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Transmitting Power: Radio and Organization in Maoist China

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Transmitting Power:
Radio and Organization in Maoist China

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Social Studies
of Bard College

by

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Glossary of Terms

Note: This project largely makes use of Hanyu or Library of Congress pinyin, rather than Wade-Giles. While both forms of pinyin are still in use today, as Taiwan uses Wade-Giles, I have used Hanyu pinyin for the sake of consistency and ease of access. For example, in this project, the Kuomintang/KMT is rendered as Guomindang/GMD; the names of people and places better known to Western readers by their Wade-Giles names, like Chiang Kai-shek, however, have been left in Wade-Giles. I have, below, provided the following glossary of terms and abbreviations:

CCP	中国共产党	Communist Party of China
CNR	中国人民广播电台	China National Radio
GMD	国民党	Guomindang
JFRB	解放日报	<i>Liberation Daily</i>
PD	中宣部	Propaganda Department
PLA	中国人民解放军	People's Liberation Army (of China)
PRC	中华人民共和国	People's Republic of China
RMRB	人民日报	<i>People's Daily</i>
XCNR	延安新华中国广播电台	Yan'an New China Radio

Introduction

The trajectory of scholarly approach to studies of mass media, and the history of media technology, seems to have been aimed in a particular way-- namely, it is aimed, perhaps unintentionally, at presenting different forms of mass media as existing on a scale, ranging from least to most important. Scholarly approaches to the radio and its significance, for instance, have had to place the radio between other forms of mass media, focusing on comparing and contrasting the radio with print, television, or film. While this has its uses, as it serves to differentiate the technical apparatus of the radio from that of the printing press or the television, thus drawing attention to it where it otherwise might be neglected, this does not necessarily elucidate certain aspects of the radio's life as what John Mowitt calls a "cultural technology."¹ It instead fixes radio to a certain time and place in the cultural and historical imagination, giving it a limited lifespan, and perhaps even placing it as secondary, or as exceptional to, other forms of mass media. To History, to Media Studies, radio is not Walter Cronkite removing his glasses to announce the death of the president; radio is Walter Cronkite dropping out of college, needing a job, trying to get a start in life.²

But conceptualizing the radio in this way, as a stepping stone from print to television and film, does a few unfortunate things: For one, it eliminates potential opportunities to observe ways in which different forms of mass media have interacted with each other, synthesizing and packaging a particular type of information and then transmitting it to a listening, watching,

¹ Mowitt, J. (2011). *Radio: Essays in Bad Reception*. Berkeley: University of California Press. p 1.

² Walter Cronkite actually did work as a radio broadcaster after dropping out of college in the 1930s before eventually moving to television, for which he is, of course, better known; the idea that radio is a starting point, rather than an end goal, in the scholarly and professional worlds of media and journalism, is an old one.

reading public. Rather than being secondary to television, film, or print, rather than being exceptional to or separate from other forms of mass media, radio is but one of the many ways in which the same message could be encoded to a particular group of people. Studying the radio, then, allows the scholar to observe the particularities of the construction or reception of that message, grounded in specific motives and goals, by different groups of people-- from advertising executives to consumers, from artists to patrons of artists, from governments to citizens. The strength of taking a magnifying glass to one form of media or mass media over another is to be able to better conceptualize the types of approaches that different groups of people took to engaging with the world around them. In the case of radio, the date of its invention places it as a tool of late modernity, so a study of radio should be able to gauge the ways in which groups of people approached the changes, disruptive and progressive alike, of the late modern and postmodern world.

However, the danger of associating the technology itself purely with the time period in which it came to be may result in the false perception that that technology may only exist within that one time period. This often confines studies of the radio's impact to its significance on the Western world in the early to mid-20th century. Once television begins to make a significant impact on the daily lives of middle class Americans and Europeans in the 1950s, for instance, scholars often lose interest in the life of the radio outside of a rare few moments until the increased use of satellite radio in the late 20th century. This mindset often fails to take into account the ways in which radio was and is still used both in the West and in other places; in America, the airtime given to protest music in the late 1960s, and its subsequent effect on counterculture movements, affected public opinion on issues of civil and human rights, and the

American government's involvement in the Vietnam War-- a similar trend, with inverse intent, can be seen in the way country music on the radio in the early 2000s was used to bolster public opinion and support for the American invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. In a similar vein, the way in which radio served as a conduit for language (in)accessibility during the Algerian War helped thinkers like Franz Fanon, a living product of colonialism, conceptualize its nature and its psychological effects on the colonized. And, as I will get to, there are ways in which non-Western, non-capitalist countries, and their governments, used the radio that are inherently different from the more colonial, corporatized format of broadcasting that Western listeners are more used to.

When Mowitt writes that radio is a cultural technology, then, he means that the physical apparatus of the radio is inherently bound up in the socio- and geopolitical contexts of the time periods in which it came to exist and beyond-- however, the technology itself, while it may represent a branch in the "evolution" of media technology, cannot be the only thing that defines it or studies of it. By highlighting the sociopolitical uses of the radio, through its being integrated into the fabric of modernity and subsequent or simultaneous time periods, the cultural aspect of the radio, *what it does*, is allowed to move out from under the shadow of the technological aspect of the radio, *what it is*. When remembering the emphasis that modernity in its later stages places on technological advancement as a sign of cultural advancement or progressivism, it is easy to conflate what the radio is with what it does, but an important distinction between the two needs to be considered when writing about the radio's impact or significance in a particular time or place.

It is important to note, however, that there is a natural symbiosis, bordering on a feedback loop, in the relationship between these two aspects of the radio's existence, the apparatus of the radio broadcast and the words of the broadcast itself. The radio's technological components enable it to perform the sociopolitical actions it has so often been used for, and those actions are, in turn, often undertaken in order to improve upon or expand the technological components of the radio-- again, often in the name of technological and cultural progressivism. Divorcing the radio's form from its function is not entirely possible due to the sociopolitical importance so often given to the apparatus of wireless broadcasting. It is merely to show that the messages transmitted through the radio are able to live outside the radio's physical form, amphibious, traversing two types of life that often seem to overlap.

This is evident in the complex, almost psychological relationship that exists between the broadcaster and the listener, built on a foundation of information exchange that, in some key respects, is quite similar to that of the relationship between reader and writer.³ This relationship is indirect; the broadcaster talks, announces, delivers information, without certainty of being heard by anyone at all. The listener, who cannot even see the broadcaster, is never allowed to reply to the utterances of the broadcaster *unless they become part of the broadcast themselves*, either by calling into a radio station or by joining the broadcaster in an interview capacity. The broadcast itself becomes the marker by which the relationship between broadcaster and listener is defined. If there cannot be two-way communication unless the listener ceases to be a mere

³ The easiest way for me, personally, to conceptualize the relationship between reader and writer has been through Philippe Lejeune's work *On Autobiography*. In it, he outlines the autobiographical pact between the writer and the reader of autobiography as existing through a common understanding of criteria that define and distinguish the genre of autobiography from other types of literature or historiography. I believe that a similar type of relationship exists between broadcaster and listener, though, since their relationship is defined by sound rather than sight, I think we may not be as psychologically conscious of articulating these relationships in the same way.

listener, and instead becomes an active agent within the broadcast, then the unconscious maintenance, by both parties, of what a broadcast is expected to be is integral to identifying the exchange between the radio announcer and the person who listens to the announcement.

This type of relationship, which differentiates the radio broadcast from the telephone just as it differentiates the epistolary novel from actual letter correspondence, makes the nature of the exchange between broadcaster and listener particularly interesting. Does the lack of two-way communication, necessary in order to maintain the integrity of the format of the broadcast itself, mean that the way the information is exchanged must reflect that relationship? Is there an underlying didacticism in the transmission of word from the mouth of the speaker to the ear of the listener, even if the words themselves may be intended to entertain, to sell, to do something other than overtly educate?

The beginnings of an answer to this question lie in the delivery of the broadcast, in the way that the voice of the broadcaster often goes from being a singular, individual voice to one stripped of the particularities of that individual identity, or of the context of in-person interactions. Since the broadcaster's interaction with the listener is faceless, precarious, and not inherently a one-on-one interaction, the broadcaster's voice must reflect the possibility that anyone, or no one at all, could be listening to the radio. A radio broadcast, since it is not a two-way interaction, is not a conversation, but the underlying idea behind the engagement between announcer and listener is very similar. In a conversation between two people, for instance, there is an unspoken agreement as to who listens and when, who talks and when. I may approach you with an idle comment about the weather, and you may reply that, yes, the weather is rather nice today, but that it might rain later in the week. The conversation itself, the small talk

exchanged between us, masks the underlying social mechanisms of our interaction. I talked, you listened, and then we reversed our roles for the sake of the content created by us, between us.

But maybe small talk's not your thing. Say I approach you with a comment about the weather, but halfway through my sentence, you hold up your hand, your palm flat in protest, or you verbally communicate that, no, you don't want to take part in this interaction. Chances are, I apologize and walk away, and so the informational exchange between us is over. Radio is not this way; the broadcaster continues talking whether or not you want to hear what she has to say, and, as Mowitt suggests, maybe *in spite of* the possibility that you don't want to hear what she has to say.⁴ The equivalent of your signal for me to stop talking, in this case, is to turn the dial of the wireless receiver to another station, or off entirely.

It is important to keep in mind that, unlike a two-way conversation, radio broadcasts are meant to accommodate multiple listeners, wherever they may be within a certain range. There is a lack of access to interpersonality or the context or intimacy that comes with it, however, the ability to reach a wider audience is gained. This accessibility makes radio, like other forms of mass media, a great way to disseminate certain types of information. If you're listening to a broadcast, you don't get to directly engage with what the broadcast is saying unless you initiate another type of interaction, be it a written response, a broadcast of your own, or violating the boundary of communication that helps define the format of the broadcast itself. If you disagree with what the broadcaster is saying, you might turn the dial or turn the radio off completely. However, barring technical issues, the broadcaster will keep talking, the words themselves are still there, existing as sound waves, and, more importantly, someone else may be listening to

⁴ Mowitt p 15

what the broadcaster has to say. The very possibility that the radio has successfully transmitted whatever message the broadcaster has to offer, that someone has listened to the words being spoken, makes all the difference, because it determines the way that the information itself is constructed; broadcasters, or, rather, the people writing the information that the broadcasters then speak, aim to present their message in such a way that it will be heard, processed, and understood by as many people as possible. Think about, in the context of American radio broadcasts especially, those precious bits of time between different radio programs, where advertisements live and keep commercial radio alive. Even today in the age of satellite and digital radio, advertisements on the radio still function in much the same way that they did thirty or forty years ago. The particularities of the words themselves might have changed along with consumer values and executive interests, however, the format of the advertisements themselves are very much the same, capitalizing on the few seconds before you turn the dial in your car or hit “skip ad” on your touchscreen smartphone.

But advertising is not the only type of information that mass media proves itself to be useful in transmitting. Radio is not just morning talk show laugh tracks or advertisements for hamburgers; popular imagination correctly associates radio technology with military intelligence and its special, coded jargon, torpedoes of potentially damaging information existing as sound waves and technical language. Radio is a sonic realm of factoids-- weather forecasts and regular updates on news-- and sometimes, it is a place for art and literature, for experimentation on the very design and delivery of sound itself. In other words, its content is varied and meaningful (except when it intends not to be, when it is purposefully unlistenable or unintelligible, and even that is imbued with a deductible meaning in and of itself), and if the relationships between

broadcaster and listener, spoken word and heard word, help to determine the specific sounds or words of the broadcast itself, then perhaps we should turn our eyes and ears to those words and their construction, meaning, and impact in places other than the Western world.

The history of radio in China has largely been defined by its state-run operations, and how those operations reflect the content it produces. State-run radio in China, and its role alongside print, television, and film, is one phenomenon among many related to the radio that could be studied, but it presents a particularly compelling case due to the potential to more clearly observe the realities of the relationship between communication and ideology. Mid-century mass media in China is a place where language and power meet explosively, building each other up and tearing each other down in the name of creating what Alan Liu calls a “pattern of control” that would allow the Communist Party of China (CCP 中国共产党 *Zhongguo Gongchan dang*) to create a centralized, self-sustaining model of government that it would, by and large, stick to throughout the Maoist period and beyond.⁵ In other words, mass media’s, and in particular radio’s, role as a cultural technology-- what it does-- is to mobilize all of the different components of Chinese communist ideology in order to cement the notion of a strong political organization.⁶

Radio’s ability to act as a tool of organization and a conduit of ideology in midcentury China stems from its cohesive, mutualistic relationship with other forms of mass media. Chinese radio stations at this time are not competing with Chinese newspapers in the capitalist sense of the word, nor are radio broadcasters engaged in ratings wars with television news anchors. The

⁵Liu, A. P. (1971). *Communications and National Integration in Communist China*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

⁶Schurmann, F. (1968). *Ideology and organization in Communist China*. Berkeley: University of California Press. p xxxv-xxxvi

fact that mass media is a state-run apparatus allows for some overlap between what is said through one form of media and another. This is not to say that radio says nothing different from newsprint-- in fact, some of radio's most important moments in Maoist period China occur when broadcasts are verbatim recitations of newspaper editorials, articles, announcements-- rather, it is to re-emphasize the notion that the specific form of the radio broadcast and the technology that it originates from may shape the content of the broadcast itself, as well as the meaning of that content or the effect it has on the listener. The usefulness of this is to elucidate the unexpected: By paying attention to the particularities of different forms mass media in China takes, we may see the ways that the government addressed potential challenges on a political, logistical, or societal level. It also allows us to see the ways in which the government may have failed or alienated its citizens, either by failing to make fundamental infrastructural changes to the models of political organization established, or by making the kinds of changes that did not necessarily reflect the reality of human wants and needs. This mode of thinking opens up the potential to gain some insight into the thought processes of social systems themselves, or the people engaged in those social systems.

In order to talk more specifically about the social and political systems radio simultaneously engages with and embodies, we must do some defining of terms. I have previously used the words "organization" and "ideology" but have, up to now, neglected to contextualize them within the framework of Marxist theory or any of its particular strains of thought or practice. Obviously, to continue to do so in the context of China and its turbulent history would be a gross mistake, so I will now briefly describe the atmosphere in which the

radio in China came to be, as it will allow us to better understand the reasons behind using mass media as part of a program of governmental centralization.

China's relationship to Western modernity, and with its own national identities, is a complex one; from the vantage point of the passage of time and scholarly interest, it may be deceptively easy to discern the patterns of tension, violence, poverty, and death that China under Mao Zedong is so often remembered for. However, the ultimate ideas and causes of some of the events of both the Republican and the Maoist era, from the first attempts at mass industrialization of its early years to the Cultural Revolution, emerge not merely from the mind and mouth of political leaders like Sun Yat-sen, Mao Zedong or the Gang of Four, but also from the aftermath of the slow, final collapse of the Qing Empire in 1911 and China's involvement in both World Wars. These events, precipitated by nearly a century of Western political and economic imperialism and widespread rebellion, triggered nearly half a century of occasionally overlapping and often high-stakes experiments of trial and error in the sociopolitical realm; China's political fracturing left it exposed to warlordism, infighting, and further imperial exploitation at the hands of a war-embattled Western world and an increasingly industrialized and militarized Japan. However, this same political fracturing encouraged the emergence of new thinkers like Lu Xun and Liang Qichao, people who had been educated abroad in the United States or Japan, and who used that education to call into question China's history and culture, its place in a world that exploited it. The resulting New Culture Movement, while brief, saw China engage in different modes and expressions of political and intellectual thought, a spectrum that ranged from language reform and technological modernization to experimenting, often simultaneously, with anarchism, socialism, nationalism, or further attempts at empire.

International events, like the aftermath of world war, or the October Revolution, helped to influence the course China took during this time, as changes in the way people engaged in politics became more felt against the backdrop of world war. The combination of all of these things, exacerbated by international colonial attitudes towards China, eventually led to the civil war between the nationalists of the Guomindang (GMD 国民党) and communists that gripped the country on and off from 1927 to 1949.

Central to this perspective of the timeline events of China's tumultuous 20th century is the idea that China underwent not only a political revolution-- the fall of the Qing Empire-- but also a social one-- the breakdown of old social systems attached to the political makeup of said empire.⁷ Part of what made the New Culture movement have such a long-lasting effect, I think, was the idea that the thought experiments it provoked, and the nationalistic, anti-Japanese fervor of the May Fourth movement, could allow China to find a suitable way to effectively reconstruct its social systems and the ideas underlying those systems, or to construct entirely new social systems. Political organization assigns roles, while social systems convey status-- that is, organization is the mechanism by which social systems are constructed or, in some cases, reconstructed. One of the implications behind organization is that, since it designates who does what and when, it is intentionally created; another is that organizations will, even if no hierarchy of role is intended, inevitably form elites of their own.⁸ I will not attempt to refute or deny the latter, as, in the case of both the Republican and Maoist eras, there were elite classes of intellectuals, military leaders, warlords, politicians, and so on, even if they were only acknowledged or referred to as such when purged or in danger of being purged. However, as

⁷ibid., p xxx, xxxi.

⁸ibid., p 18, xxxi.

Schurmann points out, since organizations are “conscious creations...ideologies which serve to create organizations require a conscious conception of unity,” there is often the perception that, particularly in the case of communism and Chinese communist conceptions of it, there is not supposed to be an intended or designated elite, or even the appearance of one.⁹

One of the central, core beliefs of socialism grounded in Marxist or Marxist-Leninist ideologies is that of the inevitability of proletarianization; this idea affected the way that organization in China was constructed. Since both the Guomindang and the Communist Party are grounded in Leninism and in the work of Sun Yat-sen, organization becomes important to understanding their different approaches to policy creation and the interpretation of the ideology behind that policy creation. I cannot speak to the GMD’s interpretation of Leninism or of Sun Yat-sen’s particular brand of nationalism, as that is outside the scope of my project, however, the CCP operated very early on, even during its work alongside the GMD in the 1920s, under the classic Marxist-Leninist idea that proletarianization was necessary, and that it “is essentially a human goal,” in that it “calls for the transformation of beings.”¹⁰ Hand-in-hand with this concept, and something I will return to, is the idea that technological modernization, or, “the transformation of things,” must be underway, must work in tandem with ideological processes, in order to realize the goal of proletarianization.¹¹

This idea of transformation was incredibly influential for the thinkers and actors of the CCP, who, in the conceptualization of ideology, would place emphasis on the formation and execution of thought. Theory and practice work together to create thought, which can be conceived of as the sum total of the “truths of Marxism-Leninism,” taken to be universal yet

⁹ *ibid.*, p 55

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p 51, 52

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p 51, 52

adaptable, and the “practice of revolution and construction” as specific to the geographic landmass, cultures, and peoples of China itself.¹² Indeed, the CCP’s interpretation, and thus its implementation, of ideology, is highlighted by its emphasis on thought, and the notion that “thought can change.”¹³ This adaptability in thought, the process of it-- indeed, true revolutionary thought is continuously changing-- is because thought “can only come about within the individual human being,” meaning that the individual has to do real, intellectual work, in order to live, and perpetuate, the revolution. This work takes various forms, from conscious education through government-sponsored programs, to self-study and living by example, and so on. These programs of education have an obvious propagandistic component; education was often a component of thought reform, which generated ideology within the revolutionary individual-- this is what is meant by the idea of rectification, though its actualities have drastic, human, emotional consequences.¹⁴

Radio found its foothold in China in urban areas during the early 1920s, less than a decade after commercial radio stations began appearing in America and Europe. In fact, it was an American, E.G. Osborn, who started the first radio station in China, the private, foreign-run Radio Corporation of China (中国无线电公司 *Zhongguo wuxiandian gongsi*).¹⁵ The earliest Chinese-owned and operated stations in Harbin and Shanghai in the mid 1920s, however, more clearly showed how China’s early approaches to the radio mirrored its varied approach to modernity, and its nebulous mentality towards the importation of Western ideas and

¹²ibid., p 30

¹³ibid., p 32

¹⁴Volland, N. (2003). The Control of the Media in the People's Republic of China (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Heidelberg. p 47.

¹⁵Miller, Toby. (2003). Television: Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies. p 23

technologies.¹⁶ Its power as a tool of organization was recognized very quickly by both the GMD and the CCP, the former of whom would exercise an iron, inflexible control over the use of radio and its content during the final years of the civil war in a way that mirrored the deliberate, somewhat flexible choices made by the CCP in the formation of their approach to mass media.¹⁷

The use of mass media is undertaken by the political organization of the CCP's government in order to, on a surface level if not deeper, allow its citizens to do the intellectual work of thought, or what Schurmann refers to as "pure ideology"; in this process, "the individual develops a commitment to the organization," through their commitment to the ideology that the organization represents and is supposed to carry out-- thus making the organization itself at the very least appear to be stronger.¹⁸ Mass media's role as a tool of political organization was a deliberate, conscious choice, that has its roots in the government's desire, nebulous as that in and of itself is, to centralize its centers of power. We can trace the conceptualizations and ideas the CCP developed surrounding its use of mass media back to the 1920s, however, Yan'an Rectification Movement, or 政风运动 *zhengfeng yundong*, which took place from 1942 to 1944, is where many of the ideas of this model are first implemented. The methods of control the government exercised at Yan'an, observable through its direct yet multifaceted relationship with the media, would serve as a coherent, reliable model for how the CCP would use the radio following the end of the war in 1949-- particularly in cities where the radio had long been established, like Shanghai.

As I said before, industrialization was essentially thought of as an integral part of the process of proletarianization. Indeed, it was a fundamental the Marxist-Leninist approach to

¹⁶ibid., p 24

¹⁷ Ibid., p 24; Volland, p 190

¹⁸Schurmann, p 54

modernity itself, which saw an increased interest in science and technology, and the supposed rationality of it, across multiple ideologies. Radio, for China, for Russia, for multiple countries or classes of people experimenting with and carrying out their interpretations of socialist ideologies, relates human words, human ideas, human structures, and bridges the gap between proletarianization and industrialization (though the specifics of its use and the reasons behind that use obviously vary from country to country). The CCP was well aware of this conceptualization of the radio and the relationships between broadcaster and listener, and took a special interest in expanding radio technology into rural throughout the first twenty years of its governance that had socio- and geopolitical consequences on a national and international level; throughout this expansion, which may or may not have been exaggerated in the wake of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, as well as events like the Sino-Soviet split, the CCP tended to stick to the same model it first implemented back in Yan'an. Because this model is fairly consistent despite its high potential for adaptability or flexibility in practice (which may mask its consistency to un-careful observers), and despite the fact that the government itself underwent many significant changes in its operational makeup, I have divided this work up into three chapters: In the first one, I deal with the model of mass media use, and radio's role in it, as laid out during Rectification, and explore some of the psychological and emotional consequences of such the media model and its usage during the program of *zhengfeng yundong*. In the second chapter, I present a case study of how the CCP implemented its use of mass media as a tool of organization by examining the military's control of the radio in Shanghai during the period of 1949-1950, when martial law was declared following the *de facto* end of the civil war between the GMD and the CCP. Finally, I will briefly examine the challenges the CCP faced, and how it

faced them, with its model of media control as it tried to expand the use of the radio into the countryside as part of its greater attempts to modernize China and gain greater geopolitical standing on an international level.

Chapter 1

Rectification and the CCP Media Concept

I have written that the use of mass media and the use of the radio was part of a conscious model developed by the CCP in order to more effectively centralize its operations and cement its ideological grounding through methods of education or rectification as part of the process of creating and practicing thought in the Marxist-Leninist sense of the word, or rather, the Chinese interpretations of Marxist-Leninist ideologies. The radio, through the complex underlying relationships between the broadcaster and the listener, is a particularly effective tool of political organization that looms, a series of masts and towers, in the landscape of 20th century Chinese history. It was used primarily in urban areas during its early history in the country, by both the GMD and the CCP, and with specific aims in mind. Here I will attempt to point to the model the CCP developed, by examining print publications and how one form of mass media might set the stage, so to speak, for another, with the understanding that, unlike Alan Liu's suggestion that radio broadcasting did not include propagandistic programs until after the CCP had established authority over a broader land area following the GMD's retreat to Taiwan in 1949, the CCP may well have used the radio in order to transmit and spread agitation and propaganda following the role of newsprint in its program of Rectification.¹⁹ The use of propaganda here serves to create a sense of political legitimacy and to cement commitment from civilians outside the immediate realm of the political organization in its more latent forms, and it derives this commitment through educational and psychological means. This analysis will include a brief history of some of the events and atmosphere in which the Yan'an Rectification Movement, as it is known, came

¹⁹ Liu, A.P. p 110

to serve as one of the definitive turning points in the course of the history of communism in China. Many of the later courses of action taken by the government (though of course not all of them) from 1950 until Mao Zedong's death in 1976, and even beyond, perhaps, can be traced back to the model of centralization first implemented at Yan'an.

Before moving into a discussion on the more emotional and psychological elements of specific episodes of the Rectification Campaign, I should first go into a little detail about the importance of propaganda and its dissemination through the media; "Propaganda and the media," Volland states, "clearly intersected with almost all other questions" surrounding the formation and continuation of the PRC as a geopolitical entity.²⁰ What precisely is the importance of propaganda, in the Chinese interpretation of the Marxist-Leninist sense of the word?²¹ How does it differ from agitation, and does that difference matter? In order to understand the media's role in the program of Rectification as directed at civilians and recruits in and around Yan'an, we must first determine where agitation and propaganda fall within the term "education" that so often comprises the action of thought. The role of education is not to be underestimated; it is essential to the development and transmission of propaganda in the PRC period, and it finds its grounding later in Mao Zedong Thought (毛泽东主义 *Mao Zedong zhuyi*), but its first, imperative heartbeats were a result of the Rectification Movement and the need to fight Japanese invasion: "Education and propaganda became increasingly identified...[and were] subordinated

²⁰ Volland, p 73

²¹ I really cannot understate the sheer number of ideas imported from the Soviet Union and importance, linguistically and politically, of direct quotations from Lenin used by the CCP since its founding years all the way through the Maoist period. To elaborate where plenty of other people have already done so for me would be futile, but many of my secondary sources, particularly Volland and Schurmann, comment extensively, giving their own interpretations on Lenin's importance in the ideological foundations of the CCP.

to the Party's main objective of the day, the anti-Japanese war, and the mobilization of the people."²²

In 1959, well after the CCP had established its authority and his role within that authority had been firmly placed, Lu Dingyi (陆定一), the head of the Propaganda Department (PD) and one of the Party's top officials, declared that the point of thought, that what the revolutionary would find herself doing, was essentially to decide whether or not to "listen or not listen to the Party leadership, to listen or not listen to what Chairman Mao Zedong says."²³ Naturally, the 'true revolutionary' would decide in the affirmative, having acquiesced to the social and political pressure of the Party, but what's interesting here is the appearance of agency and power involved in synthesizing the information, in the form of propaganda, circulating around you; the word "listen," implies more than just mechanically hearing the Party's words-- it also means internalizing and embodying the stances the Party takes or puts forward.

Lu Dingyi's work with the CCP dates back to 1925, and is extensive; he, like many other eventual leaders of the CCP, was a participant in the Long March and had written extensively for Party publications. His words, and the context in which they are written, find their first real taste of power during the initial trial and error of the Yan'an Rectification movement, which would have its echoes in the form of other ideological campaigns throughout the Maoist period (and, like them, would have a very real human cost). By using the media and to put forth the Party's intention, Lu Dingyi articulated what had always been at the forefront of the Party's

²² Ibid., p 89

²³ Lu Dingyi, "Great Developments in China's Cultural Revolution," Peking Review, No. 45 (Nov. 10, 1959), p 16. Via Pak, p 197. It is worth noting, as a short aside, the emphasis this written word places on the vocabulary of the heard word-- I believe that this is intentional on Lu Dingyi's part, because listening commands a slightly different kind of attention from that of reading. By calling attention to the heard word, he invites you to reflect the heard word back to the *spoken* word and its importance.

nation-building task: "...a central concern of the Yan'an Rectification Movement was to strengthen discipline and control over all provinces of Party life, [and] the centralization and streamlining of the command structure of the media sector was one of the key goals of the Party."²⁴ It should be noted that, as per standard Marxist-Leninist discourse of the time, propaganda was seen as instrumental in developing the organization of the Party, as a "powerful propaganda organ is seen as the precondition...and not as a result of construction efforts."²⁵ Lu Dingyi and other high ranking Party members understood this well, and the CCP took that specific approach to propaganda and media and carried it with them throughout the Maoist period, and, indeed, after its development the role of propaganda in centralization was merely magnified. From 1957 onwards, China experienced, in rapid succession, the Hundred Flowers Campaign, the Anti-Rightist Campaign, during which half a million people were estimated to be purged, and the tragic famines and industrialization of the Great Leap Forward that would kill millions.²⁶ Propaganda's role was instrumental in each of these movements, particularly because, per Lenin's explanations, which were highly influential to the avant-garde intellectuals and organizers of the early CCP, propaganda is concerned with the correction of systemic issues, that is, entire sets of issues and their causes and effects on societal level, often arising specifically from issues of capitalism, while agitation is concerned with a specific, often much more immediate, issue at a specific time and place-- in other words, a "single idea," or event, requiring immediate, tangible action, as opposed to systemic change.²⁷ There is also the idea that agitation

²⁴ Volland, p 113

²⁵ Schurmann, p 82

²⁶ Qian, G., & Bandurski, D. (2009, September 10). Uneasy silences punctuate 60th anniversary coverage.

²⁷ Lenin, V. (1961). What Is to Be Done (J. Fineberg & G. Hanna, Trans.). In Lenin's Collected Works (Vol. 5). Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House. (Lenin's Selected Works, 1, (1902)); A funny aside here; Lenin actually considered the *spoken* word to be agitation and the *written* word to be propaganda, according to this same passage; he is somewhat vague, I think, in the examples of each that he gives, in attempting to connect the personal

must be used to appeal to or to rally massive groups of people, to “drum up excitement” among the masses, so to speak.²⁸ Mass media, by its very definition, might then be confused as being a weapon of agitation, rather than one of propaganda.

There’s no reason, though, to believe that agitation and propaganda never overlap-- they can and often do (think of the Soviet term “agitprop,” for example), particularly in the CCP interpretation of Lenin’s works, which tended to “reject the differentiation between agitation and propaganda...[by distinguishing] both as almost the same terms.”²⁹ Schurmann posits that “agitation is specifically action-oriented, propaganda is not,” but there is no evidence that systemic change doesn’t require immediate action, or isn’t perceived as such.³⁰ Despite pervasive attempts to draw a distinction between the two, that very line of distinction is, in reality, much more blurred. Since the movements of the Maoist era are sociopolitical in nature and *saw themselves as such*, and thus are thought of as dealing with the nature of systemic ideological forces, the content of the mass media at many points in time was more often considered propaganda, or agitprop, by the organizational systems to which mass media belonged. Schurmann recognizes this tendency in the formation of the CCP’s organizational structure of this period: “...the struggle in the cultural realm, that is, the realm of the superstructure, is itself an essential battle in the overall revolutionary fight,” that the communists sought to consciously address.³¹ If the “goal,” so to speak, of propaganda is social consciousness, but that raising of

anecdote made powerful by speech to immediate action, versus the supposed or assumed philosophical nature of ideology as a vehicle in propaganda.

²⁸ Ibid., p 67

²⁹ Volland, p 32

³⁰ Schurmann, p 66. I wonder if one line by which they may be differentiated or interpreted is their effect on policy; perhaps agitation relates more directly to drawing attention to a policy, while propaganda can comment on it, but may not directly influence it.

³¹ Volland, p 90

consciousness happens through education and information, and education leads to thought, which leads to integration into the organization and a commitment to the ideologies of Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism, the ultimate role of propaganda was to situate the citizen in the revolutionary context of proletarianization (and all of the implications of that) and its broader place in Marxist trajectories of human progress.

Not listening to the Party or to Mao Zedong, essentially, not internalizing the organization's top-down approach by internalizing Mao Zedong thought or what would become Mao Zedong thought, was not an option without consequences, socially or politically, if doing so meant rejecting the socialist ideologies underlying the organization or the practice of thought. This first becomes evident within the mechanism of the CCP during its time at Yan'an, where it took over and established a centralized base among a network of mostly-rural soviets throughout the more tenuous, hard-to-reach places in the country. This network gave the CCP an eventual tactical advantage, both in terms of the hard-to-reach land, and the types of civilians that would end up supporting it against the GMD. Yan'an, situated in the Shaan-Gan-Ning Border Region, served as the CCP's capital following the Long March, and had a harsh climate in a region where few of its surrounding population spoke Mandarin; some of the population in and around the Border Region were not Han Chinese, either, but rather, were ethnic Hui, and made up a large number of the recruits gathering at the base established at Yan'an.

Yan'an's material harshness made it hard for either the Japanese or the GMD to take, especially during the United Front, but this also made it difficult to outfit with supplies, and it was also subjected to aerial attacks on occasion; these were nothing new to the CCP or its leaders, who had endured more difficult conditions in the Jiangxi soviets. Still, it was during the

Yan'an years that the CCP is often considered to have found its organizational bearings; Nicolai Volland calls this a "period of introspection" for the Party, a time where "unresolved issues...[that] had accumulated over almost a decade in areas as diverse as leadership, personnel, ideology, strategy, and policies in numerous fields" could be tended to, despite the chaotic atmosphere of Japanese invasion, the increasingly stormy threat of another world war, and on-and-off hostility with the GMD.³² Though the conceptualizations of the policies and ideas about media implemented at Yan'an have a considerable history in and of themselves-- many of these ideas were developed simultaneously, and to different effect, by both the CCP and the GMD well before the Long March-- Yan'an is representative of one of the first times the CCP enacts what it believes. Yan'an was a place where the CCP could consciously construct every aspect of their interpretation of communism, and to more solidly conceptualize how they would implement it on a legitimate, national (and international) level.

Its conscious construction of its organization took the form of the often-mentioned Rectification Movement, which largely took place from 1942-44 (though it had a considerable prehistory, most notably with the CCP's idealization of the soviet as a concept, which it previously implemented in Jiangxi and Fujian following the 1927 massacres). Its goal was largely to marry thought and practice, ideology with organization, and to create a clear link between the Party and civilians. Perhaps most pressing to the Party during this time period, though, was the need to "strengthen discipline and control over all aspects of Party life."³³ The media hovers in and around the program of rectification, particularly where matters of ideology and policy converge; additionally, much of the 'how' of implementing socialist policy at Yan'an

³²Volland, p 72.

³³ *ibid.*, p 113

revolved around an emotionally harrowing, often dangerous “transformation of the personalities of the cadres involved, with the goal of binding the cadres solidly to the Party and its leadership.”³⁴ This meant that, in order to find the most effective way to cement organizational commitment in its members and followers, the CCP would, through its time at Yan’an, develop a complex, multilevel system of organization where the media was concerned, and would employ multiple tactics to ensure the integrity of that system, ranging from the practical to the psychological.

The CCP set up a press and publishing division fairly early on during its time at Yan’an, often prioritizing its role as a tool to reach and educate the masses, and thus, prioritizing the way the media was set up organizationally.³⁵ In 1940, the CCP received the equipment to set up a radio station, XCNR, from the Soviet Union.³⁶ The media policy and the CCP’s approach to the use of media can be seen even by the very act of naming the individual publications and radio stations. For example, XCNR, the call name for the Yan’an New China Radio Station (延安新华广播电台 *Yan’an Xinhua guangbo diantai*), is significant in and of itself as a name because of what it tells us about what, exactly, the CCP was trying to accomplish. Since it serves as a point of identification, a call sign can subtly point out a radio station’s intentions or alliances to a widespread audience-- so the idea of a *New China Radio* indicated that the CCP wanted to, and would, establish a *new* China. This also goes for the names of many of the print publications set up during this time, as well as the emphasis on the creation of a ‘new man.’ In 1941, before the Shanghai newspaper of the same name was established and after the establishment of two previous newspapers, *Liberation* (*Jiefang* 解放) and *New China Paper* (*Xin Zhonghua bao* 新中

³⁴ Ibid., p 90

³⁵ Ibid., p 113

³⁶ Ibid., p 73; Miller, p 57

华报), the Party set up a newspaper called the *Liberation Daily* (解放日报 *Jiefang Ribao* JFRB), and, like XCNR, the intent behind its name was to reinforce the idea of ideological, political newness and rightness.³⁷ Both names imply not only a sense of new vitality to China's ideology that harkens back to the influential New Culture Movement, but also a sense of freeing China, of liberating it, from Japanese colonialism, bourgeois republicanism, or potential future exploitation by the West, and, most importantly, doing so with the Party at the helm, both ideologically and organizationally; after all, "only the Party and its propaganda can help the working classes, by way of education, to liberate itself."³⁸ Through the intentionality and emphasis placed on a name or the creation of a jargon, a specific terminology (to be internalized through coming to value what the Party values), the organization signals what it values ideologically, and what its intentions are.

Before we continue further, there is a point to be made, I think, about the role of anti-intellectualism in Mao's conceptualization of the proper way to marry thought with practice, and where propaganda fits into that, especially as Mao's use of the media later would often serve as a point of tension between him and those he disagreed with. Not only is Mao's use of media in this respect at Yan'an to consolidate power evidence of media's power as a tool of organization, it also further reveals the varying degrees of centralization that the CCP would waver back and forth over during the next thirty years. As Liu points out, Mao's public vocalizations of anti-intellectualism potentially stem from his early years as a library worker at Peking University, where his treatment by the researchers, professors, and students there led him to believe that "the intellectuals who became political leaders, like Chen Duxiu and the 'returned

³⁷ Ibid., p 76

³⁸ Schurmann, p 86

students' from Moscow in the Communist Party, were ineffectual organizers and leaders."³⁹ This calls into question whether or not Mao is truly anti-intellectual, rather, it seems that he is largely concerned with the role of intellectuals as something other than that of an organizer, and quite possibly with consolidating his own power; denunciation of those Chinese intellectuals who had gone to Russia to study communist ideologies also shows a potential organizational divergence in interpretation, on the part of Mao and those who supported him, from said ideology. In other words, Mao's anti-intellectualism, real or not, was more concerned, conceptually, with a particular approach to organization that pointed to the development of the "professional revolutionary." As organization was key to the CCP's goals of cementing its authority and implementing ideology, a drummed up or perceived lack of ability or initiative to undertake the task of unifying the party was made by Mao and those around him into a point of attack against his potential rivals or enemies, and was used to strengthen Mao's own interpretations of ideology in the process-- something that would become critical in later years.

Part of the manifestation of this anti-intellectualism and its small, but not to be underestimated, role in organization plays itself out in the use of newsprint and written mass media during the Yan'an Rectification movement. The program of *zhengfeng* contains an early and telling example of mass media's social and political power, such as when JFRB experienced a change in layout, content, and editors following an ideological dispute between its editors and the Party line in the first half of 1942, during the height of the Rectification Movement.⁴⁰ The

³⁹Liu, A.P. p 25

⁴⁰ Volland, p. 76, 77; I will here briefly summarize Volland's timeline of the particularities of this reshuffle (that can be found on page 94): From January to March of 1942, Mao ramped up his criticisms and denunciations of JFRB. In February, Lu Dingyi-- the later head of the PD-- was sent by Mao to JFRB, however, the first part of "Wild Lilies," was published on the 13th of March, with the second part published about two weeks later. This resulted in the reshuffle itself, taking place over the period of time from March 31st to April 2nd, when Mao's speech from the 31st was published.

JFRB reshuffle has been written about many times, but its impact as a series of events (that were presented to the public at Yan'an in a conscious, deliberate way) should not be underestimated for solely this reason. Many of the same "Moscow Students," that Liu wrote about, also known as the 28 Bolsheviks, who had worked in the Party's media and propaganda sectors for years, were involved in the various publications at Yan'an. One of them, Bo Gu (博古), was singled out as the editor of JFRB for having made the misstep of publishing two potentially damning essays about the societal conditions in Yan'an: Ding Ling's (丁玲) "Thoughts on March 8," and Wang Shiwei's (王实味) "Wild Lilies."⁴¹ Both of these essays point out the hierarchical divisions between those gathered at Yan'an along class and gender lines that had developed in the six years since the CCP began operating there, and had the very real potential to create an atmosphere of dissent or distrust among Party members, or, more worrisome for the Party, among the large proletariat gathered there. The reaction of Mao and the Party was one of immediate criticism; this intolerance of differing opinions or methods towards ideas about strategy within the organization of the Party show an intention on the part of Party leaders and Mao Zedong to appear as a united front both ideologically and organizationally-- but as one headed by the "right" interpretations and manifestations of how ideology and organization should function. Mao sought to use these papers as a justification for weakening the influence of Bo Gu in particular, and largely succeeded at his task.

Self-criticism was a large part of the JFRB reshuffle, or rather, the publication of self-criticism was significant to the Party's approach to centralizing its operational functions. Though Wang Shiwei would later meet a tragic end resulting in expulsion from the Party, and

⁴¹ Volland, p. 93, 95. Volland notes that Bo Gu might have been trying (and succeeding) to emulate the style of *Pravda*, the party organ of the CPSU.

execution, at the time, “Wild Lilies” served more as evidence to incriminate Bo Gu and the other editors of JFRB in the eyes of Mao and the Party.⁴² Aside from the huge social and psychological pressure of the often intimidating nature of self-criticism, it’s apparent that the process of weakening Bo Gu’s influence takes place on two levels-- internally, between Party leaders, and externally, to the public of recruits and civilians connected to the CCP at this time; Volland points to the fact that Bo Gu’s self-criticisms take place over a series of two meetings, one “private”, one public, and then are repeated in a published editorial within JFRB itself, as, it is worth noting, “read and revised by Mao Zedong.”⁴³ In fact, Mao Zedong’s role in the events leading up to the reshuffle itself is significant, as is the role media plays in it. Through the use of the media, for example, Mao “encouraged a young cadre to criticize JFRB’s style,” a criticism that he then adds his own addition to, using his persona of anti-intellectualism to refer to the style as “party eight-legged essays (党八股 *dang bagu*).”⁴⁴ This criticism works alongside the scathing critiques Mao gave of JFRB in Party meetings, and in his own personal correspondence with Zhou Enlai; a multi-level manipulation of information occurs that serves to encourage the readers of JFRB to think a certain way-- negatively, of course-- about Bo Gu’s decision to publish the essays of Wang Shiwei and Ding Ling.⁴⁵

The Party’s involvement at every level in this stage of pinning responsibility onto the staff of the JFRB for publishing content that went against the Party line, rather than the content

⁴² Volland, p 96; As an aside, Wang Shiwei’s trial and subsequent struggle sessions would take place months after Bo Gu’s, indicating that editors were expected to take more responsibility for the publishing of damning material, rather than the author themselves. This is fairly consistent with later Party approaches to media and issues of censorship; it is top-down in nature.

⁴³ Ibid., p 96

⁴⁴ Ibid., p 93; By referring to the style of JFRB as a “party eight-legged essay,” Mao was calling back to what he perceived as late imperial bourgeois intellectualism, since by the time of the Late Qing, and even well before, the imperial examinations, of which the eight-legged essay were representative, suffered from what I might briefly describe as something like intellectual inflation.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p 97

itself, is revelatory. It indicates, in the eyes of the Party, that the content a social or political structure produces can be reflected back onto the structure itself; therefore, the structure must pay attention to its own makeup in order to produce the proper content-- that is, the content that reflects back onto the organization in a way deemed appropriate or accurate. In the eyes of the structure of the Party as taking shape at Yan'an, the nature of information dissemination, of communication itself, while vowing to eliminate the hierarchies antithetical to proletarianism, must also be top-down in order to be organizationally effective. The media, in part, embodies this line of thinking, since, as both Volland and Liu point out, it operates on multiple levels-- the internal dialogues of the Party and the presentation of that dialogue, edited by organization members, to a larger public-- to address the different structures of the Party itself.⁴⁶

As previously mentioned, there is also a psychological element to this method of disseminating information, especially when it has been edited by the Party to present a certain type of picture. Publication of Bo Gu's self-criticism presents a flattened, two-dimensional version of something that took place, no matter how rehearsed and edited it might be, in real time. This real time element is important; Yu Liu identifies what's taking place during these self-criticisms as Maoist discourse, or, "Mao's ideology in circulation...its life is [through] communication."⁴⁷ The effect of this real-time communication, which can and does extend to the use of mass media during this period through the use of live broadcasts, transcripts of speeches, and so on, of Bo Gu's "humiliating public confession of his mistakes," is an atmosphere where

⁴⁶ Ibid., p 76; Liu, p 126

⁴⁷ Liu, Y. (2010). Maoist Discourse and the Mobilization of Emotions in Revolutionary China. *Modern China*, 36(3), 329-362. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20721316>. p 331

emotions run high.⁴⁸ Employing different psychological tactics towards different groups of people in and around the CCP had the intended consequence of making every action carry a much more drastic weight: “Ordinary words or deeds were not ordinary anymore in the light of political interpretation.”⁴⁹ When considering the highly political nature of Bo Gu’s decision to publish both parts of “Wild Lilies,” in the midst of the crescendo of the Rectification Campaign itself, the stakes of his action thus became much higher. And while print certainly has power to evoke high emotional responses (Volland refers to Mao’s edited version of “To Our Readers,” as “unusually elegant and rhetorically powerful,”), the psychological element of the voice, of the relationship between speaker and listener(s) cannot be understated.⁵⁰

While JFRB may very well have served as “the voice of the Party in the collective sense,” there are some practical and compelling reasons as to why that is not, despite the assigned role, a practical reality, especially when, over the course of the JFRB reshuffle, the paper was said to have “admitted to being guilty of an attitude of aloofness from the masses-- it had not sufficiently served the needs of the cadres and people of the border region.”⁵¹ To return to the psychological element of this failure to stick to the desired image of Party organization, Mao, in using the media to publish an edited version of “To Our Readers,” engages in a tactic of victimization, wherein the Party cadres and local recruits are invited to feel what can be described as a revolutionary-sanctioned outrage against supposed bourgeois elements present in

⁴⁸ Volland, p 97; Volland’s specific word choice here is a common feature in academic work about the Maoist period, particularly in discussions surrounding the Cultural Revolution. Many of the same angry, haunting emotional landscapes of the Cultural Revolution, as Yu Liu points out, find their origin in the Yan’an era.

⁴⁹ Liu, Y. p 335

⁵⁰ Volland, p 97

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p 100

the content and organization of JFRB.⁵² In this way, the manipulation of events as presented in the media serves to strengthen commitment to the political organization.

The aftermath of the JFRB reshuffle only served to heighten the importance placed upon what Mao referred to as “Party character,” and “mass character,” two interrelated terms that would become substantial to the Party’s emphasis on thought and education.⁵³ The declaration that the CCP is a “Party for the people,” meant that the paper was required to “localize” itself in order to reflect the needs of the people of the Border Region, while simultaneously emphasizing the Party line; as Mao remarked in a Politburo meeting prior to the reshuffle, “The Party papers must reflect the masses and carry out the Party’s policies.”⁵⁴ The weight given to Party character and mass character in relation to the media goes back to the idea that it is the media that “supplies working classes with the material needed to raise the worker’s consciousness.”⁵⁵ The reshuffle, in the mind of the Party and of Mao Zedong, proved that the organizational layout of the paper influenced its content. If “what counts in the Chinese Communist view is the use of theory to create thought,” then the theory has to be especially monitored; it must *reflect*.⁵⁶

This is something that the radio was already doing, however. By recognizing the radio as a great form of media for *agitatsiia*, Lenin was perhaps pinpointing, whether he knew it or not, something about the inherent mass character of a radio broadcast.⁵⁷ Where radio fits into the JFRB reshuffle and the overall Yan’an Rectification movement is key, particularly because it does involve the psychological element of the radio voice, of the spoken word that Lenin saw as

⁵² Liu, Y. p 336-338

⁵³ Volland, p 104

⁵⁴ Ibid., p 103; Volland notes that the meeting’s date is March 11, 1942.

⁵⁵ Schurmann, p 86

⁵⁶ Ibid., p 33

⁵⁷ Lenin, p 64

an effective agitator. Print did not operate alone during or before the Maoist period; it always worked simultaneously with other forms of mass media, and perhaps most closely with the radio-- a relationship that usually results in print overshadowing the radio. This is particularly true for the specific timeline of the Rectification Movement, which, though the reshuffle happened before XCNR was able to operate at full capacity, may still have included the radio in its program of thought reform.⁵⁸ Many of the elements of the Rectification Movement found their way into the CCP's use of the radio. This is, for one, because the radio was a practical machine; low literacy rates would have made publication through print and only print somewhat useless, when, as it was noted, "half of the members of the Young Communist League were illiterate."⁵⁹ Volland also points to the differences between the CCP intellectuals gathered at Yan'an and those recruited from the area: "In Yan'an, the CCP found itself in a rural backwater, living among an illiterate, superstitious peasant population."⁶⁰ Indeed, the CCP would not address problems of illiteracy until the period of 1951-52, with its first attempts at language reform and the standardization of simplified characters-- after the conclusion of the war. With this in mind, informing and educating the tens of thousands of people gathering in and around Yan'an alone about Party beliefs and policies, or later changes in the organizational makeup of the Party, would have had to incorporate other forms of media in order to be effective.

And while the restructuring of JFRB proved effective, in that it underlined the emphasis the Party intended to place on the structure and makeup of its different subunits following the possibility of a rise to power on the national and international level, the repeated instances of

⁵⁸ Jan, G. (1967, May). Radio Propaganda in Chinese Villages. *Asian Survey*, 7(5), 305-315. Retrieved October 05, 2016, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2642659>. p 307; Though China received broadcasting equipment from the Soviet Union in 1940, the station was unable to operate full-time until 1944.

⁵⁹ Liu, A.P. p 22

⁶⁰, Volland p 86

using print as a combat zone or point of contention about how to best structure and carry out the organization of the CCP may have made alternative forms of mass media like the radio attractive as a tool of propaganda dissemination. Aside from its obvious practical uses in military telecommunications, radio might have been used at Yan'an as an effective Party tool due to its seemingly anti-intellectual properties; broadcasts, while adopting a specialized socialist vocabulary, were delivered in the vernacular unless otherwise specified, as in the case of the frequent verbatim recitations of editorials and news articles from Party publications. Whereas Mao called for JFRB to localize itself to reflect needs of the people, the radio was already doing that by delivering its announcements in the vernacular. This vernacular delivery suited Mao's approach to organization nicely, as it avoided any of the exclusionary or potentially bourgeois trappings of formal or literary essays or articles like those, in his eyes, of Wang Shiwei, and fit into the image he was crafting of himself as a man from humbler, rural origins who charismatically and easily connected with the locals and new recruits in the Border Region. By using the vernacular in broadcasts, the radio voice could easily adapt to whatever linguistic or geographic location it was in-- an effective and advantageous tactic for a CCP that found itself spread among isolated, rural, non-Mandarin speaking locations.

It was not, however, merely the adoption of vernacular speech that would have made the radio attractive as a tool of propaganda to a Party in the process of centralizing itself. Since Lenin himself did not tend to view the spoken word, or consequently, the heard word, as propaganda, the content of radio broadcasts could be propagandistic in nature without necessarily being thought of by the listener, as such.⁶¹ This potentially covert dissemination of

⁶¹ Lenin, p. 74

information via the more easily relatable and palatable vernacular of geographically-specific locations was only effective when adopted by the more abstract radio voice. The dissolving of an individual broadcaster's voice into that of one that can speak for and to entire groups of people serves to remove the individual broadcaster from their work in a way that print media cannot as easily do, because the listener is able to project or assign a significance to that voice even if they do not do so consciously. Broadcasters working for the Party are never usually named as specific actors or figures in their broadcasts, and play a secondary role to the information they are tasked with circulating.⁶²

When combined with the psychological elements of this aspect of communication, wherein hearing the words from the newspaper has a noticeable effect on the listener, the radio voice's role in the work of the propaganda machine makes it an even more attractive supplement to other forms of agitation or propaganda. The ability of the radio broadcaster to switch gears from more formal language to an informal vernacular makes broadcasts seem perhaps more varied than they actually are, and also gives them a humanizing element that, on the one hand, seems to contradict with their lack of an identifiable self while, on the other hand, allows for the listener to insert their own narratives over the voice of the broadcaster.

Yu Liu refers to this specific tactic of encouraging the listener to identify with what they hear over the radio, which took the form of broadcast segments dedicated to uplifting idealized, Party-approved proletariat values, as personalization, because it "mobilizes people to translate the national discourse into personal stories."⁶³ In other words, it becomes a micro-discourse, wherein, through personal voice, the speaker and listener are allowed to identify with each other.

⁶² Liu, A.P. p 22

⁶³ Liu, Y. p 334

That identification does not make the radio voice any less abstract, however. It simply means that even listening to the radio, listening for those proletariat reports and news of self-criticisms, required an active participation that, through its effect on the person doing the listening, was vital to the mechanism of organization the CCP was developing through the media.

The seeming lack of self on the part of the broadcaster, wherein the speaker appears superficially to fade into the words they speak, while encouraging the listener to relate their own individual experiences, has more immediate political effects, as well. For a centralizing figure like Mao, the radio and its psychic, emotional elements presented an opportunity to cement a tangible sense of leadership to the public-- whether or not power struggles were actually taking place.⁶⁴ The murky, abstract role of the broadcaster, perhaps the inverse to that of the editor, under Party control was decidedly more attractive than a “paper run by journalists,” because it allowed the organization and its leaders to present assigned roles and their privileges to the listening public.⁶⁵ And, in the case of Mao himself, utilizing the radio voice and its duality, its ability to hone in on the localized vernacular, or to speak in a more common, universal language, fit with the image he had been constructing for himself since the earliest days of the Long March as a leader who was in touch with the people around him, one who was anti-bourgeois and anti-intellectual, yet whose words could hold the power to educate and reform-- something perhaps gravely at odds with his extensive work on GMD propaganda in his earliest days as a political figure.

⁶⁴ Volland, p 102. Despite the perception of Bo Gu as a willing actor in a serious power struggle against Mao, I’m not entirely sure that is a useful approach to discussing the JFRB reshuffle. Either way, “factionalism” was given as one of the reasons for Mao’s campaign against JFRB as headed by Bo Gu.

⁶⁵U, E. (2012). Dangerous Privilege: The United Front and the Rectification Campaign of the Early Mao Years. *The China Journal*, (68), 32-57. doi:10.1086/679247, p 40

The use of mass media was, of course, one concern among many surrounding the CCP's time at Yan'an; print and radio are tools of organization, are transmitters of communication, but organization cannot be legitimized without people or a movement of people to guide it. The CCP's top-down concern with its organization and with where media falls within that organization reflect viewpoints about how the Party perceives itself and its relationship to its workers and civilians. Employing psychological techniques on both consumers of media and creators or compilers of media content allows for us, as scholars, to observe both the strengths and weaknesses of different forms of media. Observing the mechanisms of print within the CCP's organizational mainframe creates a valuable opportunity to see what the radio, as a form of mass media working side-by-side with print, can do, and so I have focused largely on a case of print and organizational control in this chapter. I want to re-iterate that different forms of mass media did not work alone, against, or separate from each other in China; as I will show in my next chapter, there was a cohesive, structured relationship between the media and different levels of organization, and how the radio was structured and used, just as how print was structured and used, is an observable reflection of those relationships.

While XCNR existed and was used at Yan'an, albeit somewhat after the JFRB reshuffle, and would later simply become China National Radio (CNR 中国人民广播电台 *Zhongguo Renmin guangbotai*), which still operates today out of Beijing and has expanded itself in the digital, internet age, radio in China was still largely confined to urban areas at the time of the Rectification Movement; it must have been somewhat of a marvel for those unfamiliar with urban life to see wireless receivers, or gather around the radio and engage in group listening, something that would become a familiar sight, intentionally so, in a more politically-unified

Maoist China. It is not enough to merely speculate on the radio at Yan'an; in order to see how events at Yan'an became a model for the way that the CCP would approach the task of legitimizing itself following the conclusion of the civil war in 1949, we must turn to Shanghai, a city of factories and waterways, teahouses and storytelling, and China's most cosmopolitan urban center.

Chapter 2

Radio in Shanghai: Surveillance and the Mechanics of Power

In the previous chapter, we examined the model of media use developed by the CCP and practiced during its time at Yan'an through an exploration of the JFRB reshuffle and its impact on the Party's use of mass media. This model emphasized using the media as a tool of political organization through its multileveled, but top-down, relationships to different branches of the CCP and its psychological effects on both the creators and consumers of the CCP's interpretations of Marxist-Leninist ideologies and Mao Zedong thought; the radio fits into this model through its accessible nature, which becomes particularly compelling when considering the low literacy rates of civilians and cadres alike, as well as the issues of language reform and standardization that silently haunted China for half a century. When the CCP took power in 1949, some of the particularities of its model of media usage changed, while others did not. The easiest way for the CCP to implement its media concept on a national level was through a concerted, multi-level effort between the military wing of its organization and the Propaganda Department that utilized the practical-- through the adoption of some existing radio stations (and their equipment) in Shanghai-- and the ideological, through methods of surveillance, self-criticism, and group listening.

Throughout this chapter, I will focus on the coordination between the military and the radio over the period of May 1949 to March of 1950 in Shanghai, when martial law was in effect, through the examination of military documents like missives and directives, as sent or addressed directly to those working at radio stations during the time period of military control in the city. These print documents reveal the specifics of what the government and military thought

of the usefulness of the radio, and elucidate its role as an educator and coordinator during the CCP takeover of Shanghai-- showing that mass media here serves much the same function that it did at Yan'an during the program of Rectification. These documents also highlight the coordination taking place between different forms of mass media, particularly newsprint and the radio, as well as the coordination taking place between the Party and the pre-existing institutions it absorbs, disposes of, or reforms through thought and education. All of this serves to re-emphasize the notion that mass media functions in a highly sophisticated, coordinated manner during this period of time with the express goal of centralizing the government and legitimating its authority on a national and international level.

The uneasy timeline of the civil war between the CCP and the GMD places the Yan'an Rectification Movement during one of the intermittent periods of outward peace between the two factions; both parties focused on fighting Japanese colonial aggression throughout the 1930s and 40s, and were often logistically spread too thin to wage full-scale war against each other. The CCP used that time to implement, build upon, and concretize many of the ideas and interpretations of ideology that it had spent the previous fifteen years developing, and at a real human cost in the form of psychological self-criticisms, purges, and the imprisonment of supposed dissidents. In 1945, however, fighting between the GMD and the CCP resumed following the conclusion of World War II. As the fighting of the war escalated, mass media on both sides took on a decidedly more militaristic tone, and radio broadcasts were tactically important for the intelligence they could provide. This military mentality continued in the immediate aftermath of the *de facto* conclusion of the war, and the retreat of the GMD and Chiang Kai-shek (蒋介石 *Jiang Jieshi*) to Taiwan.

The GMD's strongholds were, by and large, coastal, urban areas like Shanghai. Shanghai, which it should be noted is not a Mandarin-speaking city, had experienced a quick rise to cosmopolitanism throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Near the long-standing imperial cultural center of Suzhou, the land on which Shanghai was constructed was known for its waterways and canal systems, around which "water towns" were built. These waterways, and the strategic importance of Shanghai's location at the mouth of the Yangtze River delta, made it ideal for rapid industrialization, and to serve as a base of Western imperial intrusion. While Shanghai had been a market town for hundreds of years, and had served as an important center of the Yangtze River trade hub, its importance and population grew rapidly in the 19th century, in part due to Western economic and diplomatic imperialism.⁶⁶ The influx of foreigners in the city did not stop with the Boxer Rebellion, or with the collapse of the Qing Empire, and throughout the first half of the 20th century Shanghai received waves of foreigners from Western countries, ranging from European Jewish people fleeing persecution and genocide to American soldiers and entrepreneurs looking to see the heavily exoticized "Paris of the East," and to make money. Many of the new class of Chinese intellectuals also made their way through or to Shanghai during the first half of the 20th century. When, for instance, the New Culture Movement erupted out of the May Fourth Movement and the anger of intellectuals and students at the transfer of Shandong province from Germany to Japan following the end of World War I, Shanghai served as a gathering place for new waves of Chinese intellectuals.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ This happened to other coastal cities in China as well; Qingdao, a city in Shandong province central to the May Fourth Movement, may not be the most famous example, but it is the best. It did not quite exist until the Germans took over Shandong in the imperialistic grab for concessions in the 19th century. Today, though it is considered a mid-sized city in China, Qingdao and its connecting areas in coastal Shandong have a population roughly the same size or larger than New York City.

⁶⁷ Mitter, R. (2005). *A Bitter Revolution*. London: Oxford University Press. p 19

It is in this atmosphere of simultaneous, constant change that radio came to China; radio is an import, similarly to the way that Marxism-Leninism is also an import, though this does not make it any less powerful as a tool of organization, or make the Chinese approach to the use of the radio any less legitimate or any less worth analyzing. The first radio station in China was set up in 1922 in Shanghai, and it was a foreign-run endeavor (Harbin, in the far northeast, is probably the site of the first Chinese-run radio station). However, the radio caught on rather quickly in Shanghai, and it soon became a tool of organization of the GMD alongside other forms of mass media. And there is a tendency, in Chinese documents, to view the radio in this light; a retrospective compilation of transcripts and letters about the radio in Shanghai from the 1930s to the 1950s refers to Shanghai not only as the “birthplace of the radio, but also 20th century China’s biggest centralized place (“旧中国的最大集中地” *jiu Zhongguo de zui da jizhong di*).”⁶⁸ The link here between the radio and centralization is remarkably telling, particularly when factoring in the stabilization and centralization of the CCP on a national geopolitical level following the conclusion of the civil war. The CCP had to contend not only with “rural backwaters” like Yan’an, but also with large, technologically modern sprawls like Shanghai.

I must return to the idea of imports; it is important to the Chinese conceptualization of the civil war itself. Radio, while it is a cultural technology, it is also associated with another, more famous, Western technological import: Weapons. There has been much scholarly focus in recent years on the role American money and weaponry played in the final years of the Chinese civil war, and it is estimated that around \$900 million worth of war materials and supplies were sold

⁶⁸ *Radio Broadcasting in 20th Century Shanghai*. (《旧中国的上海广播事业》 *Jiu Zhongguo de Shanghai guangbo shiye*). Editor’s note.

by the American government to the GMD after 1945.⁶⁹ The sale of Western weapons and supplies can be linked to a cultural transmission of ideas about how to conduct war. For example, despite the sheer disadvantages of using heavy artillery in the latter half of the war (especially with little to no logistical training to make the GMD use of American tanks truly effective), the concept of the tank itself was easily adapted by CCP soldiers using readily available materials to provide a makeshift offensive ‘vehicle’ by putting around five or so damp quilts above a wooden table and positioning four soldiers beneath it with a cache of weapons, to be expended as the soldiers advanced forward under their cover.⁷⁰ The effect of this ‘native tank,’ when the CCP could have used the actual tanks it had captured during battles, was to put to use the tactical advantages of the machinery of the tank without actually being bogged down by the apparatus of the tank-- as happened to the GMD during combat on the Eastern front in Shandong province.⁷¹ The adaptation of ideas about how to conduct war, and the picking and choosing of what tactics do or do not work, reveals the practical nature of the structures at work in the CCP military itself; rather than risk destabilizing the structure of the military by introducing unfamiliar weapons technology, the CCP simply chose to reject the large-scale use of American weapons.

Attitudes towards these Western ideas and technologies may have helped determine the course of the war, as Cheng points out that “Mao’s perception of modern weapons...emphasized the ‘social’ dimension of the war.”⁷² Essentially, the American weapons themselves, upon

⁶⁹ Cheng, p 39, via Pepper.

⁷⁰ Cheng, p 51

⁷¹ *ibid.*, p 45; Much of the GMD’s combat misery, as the author points out, can be linked to the swampy conditions of some of the battlefields of the Eastern front and the GMD’s inability to fully adapt to them. Cheng also notes that, essentially, the CCP seemed to mostly confiscate American-made weaponry without actually using any of it to full effect.

⁷² *ibid.*, p 51; Cheng frames Mao’s attitude towards American weapons as “technophobic,” though how much of this is purely anti-GMD, anti-imperialist sentiment, or actual technophobia is never made clear.

proving to be largely ineffective, were to be mistrusted, but the *idea* of them-- as with the native tank-- could be effectively adapted to Chinese use. This mentality is not exclusive to the use of weapons or the adoption of military tactics or logistical procedures; communications technologies like the radio can also be subject to adoption and adaptation by the groups to whom the technologies are diffused. Unlike the heavy artillery or firepower confiscated from the GMD over the course of the war, however, radio was not necessarily rejected by the CCP. Shanghai's rise as the epicenter of radio in China is symptomatic of the diffusion of technology, and of the ideas surrounding technology, due to the rise of globalism in the late modern era. Its adaptation by the GMD, and again by the CCP, is done with specific sets of goals-- the organization and mobilization of different groups of people-- in mind.

The beginnings of this tendency to adopt and adapt are evidenced by the CCP military's classification of the radio stations in and around Shanghai in a "working report," (工作报告 *gongzuo baogao*) by the Shanghai Military Affairs Committee to radio broadcasters in Shanghai in March of 1950. It details the situation of radio broadcasting both before the liberation of the city in May of 1949 and after the assumption of military control by classifying each radio station according to their suspected political affiliation. In the first section of the document, for example, forty-five radio stations are named as either being "puppet public radio stations" (伪公营电台 *wei gongying diantai*) or private radio stations (私营电台 *siying diantai*).⁷³ A familiar tone is employed in condemning the listed radio stations for supposedly working with the GMD or with Japan-- the character 伪 denotes falsity or fakery, but also came to signify, accusatorily, that something had compromised its ideological truths by being "collaborationist." The term "bandit"

⁷³ Jiu Zhongguo, p 771-773

(寇 *kou*, also meaning “invader” or “to invade”) is also used frequently, perhaps with a hint of irony; GMD propaganda often referred to the CCP as bandits or invaders during the war.⁷⁴ Such terms were used by the military committee to establish and cement a sense of political legitimacy that could not, according to the CCP’s interpretation of its ideologies, have existed under the GMD.

Part of this sense of legitimacy also comes with the ways that the CCP incorporated existing broadcasting stations and technology into its organizational systems; unlike the rejection of American military weapons during combat, the CCP took the forty-five existing stations and reformed them to fit the models of state-run media that they had practiced in Yan’an with the Party-operated press; in another section of the document, titled, “Handling the Puppet Radio Stations,” it is mentioned that, despite embodying the “previously-mentioned principles [of collaborationism], each station was dealt with separately” by the Military Affairs Committee after the immediate takeover of Shanghai.⁷⁵ The document details that, while twenty-two of the stations were “disposed of,” (除上 *chushang*) some of them were incorporated into the fold of the CCP’s media program via the public security bureau-- similar in function to a police force.⁷⁶ This same section of the document also explicitly mentions the management of equipment for broadcasting as being taken over by the public security bureau, as well: “...in addition to taking over [the stations], the public security bureau also used their equipment” (“...亦已由公安局接管，器材等亦由公安局使用”).⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Cheng, p 40

⁷⁵ Jiu Zhongguo, p 775

⁷⁶ Ibid., p 777

⁷⁷ Ibid., p 777

The structured nature of the document, that is, the detailing of the circumstances of radio broadcasting in Shanghai both before and after the military takeover, also reveals a tendency towards surveillance commonly associated with military occupation. In addition to listing the names and frequencies of the pre-liberation radio stations, the address of each station is also listed, as well as the name of each broadcaster, and a short description or remark about each station. A station listed under the name Yuandong-- the Far East-- was located at 506 Wu Jin Road and had was operated by a broadcaster by the name of Ma Fengduan. The document remarks that the station reported on the graduations of personnel coming from a military school in the city. Another station, whose name is given as Huamei (华美, meaning “gorgeous”), is commented on as being among the older privately-run radio stations in Shanghai. The information is often simultaneously minute and yet detailed, indicating that a wide body of intelligence exists outside the body of the briefing itself and was compiled over a period of time.

The immediate function of such surveillance, or even just the revelation of extensive military intelligence, is to exercise power. By plainly circulating the political alliances, functions, addresses, and names of each station and their broadcasters, to radio broadcasters and Party cadres themselves, one organ of the Party is encouraged to police the other in order to ensure the organizational cohesiveness necessary to effectively unite and govern city, province, and country. In writing about the CCP’s takeover of Hangzhou, James Gao points out that, just as the radio stations and their broadcasters were classified and dealt with according to their political alliances, so, too, were the other branches of commerce, industry, and government in the old regime: “Based on investigation and observation, the cadres classified the old, non-Party employees into three categories...The first were bureaucrats, the second were professionals, the

third were service people.”⁷⁸ The function of this categorization, and the surveillance behind it, in the midst of takeover was to exert political and ideological control over existing institutions while simultaneously working with and mobilizing the people within those institutions. The radio stations and broadcasters in Shanghai who cooperated sufficiently with the Military Affairs Committee-- that is, those who internalized the CCP’s ideologies and provided assistance to the transitional government-- were allowed to keep their stations, just as about half of the workers in government offices in Hangzhou were allowed to keep their jobs after the CCP takeover.⁷⁹

This need to demonstrate power was perhaps exacerbated by the fact that, as the GMD abandoned city after city, they would often leave the governmental infrastructure of the city a corrupt or ineffective mess. For example, while the mayor of Hangzhou under the GMD government withdrew 50,000 silver dollars to pay teacher salaries before evacuating the city, he pocketed 15,000 silver dollars for himself; during a time where a large chunk of the city was struggling from resource allocation due to the severe inflation the war caused, the effect of this was to prove to the CCP that, if it was going to work at all with existing infrastructures as it took over more and more cities, then it would have to mold them to its own ideological practices while transitioning as smoothly as possible.⁸⁰

This notion of intelligence in relation to mass media and the radio is important, as it serves to underline the fact that mass media’s centralizing work takes place on multiple levels-- externally, in the relationships between broadcaster and listener, and internally, by the notion of privileged information between the government and broadcasters. In addition to the surveillance

⁷⁸ Gao, J. p. 84 ; I should note that Shanghai and Hangzhou are relatively close to one another, and that the timelines of CCP takeover are incredibly similar; in addition, while Shanghai was larger, both were considered culturally, economically, and tactically significant cities.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, p 82

⁸⁰ *ibid.*, p 74-76

at work here, broadcasters themselves were told fairly early on in the military's occupation of the city that they could and could not broadcast certain things. In a July 1949 missive from Chen Yi, an eventual mayor of Shanghai and prominent Party figure, and Su Yu, a PLA commander, broadcasters are given specific prohibitions in the first and second clauses of the document on what they can and cannot include in their work:

1. Within the time of military command, in order to protect the lives and property of those within liberated areas, and to safeguard against imperialism and remaining GMD forces conspiring to sabotage military operations, we are publishing the following missive.
2. The following conditions, as issued to radio stations in this city, broadcasting in the vernacular and capable of transmitting broadcasts overseas, must not be violated directly or indirectly:
 - a. Reports about weather conditions
 - b. Reports of aerial bomb attacks or the locations or outcomes of said attacks
 - c. Reports about PLA bases; the numbers of soldiers or specific designations of military units; supplies or movement of supplies; the quality or origin of military equipment; anything involving factories; or other circumstances related to these things
 - d. Reports about the Military Affairs Committee; the People's Government; or all Party military mass organization locations or whereabouts.⁸¹

Many of these prohibitions on the content of radio broadcasts make sense from a tactical angle, since the war was never formally concluded, and idea of its continuation must have seemed incredibly likely in the summer of 1949. Yet, the imposition of control over the information broadcasters can or cannot put on air does more work than safeguarding against GMD military intelligence; it also serves to provide a legitimate precedent for control over other types of information; the integrity of the power of the state to protect its civilians is here seen as a justification for exerting control over different forms of mass media. This shares some commonality with the model of media usage as developed at Yan'an during the Rectification

⁸¹ Jiu Zhongguo, 768-770

Movement, as the idea of Party unification was central to the JFRB reshuffle, however, the need to legitimize Party organization and control on a national level makes the military's relationship with existing apparatuses of mass media-- like the forty-five previously existing radio stations in Shanghai-- much more high-stakes.

This notion is further cemented by the fact that the third and fourth clauses of the document immediately state that “all telecommunications must await explicit sealed approval before they can be aired on the radio,” and that “spoken broadcast scripts must be approved before they can air. Broadcasters must refer only to approved scripts and not change or edit them in the slightest.”⁸² Just as Mao edited the article formally announcing the JFRB reshuffle and Bo Gu's apology and ousting as editor over a lengthy, mechanized process, drafts of broadcast scripts were carefully passed through regulatory boards headed by the Military Affairs Committee. It should be noted that these boards, which existed in Shanghai as well as in other places following the transition of governments after the war, were comprised partially of the mass transfer of cadres from rural parts of the country, particularly from the northern and central provinces, into larger cities. James Gao points out that more rural areas like Luzhongnan District, located in Shandong province, transferred 4,430 cadres into Shanghai, Zhejiang, and Fujian to assist with the takeover and transition in the South: “The transferred cadres would be responsible for forming the government in these areas at all four levels: city, prefecture, county, and subdistrict.”⁸³ In addition to forming a conscious, levelled organization, the roles these cadres played were assigned before they left the countryside for Shanghai-- “major appointments”

⁸² Ibid., p 770

⁸³ Gao, p 46

ranged from “Party secretaries” to “directors of departments of personnel, propaganda, and mass movement.”⁸⁴

The transfer of people from rural to urban areas in the wake of governmental transition, along with the surveillance they conducted, served to concretize the abstract nature of the mechanisms of the CCP’s approach to organization; when taking into account the existence of radio and the media as a conscious part of this program of organization, the way that the forty-five pre-existing radio stations in Shanghai were dealt with following the takeover is particularly interesting, because it also demonstrates how existing systems and resources were incorporated into the fold of the newly-legitimized People’s Republic of China (PRC 中华人民共和国 *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo*). As Volland puts it, the way the CCP theorized the use of the media “never existed in isolation from its institutional environment.”⁸⁵ That is, the CCP put, or attempted to put, its theories about media use into practice in a way that did not necessarily compromise the underlying ideologies at work, and in fact, served to emphasize them. First, existing stations would be surveilled and examined for their political stances or alliances; if they were deemed to be useful or loyal, they would be integrated into the state and put under the control of state-run bureaus. Then, just as cadres and recruits had to undergo thought reform and education at Yan’an, “all previous employees [were] to attend ‘political study meetings’ (政治学习会 *zhengzhi xuexi hui*).”⁸⁶ These widespread study meetings were a lot like the struggle sessions or educational practices present at Yan’an during the Rectification Movement, and served much the same function; Gao writes that, immediately after the military takeover of the South, the “first and most urgent task was to re-educate previous employees so

⁸⁴ Ibid., p 46

⁸⁵ Volland, p 189

⁸⁶ Gao, p 83

that they would serve the new regime,” and that, for this reason, “political study had to be intensified and institutionalized.”⁸⁷

In addition to prohibitions on the content of broadcasts themselves, the Military Affairs Committee also enforced a strict schedule detailing what types of programs should be broadcast, and when. Radio broadcasts in Shanghai during this time were not on air twenty-four hours a day, nor would the CCP have allowed that; on May 28, 1949, the Military Affairs Committee laid out a provisional broadcasting programme for the radio stations in Shanghai to follow that only allowed for segmented periods of time that broadcasters could be on air. Morning broadcasts took place from 7:45 to 8:45 AM, and covered several different types of news broadcasts; for example, from 8:00 to 8:15 AM, broadcasters reported the news by reading from the Party newspaper, while from 8:15 to 8:45, news was delivered by broadcasters in the form of “bulletins” (布告 *bugao*) and “legal decrees” (法令 *faling*).⁸⁸ The stations were instructed to not air anything from 8:45 AM until 11:50 AM, when the afternoon broadcasting programs would begin.⁸⁹

The fact that radio broadcasters would have to read from the Party newspaper, and do so on a fixed schedule, is interesting, because it shows that the government was coordinating its centralized structure with local populations across the country; that this particular schedule was also given to broadcasters to use so soon after the official takeover of Shanghai is also telling, in that it also shows that, just as it had at Yan’an, the Party had already thought about not only what it would do once it came to power on a national level, but also how it would do it. By placing the responsibility for the content of the broadcasts on the broadcasters themselves, or the

⁸⁷ *ibid.*, p 83

⁸⁸ *Jiu Zhongguo*, p 767

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p 767

responsibility for the content of editorials, essays, and articles on the newspaper editors behind the scenes, the Party created a sense of accountability among its employees that had, as evidenced by the culling of radio stations or the ousting of Bo Gu as editor of JFRB, very real consequences if not adhered to. Thus, through this coordination and policing, the Party was better able to centralize itself and to bring other people into its system.

This top-down model of presenting information to a listening public in the immediate aftermath of the civil war, wherein there is a systemized exertion of power by one section of the CCP government over the other in the name of keeping both nationhood and ideology intact, is not the only way in which the radio is an observable cross-section of the underlying systems of organization employed by the Party. The psychological element of self-criticism, the weight of social pressure that so crushed Bo Gu, finds its mirror in the ways in which the tightly controlled information of the radio broadcast were listened to by the public. From 1949 to 1951, the number of loudspeakers in the city used to maximize the number of people listening to broadcasts increased from 500, to 2,200, to 6,100.⁹⁰ These loudspeakers appear to have been strategically, placed, as well; among the targeted areas for the placement of wireless receivers and loudspeakers included “communes, factories, schools, and mining areas,” a tactic that harkens back to the idea of personalization as employed during the Yan’an Rectification Movement.⁹¹ Given Shanghai’s industrial landscape, existing alongside its exotic, cosmopolitan image, the placement serves to connect the different socioeconomic groups-- ranging from intellectuals and businessmen to industrial workers and rural transfers-- of the city to each other under the content of the broadcasts themselves. Considering the high rate of inflation during and after the civil war,

⁹⁰ Liu, A.P., p 120

⁹¹ Ibid., p 118

and the economic instability that would have caused, the immediate increase in the number of loudspeakers indicates that the Military Affairs Committee saw the radio as a valuable tool for centralization.

The loudspeakers were instrumental in the realization of one of the most important tactics employed by the CCP in legitimizing its authority on a regional and national level: Education. Education, in the context of the political organization of communist countries, is part of the work of thought, or pure ideology, as it allows the civilian and cadre alike to internalize the Party's values, and then to act with those values in mind. A large part of the Party's program of education, both at Yan'an and at Shanghai, consisted of group, or collective, listening. Alan Liu makes the point that, "at first, collective listening was both a necessity, because of the limited number of radio sets, and a device for political penetration."⁹² As the number of receivers and loudspeakers increased, the tactic of group listening remained prominent in the centralizing program of the Party. In 1951, for example, just outside the time frame of the military's control of Shanghai, collective listening in the form of 'broadcasting assemblies' was said to be responsible for around 500,000 people listening to a special news broadcast from Beijing.⁹³ There is a chance that these numbers could be exaggerated in order for the government to appear more in control than it seems; many records throughout the 1950s were falsely reported in order to curry favor with or to conform with the Party and its goals for industrial production. However, whether or not the numbers are exaggerated, the listed number still reveals something about the way the Party filtered and presented its image as a proletarian, socialist state, and how the radio, and its ability to reach people on a larger scale, fit into that image.

⁹² Ibid., p 125

⁹³ Ibid., p 122

The placement of radio loudspeakers in factories, schools, and largely public places, in addition to targeting certain groups of people for programs of collective listening and thought reform, allowed for the CCP to centralize itself both ideologically and logistically. By strategically increasing and placing points of access for listening to broadcasting, and simultaneously utilizing the psychological pressure of collective listening and the crowd mentality, the CCP could effectively ensure that its ideologies were being internalized by more than just Party officials and those closest to the Central Committee. This tactic is reminiscent of the model of education implemented during the Yan'an Rectification Movement, though the use of some of Shanghai's previously existing radio stations, and the control over what those stations could and could not broadcast, or when, creates an extra dimension in the wake of the civil war between the CCP and the GMD and its effect on the city and its economy.

When taking into account that the content of the radio broadcasts, and the broadcasters themselves, had to be approved by the Military Affairs Committee, who were in part made up of people from different parts of the country, in addition to high-ranking PLA members like Su Yu, we can more clearly elucidate and observe the ways in which the government not only adapted the model of media use it developed at Yan'an, but also the ways in which that model was or was not effective; by intentionally crafting the content that listeners would engage with, and then designating when and where listeners should engage with that content, the CCP was molding and adapting its vision of a new social and political system that, through its leadership and guidance, would unite, and, it was hoped, stabilize the country.

The mechanics of the CCP's use of the radio, wherein existing stations are surveilled, cut, and then undergo reform along Party lines, are similar to the model the CCP implemented at

Yan'an, minus the fact that Shanghai radio stations had a considerable prehistory before undergoing thought reform; nevertheless, the exertion of power by the military and its oversight committees over broadcasting infrastructure, which, in addition to education, included the use of broadcasting equipment and control over what broadcasters could and could not say on air, is very similar to the way the Party dealt with JFRB following Bo Gu's decision to publish Wang Shiwei's "Wild Lilies." The impact of the Party's subsequent emphasis on the underlying structure of its organizational makeup also had an effect on the way the content of the broadcasts themselves were aired and listened to, as demonstrated by the Party's preference for collective listening and continued coordination between the official Party newspaper and radio broadcasting. Though this model proved to be reliable during the period of transition following the civil war, the CCP faced many challenges throughout the 1950s and 60s that would challenge its effectiveness. The government made it an intentional effort to expand the use of wireless broadcasting into the countryside, especially as it attempted to standardize language on the mainland. In the next chapter, I will examine, briefly, this expansion of the radio into rural China, as part of the larger program of industrializing the country, and the effects this had on the organizational structure of the government, in an attempt to observe if and how the CCP's conceptualization of mass media changed throughout this time period.

Chapter 3 Expanding the Radio into Rural China

In Shanghai, the transitional government, made up in part of transferred cadres from rural areas of the country, as well as those closer to the government's central organs, undertook the task of integrating existing broadcasting institutions into the centralizing program of the CCP by surveilling them, using their equipment, making former employees of the GMD undergo 'study sessions,' akin to previously seen programs of self-criticism, education, and thought reform. The re-molding of Shanghai's radio stations along ideological lines allowed the CCP to implement and adapt what it had previously practiced at Yan'an on a larger scale, as this was happening simultaneously in other places, like the nearby city of Hangzhou, in the immediate aftermath of the GMD's retreat to Taiwan. Radio broadcasting in Shanghai, with its extensive history and effect on the city, is one of the observable cases in which the CCP government could be seen to begin the larger-scale process of centralizing itself, since it required coordination between the different organizational components of the government in order to effectively operate.

The immense pressure on the CCP government to preserve its organizational integrity and legitimize itself in the wake of a century of war and instability cannot be understated. While the takeover and reform of existing infrastructures certainly didn't hurt, one of the biggest challenges facing the Party was how to align its ideological goals with what could be achieved in practice. Because the radio is a cultural technology with a strongly observable tendency towards accessibility for the illiterate, as well as the psychological effects it has on the listener, the CCP paid special attention to increasing the number of radio receivers throughout rural China from 1949 onwards. Observing the CCP's return towards building a broadcasting infrastructure in

rural places allows us to see the progression of the Party's media concept; its implementation began in Yan'an, was continued and adapted to urban areas following the military takeover, and then was diffused outward back into rural areas. In this chapter, I will examine the increases and upgrades in radio broadcasting technology in the early 1950s, and attempt to link them back to the CCP's earlier use of mass media in both Yan'an and urban areas like Shanghai.

As previously mentioned, the radio's role in Yan'an was minimized due to the CCP's inability to provide adequate maintenance to the broadcasting technology given to it by the Soviet Union, since it only began regularly broadcasting in 1944⁹⁴. Despite this, however, the radio played a significant role in the distribution of propaganda and the implementation of thought reform due to the high illiteracy rates and the psychological pressures of the Yan'an Rectification Movement. Even more remarkable is the fact that, lack of resources aside, XCNR set a major precedent for radio broadcasting in areas held by the communists, and by 1948, the CCP ran around sixteen radio stations of its own in the territories that it held.⁹⁵ Given the material difficulties caused by the decades of fighting and the lack of a fundamentally-sound infrastructure, the sheer number of radio stations reveals the Party's interest in the radio as a tool for the dissemination of propaganda. Following its absorption of pre-existing, non-communist radio broadcasting stations as the civil war wound down, the number of stations the CCP controlled grew exponentially.

Perhaps because of its experiences with the radio in urban centers like Shanghai, the government rapidly expanded its use of the radio into the countryside with the help of loudspeakers; George Jan notes that loudspeakers, aside from their ability to enable the CCP to

⁹⁴ Jan, p 307

⁹⁵ Ibid., p 307

enact its strategy of collective listening, were also easier and cheaper to maintain than higher-quality, wireless broadcasting equipment. The CCP supposed that they “could build a wired radio station with 150 loudspeakers attached at a cost of 7,000 yuan, and could maintain such a station at the cost of 90 yuan per month.”⁹⁶ Though the cost to set the stations up might have been somewhat hefty, the first six years following the end of the war saw the number of rural radio stations increase from 16 to 104-- and while this growth pales that of the growth of radio broadcasting in urban areas, factories, and schools, the number is not insignificant, and serves to indicate the beginnings of what was seen as an “urging [of] the extension of radio facilities to villages” on the part of Party officials.⁹⁷ These numbers tend to fly in the face of the CCP’s claims of its own broadcasting abilities within this same time frame, as Hugh Howse writes that, “China claims that her radio transmitting power is now almost five times greater than the total transmitting power under the GMD in the twenty years from 1928-1947. Ergo, CNR in Beijing proudly claims, ‘one year of us is equal to a hundred years of the GMD.’”⁹⁸ In fact, while George Jan argues that these numbers indicate that Beijing was not concerned with using the radio in order to disseminate propaganda, the reality of the difference between the actual increase in radio receivers under the CCP and the numbers they claim serves to emphasize the tactical advantages the CCP saw the radio as possessing. False reporting of numbers, or over-exaggeration by the government regarding its actual broadcasting capabilities, may make the historian’s job a little more frustrating, but such numbers also do the work of revealing the intentions underlying the CCP’s hopes for its future.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p 307; the cost of building the stations, in dollars, would have been about \$3,500 in 1967, which would be roughly \$25,000 as of 2016.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p 308

⁹⁸ Howse, H. (1960, Spring). The Use of Radio in China. *The China Quarterly*, 1(02), 59-68. Retrieved October 05, 2016, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/651441>. p 60

Despite the seeming lack of consistency in the exact numbers of receivers and stations, wired or wireless, there does seem to be a general increase in the capabilities of radio broadcasting in rural areas during the earlier years of the CCP's governance over China. This is observable through the radio's interaction with different levels of government. CNR, for example, served much the same role as the Party's central newspaper, the *People's Daily* (RMRB 人民日报 *Renmin ribao*), since it was the Party's official mouthpiece (quite literally) in Beijing. From the epicenter of centralized media in Beijing, there were also provincial stations, which serve regional organizational needs, as well as stations localized according to either geographic location or language.⁹⁹ The latter element of radio broadcasting in rural areas was especially relevant to the central government "both because the problem of unification and ideological transformation is at its greatest in national minority areas and because these areas are the most remote from the center."¹⁰⁰ This is particularly true in the southern and western parts of the country, where there were large concentrations of non-Han ethnic groups who spoke a language other than Mandarin as their first language; the need for the government to foster a centralized sense of legitimacy also meant recognizing the linguistic needs of non-Mandarin speakers, as happened in Shanghai with the delivery of broadcasts in Wu, as well as English.¹⁰¹

As the term 'ideological transformation,' or the internalization of Party policies and beliefs, implies, however, broadcasts in rural areas also included the beginnings of the CCP's attempts at language standardization. Language standardization presented a huge challenge for the CCP, as the lack of a uniform language made the likelihood of political fragmentation seem great. Language reform and standardization had long been in the intellectual consciousness in the

⁹⁹ Ibid., p 60

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p 60, 65

¹⁰¹ Jiu Zhongguo, p 768

country; early 20th century writers like Lu Xun often explored the use of language and its role in history in their works, though the instability of the various changes in government often prevented substantial language reform from being undertaken until the 1950s. The use of the radio to teach Mandarin was directly linked to the dissemination of propaganda in rural areas, as, according to Jan, the “contents of the teaching materials were directly related to propaganda.”¹⁰² Mandarin lessons as broadcast over the radio often contained quotations from Party works or upheld Party values, linking language standardization to the tasks of centralizing and strengthening the different levels of governmental organization. The simultaneous, underlying linkage of the diffusion of technology with the diffusion of language is also at work here, since the radio’s ability to transmit the actual sounds of Mandarin might have allowed the language to be more easily spread to the many non-Mandarin speaking parts of the country.¹⁰³

When taking into account the CCP’s use of collective listening techniques, the radio can be seen almost as a portable classroom; its function is to teach ideological unity in an accessible way, to enable listeners to do the work of thought. As CNR put it, the radio’s potential as a didactic tool serves as “a means of strengthening links between the center and the regions, the Party, Government, and the working people.”¹⁰⁴ The range of educational programs moved beyond the teaching of Mandarin; educational broadcasts about agriculture and industrial work-- particularly in the late 1950s-- were also included in schedules for radio broadcasts.¹⁰⁵ The effect of this range of programs broadcast according to need and the direction of the central government in Beijing, and of having all these broadcasts grounded in Marxist-Leninist

¹⁰² Jan, p 312-313

¹⁰³ Ibid., p 311-312

¹⁰⁴ Howse, p 62

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p 62

ideologies, was to “permit a most flexible use of radio as a policy instrument.”¹⁰⁶ By having the ideological components of the broadcast be fairly consistent, while allowing the particularities of broadcasts to change from place to place and from topic to topic, radio broadcasting highlights the notion, for the listener, that communist ideologies can be considered a body of work to refer back to. In other words, “radio in China is not...an authority in itself but a transmitter of the words of authorities and the attitudes they wish to engender.”¹⁰⁷

A lot of the CCP’s hopes for its future are strongly and inevitably linked to the Party’s goals of industrialization and technological modernization. Beginning in 1955, the government appears to have stepped up its production of radio broadcasting equipment. In 1958, the year the Great Leap Forward (GLF 大跃进 *da yue jin*) began, there was also a bigger push for the “nationwide campaign to develop radio facilities in villages [to gain] new momentum.”¹⁰⁸ This was in part because the radio’s role in spreading propaganda was needed in coordinating and attempting to successfully navigate the industrial plan of the Great Leap Forward through its ability to help train workers and make them enthusiastic about the endeavor.¹⁰⁹ Though the Great Leap Forward proved disastrous on many levels, the push to expand broadcasting into rural areas paid off, and the number of receivers and loudspeakers in rural areas increased almost exponentially.

In addition to the industrial goals the CCP laid out for itself, the 1950s also saw China working closely with other communist countries in order to develop the infrastructures necessary to support radio broadcasting on a national scale. Just as XCNR had been set up with equipment

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p 63

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p 66

¹⁰⁸ Jan, p 309

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p 309

from the USSR, much of the broadcasting technology available in the PRC's early years came from "technical assistance...from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and East Germany."¹¹⁰ In 1957, for example, China constructed a factory specifically for the production of radio equipment with the help of East Germany, which in turn allowed it to produce a reported one million radio sets annually from the next year onward.¹¹¹ Part of the reason for this international cooperation was materially-based, but part of it also allowed for the CCP to position China within a network of other communist countries that attempted to find a viable alternative to capitalist methodologies. The stimulation of industrial growth surrounding China's radio broadcasting capabilities in turn allowed China to help expand radio broadcasting not only into the rural countryside, but also into Tibet, as well as Vietnam and Cambodia.¹¹² These colonial endeavors, in addition to the central imperative to bring radio broadcasting to every Chinese city and village, show the strong links between the ideologies of the CCP and its organizational makeup; the policy of expansion is made with ideology in mind, and is then carried out by the various branches of the government.

The huge variances in climate, culture, and language that proved challenging in the CCP's attempts to centralize itself ensured that a multi-leveled, flexible approach was needed in order to secure and maintain a sense of geopolitical stability. The radio, for its potential to reach a wider audience and link the local to the national through attempts at language reform and standardization, reveals both the ideological hopes for a country that intended to modernize itself on an industrial scale, as well as the usefulness of media as an organizational tool. The tendency for the use of the radio as it expanded into the Chinese countryside in the 1950s was to employ it as a didactic tool for programs based in ideological education and thought, with said programs

¹¹⁰ Howse, p 60

¹¹¹ Jan, p 310

¹¹² Howse, p 60-61

emerging from the central government while being adapted to the vernacular and to suit local needs. Though the government often seems to have exaggerated claims about its broadcasting capabilities, sometimes through false reporting of numbers, other times through comparisons to the conditions of Chinese radio broadcasting before the CCP took power, the attempt to spread radio into the countryside appears, by and large, to have been successful.

Conclusion

Radio broadcasting in China often finds itself in the background of the cultural and historical imagination. It is never the first thing that people think of, however, the constant lively bustling, the 热闹 (*renao*) of Chinese soundscapes, has only increased following the introduction and diffusion of the radio, and its extensive political use. The CCP pinned the use of mass media to an ideological framework that would also become the basis for its policy-making decisions, and it did so throughout its lengthy history, developing a coherent model of ideological and organizational grounding in a central source-- the Party leadership and Party policies-- and localized adoption and adaptation that would make use of the resources and ideas available at hand. The CCP's strategies surrounding its media concept were varied throughout the early years, but most of them revolved around methodologies of exerting and consolidating power.

In Yan'an, the Party leadership exerted power over newsprint and JFRB by implementing a program of oversight during the paper's drastic changes in content style. Bo Gu, the paper's editor, was ousted, perhaps in part because of his role as an intellectual figure within the Communist Party, but also because of his decision to publish two essays that condemned the hierarchical formations developing at Yan'an. These essays seemed to reveal the underlying mechanisms of the social makeup of the CCP during its time at Yan'an, and the apparent lack of structural integrity that the essays ultimately seemed to imply revealed the Party's need to appear as a united and cohesive unit. To this end, it utilized methods of education and thought reform via various psychological techniques. Bo Gu, for example, was made to undergo multiple, humiliating self-criticisms at Party meetings and struggle sessions that served to justify ousting

him as JFRB's editor while allowing the Party, through its oversight and interference in the construction of Bo Gu's final editorial letter to the reading public, to appear as a competent and cohesive unit.

From the time of the JFRB reshuffle onward, the CCP's theories on the use of mass media focused on the importance of the psychological, on multiple levels, within its attempts to implement thought reform and instill a sense of loyalty and commitment in its cadres and citizens alike. Though radio was not widely used during the first half of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, as the technology could not be easily maintained until 1944, the year the program ended, it was subsequently recognized and used for its perceived accessibility, as a way to potentially bypass the high rates of illiteracy and the lack of a standardized language. Following the *de facto* conclusion of the civil war between the CCP and the GMD in 1949, which saw the GMD vacate the majority of its urban strongholds, Shanghai among them, the CCP installed a Military Control Committee to deal with the change in government. The committee surveilled broadcasters, while also classifying them according to their political alliances and making them undergo programs of thought reform. The CCP government also saw this as an opportunity to employ techniques of collective and compulsory listening, as well as incorporating and re-molding previously-existing radio stations into its organizational makeup.

The psychological components of the use of the radio in Maoist China help to reveal the top-down mechanisms of Party control. By surveilling broadcasters and controlling the content they produce, while simultaneously engaging listening civilians in education and thought reform, the CCP was operating on multiple organizational levels that encouraged different sociopolitical groups, and individuals within those groups, to police each other, using ideological beliefs as the

means with which to do so. Through the use of techniques such as personalization or victimization, the listener is encouraged to identify with and internalize the content of the broadcast, while tactics of intimidation or self-criticism serve to ensure that broadcasters, in order to keep their jobs, will not attempt to go against Party policy without considering the consequences.

The fact that each of these techniques also had practical reasons for their implementation, ranging from the original lack of a stable technological infrastructure to the need to maintain military vigilance, serves to elucidate the practical challenges facing the CCP as it attempted to centralize itself and govern China. As the likelihood of prolonged armed conflict with the GMD seemed to decrease, with a few exceptions, the CCP also faced the problem of needing to technologically modernize and industrialize the country. The radio, both as an imported technology and as a product of modernity, fit nicely into the CCP's goals of industrializing the country rapidly, and the radio was instrumental not only in the creation of large-scale industry, but also in the cementation of political authority around a centralized entity-- the Party. In addition to the usefulness of its technical apparatuses, despite initial limitations in the capabilities of radio broadcasting, the radio was also a particularly effective, if not somewhat obvious, tool of propaganda dissemination. By adapting itself to local vernacular while also having the ability to air lessons in Mandarin, the radio was able to effectively communicate the Party's policies and beliefs without necessarily needing to do so explicitly, though through frequent news broadcasts and legal decrees, it often did exercise an explicit political stance.

The radio in China, as a state-run apparatus, worked alongside newsprint and other forms of mass media in order to convey its ideas; though it is rarely written about, the radio is not

exceptional to other forms of mass media. Unlike the competition fostered in countries that subscribe to capitalist ideologies, the radio did not necessarily have to compete with print, television, or film, and due to the nature of state-run media in China, it did not have to. In fact, there was considerable overlap between radio and print, as radio broadcasters would often had to recite headlines, articles, or editorials from the newspaper. This overlap may have even strengthened the impact that mass media had on allowing the CCP to appear as a cohesive organizational unit, as it created a sense of consistency that did not exist in the same way in the mass media of other countries or regions during this time period.

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