not participate in national life to the same extent as they did in Britain and France. The nobility did not assimilate significant numbers of commoners into the noble class. By Imperial court decision the peasantry was undiscoverable as an estate in the German constitution.⁷¹

A reduction of the tensions and the divisions that existed between class, army and people could be partially achieved, as in the French model, through appeals to patriotism. The danger to the state, as evidenced by military occupation, would seem to provide such an opportunity.

The advocacy of patriotism and support of the state by its citizens would seem a policy somewhat beyond ideological contention. Such was not the case. Suspicions about the utility and propriety of releasing national passion were endemic in the opponents of reform. Prussian

⁶⁹Goerlitz, Staff, 32.

⁷⁰Friedrich Meinecke, The Age of German Liberation, 1793-1815 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 12.

The Prussian kings had no compelling reason, until the advent of Napoleon, to risk their fragile state and army by subjecting them to the rigors of "ungentlemanly" war. The fact that the Napoleonic revolution threatened both the monarchy and the state convinced the Prussian leaders to make "war a concern of the people, and with half her former population, without money or credit, she mobilized a force twice as large as he had in 1806,"⁷⁶ and became "foremost among those states which combined to defeat the Corsican."⁷⁷ Preservation of the Prussian state demanded reform. Prussia became a great power through militarism and could remain a great power only through its maintenance. French imperialism provided the catalyst for reform.

6

All imperialists are paper tigers--Mao

Scharnhorst led the reform movement in the military. Scharnhorst entrusted Clausewitz as his adjutant with making suggestions and with the drafting of his proposals and plans.⁷⁸ In June of 1807 Clausewitz authored, with Crown Prince August, a memorandum which contained many of

⁷⁸Clausewitz, War, 582.

⁷⁷Craig, Politics, 37.

⁷⁶Parkinson, Clausewitz 87. Parkinson describes Clausewitz as Scharnhorst's secretary. Shanahan, Reforma, describes Clausewitz as his adjutant P. 101.

the ideas essential to the reform movement. The memorandum influenced the king's "Guidelines for the Reorganization of the Army," which included "suggestions" for the formation of light troops, incorporation of the divisional system and also raised the question of admittance to the officer corps of the *bourgeoisie*. The Clausewitz memorandum contained all of these proposals and also recommended conscription without exemption, an end to corporal punishment and further proposed that all soldiers be made eligible for promotion regardless of class.⁷⁸ The actual specific effects of the memorandum on the king and on the Military Reorganization Committee can not be ascertained. It is sufficient to say that it stands as a basic summary of the spirit of the Prussian military reformers at that time. The memorandum advocated a mixture of practical, technical, social and political change.

The implementation of most of the practical and technical changes suggested by Clausewitz took place by the end of 1808. The king, who was not ideologically opposed to the divisional reorganization and the unification of administration in the Ministry of War, silenced the critics of reform. The question of the composition of the officer corps and the reform of the Canton system was of course another matter.

⁷⁸Perkinson, Clausewitz, 88.

A law dating from August 6, 1808 signaled the first significant military reform of political consequence. The Prussians achieved the democratization of the officer corps, admitting citizens of any class who met specific educational requirements. Few except those of noble birth could meet such requirements, limiting the initial impact of this reform.^{e0} The recall of Stein, dismissed only a few weeks after Jena, aided the military reformers in their endeavours to achieve social and political reform.

Stein's view that "We must train the nation to conduct its own affairs, and to grow out of its present condition of childhood in which an overbearing government wishes to control the people,"^{e2} was in complete accordance with the views of Scharnhorst. In a letter to von Clausewitz, Scharnhorst described his view of the purpose of reform: "to kindle a sense of independence in the nation; we must enable the nation to understand itself and to take control of its own affairs"^{e3}

The partnership of Stein and Scharnhorst succeeded. Both realized that the problems of the Prussian army "were, in fact a terrible judgement against the political and military system of the past."^{e3} The most shameful part of the recent disaster being "the fact that the Prussian

^{e0}Shanehan, Reform, 128.

^{e1}Parkinson, Clausewitz, 100.

^{e2}Ibid, 100.

people had so openly disassociated themselves from their government."^{e4} Stein's appointment saw the first major attempt to bridge the gap between people and government. The abolition of serfdom was proclaimed in October of 1807, to be followed in November of 1808 by institution of the local government of cities. The abolition of hereditary servitude followed Stein's departure in 1810.^{e5}

The question of universal service and the establishment of the *Landwehr*, or militia, provided the reformers, both political and military, with their greatest challenge. Not until 1813, after the defeat of Napoleon in Russia, the defection of General York and the establishment of an East Prussian *Landwehr*, was a country wide militia established.^{ee} Of the militia Clausewitz wrote:

Prussia taught us in 1813 that rapid efforts can increase an army's strength six times if we make use of a militia, and, what is more, that the militia can fight as well in foreign countries as at home. All these cases have shown what an enormous contribution the heart and temper of a nation can make to the sum total of its politics, war potential, and fighting strength. Now that governments have become conscious of these resources, we cannot expect them to remain unused in the future, whether the war is fought in self-defense or in order to satisfy intense ambition.^{e7}

^{e3}Craig, Politics, 40.

^{e4}Ibid, 40.

^{e5}Heinecke, Liberation, 80-81.

^{e6}Craig, Politics, 59-80. See Shanahan, Reforma, for an account of the politics of organizing the *Landwehr*.

^{e7}Clausewitz, War, 220.

Clausewitz's experience observing the political implications of reform reinforced his conclusions about the political nature of war. Clausewitz also concluded that political policy was superior to military policy, and supported social and political change to strengthen the state. The radicalism of Clausewitz grew from patriotism tempered by concern for the state.

5

To avert my gaze, to be anything at all apart from fatherland and national honor. Everything I am or might be I owe to these two earthly gods and without them nothing would be left of me but an empty shell--Karl von Clausewitz

The reformers believed Prussia's inferior political and social system and its absolutist policy resulted in defeat. The Prussian reformers however, were not revolutionaries. Clausewitz himself, among the most critical of the reformers, was a conservative, concerned primarily with preserving the Prussian army and state.⁸⁸

Ideologically, many of the reformers were committed to the idea that the liberation of Germany, as opposed to that of Prussia alone, should be the primary goal. Patriotism could provide the impetus to unite the nation against a common enemy. Nationalist war aims, limited to the destruction of Napoleon and the liberation, was a political policy that was easily understandable by the masses and

⁸⁸Parkinson, Clausewitz, 302.

would not threaten the state. That an intellectual basis for such a movement existed is evidenced by the writings of Fichte, Arndt and Jahn. The birth of nationalism in Germany was a force that could not be resisted, even by the King of Prussia. Arndt was one of the first to call upon the German people to revolt against Napoleon, without consulting their rulers.⁸⁸ Frederick Ludwig Jahn, advocate of defensive war, derided wars of conquest as inhuman and foolish. The standing armies that made such wars possible were to be disbanded, the defense of the nation to be borne by the people in a militia.⁸⁹ Fichte's anti-monarchist writings, indicative of the politicized liberal intellectual, attempted to synthesize the needs of the state with the inalienable rights of the individual.⁹¹

Most of the major figures of the reform movement, like Fichte, Arndt and Jahn, were not Prussians by birth. The Prussian noble class viewed Stein, Scharnhorst and Gneisenau with a certain amount of suspicion because of their non-Prussian origins. Frederick the III of Hohenzollern, and his aristocratic supporters, were more interested in dynastic preservation than in any specific "German" nationalism. Ultimately nationalism became

⁸⁸Meinecke, Liberation, 20.

⁸⁹Meinecke, Ibid., 40.

⁹¹Krieger, Freedom, 178.

a force out of the control of the monarchy. In 1812 York's unauthorized defection from French service followed mass resignations of Prussian officers. The birth of German nationalism provided one aspect of policy necessary to wage total war. The will power of Clausewitz and Gneisenau provided the other aspect of policy Prussia needed to wage total war.

Metternich's policy of balance of power threatened to break apart the coalition raised against Napoleon. Austrian fear of Prussian and Russian power delineated a limited goal in Austria's war against the French. Destruction of French power was not desirable, nor was the abdication of Napoleon a pre-requisite for the Austrians to make peace.⁸²

The Prussians, particularly Gneisenau, demanded a march on Paris. Clausewitz wrote at the time "operations must continue without delay until the peace...a rebellion in the army and in the provinces would meet us half way."⁸³ Field Marshall Karl zu Schwarzenberg, the Austrian commander commented, "Blucher and still more Gneisenau, are urging the march on Paris with such perfectly childish rage that they trample underfoot every single rule of warfare, Regardless of the rear, and of their right flanks, they do nothing but plan parties in the *Palais*

⁸²Chandler, *Campaigns*, 847.

⁸³Parkinson, *Clausewitz*, 241.

*Royal.*⁸⁴ The Prussians had found their unlimited political goal enabling the prosecution of total war.

Conscription and the *Landwehr* had enabled the construction of a mass army of 162,000 men. Prussian insistence on the total destruction of Napoleon led to the signing of Quadruple Alliance of Chaumont, in which Prussia, Russia, Austria and England agreed not to pursue a separate peace with the French and to enforce the peace for twenty years.⁸⁵ The capture of Paris in 1814 and the defeat of Napoleon in the hundred days campaign are testament to the success of the reformers. The fate and subsequent history of the reforms are testament to the resilience of Prussian conservatism and due to the method of reform itself.

6

It is possible that sooner or later we will have to defend the King of Prussia against his own army--Czar Alexander I

An important difference existed between the "destruction" of Prussian social conventions and those which had taken place in France. Destruction did not come through revolution from below but through reform from above. The conditions necessary for national rebirth did not require a reign of terror. The absolute Prussian

⁸⁴Ibid., 245.

⁸⁵Craig, *Politics*, 85.

monarchy had existed in its pre-1789 form in order to support the army. If preservation of the army required a re-ordering of the social structure of the state, that would be accomplished as well.

The first condition of the Prussian military reforms, because of the social changes such reforms necessitated, was their limitation. While serfdom was abolished, conscription proclaimed, and the brutality and length of service moderated, all of these reforms were in practice incomplete. Sufficient to preserve both Prussia as a state and the Hohenzollerns as a dynasty, the reform movement was stillborn. The structure of the state, the power and conservatism of the aristocracy and the backward nature of the peasantry, all conspired to prevent true revolutionary reform from occurring.

The reforms implemented in Prussia were not initiated by social revolution from below, as in the French case, but from above as a reaction to military disaster. The following quote, by an unnamed Prussian minister to the French ambassador, however overstated, is illustrative of the views of the Prussian ruling class regarding the method of reform.

The wholesome revolution which you have carried through from below will take place in Prussia from above....In a few years there will no longer be a privileged class in Prussia."⁸⁸

⁸⁸Frederick Hertz, The German Public Mind in the Nineteenth Century, (Ottawa: Rowman and Littlefield, 1975), 20.

Social change was advocated more for its utility rather than for any intrinsic moral value. Military reform addressed specific social problems in order to achieve specific military goals. If it had been possible to defeat Napoleon and withstand the forces for liberalization and change unleashed by the French Revolution, then the Prussian State would have continued in its previous form.

Following the defeat of Napoleon, the forces of reaction immediately attacked the *Landwehr* as unnecessary and expensive. By 1819 the *Landwehr* had been largely incorporated into the professional standing army.⁸⁷ The link between the army and people had been effectively severed and was not to be renewed until the reintroduction of the reforms during the wars of Bismarck⁸⁸

The reform movement reinforced the idea that state power could overcome the need for change without the destructiveness of revolution. Change could be controlled and directed to serve the needs of state and army. Social and political aspirations could be utilized or rejected at will and became just another tool of the state. Krieger describes the reform movement as follows:

It was an inclusive, conjunctive movement which rejected the either or in favor of the both and ; it added liberal arrangements to the existing state and society, asserted the inherent compatibility of these and indeed of all

⁸⁷Craig, *Politics*, 81.

⁸⁸Parkinson, *Clausewitz*, 288.

political principles and interests with one another."⁸⁸ \

This revolution from above left grave social and political problems unresolved and their solutions deferred until Hitler's reordering and "democratization" of the German state and army in the 1930's. At this time class war, regional favoritism and Junker domination of the German army and state ended.

For Clausewitz, the French revolution and the Prussian revolution from above were evidence of the rebirth of absolute total war. The power of the state now conspired to organize and popularize war among politicized citizens who regarded the state as their own. The sixteen years following Waterloo, until the death of Clausewitz in 1831, were spent in the systematic development of these ideas. Clausewitz's relative success as a philosopher for all times is illustrated in the parallels that exist between his work and that of Mao Tse-tung, perhaps the only true philosopher of war produced in the 20th century.

⁸⁸krieger, *Freedom*, 140.

CHAPTER TWO

The first capitalist that I struggled with was my father--
Mao

Mao Tse-tung's development as a military theorist took place in an atmosphere of almost constant armed struggle. Immersed in revolution from 1911, Mao wrote his most important military works in the late 1930s, relying on the practical knowledge of twenty years of conflict as the basis of theory. Mao's theories, derived from practice, exhibit characteristics both uniquely Chinese and strikingly original. In the main, however, his theories are Clausewitzian. Congruent experiences with revolution, Mao from the inside and Clausewitz from the outside, led each to reach similar conclusions regarding the nature of war.

Mao Tse-tung's experience with revolution, like that of Clausewitz, began at age thirteen. Mao reports that he participated in a "United Front," consisting of himself, his mother, brother and the family's hired labourer, in order to oppose the "Ruling Power," Mao's strict father, Mao Jen-shen.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰Edgar Snow, Red Star Over China (New York: Garden City Publishing Co., 1938), 114.

Mao cites a division in this "United Front of the Opposition," as the source of his first experience with revolutionary tactics: "My mother advocated a policy of indirect attack. She criticized any overt display of emotion and attempts at open rebellion against the Ruling Power. She said it was not the Chinese way." Mao's more direct tactics also produced good results: "I learned that when I defended my rights by open rebellion my father relented, but when I remained meek and submissive he only cursed and beat me the more."¹⁰¹

Edgar Snow reports that Mao "used all these political terms humorously...laughing as he recalled such incidents," but a political dimension does exist in the conflicts with his father. Mao describes his mother as "a kind woman, generous and sympathetic, and ever ready to share what she had. She pitied the poor and often gave them rice...during famines. But she could not do so when my father was present."¹⁰² Mao viewed these conflicts as "dialectical struggle," and "did not sympathize" with his father, "a rich farmer" and a rice merchant.¹⁰³

Unlike Clausewitz who identified with a class and privilege that was perhaps not his by birth, Mao "learned to hate" his father and the privilege associated with his

¹⁰¹ Snow, Star, 115.

¹⁰² Ibid., 114.

¹⁰³ Ibid 118.

family's modest wealth. Mao was repelled by his father because he identified him with corrupt and outdated values of old China. The social situation in his own house and village mirrored that of the rest of the nation, a situation that Mao believed should change. Mao's description of the "class structure" of his home life is an indication of the relationship that Mao perceived between politics and concrete life experience.

The Oedipal implications of the father-son relationship is a subject of much speculation.¹⁰⁴ Given the climate of social ferment and political disintegration that existed in China in the first decade of the 20th century, generational conflicts were perhaps not uncommon.¹⁰⁵ Of more interest is the fact that Mao related the conflicts of his childhood to Edgar Snow in political terms, the implication being that his class and political consciousness date from these experiences in adolescence. It also suggests that by the time of Mao's interviews with Edgar Snow he saw a political dimension in all relationships, even in close personal ones.

¹⁰⁴Lowell Dittmer, "Mao and the Politics of Revolutionary Morality," Asian Survey 27, (March 1987): 318. See also Lucian Pye, Mao Tse-tung: The man in the Leader (New York: Basic Books, 1978), and Han Suyin, The Morning Deluge (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1972) for discussions of this issue. Dittmer considers the Oedipal complex "quite explicit," Pye emphasized Mao's relationship with his mother and Han Suyin sees conflict between generations inevitable in the atmosphere of a changing China.

Famine in Changsha resulted in a rebellion of "ordinary people like my own family." The governor arrested and beheaded the leaders of the uprisings, events "which influenced my whole life,"¹⁰⁵ Conflict between a powerful landlord and the Ke Lao Hui secret society directly affected Mao's family: "One time the Ke Lao Hui robbed our family. I said that they were right to do so, for people had nothing."¹⁰⁷ Revolts, riots, banditry, famine and class division intruded on Mao's family life and conditioned the development of his social and political conscience.

Mao's schooling began at the age of eight. He later claimed that his hatred of Confucius began at this young age.¹⁰⁸ Mao preferred tales of banditry and adventure such as Story of the Marshes, Romance of the Three Kingdoms and Journey to the West, books which "did more than anything else...to color Zedong's mental world."¹⁰⁹ From the Story of the Marshes, the great traditional novel of peasant revolt,¹¹⁰ Mao developed a strong sense of romanticism

¹⁰⁵Suyin, Deluge, 112.

¹⁰⁸Snow, Star, 117.

¹⁰⁷Stuart Sohran ed. Chairman Mao Talks to the People (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), 219.

¹⁰⁸Robert Payne, Mao Tse-tung (New York: Weybright & Talley, 1968), 30.

¹⁰⁹Ross Terrill, Mao (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 8.

¹¹⁰Stuart Sohran, Mao Tse-Tung (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1968), 21.

regarding struggle against corruption and tyranny. He also gained his first exposure to guerrilla tactics from this story of bandits who "gather in a mountain fortress to resist tyranny."¹¹¹

In 1910 Mao traveled to Changsha to continue his education. Mao freely admitted his vulnerability to the values and prejudices of "bourgeois and petty bourgeois feelings implanted in me in the bourgeois schools."¹¹² He believed "intellectuals were the only clean people in the world, while in comparison workers and peasants were dirty."¹¹³ Mao's exposure to the western idea of socialism, "social reform with vague collectivist overtones," occurred at this time, "although Marxism was not even a spot on the horizon."¹¹⁴ This exposure probably moderated his views on the peasantry, as did his deepening nationalism.

A desire personally to express nationalistic feelings and military heroism inspired Mao to join the Hunan revolutionary army when opposition to the Manchus turned to military revolt, in October of 1911.¹¹⁵ Mao, as a common soldier, received the only formal military education of

¹¹¹Suyin, Deluge, 57.

¹¹²Mao Tse-tung, Selected Works, vol. 3 (New York: International Publishers, 1955), 73.

¹¹³Mao, Works, 73.

¹¹⁴Terrill, Mao, 23.

¹¹⁵Suyin, Deluge, 37.

his life at this time. Significantly, Mao refused to join a student regiment, preferring the company of illiterate peasant soldiers.¹¹⁶

In 1917 Mao led the student's volunteer army, defending the school against local warlords. Mao employed a device well known in the Hunanese countryside, cutting bamboos in such a way as to blind anyone attempting to scale the walls.¹¹⁷

Mao published his first article in April, 1917, *A Study of Physical Education*, in which he lamented the weakness of the people and state.

Our nation is wanting in strength. The military spirit has not been encouraged...If our bodies are not strong we will be afraid as soon as we see enemy soldiers, and then how can we attain our goals and make ourselves respected?¹¹⁸

Mao's conclusion: "The principle aim of physical education is military heroism."¹¹⁹ In this publication Mao expresses intense nationalism, anti-imperialism and links achievement of policy goals to a military means. The historical circumstance of foreign presence and China's weakness radicalized Mao politically by his twenty-fourth year.

¹¹⁶Terrill, *Mao*, 24.

¹¹⁷Schram, *Mao Tse-tung*, 43.

¹¹⁸Stuart Schram ed. *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung* (New York: Praeger, 1968), 152.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*

Mao's identification with heroic, military solutions to China's problems are illustrated in incidents and writings from his pre-Marxist period. Also evident is an understanding of the relationship between military power and politics and a deep concern for the fate of China. From the beginning of Mao's experience, armed struggle accompanied the political struggle being waged for Chinese regeneration. Chaos and disintegration provided the background for Mao's formative years as he, along with thousands of other educated Chinese youths, sought to discover a way to bring China into the 20th century, defeat the warlords and end imperialist humiliations.

The Russian Revolution confronted Mao with an ideology which translated theory into action. Mao re-read the works of Marx and Lenin and speculated on their potential as a model for China. If Russia, a large and backward nation, could transform itself through revolution, China might follow the example. By 1920 Mao considered himself a Marxist and advocated revolution, as opposed to "several dozen years of education."¹²⁰

In the works of Marx and Lenin, Mao found the political means to transform China. He was yet to define a military means applicable to China.

¹²⁰Siao-Yu, Mao Tse-tung and I Were Beggars (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1958), 54.

As you would not use good iron to make a nail, so you would not use a good man to make a soldier--Traditional Chinese Proverb

The armies of the warlords with which Mao first came into contact had a great deal in common with those of Prussia in 1792. A warlord, like a ruler in absolutist Europe, commanded what amounted to a private army. Each decided policy, made alliances, waged war and pursued foreign relations independently. The primary goal of policy concerned the preservation and extension of power. Each developed political administrations dedicated to exploiting agrarian economies in order to build up military power. Each in effect waged class war against its own citizens as they sought alliances favoring one segment of the population at the expense of another. Wu P'ei Fu, who controlled Mao's home province of Hunan from 1920 until 1926, ruled over a population greater than that of Napoleonic France and commanded an army twice the size of the one fielded by Napoleon at Jena.¹²¹

¹²¹Odoric Wou, Militarism in Modern China (Dawson: Australian National University Press, 1978), 81. Wou credits Wu P'ei Fu's army with a strength of 375,000. See Terrill. Mao, p. 54 for a comparison of the population of Napoleonic France with Hunan. Wu P'ei Fu's principle power base. Terrill (p. 2) also describes pre-revolutionary China as "the *ancien regime* of one fifth of mankind."

The warlords, like the minor princess of Europe, "loaned" or sold the services of their soldiers. Political alliance as well as money bought service. Considered the personal property of their leaders, the soldiers of the warlords, like those of absolutist Europe, subscribed to no particular political belief or ideology. The warlords repressed larger social or national goals, sacrificing national unity to the point where foreign governments dealt with individual warlords as separate entities.¹²²

China's warlords treated soldiers even more abysmally than Prussia had treated drafted peasants, a condition that did not change with the domination of Chiang Kai-shek, the ultimate warlord. "Going into the army was usually a death sentence, more men died on their way to the army, ... than after getting into it."¹²³ In both armies the landless peasant, the debtor and impressed prisoners of war made up the bulk of the rank and file. The eighteenth century spectacle of illiterate Prussian peasant draftees, dragged in chains through the streets on their way to the army, was repeated in twentieth century China.¹²⁴ Similar concerns motivated Chinese soldiers and Prussia's peasant levees and mercenaries. Evans Carlson's observation that

¹²²Wou, Militarism, 148.

¹²³Theodore H. White and Annalee Jacoby, Thunder out of China, (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1948), 133.

¹²⁴Evans Fordyce Carlson, The Chinese Army (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1940), 31.

the Chinese soldier "fought for the material success of the man who paid him, rather than for an ideal,"¹²⁵ is equally applicable to the soldiers of Europe before the French Revolution.

A much larger gap existed between the army and people of pre-revolutionary China than had existed in Frederick III's Prussia. Unlike Prussia where an alliance between a noble landed gentry and the monarchy assured support of the army by a powerful segment of society, in China the army and soldiers were universally maligned.¹²⁶ Warlords allied with each other, landlords, the bourgeoisie or foreigners as a matter of convenience.¹²⁷ Service in the army being unacceptable to all who could avoid it, the army became the province of the poor. Probably 70 percent of the warlords were uneducated and of very low social origins¹²⁸. Social mobility did exist to a certain extent in the Chinese army, due to its constant expansion beginning in the last decade of the nineteenth century.¹²⁹

The low social origins of the Chinese militarists did not mitigate the traditionally bad behavior of Chinese armies towards native populations. The extreme discipline

¹²⁵Carlson, *Army*, 14.

¹²⁶*Ibid.*, 3.

¹²⁷James E. Sheridan, *China in Disintegration*, (New York: The Free Press, 1975), 57-58.

¹²⁸Wou, *Militarism*, 10.

¹²⁹*Ibid.*, 11.

with which Prussian officers controlled their troops extended to the troops' relations with civilians. The system of control that prevented outrages against civilians in Prussia did not exist in China, where "to loot and rape was part of the job."¹³⁰ The brutal behavior of the armies of the Nationalists equalled that of the Japanese: "they all (Chinese near the front) said that the enemy was better than the Chinese troops. When they mentioned the Chinese troops, they felt them to be a third party and not their own troops at all."¹³¹

Mao believed the chaos of warlordism essential to the development of a successful communist movement in China. In his essay *Why is it that Red Political Power can Exist in China?* Mao wrote:

The prolonged splits and wars within the White regime provide a condition for the emergence and persistence of one or more small Red areas under the leadership of the Communist Party amidst the encirclement of the White regime.¹³²

Perhaps the dominant characteristic of warlordism and also of the Prussian state was militarism. All political concerns were subordinated to the concerns of maintaining military power at the expense of a rational foreign or domestic policy. Chiang Kai-shek's "unification" of the

¹³⁰Terrill, Mao, 100.

¹³¹White, Thunder, 144.

¹³²Mao Tse-tung, Selected Military Writings (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1988), 13.

warlord factions actually changed little. The substance of the warlord armies and politics remained the same. Following Chiang's victorious Northern Expedition, the major warlords were allowed to join the KMT and retain command of their troops. They retained independence, albeit with reduced autonomy, and also retained much of their former power.¹³³

The legacy of warlordism persisted throughout the anti-Japanese war and the revolutionary war that followed. The army of the KMT continued all of the abuses of the warlord era and its officers still used their positions for personal aggrandizement. The Eighth Route Army in the period of the second united front "operated independently...in the manner of the Kuomintang's warlord allies."¹³⁴

Early Republican China exhibited all of the social and political shortcomings of European absolutism. The warlord armies collapsed when confronted with the politically and socially unified Japanese, just as the Prussian army collapsed in its first encounters with Napoleonic France. The difference between these two situations exists only in degree. While Prussian political institutions were merely regressive, Chinese institutions disintegrated. Military failure in Republican China reflected its political

¹³³Sheridan, Disintegration, 188.

¹³⁴Mark Selden, The Yanan Way in Revolutionary China (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 138.

incoherence. While absolutist Prussia remained a competitor in the European balance of power throughout the crisis of the Napoleonic wars and reform, China suffered political collapse, occupation and humiliation by a host of nations.

9

Imitate the heroes of Liang Shan P'oo--Mao¹³⁵

Mao's first substantive experience combating warlordism occurred during Communist participation in the KMT's Northern Expedition. The Communist alliance with the KMT, the First United Front, produced a prodigious amount of activity on the part of Mao Tse-tung. As secretary of the Propaganda Department and as head of the Peasant Institute of the KMT, Mao insisted that the center of revolution "was in the countryside."¹³⁶ Neglect of the peasants by the KMT led to their association with the Communists almost by default. During the First United Front few prominent KMT leaders could be found to maintain influence in its own Peasant Department.¹³⁷

¹³⁵Schram, Mao Tse-tung, 43. Liang Shan P'oo was the name of the mountain fortress in Story of the Salt Marshes. Mao's advice to his fellow students in 1917 rejects evolution in favor of armed struggle.

¹³⁶Suyin, Daluga, 128.

¹³⁷John E. Rue, Mao Tse-tung in Opposition 1927-1935 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980), 42.

The success of the Northern Expedition in Hunan, in which CCP organized peasants played a major role, reinforced Mao's lean towards the peasantry. "Mao exulted in excess"¹³⁰ displayed by the peasants in revolution. In the end CCP success in organizing peasants and workers antagonized Chiang Kai-shek and the right wing of the KMT. In March of 1927 Chiang split with the CCP and massacred as many of its members as possible.

After the massacres the Communists indulged in an illadvised period of insurrection that killed three-fourths of the membership of Hunan's Communist party. Mao and around 1,000 followers retreated into the Chingkang mountains and established themselves in a fortress, much like the bandits in Story of the Salt Marshes.

The military struggle in the Chingkang mountains lasted nine years. During this period Mao observed and critiqued the tactics, structure and politics of the KMT and warlord armies. Mao eradicated social and political inequalities in his armies, seeking to build an efficient highly motivated force. The warlords based their "revolution" on the bourgeoisie, landlords and foreigners. Mao based his revolution on the peasantry. KMT armies and administration rapaciously extorted funds from the peasants, while "Mao had rolled back the ways of

¹³⁰Terrill, Mao, 83.

millennia,"¹³⁸ with armies that took nothing that could not be paid for. Warlord troops fought for money and power. Mao supplied his troops with compelling national and political goals. In the end the motive of defeating Japanese imperialism and solving the land problem in the countryside triumphed over mere greed. Carlson vividly described the difference between the Communist and KMT guerrillas, whose effectiveness,

depends almost entirely on the amount of ethical indoctrination which they have assimilated. If they are thoroughly disciplined and inspired with a high sense of duty, they are very effective. Without such training they tend to degenerate into bandits.¹⁴⁰

Mao's rolling back of "the ways of millennia" meant that for the first time in Chinese history the people had an army with which they could identify. If Clausewitz and the Prussian reformers "handed war back to the people," Mao gave war to the Chinese people for the first time. Hearing the phrase "our Red Army" from peasant children, Edgar Snow commented that "obviously it wasn't China."¹⁴¹ Evans Carlson described the unique place in Chinese history enjoyed by the Red army in more direct terms: "The extent

¹³⁸Terrill, *Mao*, 100.

¹⁴⁰Carlson, *Army*, 33.

¹⁴¹Snow, *Star*, 80.

to which the men of the Eighth Route Army have broken with Chinese tradition is unprecedented."¹⁴²

Mao, a peasant himself and a student of the peasantry, understood the warlord soldiers. In 1928 he described the transformation of mercenary peasant soldiers after their recruitment into the Red Army as follows:

The majority of the Red Army soldiers come from the mercenary armies, but their character changes once they are in the Red Army...The Red Army has abolished the mercenary system, making the men feel they are fighting for themselves and the people, not for somebody else.¹⁴³

Mao's soldiers did not serve in an army as much as in "a political workshop."¹⁴⁴ Mao recruited bandits and deserters from warlord and KMT armies, entrusting his political workshop with the task of conversion. Mao designed his appeals to potential Red Army recruits to overcome social inequities in the countryside and link the people and party through culpability in revolutionary acts:

First kill your reactionary superior officers; then unite with the workers, peasants, and all the toiling masses of your area to overthrow the fucking Kuomintang Government; confiscate the land of the landlord class and distribute it among the poor peasants; confiscate the food and the houses of the wealthy and distribute them among the poor...organize yourselves to run your

¹⁴²Carlson, *Army*, 42.

¹⁴³Mao, *Military*, 28.

¹⁴⁴Terrill, *Mao*, 88.

own affairs. In this way you will have created... a Soviet Government.¹⁴⁵

Essential to the survival of the Red Army, the radicalization of "enemy" soldiers not only affected the common soldier but officers as well. The most significant political radicalization of a KMT officer resulted in the famous Sian incident. Warlord Chang Hsueh-liang "responded sympathetically to the Communist appeal that Chinese should not fight Chinese," and kidnapped Chiang Kai-shek and forced his cooperation in a united front against Japan.¹⁴⁶ In contrast the KMT offered little to all but a tiny segment of the Chinese population. A head without a body, the KMT ruled through military and commercial power and with the aid of foreign governments. Personal loyalties, bribery and corruption cemented the loose alliance of warlords comprising the KMT.

Mao's policy appealed to the awakening political consciousness and nationalism of the peasants, advocating unity against the Japanese and social revolution. The Communists coordinated political and military policy to achieve support. During the anti-Japanese war:

The basic guerrilla problem lay in coordinating agrarian revolution with military victory... To attempt land redistribution prematurely merely invited severe reprisal. Yet

¹⁴⁵Schram, *Thought*, 218.

¹⁴⁶Sheridan, *Disintegration*, 254.

concrete benefits were essential if the peasants were to support the military struggle, or even distinguish the partisans from local bandits and warlord armies.¹⁴⁷

Thus Mao built a new army that exhibited none of the characteristics of the "semi-feudal" warlord armies of the nationalists. Mao's army gained popular support. The Red Army did not institute a draft but received a steady supply of volunteers. The peasants viewed the Red army as their own army and not as an alien force to be avoided.

The political failure of the KMT Government to reform itself and solve the problems of the countryside crippled its abilities to organize the Chinese people and field an effective army. Clausewitz attributed the victories of the French to "the erroneous policy of the governments by which it was opposed." The erroneous policy of the Japanese and KMT also accounted in large measure for Mao's success. Mao ascribed previous imperialist victories to a lack of policy, a problem solved in modern times by the leadership of the Communist Party:

Our enemy is probably still cherishing fond dreams of emulating the Yuan conquest of the Sung dynasty, the Ching conquests of the Ming Dynasty, the British occupation of North America and India, the Latin occupation of Central and South America, etc. But such dreams have no practical value in present day China...we now have the Communist Party and the Red Army.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷Selden, Yenan, 77.

¹⁴⁸Mao, Military, 145.

The principle policy of the Communist Party and the Red Army was "protracted guerrilla warfare (which) is something quite new in the entire history of war."¹⁴⁹ Protracted guerrilla warfare was also something quite new in the history of politics. Communist mobilization enabled the peasants, a "passive element in politics,"¹⁵⁰ to act politically. The importance of a peasant fighting the Japanese or joining one of the many Communist associations did not lie in its practical effect as much as in its political effect. The peasant developed a political consciousness for the first time. In the same fashion that Prussian reforms enabled the lower classes of Prussia to actively participate in the national life of the state, so Communist leadership facilitated the birth of peasant nationalism in China.

Protracted guerrilla warfare differed from previous irregular warfare in its scope and in its political and revolutionary character. Previous guerrilla movements depended primarily on the motivation of nationalism, and in the case of the Spanish fighting Napoleon, religion. In protracted war social revolution and nationalism were united in order to mobilize military power. Protracted war did not depend on outside help. It was based on long

¹⁴⁹Ibid.

¹⁵⁰Chalmers A. Johnson, Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), 89.

term self reliance, in which the enemy provides the principle source of supply. Irregular war usually accomplished little more than harassment and discomfort to the enemy. Given the scale of China's protracted guerrilla war, "it has broken out of the bounds of tactics to knock at the gates of strategy."¹⁵¹ The ultimate aim of protracted guerrilla war is its transformation to regular war, in which the guerrillas form large scale units that fight a conventional war of annihilation.¹⁵² The significant difference between Mao's concept of protracted war and previous irregular wars consisted in its political element. Inseparable political and military components characterized protracted war:

The basic political principle of China's War of Resistance Against Japan, i. e. , its political aim, is to drive out Japanese imperialism and build an independent, free and happy China.¹⁵³

The military aim is intimately coupled with a much larger political goal. Achievement of the military aim, with its "sacrifices that will be great," is much more palatable when linked with a future that is "free and happy."¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹Mao, *military*, 154.

¹⁵²*Ibid.*, 158.

¹⁵³*Ibid.*, 155.

¹⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 181.

Concealed within strength there is weakness, and in weakness, strength.

Mao saw in the polarity of the ancient concept of *Yin-Yang* the basis for successfully combating the warlords and the later the Japanese. Mao's military thought is the direct antithesis of warlordism. As a Marxist, Mao familiarized himself with the Hegalian dialectic. As a Chinese, Mao familiarized himself with the concept of the unity of opposites *Yin* and *Yang*. The *Yin* and the *Yang* are intrinsic and universal. They represent a balance of opposites; male and female, dark and light, action and reaction etc. All human behavior and phenomenon possess this duality, this balance. Mao reconciled Marxist dialectics with traditional Chinese philosophy by postulating that the unity of *Yin-Yang* seldom achieves equilibrium; contradiction rather than balance characterizes the unity of opposites, giving rise to a new unity conditioned by the old. In his essay *On Contradiction* Mao writes:

When the old unity and its constituent opposites yield place to a new unity and its constituent opposites, a new process emerges in place of the old...Contradiction exists in the process of development of all things, and contradiction runs through the process of development of each thing from beginning to

end: this is the universality and absolutness of contradiction.¹⁵⁵

In applying the theory of contradiction to war in general, Mao believed "War is the highest form of struggle for resolving contradictions, when they have developed to a certain stage, between classes, states, or political groups."¹⁵⁶

Two types of contradictions exist; antagonistic and non-antagonistic. Antagonistic contradictions, such as those between classes, inevitably result in open conflict and wars of revolution. Contradiction continues even after the triumph of socialism, but antagonistic class contradictions, and therefore war, will disappear.¹⁵⁷

The theory of contradiction defines the nature of guerrilla warfare. The military power of conventional armies, evidenced by lavish supply systems and heavy equipment, exhibits its weakness when confronted with guerrilla units. Unable to match the guerrillas in mobility and tied to vulnerable supply lines, conventional armies cannot force combat with the guerrillas. If the conventional armies disperse their strength to garrison

¹⁵⁵Mao Tse-tung, Selected Works, Vol. II. (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1954), 21.

¹⁵⁶Mao, Military, 78.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., 50-51.

large areas or to attack small guerrilla units, they themselves become vulnerable to attack.

Reliance on the peasant makes it next to impossible to separate the guerrillas from their source of supply. The villages supply the guerrillas with food, recruits, money and intelligence. The vivid image of the guerilla warriors as "fish" swimming in a "sea" of peasants is both instructional and traditionally Chinese.¹⁵⁸

Only by "draining the water" is it possible to separate the fish from the sea. The Japanese practiced this policy, *sanko-seisaku* ('kill all, burn all, destroy all') in operations against the Communists in the early 1940s. Based on German practices developed to combat partisans in Eastern Europe, *sanko-seisaku* was not so much policy as atrocity. Draining the water radicalized entire populations, ultimately creating more "fish" than it destroyed.¹⁵⁹

Mao opposed the militarism of warlords, who sublimated all other concerns to those of the army, by rejecting the "purely military viewpoint."¹⁶⁰ Mao's genius lay in his utilization of the most powerful resource in China, the peasantry. Mao substituted the political organization of a radicalized peasantry for the industrial power and military

¹⁵⁸Terrill, *Mao*, 95.

¹⁵⁹Johnson, *Nationalism*, 59.

¹⁶⁰Mao, *Military*, 53.

professionalism of his enemies.¹⁸¹ Unless his enemies were able to respond in kind and compete for the support of the peasant masses, ultimately the Chinese Communists would "drown their enemies in the ocean of people's war."¹⁸²

If Revolutionary France "had burned away the old concept of war," then Mao and his cadres burned away the old concept of both war and politics in China. Previous Chinese armies "had only asked for a soldier's body, never before his mind!"¹⁸³ and previous Chinese governments used the peasants only for taxation and exploitation, seldom as the basis of political power. Mao's political army mobilized rural society in its totality. Nationalism, directed against the Japanese, and economic reform, directed against feudal landlords, enabled the waging of protracted guerrilla war.

11

From the beginning Mao stressed the importance of understanding the specific political and historical context in which China fought its revolutionary war. All of the essays in Selected Military Writings begin with

¹⁸¹G.L. Katzenbach, "Time, Space and Will: The Politico-Military Views of Mao Tse-tung," in The Guerrilla and How to Fight Him (New York: Praeger, 1962), 12.

¹⁸²Richard H. Solomon, A Revolution is not a Dinner Party (Garden City: Doubleday, 1975), 111.

¹⁸³Terrill, Mao, 88.

discussions of the social, political and historical factors conditioning the progress of the revolution. Mao believed that military considerations are not understandable apart from their specific political context.

They say that it is enough merely to study the laws of war in general, or to put it more concretely, that it is enough merely to follow the military manuals published by the reactionary Chinese government of the reactionary military academies in China.¹⁸⁴

Mao believed that it is not enough just to understand the mechanics of war. War is an extension of policy. China's revolutionary war is an extension of the Communists Party's political policy in the countryside.

If one accepts the political nature of Maoist military thought then it is necessary to examine the evolution of Maoist politics. Parallel to the "heretical" notion (in traditional China) of a people's army of peasants, Mao committed an additional heresy by advocating a Marxist revolution based on the peasantry, an ideological heresy that alienated him from Communists at home and abroad and also made him the pariah of the city-based KMT. Mao suggested political tactics contrary to traditional China and to orthodox Marxism. While other Communist leaders attempted to apply the Russian model of revolutionary war waged conventionally, Mao developed a distinctly Chinese model of revolutionary war, protracted guerrilla war.

¹⁸⁴Mao, *Military*, 78.

Clausewitz and the Prussian reformers learned that the practical utility of an idea is not necessarily related to its political viability. Mao, in his struggle to preserve and expand Red political power through peasant revolutionary warfare, learned a similar lesson. Mao suffered three expulsions from the Central Committee of the CCP and eight reprimands before his elevation to Chairman of the party in January of 1935. Incarceration in Yu-tu prison followed his third expulsion in 1934.¹⁸⁶

In the early 1920s Mao followed the traditional Marxist line, organizing "a childish proletariat,"¹⁸⁵ the miners of Anyuan. Mao's emphasis had completely changed by 1927, when he first wrote of the efficacy of peasant based revolution. His *Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan*, advocates the conquest of power through peasant uprising, "the central issue in the national revolution."¹⁸⁷

Mao recognized the immense power of the peasantry, "a force so swift and violent that no power, however great, will be able to hold it back."¹⁸⁸ Mao saw three choices open to the party: "To march at their head and lead them?

¹⁸⁴Mao, *Military*, 78.

¹⁸⁵Rue, *Opposition*, 9-10.

¹⁸⁶Suyin, *Daluga*, 88.

¹⁸⁷Rue, *Opposition*, 53.

¹⁸⁸Mao, *Works*, vol. I, 230

To trail behind them, gesticulating and criticizing? Or to stand in their way and oppose them?"¹⁶⁶

After Mao's retreat to the Chingkang Mountains he abandoned the policy of Central Committee of the CCP and the Comintern. He developed a guerrilla base among the peasants in the Kiangsi-Hunan border area. Mao defeated the first three KMT extermination campaigns launched by Chiang Kai-shek against the Kiangsi base. However he did not defeat three successive "left" lines launched against him by the leadership of his own party. Political orthodoxy delineated opposition to Mao's tactics. Mao's opponents asked "How can there be Marxism in the Mountains of Chingkangshan?"¹⁷⁰ and derided his "timid Guerrillaism."¹⁷¹ The instructions of the party and the Comintern to abandon guerrilla warfare and pursue a policy of city-based uprisings and positional warfare eventually resulted in the destruction of the base areas. After these multiple disasters Mao became Chairman of the Party, for as Chou En-lai said "He has been right all the time and we should listen to him."¹⁷²

The resolution of the political struggles within the party insured the viability of Mao's peasant based version

¹⁶⁶Mao, Works, 24.

¹⁷⁰Suyin, Deluge, 201.

¹⁷¹Terrill, Mao, 118.

¹⁷²Ibid, 128.

of Communist revolution. Henceforth the Red Army used military tactics based not on Marxist theory or Russian experience but on Chinese practice. Mao described the nature of theory and practice:

There is only one type of true theory: that which is derived from the observation of objective reality and probed by objective reality...Those who regard Marxism-Leninism as religious dogma show...blind ignorance. We must tell them openly, 'your dogma is of no use,' or, to use an impolite formulation, 'Your dogma is less useful than shit.' We see that dog shit can fertilize the fields and man's can feed the dog. And dogmas? They can't fertilize the fields, nor can they feed a dog. Of what use are they?...Our doctrine is not dogma, it is a guide to action.¹⁷³

Mao's rejection of dogma added up to a rejection of Stalinism. Mao's anti-Stalinist attitude surfaces politically, but is most apparent in "his flexible, nativistic, and mind-over matter military tactics."¹⁷⁴

Mao identified military power as a condition for the existence of Communist political power in China as early as 1928.¹⁷⁵ It is significant that during the Long March Mao carried with him no books on Marxism-Leninism, only the

Practical experience with revolution conditioned the

¹⁷³Sohren, Thought, 178-9.

¹⁷⁴Terrill, Mao, 128.

evolution of Maoist military theory in much the same way it influenced the thought of Clausewitz. Practice and utility prevailed against ideology. Survival of the Prussian state and survival of the Chinese revolution depended on transcending the material limitations imposed by their respective circumstances. Political mobilization provided the means of overcoming material limitations.

Mao reveals himself as a Clausewitzian of the highest order upon examination of his military policy. Throughout his career Mao's military policy remained indissolubly linked to his political policy. Mao pursued military policy solely for its political effect. Red Army discipline, the strategy and tactics of guerrilla warfare and the establishment of the anti-Japanese united front flowed naturally from Mao's political goal of peasant revolution. Revolution requires power. No other class equalled the peasants in terms of political potential. Political power requires an army. The Red army must be friendly to the peasants and draw power from them. The development of people's war and guerrilla tactics provides a strategic method enabling the extension of power and therefore of the revolution. Participation in the united front serves this policy because: "We cannot even discuss

communism if we are robbed of a country in which to practice it."¹⁷⁷

Mao's success as a soldier is directly attributable to his understanding and practice of Clausewitz's most famous dictum that "war is an extension of policy by other means." Mao was first and foremost a revolutionary. The circumstances of revolutionary China dictated that he become a soldier. The context of revolutionary war illustrated to Clausewitz and Mao the political and social nature of war and accounts for much of the similarity that exists in their analysis of war.

¹⁷⁸Snow, *Star*, 455.

CHAPTER THREE: CONCLUSION

Theoretical works must be evaluated in light of an author's predisposition to a particular point of view. An author's cultural, class or professional background may excessively condition or distort an otherwise evenhanded analysis. The "prejudice" of nationalism furnished the primary motivation for both Clausewitz and Mao. Clausewitz freely admitted his life long hatred of the French and Mao's adoption of Marxism-Leninism grew from a hatred of class privilege and imperialism. Factional opposition to their ideas existed in the extreme, which could lead theory to degenerate into political conflict. Neither Clausewitz nor Mao however, allowed personal prejudice or political expediency to intrude upon their cogent, systematic studies of war.

Clausewitz, under the tutelage of Scharnhorst, embraced a scholarly, "non-ideological approach to war."¹⁷⁸ In reforming the Prussian army and writing accurately and truthfully about the nature of war Clausewitz believed he best protected and served the people and the state. Clausewitz's extreme nationalism did not prevent his criticism of the failings of the Prussian state and monarchy, and his antipathy to the French Revolution did

not deter an appreciation of the abilities of Napoleon, whom he described as "the God of War himself."¹⁷⁷

While Mao's writings often contain Marxist jargon, he did not base his military actions or theory on "foreign" Marxist ideology, but on Chinese practice. The methods of the Red Army had to work and Mao did not hesitate to discard or create ideology when "conventional" party wisdom proved inadequate. In his military writings Mao quotes Story of the Salt Marshes and Sun Tzu's Art of War and even Clausewitz's On War, but he does not quote the voluminous military writings of Marx and Engels.¹⁷⁸ Mao briefly cites Lenin's essay *On Guerrilla War*¹⁷⁹ and offers the following quote from his *Socialism and War* "War is the continuation of politics by other means."¹⁸⁰

In summation, military necessity and intellectual honesty characterized the military works of Clausewitz and Mao. Neither proceeded from preconceptions based on the past or on prevailing views. In fact each expressed opinions provoking extremely unfavorable reactions among the leaders they served. Enemies at court stifled

¹⁷⁷Clausewitz, War, 523.

¹⁷⁸Mao, Military, 109, 18. and Mao Tse-tung, Warfare (New York: Praeger, 1981), 48. Mao repeats some of the quotations from Sun Tzu throughout his writings. He also quotes Story of the Salt Marshes in his philosophical essay "On Practice," Works, vol. 2, 21.

¹⁷⁹Mao, Guerrilla, 48.

¹⁸⁰Mao, Military, 227.

Clausewitz's career and Mao endured imprisonment and expulsion from the Central Committee of his own party. Their respective rejections of convention in the face of powerful opposition further indicates a willingness to place the integrity and practicality of learning and scholarship above short-term political expediency.

The rasool has a 'common sense' bordering on wit--Marx

Marxists have always appreciated Clausewitz for his identification of the political and social nature of war, for the systematic method of his thought and for his role in organizing a truly popular militia, "at least as far as this was possible in an absolute monarchy."¹⁸¹ Engels referred to Clausewitz as "that natural genius,"¹⁸² and Lenin wrote that "Marxists have always rightly regarded this thesis ('War is the Continuation of Politics by other Means') as the theoretical basis of views on the significance of any war."¹⁸³

Marxists readily accepted Clausewitz's idea of a people's war in which entire populations participate in the

¹⁸¹Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Collected Works, (New York: International Publishers, 1988), 22:188.

¹⁸²Ibid. 38:305.

¹⁸³v. I. Lenin, "Socialism and War." in The Lenin Anthology, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975), 188.

defense of the state, and saw in it a basis for civil war and revolution. In addition, war, like all other human endeavours, does not exist in a vacuum but "arises from basic social needs, and social arrangements of production."¹⁸⁴ War is a progressive instrument for change as well as an instrument of oppression. In all cases war is a continuation of political struggle which in turn is a continuation of class-struggle.

Mao viewed war in substantially the same manner as other Marxists. Mao identified the political dimension to war observed by Clausewitz and recognized by Marx, Engels and Lenin. He also believed in the study of war as a tool for revolution and used military history to further his own understanding of war:

All military laws and military theories...are the experience of past wars summed up by people in former days or in our own times. We should seriously study these, lessons paid for in blood, which are a heritage of past wars.¹⁸⁵

Clausewitz's advocacy of the use of military history, "in which he anticipates R. G. Collingwood's idea of history as the re-enactment of past deeds,"¹⁸⁶ is echoed in Lenin and Mao. "Lenin said that the most essential thing in Marxism, the living soul of Marxism, is the

¹⁸⁴W. B. Gallie, Philosophers of Peace and War. (London: Cambridge University Press. 1978), 78.

¹⁸⁵Mao, Military, 87.

¹⁸⁶Gallie, Peace, 42.

concrete analysis of concrete conditions."¹⁸⁷ Such study of the past provided the basis of Marxist economic theory, but application in the real world is the final step in the formulation of theory. Historical study, however imperfect, is also the only alternative to actual experience in war. Peter Paret comments on Clausewitz's view: "History had the additional function of expanding the student's or reader's experience, or substituting for it when experience was lacking,"¹⁸⁸ but ultimately "knowledge must become capability."¹⁸⁹

Marxists in general and Mao in particular agreed with Clausewitz that no substitute exists for practice. Knowledge without practice in the real world is useless. Mao, in *Strategy in China's Revolutionary War*, defines the relationship between learning from the past and doing:

It is not easy to learn and apply...Reading is learning, but applying is also learning and the more important kind of learning at that...Our chief method is to learn warfare through warfare.¹⁹⁰

Clausewitz in Book II of On War, *On the Theory of War*, describes the problem in substantially the same terms, with

¹⁸⁷Mao, Military, 84.

¹⁸⁸Peter, Paret, "The Genesis Of On War," introduction to On War by Carl von Clausewitz (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978). 23.

¹⁸⁹Clausewitz, War, 147.

¹⁹⁰Mao, Military, 87-88.

additional emphasis on the intellectual difficulties of command:

"The knowledge required in war is very simple, but at the same time it is not easy to apply...The difficulty increases with every step up the ladder; and at the top--it becomes among the most extreme to which the mind can be subjected."¹⁸¹

Clausewitz's advice that "knowledge must become capability" is recognized by W. B. Gallie. In his discussion of the philosophical contributions of Clausewitz he concludes :

One could say, in the current jargon, that they were centered on the idea of practice and its implications for science in general...In other words, the conflicting interests, aims, means and moves in which war consists continually affect each other reciprocally.¹⁸²

Clausewitz separated war from the confines of mechanistic, objective science and brought it into the realm of social science. War and politics do not react according to mathematical principles but according to the dynamics of distinctly human characteristics. Clausewitz clearly defines this view of war in Book II, Chapter Three, *Art of War or Science of War* :

War is part of man's social existence...War is not an exercise of the will directed at inanimate matter, as is the case with the mechanical arts, or at matter which is animate but passive and yielding, as is the case with the

¹⁸¹Clausewitz, *War*, 148.

¹⁸²Gallie, *Peace*, 42.

human mind and emotions in the fine arts. In war, the will is directed at an animate object that reacts.¹⁸³

Mao describes war in much the same way, identifying war's social components with an emphasis on its relation to outside phenomenon:

War is the highest form of struggle for resolving contradictions, when they have developed to a certain stage, between classes, nations, states, or political groups...Unless you understand the actual circumstances of war, its nature and its relations to other things, you will not know the laws of war.¹⁸⁴

War is not an exact science subject to laws and formula, but a continuous social and political process, constantly changing and evolving. Theory cannot be applied dogmatically but can only serve as a guide to order one's thinking. War is a mode of conflict operating in relation to other dynamic reacting objects and is an expression of something other than emotion, it is a reflection of the social relations of man.

In his identification of war as "an act of human intercourse"¹⁸⁵ Clausewitz reveals his basic humanistic

¹⁸³Clausewitz, *War*, 148.

¹⁸⁴Mao, *Military*, 70.

¹⁸⁵Clausewitz, *War*, 148.

approach to the problems of war. The historical examples of the French Revolution and Prussian defeat and rebirth led Clausewitz to stress the importance of the human element in war. Mao's studies of the peasantry and participation in revolutionary war led him to substantially the same conclusion. Clausewitz's continuous struggle to retain the *Landwehr* illustrates his belief in the military value of non-professional soldiers "sprung from the people."¹⁸⁶ Mao also believed the technical abilities and equipment of professionals could be overcome by mobilization of the human element:

Weapons are an important factor in war, but not the decisive factor; it is people, not things that are decisive. The contest of strength is not only a contest of military and economic power, but also a contest of human power and morale. Military and economic power is necessarily wielded by people.¹⁸⁷

In his *Defense Plan for Silesia* (1811), Clausewitz showed an appreciation of the ability of civilians to overcome material military power. He proposed that Gneisenau "make a Spain out of Silesia," and that volunteers fight the French with pikes and fowling pieces.¹⁸⁸

Clausewitz, in his evaluation of the human element in war, paid great attention to the concept of the "military

¹⁸⁶Parkinson, *Clausewitz*, 290.

¹⁸⁷Mao, *Military*, 217-218.

¹⁸⁸Parkinson, *Clausewitz*, 130.

genius." The personalities of soldiers "are such important factors that in war above all it is vital not to underrate them."¹⁹⁹ The characteristics Clausewitz identified as indicative of military genius include physical courage, determination and "a strong mind rather than a brilliant one."²⁰⁰ Clausewitz prefers the "inquiring rather than the creative mind, the comprehensive rather than the specialized approach, the calm rather than the excitable head."²⁰¹

Mao's evaluation of the qualities necessary for effective leadership are also based on practicality, will and results:

"In real life, we cannot ask for "ever-victorious generals," who are few and far between in history. What we can ask for is generals who are brave and sagacious and who normally win their battles in the course of a war. To become both wise and courageous one must acquire a method, a method to be employed in learning as well as in applying."²⁰²

The basic humanism evident in the works of Clausewitz and Mao lead naturally to their respective concerns for the political element in war. Organizing human activity is primarily a political task, therefore the reciprocity between military and political action.

¹⁹⁹Clausewitz, *War*, 98.

²⁰⁰Ibid, 103.

²⁰¹Ibid, 113.

²⁰²Mao, *Military*, 85.

Philosophically Clausewitz and Mao exhibited a basic similarity in their approach to war. Derived from historical example and practice, their theories expressed a belief in the essential ability of human beings to defend themselves effectively regardless of their social origins or deficiencies in their technical ability to wage war. The social nature of war delineates that political organization and leadership unlocks the intrinsic military potential of social groups, a potential that is proportional to the dedication and political will of the group.

15

The philosophical similarity between Clausewitz and Mao produced a similarity in the practical sphere. Comparisons between the writings of Clausewitz and Mao, when they are made, generally begin with a discussion of Clausewitz's Chapter *The People in Arms* (Book VI, Chapter Twenty-six).²⁰³ Clausewitz's direct knowledge of guerrilla war existed second hand, through reports from Spain. In On War, he mentions the Spanish insurgency only once,

²⁰³John E. Tashjean, "The Transatlantic Clausewitz," Naval War College Review, 35, (1982): 78. Tashjean discusses the improvidence of this view. See Howard, Clausewitz, 72, and Rylander, "Clausewitzian," 18-18, for examples of this type of comparison.

describing it simply as "a war of attrition."²⁰⁴ His conclusions are of interest when compared with those of Mao, as his limited information forced him to extrapolate a great deal from other more familiar forms of warfare. In contrast with all other aspects of war, in which Clausewitz's analysis is much more developed and systematic than Mao's, here the situation is reversed. Mao's writings are all based on guerrilla experience and are as detailed and systematic as Clausewitz's writings (5 pages) on the subject are brief.

Clausewitz exhibited a fascination for popular uprisings demonstrated by his support of the establishment of a militia and of other irregular forces to combat Napoleon. Clausewitz's vivid imagination enabled him to conceptualize the probable course and essential characteristics of a people's war, and enabled him to evaluate its utility and relationship to conventional forces without any direct knowledge of it.

Clausewitz begins by discussing opposition to this nineteenth-century phenomenon, described by its detractors as "a means of revolution and legalized anarchy...as much a threat to the social order at home as it is to the enemy."²⁰⁵ Mao's awareness of the social ramifications of arming the people is self-evident. Mao did not question

²⁰⁴Clausewitz, *War*, 615.

²⁰⁵Ibid, 479.

the inevitability of peasant revolt in China, only if the Communist party would lead it. Clausewitz outlines five conditions under which a people's war can be effective:

- 1. The war must be fought in the interior of the country.*
- 2. It must not be decided by a single stroke.*
- 3. The theatre of operations must be fairly large.*
- 4. The national character must be suited to that type of war.*
- 5. The country must be rough and inaccessible, because of mountains or forests, marshes, or the local methods of cultivation.²⁰⁶*

Mao emphasized and in practice took advantage of all of these conditions in waging guerrilla warfare against the KMT and the Japanese. The establishment of bases in remote or protected regions of China, satisfies Clausewitz's first requirement. His second condition, that the war not be a short one, to a degree anticipates Mao's concept of protracted war. The scale of guerrilla operations, including the 6,000 mile long march, aptly demonstrates the utility of a large area of operations, Clausewitz's third condition. Mao also exploited China's history of rebellion and the difficulty of China's terrain, the fourth and fifth conditions Clausewitz considered essential for successfully waging small wars.

Clausewitz and Mao each portrayed the nature and tactics of people's war in strikingly similar ways. Clausewitz described the course of peoples war as follows: "Like

²⁰⁶Clausewitz, *War*, 480.

smoldering embers it consumes the basic foundation of the the enemy forces...The flames will spread like a brush fire,"²⁰⁷ Mao's depiction uses similar imagery: "All China is littered with dry faggots which will soon be aflame... 'A single spark can start a prairie fire,' is an apt description of how the current situation will develop."²⁰⁸ Their respective comments on guerrilla tactics resemble each other as well. Guerrilla's should not "pulverize the core but...nibble at the shell around the edges (Clausewitz),"²⁰⁹ and should "avoid the solid and attack the hollow(Mao)."²¹⁰

Tactical similarities also exist in more specific form. Clausewitz identified the principle tactical goal of insurgents as preservation of one's forces by avoiding major defensive battles, a goal which entails mobility and possible abandonment of territory. Mao addresses this problem by his statement, "to gain territory is no cause for joy and to lose territory is no cause for sorrow."²¹¹

²⁰⁸Clausewitz, War, 480.

²⁰⁷Ibid, 481.

²⁰⁸Mao, Military, 89.

²⁰⁹Clausewitz, War, 480.

²¹⁰Mao, Guerrilla, 48.

²¹¹Mao Tse-tung, Basic Tactics (New York: Praeger, 1988), 87.

Mao's famous sixteen character formula,

*The enemy advances, we retreat:
The enemy camps, we harass:
The enemy tires, we attack:
The enemy retreats, we pursue.* 212

is descriptive of all successful guerrilla campaigns in history. Of more significance is the extent to which Clausewitz anticipated the modern phenomenon of protracted war, and the extent to which Mao transcended "guerrillaism" in a strategic sense, turning a tactical device into a comprehensive strategic method.

Mao's name will always be associated with guerrilla warfare, and in a practical sense this association is correct. Mao's success with guerrillas in China served as a model for much of the Third World in the wars of liberation that followed World War II. However, Mao's major contribution to military theory, his concept of protracted war, is not based on guerrilla war, but regular war. When Mao wrote, "In the War of Resistance Against Japan, regular warfare is primary and guerrilla warfare supplementary,"²¹³ he reveals the essence of protracted war. With Mao's division of guerrilla struggle into phases in which the insurgents eventually form large conventional

²¹²Mao, *Military*, 72.

²¹³*Ibid.*, 153.

units, guerrilla warfare "has broken out of the realm of tactics to knock at the gates of strategy."²¹⁴ Differences between regular and irregular war are minor: "Guerrilla Warfare is different only in degree and in form."²¹⁵

Mao is correct when he describes protracted war as "something entirely new in the history of warfare."²¹⁶ Previous to Mao, no theoretical basis existed for the transformation from low level guerrilla tactics to regular conventional war. The guerrillas in Spain achieved notable successes, but ultimately relied on Wellington to eject the French. Without corresponding regular forces, guerrillas remained an adjunct, an annoying curiosity. With Mao irregular warfare came into its own as a method to organize, train and politicize a regular army. Only a conventional army can fight large battles, destroy enemy forces and capture cities. Guerrilla war provided the environment in which to build such an army.

Clausewitz appreciated the essential guerrilla problem that Mao solved in his development of protracted war:

To be realistic, one must therefore think of a general insurrection within the framework of a war conducted by the the regular army, and coordinated in one all-encompassing plan.²¹⁷

²¹⁴Mao, Military, 155.

²¹⁵Ibid, 153.

²¹⁶Ibid, 154.

²¹⁷Clausewitz, War, 480.

In the final paragraph of *The People in Arms*, Clausewitz describes a scenario akin to the counter-offensive stage of protracted war:

Once the victor is engaged in sieges, once he has left strong garrisons all along the way to form his line of communication, or has even sent out detachments to secure his freedom of movement and keep adjoining provinces from giving him trouble; once he has been weakened by a variety of losses in men and materiel, the time has come for the defending army to take the field again...raking the invader with their strategic enfilade.²¹⁸

The composition of the army that takes the field is not well defined. Presumably a mixture of irregulars and fortress troops emerge from their bastions and fight in a conventional manner.

17

If one takes Mao at his word and views protracted war as conventional war with a guerrilla aspect, then the barriers between Mao, who epitomizes guerrilla war, and Clausewitz, who "laid the groundwork for all subsequent theoretical military thought,"²¹⁹ diminish. Clausewitz is perhaps the outstanding example of the military theoretician in the west. The view of Mao's guerrillaism as the limit of his military thought is refuted through an examination of

²¹⁸Clausewitz, *War*, 483.

²¹⁹Trevor Dupuy, *Understanding War*, (New York: Paragon, 1987), 21.

protracted war in light of conventional Clausewitzian doctrine.

Mao based protracted war on "tactical offensives within the strategic defensive," and advised, "strictly avoid passive defence."²²⁰ Clausewitz advocated a similar course of action, "never allowing this important strategic means of defense (an armed uprising) to turn into tactical defense."²²¹ Clausewitz devotes 32 chapters in On War, to the subject of defense and offense. His conclusion, that the defensive is the stronger form of war, is "at odds with prevalent opinion" in his own day as well as in ours.²²² Mao's defensive success with "timid guerrillaism," is brought to mind, as is the stalemate brought about by the superiority the defensive exhibited in the First World War.

A successful defense without subsequent offensive action is ultimately indecisive. The counter-attack stage in protracted war and Clausewitz's "sudden powerful transition to the offensive--the flashing sword of vengeance,"²²³ are analogous. War develops to "a culminating point of victory,"²²⁴ when the superiority of one side over the

²²⁰Mao, Military, 157-158.

²²¹Clausewitz, War, 481.

²²²Ibid, 878.

²²³Ibid, 880.

²²⁴Ibid, 588.

other reaches the point of decision, resulting in the destruction of weaker.

Clausewitz identified the destruction of the enemy's armed forces as the main military objective in war. This ensures the achievement of the political objective. Mao's concept of a "War of Annihilation,"²²⁵ in which a mere routing of the enemy is insufficient, brings to mind the Clausewitz inspired campaigns of Moltke and the writings of Schlieffen. Each believed moderation in war unrealistic and unjustified, anything less than total annihilation leaves one vulnerable to an enemy who rejects defeat.

Clausewitz saw in the mass mobilizations of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars the tendency for wars to become absolute. Mao viewed this tendency in a different manner, dividing all wars into just and unjust wars. These wars represent the struggle between, classes, revolution and counter revolution and ultimately between good and evil. "The war we wage is part of a final battle...a most lofty and glorious undertaking for the salvation of mankind."²²⁶ War reaches toward the absolute for Mao in terms of its role in resolving class struggle, a "war waged by the great majority of mankind."²²⁷

Clausewitz is best known for his linking of policy and war. The political idea is the supreme contribution of

²²⁶Mao, Military, 80-81.

²²⁷Ibid, 81.

Clausewitz to the study of war. War is an instrument, a tool of policy, not a separate entity. Mao developed Clausewitz's supreme idea to its logical conclusions, providing the 20th century extension of Clausewitz's theory. For Mao war is not only an extension of politics, "war is politics,"²²⁸ "politics with bloodshed."²²⁹ This reciprocity is illustrated by a remark Mao made regarding the period of the Second United Front: "When the Nationalists are wrong we criticise them. In the past we used the machine gun to criticise them. Now we use the pen and the tongue."²³⁰

Mao applies Clausewitz's most famous dictum in practice as well as in theory:

What is political mobilization? First, it means telling the army and the people about the political objective of the war... Next... the steps and policies to attain this objective must also be made clear; that is, there must be a political program.²³¹

Few acknowledged disciples of Clausewitz would go so far as to share with the army and people the objectives of war and the steps and policies necessary to achieve those objectives.

²²⁸Mao, Works, vol. 3, 202.

²²⁹Mao, Military, 229.

²³⁰Terrill, Mao, 135.

²³¹Mao, Works, Vol. 3, 200.

Any comparison of the theories of Clausewitz and Mao must investigate the possibility that Mao studied Clausewitz and derived his theories of war from him. The possibility also exists that Mao gained knowledge of Clausewitz through the works of Lenin, an acknowledged practitioner of Clausewitzian methods.

E. L. Katzenbach does not document his statement that Mao "quotes...Clausewitz, whom he studied in Chinese translation as early as 1928."²³⁶ R. L. Rylander cites "considerable, if circumstantial, evidence that suggests that Mao studied On War," in the middle and late 1930s.²³⁷ Jacques Guillermaz calls attention to Mao's quotation of Clausewitz in his essay *On Protracted War* (1938)²³⁸ and Yeh Ch'ing ascribes Mao's knowledge of Clausewitz to his reading of Lenin's *Socialism and War*.²³⁹

It is difficult to imagine Mao making a systematic study of On War in 1928, the year of the establishment of the first communist guerrilla base and a year of constant

²³⁶Katzenbach, "Will", 12.

²³⁷Rylander, "Clausewitzian," 18.

²³⁸Jacques Guillermaz, "The Soldier," in Dick Wilson, ed., Mao Tse-tung in the Scales of History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 128.

²³⁹Yeh Ch'ing, Inside Mao Tse-Tung Thought (New York: Exposition Press, 1975).

combat.²⁴⁰ It is more likely that Mao's familiarity with Clausewitz stems from his reading of Lenin. Mao's direct quotation of Clausewitz in *On Protracted War* is attributed to Lenin's *Socialism and War* in a footnote.²⁴¹ Lenin acknowledges Clausewitz as the source of the quotation that Mao cites. One must assume that Mao's knowledge of Clausewitz, like the quotation, comes second hand from Lenin's *Socialism and War*. Three brief paragraphs, all concerning war as a continuation of politics, comprise Lenin's discussion of the validity of Clausewitz's theories for Marxists.²⁴² It certainly does not represent the body of Clausewitz's theory nor does it provide a basis from which Mao could have derived a major part of his theory. Less likely is the notion that Mao read Lenin's more extensive critique and notes regarding On War, as they were deleted from Russian editions of *Leninskii sbornik* after 1930.²⁴³ Stuart Schram points out that the quotation in question, "War is the continuation of politics by other...means,"²⁴⁴ reads "War is a special political technique for the realization of certain political

²⁴⁰Rue, Opposition, 87-111.

²⁴¹Mao, Military, 288.

²⁴²Lenin, "War," 189.

²⁴³Rolf H. W. Theen, Lenin: Genesis and Development, (New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1973), 189.

²⁴⁴Mao, Military, 277.

objectives," in the original text. The change from an indirect paraphrase of Clausewitz to direct quotation occurred in 1951, thirteen years after the writing of *On Protracted War*.²⁴⁵ From this belated acknowledgment of Clausewitz, via Lenin, one can surmise that Mao did not have direct access to either Clausewitz or Lenin in Yanan in the late 1930s. Direct access would have resulted in direct quotation, not the inadequate paraphrase Mao later changed.

Mao himself is clear on the subject of the origins of his military thinking:

I have never attended military school. Nor have I read a book on military strategy. People say that I relied on Romance of the Three Kingdoms and Sun tzu's Art of war for my campaigns. I said I had never read Sun Tzu's Art of War. I have read Romance of the Three Kingdoms...Later when I wrote about what I called problems of strategy I had a look at Sun Tzu.²⁴⁶

Mao must be regarded as an original thinker whose thought evolved from practice and observation. Exposure to Clausewitz through Lenin reinforced Mao's thinking, but did little or nothing to condition it. Mao's major writings on military affairs took place after ten years of practice waging war. The similarity between Clausewitz and Mao stem from the abilities of each to identify and understand universals in war applicable to all times, and to all modes of combat.

²⁴⁵Sohran, Thought, 288.

²⁴⁶Guillermo, "Soldier," 128.

in my view Clausewitz level is on that of Copernicus, Newton and Darwin--J. F. C. Fuller

No one since Lenin has had such a powerful effect on history--Andre Malraux

An observer appalled by the excesses of revolution, Clausewitz advocated transformation of the state to avoid revolution. Mao had no state to preserve. The power of the Red Army and therefore that of the party, existed only precariously. Clausewitz chose to serve Prussia, advocating social reform and the mobilization of the entire nation to participate in defense of the state. Mao served China by mobilizing the nation to resist the Japanese and by creating a new state.

The similarities in their respective studies of war underscore the abilities of each, the veracity of their conclusions and an essential unity of great themes and ideas east or west. Clausewitz's relevance in the 20th century is illustrated by the harmony existing between his ideas and those of Mao. The Chinese example, repeated most significantly in Viet Nam and most recently in Afghanistan, is further evidence of the relevance of Clausewitz and Mao. Conflicts such as these graphically exhibit the reciprocity, identified by Clausewitz and Mao, that exists between politics and war. There is little reason to expect that this will change in the future.