

AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES FIELD STAFF

HSUEH HSI - WEAPON OF IDEOLOGICAL REVOLUTION IN CHINA

A Letter from A. Doak Barnett

69-B Robinson Road
Hong Kong
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The revolution in China is a process of struggle, It is a struggle not only to **"reform"** society but also to capture and **"remould"** the minds of one-fifth of the human race. The Chinese Communists' aim is mass ideological conversion and creation of the **"new socialist man"** - a man who rejects the past and accepts an entirely new code of **Communist** "truth" and morality.

Indoctrination, **which** strikes at the **innermost** recesses of the minds of the Chinese people, is given equal priority by the **Communists** in China, therefore, with industrialization, collectivization and similar programs which attack the political, economic and social structure. The Chinese **Communists** believe that **if** minds can be controlled, and basic ways of **thinking** changed, their revolutionary struggle can be won.

Considerable attention has been devoted by the press of Western countries to the intensive **"thought reform"** given by the Chinese **Communists** to a few imprisoned foreign missionaries, businessmen **and** prisoners-of-war. Some of these men, **whose** minds and wills were broken by the strains of powerful mental **pressures**, have described how they **were** forced or persuaded to **make** false confessions,

But much less attention has been given to the methods of indoctrination which the Chinese Communists are using to assault the minds of **their** own people - not only **the** imprisoned minority who are considered **"enemies"** by the regime, but also the mass of ordinary people of all sorts: workers, students, government employees, intellectuals, business employees, housewives, **and** farmers.

The Chinese Communists use **many** methods of thought control. Formal education is, **of** course, important. The entire educational **system** in China has been reorganized **and** its content changed. A new generation is being **nurtured** on strictly-controlled fare rationed by the Communist leaders. **Propaganda** media **of** all sorts are important too. (See ADB-1952-11.) The

Chinese Communists attempt to control everything which is capable of conveying ideas and symbols. This control is designed to place strict limitations upon the ideas to which people are exposed, and since thought does not take place in a vacuum, the elimination of heterodox ideas from the intellectual market place **is** an important means of thought control,

One of the **distinctive** and **successful** means which the Chinese Communists are using in their ideological struggle, however, is group indoctrination. It is **group** indoctrination which the **Communists** use to give political **training** to the new elite of the country - the students, cadres (kanpu), government workers and party members. Group indoctrination is the basis for campaigns to change the outlook **and** attitudes of whole classes - campaigns such as the "**ideological reform**" of the intellectuals carried on during 1951-52. (See ADB-1952-1.) It is also used in prisons to "**reform**" or at least to cow the actual or potential "**enemies**" of the regime - "**reactionaries**" **and** "**counterrevolutionaries.**" But this is not all. Virtually everyone in China is exposed to group indoctrination in some form or other. Primary attention is devoted to youth and "**intellectuals**" in the broadest sense, and the urban population is more thoroughly organized for indoctrination than people in the countryside, but no group is **exempted.**

The term used throughout **Communist** China for group indoctrination is hsueh hsi, or "**study**"; literally hsueh hsi means simply "**to learn and practice.**" The origin of this phrase is traceable to Confucius, who in Chapter I of the Analects says (using the words hsueh and hsi): "Is it not pleasant to learn with constant perseverance and application?" But in the modern period, the phrase was little used until the Chinese **Communists** adopted it for their indoctrination methods, and its meaning now has **harsher**, sterner connotations. Actually, the **Communists** use hsueh hsi to refer to all political study, including individual "**self-study,**" but in common usage it has become almost synonymous with collective group study, which is given primary stress by the Chinese **Communists'** regime.

Hsueh hsi has **become** an essential part of the fabric of society and the way of life in Communist China. Today, every-day, millions of Chinese gather together in small **groups** of half a dozen to a dozen people - in factories, shops, schools and offices - to hsueh hsi the ideology and policies of the Communist regime. **These** organizational cells are a direct link between the Communist rulers of China **and** the brain cells of masses of ordinary **people.**

During the past three years I have talked with many Chinese refugees in Hong Kong who have taken part in hsueh hsi groups in **Communist** China. What they describe is not "**study**" in any sense in which the word is understood in non-Communist countries; it is a unique process of manipulating minds and organizing social pressure to force compulsory acceptance of the

whole new philosophy and ideology sponsored by the Chinese Communists. The individual in a hsueh hsi group must think, but he does not think independently; his mind is shaped by the pressures within the group. Clearly the Chinese **Communists** have hit upon a method of indoctrination which reveals great intuitive insight into subtle psychological **principles** and "**group Dynamics**," applied to **political** purposes,

"You **can't** think clearly, even if you think you can, when you are **taking part** in intensive hsueh hsi," one **former newspaper editor**, now in his forties, **said to me**. "You **instinctively** realize that your real thoughts will **some day pop out of your mouth** and that therefore to be safe you either **have** to change your real thoughts or not think at **all**."

"**Most** students began to change after undergoing hsueh hsi," said a young girl who had just graduated from a university in Communist China. "**Only** a small percentage stuck to any old beliefs. That doesn't mean, however, that this 'change' was really 'conversion' in many cases. For most students there wasn't much to convert; they had no **firm** or **well-developed** ideology; they were an ideological **blank**. The 'change,' therefore, was an acceptance of new ideas which filled a **vacuum**."

"It is difficult to know how much the Communists are able really to change people's **thinking**," another hsueh hsi **participant** said to me, "**but there is no doubt that at least** they break down almost everyone's resistance to the new ideas,"

A young man who had actually joined the Chinese Communist Party after his **indoctrination** told me: "Hsueh hsi is very effective. I was impressed by the theory **and** the ideas which I learned. It was only later when I began to see differences between theory **and** practice that I became disillusioned,"

From these and other persons who have belonged to hsueh hsi groups in Communist China I have tried to learn how hsueh hsi groups operate - in what way they are organized, how they function, what they study. Although there are many variations in detail (at one extreme these **groups** are used in special training courses where hsueh hsi is carried on six or eight hours a day for many months; at the other extreme, in **some** offices or organizations, the groups may meet for a weekly one-hour session **only**), there are certain basic principles which seem to apply to all hsueh hsi groups.

One of the basic principles is that the "**study**" is **collective**, a **group** effort. This is essential. Not only is it possible for the regime to reach and control much larger **numbers** of people **through** groups than it could individually, but the fundamental nature of the Chinese Communists' indoctrination methods requires group action. The Communists do not trust the individual, or believe that the individual can be allowed to

function as an independent unit, even in his thinking.

Hsueh hsi groups are small. Sometimes they have as few as six members; rarely do they exceed twelve. The groups have continuity, There is definite membership, and the same people meet together over an extended period of time. Their meetings are regular and periodic, whether several times daily or only once every few days. One of the most common practices of hsueh hsi groups, particularly those in large organizations, is to meet for an hour a day, either before or after regular working hours.

Although participation in hsueh hsi groups is sometimes described as "voluntary," the pressures to take part make it compulsory in fact. If a person shows reluctance, he is criticized as being "backward and unprogressive," and he is not left in peace until he shows a more cooperative attitude. Often, however, there is no attempt to maintain the fiction of voluntariness; all members of a large organization are simply assigned to small hsueh hsi groups.

Hsueh hsi groups do not function as isolated or independent organizations. They are always established on the initiative of higher authorities. (In any particular area, ultimate responsibility for them usually rests in the hands of educational organs in the government and propaganda organs in the Communist Party.) Each group is tied into a network of similar groups and is responsible to a hierarchy of leaders or committees which exercise direct supervision and control over it. In many organizations or local areas, for example, about ten small groups (hsueh hsi hsiao tsu) are grouped into a larger unit (fen tui or ta k'io), and above these larger units are committees linking them to the ultimate local authority for hsueh hsi. Instructions are passed down to the small groups on their schedule of meetings, subjects to be discussed, material to be read or lectures to be attended, and so on. And the small groups submit regular reports to the organizational hierarchy above them. When the members of any one small group gather for their regular meetings and discussion, therefore, they know in most cases that thousands of other people like them are meeting simultaneously in similar groups, discussing the same topics. They are merely one small unit in a tremendous, organized "captive audience."

Each hsueh hsi group has a leader; sometimes there is an assistant leader too. In most cases, the group leader is "elected," but people who have participated in the groups report that "the Communists have ways of getting the people they want into positions of group leaders." If the group contains a Communist Party or Youth Corps member, an "activist" or a known "progressive" (and where possible they are organized so that at least one such person is included in each group), this person usually emerges as the leader. If a clearly undesirable leader is elected, the authorities veto him, and in extreme cases they may break up and reorganize a group which shows its "backwardness" by choosing a suspect leader,

The group leader is a direct link with authority, through the **organizational** hierarchy above the hsueh hsi groups. He carries out instructions from above. He supervises discussion sessions. He takes notes on the meetings and makes regular reports (sometimes written, sometimes verbal) to those above him. He is supposed to learn everything about each member in his group and watch with care the development of his ideas and attitudes. He represents the eyes and ears of the regime and is a personification of the conscience of the group.

The role of the group leader in the whole scheme of small-group hsueh hsi is extremely important. **Responsible** to the authorities, he **symbolizes** the power of the regime, and although he is expected to lead and guide in a restrained manner, his mere presence in the group ensures control. On all questions discussed, he is the ultimate arbiter and oracle on the "correct," orthodox "**truth**" - or if he himself does not have the answer to a **question** he is the pipeline to higher authorities who do have the answer.

Another basic principle of this group indoctrination is the fact that discussion is the essence of the process. "Studying" is not conceived of as a matter of passively listening to lectures or privately reading books and other written materials. Thoughts and ideas **must** be expressed verbally, **and** there **must** be interchange and interaction among all members of a **group**. Lectures and reading play a role **in** the process, but primarily to **provide** a springboard for group discussion. And even in lectures and reading the emphasis is upon collective rather than individual activity. Lectures are attended en **masse**, and very often textual source materials **are** read aloud in the **study** groups. (One technique is for the group leader to read a text, paragraph by paragraph, with prolonged group discussion **after** each paragraph.)

In discussion within the groups, every member is expected to participate actively. This is extremely important. There are no passive observers, no neutrality, no indifference. If a group member appears to stay aloof, it is the **responsibility** not only of the leader but also of all other members of the group to arouse and involve this laggard, to criticize his backwardness, to solicit his views. This necessity for active participation means that every member of the **group** is involved in the indoctrination process in a positive way, must be mentally alert throughout the meetings, **and** must bare his mental "**self**" to group scrutiny.

The pattern of discussion itself in the groups has peculiarities of its own. "**Free** discussion" and strict control are combined in a unique formula. Abstract theory is linked to personal attitude and experience. Criticism and self-criticism are used to bring all **members** of the group into a **complicated** interrelationship in **which** they exert a mutual influence upon each other. The confessions involved in self-criticism give the

discussion a strong emotional flavor which makes it **something** quite different **from** a primarily **intellectual** discussion,

One fundamental premise of all the discussion **is** that for every problem or question there is a "correct" solution or answer. The "**truth**" is contained in "**scientific** Marxism," as defined **by** the Communist Party, **and** the problem is to understand and accept the Communists' basic theories of historical and social change, to relate these to current social, economic, political and international issues and to adapt one's own behavior to this theoretical framework. It is also assumed that no one - even old party members - have progressed as far as is theoretically possible in understanding this "**truth**" and in fully relating one's personal life to it,

This means that for average members of a ~~hsueh-hsi~~ group the whole aim of discussion is focused upon the necessity of repudiating past beliefs, discovering what it is that the **Communist** regime now requires them to believe, rejecting all competing ideas and expressing - at least verbally - **full** acceptance of the "**correct**" dogma.

Discussion always centers on one, or a **few**, specific ideas or ideological **problems**. More often than not they are quite abstract theoretical or philosophical questions.

The following are typical examples. taken from a study outline for one hsueh hsi group of university students,

"**Selfishness is** natural; the working class is also **selfish.**' 'If the individual **is** slightly selfish, that **is** all right as long as he does not interfere with other people,' **Why** are these thoughts the selfish and self-profiting **ideology** of the **petty** bourgeoisie? Are they influenced by feudalistic or capitalistic **ideology**?"

"**The** revolutionary outlook on life is one involving **examination** of one's life from a revolutionary standpoint, Revolution is the meaning of life, One lives for the revolution, **Why?** How do you understand this now? In the **past**?"

"From a class viewpoint, what is your opinion of internationalism and patriotism? Patriotism is certainly related to internationalism. **Why?** By what steps did you come to an understanding of this question.?"

"**Why** do the **ideas** of 'being a sympathizer with the working people' and having 'a new viewpoint of showing gratitude' reveal that you **really** do not yet understand that the laborer is the **master** of history and the **masses** are the real heroes? **Why** are these ideas merely petty bourgeois humanitarianism and salvationism? Examine yourself to see if you have such thoughts,"

Of course not all of the discussion concerns broad

questions of attitude and outlook such as these, Hsueh hsi groups also discuss current events, government policies **and** concrete problems related to the work of group members. But the broad ideological questions are looked upon as of fundamental importance.

As already stated, lectures **and** reading of prescribed texts (books, pamphlets, newspaper editorials or specially **mimo-graphed** material) play a part in hsueh hsi and **usually** precede discussion. **Normal** procedure is for several hsueh hsi groups to meet together and listen to a speech, which **may last** two to four hours, or for all the group **members** to read the basic writings on a particular question, either individually or collectively,

The **lectures** and reading provide the raw material for discussion and pose the **problems** or questions to be discussed. The presentation is often highly "**dialectical**" - full of "**on the one hand**" and "**on the other hand,**" outlining wrong answers and the right one, listing rightist and leftist **deviations and** defining the "**correct**" view,

Upon analysis, one interesting fact about this **preparation for** discussion becomes clear. At the very start, everyone in a hsueh hsi group knows what the right answer to the question under discussion is; it is contained, either explicitly or implicitly in the speeches which group **members** have heard or in the material they have read. Yet the members of a hsueh hsi group then proceed to spend hours, and sometimes weeks, in discussion which will end right where they **Rave** started. In short, the discussion is not a genuine search for unknown answers to difficult **questions and problems**; it is a process of clarifying and obtaining acceptance of answers which are defined at the **beginning** of the process,

What happens, then, during the course of lengthy discussion of a topic? Essentially, there is a detailed examination of every conceivable aspect of a question; an attempt to bring into the open and refute all possible objections, **counterarguments** and doubts concerning the "**correct**" **line**; an effort to **get** each group member to renounce any reservations about accepting the orthodox view; and finally insistence that each member of the group openly express full acceptance of the officially-sanctioned "**truth**" and try to **relate** this to his personal life,

Even if every member of a group is inclined to accept the **prescribed** ideas at the **start** of discussion on a particular subject, the **process** of **discussion** cannot be dispensed with. **Group members** must rack their brains to raise **problems** and doubts, even if they have to invent them, so that they can be disposed of.

If a **group member** genuinely disagrees with the "**correct**" line, and persists in resisting conversion, it is the responsibility of **all** members of the group to criticize him, argue

against him and prove him to be wrong. If they do not speak up, this fact might be interpreted by the group leader as indicating that they share the mistaken ideas of the maverick.

The result, therefore, is mobilization of intense social pressure within the group to achieve total conformity. In a sense, every member of a hsueh hsi group is a minority of one being worked on by all the rest. Some of the groups are composed of people who may all be skeptical of the Communist line, yet in these groups there occurs the remarkable phenomenon of eight or ten skeptics all exerting pressure on each other to become believers - under the watchful eye of the group leader,

Persons who have participated in hsueh hsi describe a subtle but deep undercurrent of tension, suspicion and fear which exists at least in many of the groups. Each group member realizes that the discussion is a test of his ability or willingness to accept the official ideology of the regime. He realizes also that the Communist authorities demand acceptance of their ideology and that in the long run he either must give in or risk subjection to further, more intensive indoctrination. If a person is really stubborn, he may be sent to a jail for "re-education" - or worse - and everyone knows this,

The pressures upon a group member's mind during discussion are by no means all negative, however. Constant repetition of ideas hammers them into one's mind and leads to an increasing willingness to accept and believe. Hearing the other group members argue in support of the "correct" line begins to undermine one's belief in different views: a person begins to think "maybe, after all, they are right and I am wrong." The pressure to verbalize arguments supporting the official line, even if one is skeptical, begins to create a readiness to accept the ideas. And all possible arguments to support the Communist-approved answers to problems are mobilized during the course of the group discussion.

The final aim of discussion on any question is open acceptance, by each and every member of the group, of the official ideas and viewpoint, and this is usually achieved. Even those who have participated in hsueh hsi groups, however, find it difficult to assess the real effects of all this upon members of such a group. In some cases, genuine conversion and acceptance of the ideas is achieved. In some cases, at the other extreme, verbal acceptance is obviously a fraud, and people begin living a double life mentally - espousing one set of ideas openly, but clinging to another set privately. Many people are probably between these extremes. Put one thing is clearly and indisputably achieved: open expression of intellectual submission to the official line of the regime. Whether a person is actually converted or secretly persists in maintaining intellectual independence, almost all admit by their verbal acceptance of the "correct" views that they are subservient to the regime and are unable to maintain an independent intellectual position against it,

Discussion on any one major subject by a hsueh hsi group is usually ended by a **summary** of all that has been discussed. In special intensive indoctrination courses, the whole course comes to a climax when each participant writes what is called an "**ideological r sum **" (szu hsiang tsung chieh). Criticism and self-criticism are essential **components** of the process of group indoctrination, and they reach their apex in these ideological **r sum s**.

An ideological **r sum ** is a long document, of several thousand words, in which an individual recounts his whole **past** life (childhood, class status, education, work, activities of all sorts) and previous thoughts and attitudes, confesses all those aspects of his past activities and thinking which did not live up to what the Communists define as ideal, and describes how he has now renounced the past **and** has been converted.

Sometimes several **weeks** are devoted to preparation of these documents. Each individual in a group first works alone on preparation of a **r sum **. The first **drafts** are then circulated among **members** of the **group** who write criticisms and suggestions. The drafts are then revised, and subsequently each **member** reads his **r sum ** to the group, which critically examines it and discusses it in detail. The individual is probed to see to what extent he has completely revealed all of his past, **confessed** all of his errors, and actually presented convincing proof of having really changed and become a new man ideologically. Almost always a **r sum ** is rejected by the group after the first reading, and the individual is told to improve it and make it more **complete**. Sometimes a person must revise and expand his **r sum ** two or three times before it is finally accepted by the group and then by the hierarchy of authority above the group.

Everyone I have talked with who **has** written an ideological **r sum ** states that it **is** a devastating experience, breaking down **one's** integrity as an individual. The necessity of dissecting and denouncing one's past is in **many** respects a disintegrating experience. **The** problem of justifying himself, and supporting the claim that genuine ideological change has taken place, puts a great mental strain upon a person. It is not **uncommon** for an individual to lose several pounds during the period he is preparing and defending his ideological **r sum **.

The final approved **r sum ** is kept on file by the authorities, and according to some **people** it **becomes** the basis of a permanent dossier on one's thinking, following a person **from** place to place and job to job. The sincerity of a person's claims about past and **present** thoughts can be periodically checked by referring to his ideological **r sum ** and looking for inconsistencies between past and present statements.

As stated earlier, there are **many** different kinds and degrees of hsueh hsi, ranging from the study groups of ordinary people within organizations all over the country which meet for an hour a day to the special indoctrination courses which involve

full-time group hsueh hsi for a period of several months,

The most effective indoctrination is obviously achieved in the full-time, intensive schools, whose students are usually persons slated to work for the regime. The aim of this intensive indoctrination is complete "thought reform." In such schools the small group is the basis of the students' whole life; not only hsueh hsi as such but all other activities as well are done collectively. The schedule of activities of the schools, furthermore, is designed to occupy all of the students' time and energy, and for periods ranging from a few weeks to several months the students spend almost the whole of every day in discussion sessions designed fully to "remould" their minds.

The most intensive process of all is that applied to prisoners in Chinese Communist "re-education" jails. The treatment of these prisoners, which has been reported fairly extensively in the West on the basis of accounts given by foreign residents in China and former prisoners-of-war, is rather different in its psychological basis, however, from the hsueh hsi undergone by ordinary people. Fear, intimidation and threats play a much greater and more obvious role in the Chinese Communists' treatment of prisoners than in ordinary hsueh hsi, although they are certainly present in every hsueh hsi group. Often a person's mind is literally broken down in prison by methods which can only be labelled "mental torture." As one American missionary friend of mine who spent eleven months in a jail in Southwest China has reported, "one's mind begins to find it difficult to distinguish between what the court has suggested and what one had known to be the facts." The "confessions," obtained from minds which are sick and confused as a result of unbearable psychological pressures and fatigue, are very useful to the Communists' propaganda machine.

In other cases, however, prisoners make false confessions as a result of despair. A missionary who spent over two years in a Chinese Communist jail said to me that he finally reached a point where the desire for release, combined with a realization that he would never be freed until he made the confession which his prison wardens required, made him decide to do and say everything the Communists wanted, even to the extent of inventing wild untruths to confess.

The experiences of men such as these indicate that the Chinese Communists have developed psychological techniques which can "break" men's minds as well as "remould" them. The emphasis in most hsueh hsi is upon "remoulding" minds, however, and this is what the Chinese Communists are trying to do on such a wide scale,

What is the image of the "new socialist man" which the Chinese Communists are trying to create by this remoulding? Stated briefly, he is a man who has been converted to a whole new outlook on life, accepts the "truth" of Communist dogma as outlined in Russian and Chinese Communist classics, and lives

according to a new code of morals defined by the Communist Party, He is expected to subordinate his own individual will completely to the will of the Communist Party, Self-sacrifice, obedience, loyalty and discipline are fundamental requirements. He must be willing to struggle actively for the revolution in order to ensure the course of social development which the dogma states is both necessary and **inevitable**. He is supposed to think in class terms, to differentiate "**good**" from "**bad**" and "**friend**" from "**foe**," to glorify and imitate the ideal of being proletarian, to be frugal, to live a simple life, He must identify **himself** with the "**masses**" and be willing to live a collective group life. He must fight against anything which he is told is "**feudal, capitalist or bourgeois**". And he must support all the **policies** of the Communist Party and the regime which it has created, This is a big order, but it is what the Chinese Communists are trying to achieve.

This is why so much attention **is** devoted to "**attitudes**" and "**outlook**" in ~~hsueh-hsi~~ groups. The ~~hsueh-hsi~~ groups also, however, try to **indoctrinate** their members in the whole Marxist ideology, that **is, Marxism - Leninism and the Thought of Mao Tse-tung**, as well as in the many specific policies of the Chinese Communist Party and **the** government,

An outline of one course at a twelvemonth indoctrination school in Communist China gives an idea of the political content of **some** of the indoctrination.

First 3½ months

1. History of social development,
 - a, Ancient history,
 - b, Modern history,
2. **Basic principles** of the Chinese revolution.
 - a. The present stage of the Chinese revolution,
 - b.** The social **foundation** of the present stage of the revolution,
 - c, **Leadership, etc.**, of the present **stage** of the revolution.

Second 4½ months.

3. History of the revolution and Chinese New Democratic principles,
 - a, **History** of the revolution and its principles,
 - b, Basic experiences of the revolution,

Last 4 months.

4. Establishment of New Democratic principles,

But this is only one course, and one general category of the material included in hsueh hsi. Actually, there is no end to hsueh hsi. It is conceived of as a lifelong process. although its intensity may vary during different periods of one's life, and everyone from old party leaders to factory workers or store clerks are expected to keep up hsueh hsi on current policies and problems and also to keep on improving their understanding of basic Communist defined "truth."

The textual reading material used by hsueh hsi groups is consequently almost inexhaustible. Actually, all important editorials on policies in newspapers such as the Peking People's Daily are texts for hsueh hsi groups. So are the major writings and speeches of Chinese Communist leaders, as well as those of Marx and the Russian Communists.

The entire propaganda apparatus of the regime grinds out an unending flow of material, most of which can be, and much of which actually is, used by hsueh hsi groups. (The principal theoretical journal published by the Chinese Communists, incidentally, is called simply Hsueh Hsi.)

What is perhaps most startling to a non-Communist observer, however, is the emphasis placed upon theory. One would naturally expect the Chinese Communists to indoctrinate the people on political and economic policies, and hence it is no surprise at all to discover that works such as Lenin's "Imperialism," Stalin's "The Foundations of Leninism," Mao's "On New Democracy" and "On Peoples' Democratic Dictatorship," the Peking regime's Land Law and Common Program, and many similar writings are widely used in hsueh hsi groups. But it is surprising to learn that one of the most universally-used texts is a book called "The History of Social Development," that everyone reads "From Monkey to Man," that "Dialectical Materialism and Historical Materialism" is inflicted even upon persons with very little formal education, and that abstruse works such as "On Practice" and "On Contradiction" are given high priority. Great stress is placed upon ideological fundamentals,

This effort at mass conversion of the whole Chinese population to a new ideology by intensive group indoctrination raises some difficult questions. How did the Chinese Communists develop the program? Where did they learn the techniques used?

Although the idea of educating the populace in an orthodox, state-approved ideology is not new in China, it is difficult to find any precedents in Chinese history for intensive group indoctrination of the sort now used by the Chinese Communists. Although many aspects of the indoctrination, such as the emphasis upon criticism and self-criticism, have clearly been borrowed by the Chinese Communists from the Soviet Union, persons who have studied post-1917 Russia more thoroughly than I tell me that the use of intensive group indoctrination to remould the thinking of the mass of the population (not just party and govern-

-ment personnel) was never developed or pushed in the U.S.S.R. to the extent that **it** has **been** in Communist China. In scope and intensity, the group indoctrination in China appears to be a new phenomenon - new both to China and to world Communism.

I have discussed the origin of hsueh hsi with Chang Kuo-t'ao, a former member of the Chinese Communist Politburo who now lives in Hong Kong, and he believes that it developed by trial and error during the period in which the Chinese Communists were recruiting guerrilla armies. "It started in the army," he says. "The rank and file of soldiers were uneducated peasants. We experimented in explaining commands and then **seeing** what they understood and remembered. It was difficult to teach **them**, and we had to teach them all sorts of things - how to work a rifle, how to live together, why they should not steal. The idea of teaching them through group discussion slowly developed." This throws a little light on the origins of hsueh hsi, perhaps, but it hardly explains how it has developed to its **present** stage,

The insight into subtle psychological techniques and group pressures revealed by present methods of hsueh hsi used in China also is surprising. It makes one wonder if Chinese Communist leaders in their caves at Yen-an were reading Freud and Jung as well as Marx and Lenin, although there is certainly no evidence that this was the case.

Undoubtedly, the whole program developed in China slowly on the basis of both Soviet and Chinese experience, 'but there **is** no doubt that hsueh hsi and the great emphasis placed upon remoulding the thinking of the entire population in China are now in many respects unique aspects of the Chinese Communist regime,

How effective is this group indoctrination and how much success are the Chinese Communists having in their efforts to **accomplish** a mass ideological conversion?

One can answer, at the start, that group indoctrination is having great success in achieving surface conformity in the thinking of people in Communist China. People are being taught the new ideology, and they are **expressing** verbal acceptance of it. But it is **extremely** difficult to know what actually goes on in the minds of those **indoctrinated**. How many genuinely believe the new ideology? How many people's minds are confused by a combination of partial belief and doubt? How many people "**believe**" only because of the unremitting psychological and social pressures upon them; what would happen if the pressures upon them were lifted? How many have built walls around their minds and have tried to stop thinking? How many cling stubbornly to old beliefs despite the necessity of approving the new ones verbally?

It is almost impossible to answer these questions with any confidence, although undoubtedly there are people who **fit**

each of these **categories**.

One thing is probable, however. The **younger** the persons exposed to the indoctrination, and the longer the indoctrination process, the more likelihood there is of genuine belief in the new ideology. And there is no doubt that many of the older generation, particularly those of the educated classes, secretly maintain **ideas** which they can no longer express. **The psychological strain** of the indoctrination on many of the older people is very severe, and there is evidence that many are afflicted by psychiatric disorders. In Shanghai, for example, the mental wards of hospitals are more crowded than they have ever been in the past. One hears of cases which lead one to **guess** that schizophrenia **is often** the price paid for attempting to lead a double mental life. Certainly **"peace of mind"** is not characteristic of Chinese **society** under Communist rule.

It is too early to predict whether or not the Chinese **Communists** will be able, in their revolutionary struggle, completely to reshape the minds of the inhabitants of the **largest single** nation on earth. But it is possible to say that through hsueh hsi they are now trying very hard to do so, and the degree of success which they seem to be **having** is profoundly disturbing.

A. Doak Barnett