

# *The Chinese Cultural Revolution Revisited*

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*This paper intends to construct a framework of understanding the Cultural Revolution and the complexities of such an event on the basis of historically novel forms of political, social and ideological relations. It brings the Cultural Revolution back in a good light so as to show its immense, autonomous historical importance as well as its continuing relevance. It studies and establishes the relationship between Mao's political and ideological discourse manifested and practised in the Cultural Revolution and the transformation of China's political economy in the present era. It concludes that the theoretical and practical problematics which the Cultural Revolution struggled to resolve can transcend space and time and continue to yield to our reading in a new light.*

## **Introduction**

Never before in history has Chinese society been so radically transformed in so short a time. In the second half of the last century we have seen the development and transformation of “two contrasting Chinas”: firstly, a Maoist China that took a socialist development strategy characterized by cooperative and state (public) ownership, control of the means of

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production, planned wealth distribution and resource allocation, struggle for elimination of economic and political inequalities and class privileges, utilization of human potentials, dominance of the interest of the immediate producers at the workplace and of working people in all spheres of society including control over politics and ideas. Secondly, a Dengist China that is returning to market capitalism based on privatization of ownership, marketization of the means of production and resource distribution, acceptance of economic inequities and political privileges, emphasis on science and technology as the primary productive forces, promotion of the interests of the privileged, professional and entrepreneur classes, and commercialization of welfare and social security benefits.

This historical transformation from Mao to Deng represents a sharp departure from the past as to national objectives, political agenda, economic development, and, more importantly, ideological convictions. In the era of Mao's socialism, depending on how one assesses its successes and failures, China was characterized by a historically unique experiment to skip over the stage of capitalism and to bring about a socialist transformation of both the social structure and the consciousness of its people in ways that defied conventional ideological and political norms in established capitalist as well as socialist states. In the current era of Dengist market socialism, China is undertaking a modernization process by embracing capitalist practices, while at the same time incorporating itself into the existing world system. The profound differences between revolutionary socialism's emphasis on state ownership and welfare, collectivism and egalitarianism and market socialism's increasing capitalist characteristics: privatization, marketization, class polarization, regional disparities and increasing inequality, have brought about serious contradictions which will have to be tackled sooner or later.<sup>1</sup>

It is observable that events and changes taking place in China since 1976 have resulted in a situation in which the history that my generation had learned and experienced is being totally rewritten: the Chinese Revolution (1921–1949), which founded the new China, has been assessed by radical reformist intellectuals as a mistake which prevented China from becoming as “developed” as major Western industrial powers. Mao Zedong, who used to be praised as a great leader, is criticized by them as a “dictator” who created only disasters and was responsible for China's backwardness. “Mao Zedong Thought” is often described as being political “madness” or “irrationalism.” The cult of Mao is now viewed as “proof of the persistence of the traditions of oriental despotism or a manifestation of

feudal-fascism,” and the Cultural Revolution (hereafter the CR), which not long ago was widely praised as an innovative and revitalizing socialist alternative for China’s development, is described as a “ten year disaster” that was responsible for causing a political and economic catastrophe and for the severe setbacks and the heaviest losses suffered by the party and the country.<sup>2</sup> Chinese socialism, which a short while ago was seen as a revolutionary model worldwide and as an ideological menace by both the US and the USSR, is deemed to be a failure for delaying China’s catching up with the advanced nations, and the history of socialism in China has been “little more than a story of impractical, utopian dreams born from conditions of backwardness.”<sup>3</sup> Socialist values such as collectivism and egalitarianism, which were formerly praised as the source of China’s successful development and its position as a socialist world leader, are now blamed for every backward aspect of Chinese society.<sup>4</sup> In contrast, the ongoing “market socialism” or “socialism with Chinese characteristics” is portrayed as the only way of leading the nation to prosperity and to great power status.<sup>5</sup>

It seems that the current mainstream line of scholarship, both official and intellectual, both in China and in the West is providing *the* expert interpretations regarding all historical, political, economic and societal questions presented by Chinese society. The disturbing feature of China scholarship at present is its tendency to dissolve the so-called mainstream expert interpretations into general public opinion. This is not surprising, for as Jawaharla Nehru observed in 1946: “History is almost always written by the victors.”

The aim of this paper is to call for a critical rethinking of the historical issues with regard to Mao’s political thought and the CR even though they have been “described,” “interpreted,” “assessed” and “concluded” both officially and academically.<sup>6</sup> It intends to evaluate Mao’s political ideology dialectically and to bring the CR back in a good light so as to show its immense, autonomous historical importance. It attempts to study and establish the relationship between Mao’s political and ideological discourse manifested and practised in the CR and the transformation of China’s political economy in the present era. It endeavours to posit that, contrary to conventional wisdom, the CR continues to provide us with a useful perspective to analyze and understand the contradictions unfolding after “the restoration of capitalism in China”<sup>7</sup> since the 1980s.

Methodologically, it attempts to offer a conceptualization of the CR based on a framework of *discourse analysis*<sup>8</sup> — the role of political and

ideological thought — as an approach to understanding the CR and its continuing relevance in our present era. In other words, it attempts to analyze the role of ideologies or the conscious elements in social life as the driving-force for societal transformations and for a specific socio-political project. It is not intended to provide *the answers*, rather, it aims at constructing a framework of understanding the CR and the complexities of such an event on the basis of historically novel forms of political, social and ideological relations. The analytical scope of this paper is mainly centred at the internal/domestic level, although the author understands the fact that there were external/international factors behind Mao's motivation to mobilize the CR movement.

The conclusion of this paper posits that the CR cannot be assessed simply by the current market- and profit-based capitalist development discourse. In one way or another, it is rather appropriate today to bring back the *analytical framework* of the CR since it seems to be more relevant today than in the 1960s. Contrary to the view that "Maoism is a past episode in Chinese history" and "the Cultural Revolution was irrational," the consequence of China's socio-economic transformations since 1979 and the direction in which China is moving indicate that the theoretical and practical problematics which the CR struggled to resolve can transcend space and time and continue to yield to our reading in a new light.

## **Mao's Political Thoughts and the Cultural Revolution**

The search to ensure China's existence as a prosperous and strong nation and political entity has been a key concern in modern Chinese history. This issue confronting China was related to the necessity of creating a new consciousness and viable culture capable of destroying the old feudal system and of developing a new society. Earlier attempts by conservatives and reformers were frustrated by the scope of the challenge and the pressures from internal and external forces. Seeking a way to effect transformation and revival of China, Mao Zedong devoted his life to studying, probing and looking for an answer to this dilemma. Although not particularly attracted by the West, he eventually found some answers from the Marxist-Leninist ideological value system. The success of the Chinese Revolution is commonly recognized as the result of Mao's efforts in sinicising Marxism-Leninism.

After the Communist victory in 1949 and with the successful development of the socialist economy and transformation in the early 1950s, few

people in the Communist leadership thought of revolution as a process to be continued through a prolonged period of contention and struggle. Revolution was mainly regarded as the act of seizing power, whereas the building of a new economy and society would require a different method. But the next three decades were to see the continuation of the revolution through a progression of several mass movements, such as the Great Leap Forward the Anti-Rightist Movement in the 1950s and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in the 1960–1970s. Mao's theory of uninterrupted revolution was put into practice in these experiments and it maintained that even under socialist development the revolution must continue. Among those experiences, the CR was perhaps the most dramatic example of a nation in search of a development strategy that would avoid the shackles of the "old," resolve continuous contradictions and pursue an independent and self-reliant development.

One of the problems facing post-revolutionary China, as in all former socialist states, was that old relations were being constantly reproduced, although the goal of the socialist project was to break down traditional social relations. The traditional bureaucratic relations, i.e. the relations of domination and subordination and the old divisions in the social, political and economic domains, were still being endlessly reproduced in the ex-socialist states. Antonio Gramsci is right in pointing out that hegemony can never be taken for granted, and it has to be continually maintained even after a social class or group has become dominant and achieved state power.<sup>9</sup> In Mao's view, a solid socialist hegemony is determined by whether such an ideology is able to occupy all positions throughout society and control the whole process of social reproduction.<sup>10</sup>

A revolution in ideological consciousness and traditional values is a critical precondition and an integrated part of any revolutionary social transformation. Very often the delicate relationship between cultural change and revolution, especially during the post-revolutionary period, poses great challenges to the sustainability of the changes which the revolution has achieved. In confronting the challenges, different revolutionary leaders have different strategies. Some may struggle to continue cultural revolution after the seizure of state power in order to combat and eliminate the possibility of the re-emergence of cultural conservatism and the return to the "old." Others may have to yield to strong resistance from cultural conservatism and accept a kind of adaptation or compromise. And some may even have to go back to the old under strong pressure and become "revisionists."

During and after the completion of socialist transformation in China in the 1950s, there emerged a number of familiar social symptoms both in the countryside and cities: the tendency of former landlords and rich peasants to resume “capitalist” practices, increasing government bureaucracy fuelled by rapid industrialization, and rising localism and political regimentation. All these had their roots in the old society. This was perhaps the logic and rationale behind Mao’s theory of uninterrupted revolution in the cultural and political domains. The meaning of “continuous revolution” should be understood as referring to the preservation of some important continuities in Mao’s thought and practice. As Selden summarizes:

These include the fierce commitment to eliminate exploitation and property-based inequality; the emphasis on political mobilization, class struggle, and political and ideological transformation and their relationship to economic development; the proclivity to replace the market and the household economy by large cooperative, collective, and state institutions; and the emphasis on self-reliance and the suspicion of intellectuals and technical personnel.<sup>11</sup>

Mao showed a keen awareness both in theory and practice of the importance of continuous effort in coping with post-revolutionary contradictions — the problems inherited from the pre-revolutionary culture and society. He understood that the struggle to resist various counter-revolutionary forces was an extremely difficult and complex task which entailed many unexpected occurrences and outcomes. After the initial success of the transition to socialism, Mao constantly pondered the following questions:

Was the aim of the revolution merely to build up China’s “wealth and power,” or was it to entail the creation of a new socialist man as well? Was a professional party, equipped to lead China’s industrialization through its mastery of planning and scientific technology, the proper motivating force for building a socialist society? Or was that force the creativity of the masses, liberated by new social, political, cultural, and economic relationships?<sup>12</sup>

The difficulties facing the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) were basically how to foster rapid industrialization in a traditional and backward society, and how to deal with the problem of scarcity (technology, resource, capital) while building a strong socialist society in the direction of achieving common prosperity. Mao’s approach to resolving these difficulties emphasized the role of ideology and organization as a substitution for scarcity. Ideology as the motive force and organization as the instrument were promoted to mobilize the sense of devotion and the spirit for

change among the masses. It was the people's power, the "mass line," rather than technological productivity that was relied on as input for mobilization.

Mao was convinced that human beings were capable of unleashing tremendous power in terms of dedication, self-sacrifice and hard-work for the cause of Chinese socialism. When people were given proper ideological indoctrination and organizational discipline, they would in time become imbued with these new values and traits. According to this view, to transform society and pursue economic development is to first and foremost transform human beings, who must be guided to raise their consciousness and strengthen their will. Here, Mao contributed "dialectical moralism" as a new perspective to Marxist "dialectical materialism" by stressing the role of ideology and morality in influencing people's thought and action. Mao firmly believed that:

In man, the producer, motivation derives from consciousness, which in turn comes from social practice. Motivation is the source of moral energies, such as dedication, devotion, determination, faith, frugality, industry, and simplicity. Consciousness and motivation reinforce each other, and can be transformed into material force through man's labor.<sup>13</sup>

This is a completely different world outlook from the Western economic theories which highlight the market mechanism, technology and individual profit-seeking as an "invisible hand" energizing economic development. In Mao's view, "modern science and technology were not to be viewed as a preserve of highly trained and specialised 'expert', but as a field where experimenting and active participation by ordinary workers and peasants was to be strongly encouraged."<sup>14</sup> The fact that Mao seemingly politicized the question of economic development was not due to his intention to challenge the concept of economic development but due to his attempt to use politics to maximize the mobility of human resources and the efficiency of all social forces for economic development. Hence, the aim of his mobilization of the CR was "to revolutionize people's ideology and as a consequence to achieve greater, faster, better and more economical results in all fields...."<sup>15</sup>

In order to fully utilize human beings as a decisive factor and the primary productive force in socialist economic development, Mao found it important to establish a worldview in which the part is thought of in the context of the whole. It aimed at broadening the concept of the "whole," which had been narrowed to imply loyalty to one's family, village and

clan, to include the consciousness of the class, the nation and beyond. The goal was to form in society a *gong*-oriented (collective, public and broad) outlook in contrast to the *si*-oriented one (selfish, individual and narrow). Mao firmly believed that only collective socialism could save China and build a strong nation, and in order to adopt such a worldview one needed an uncompromisingly ethical and moralistic revolution. He very often referred to the CR as a movement to establish the moral foundation of socialism — collectivity, which was advocated not only in terms of public ownership as a socialist ideology but also in terms of devotion and selflessness in the behavioural sense. *Gong* implied that socialist economic development was a process based on collective effort rather than based on *si*, individualistic self-oriented motivation.

Seen from the above perspective, one of Mao's rationales in launching the CR could be understood as an attempt to eliminate the consciousness and motivation of the old semi-capitalist society and establish a just socialist worldview in conformity with the new socialist economic bases. In other words, it was an endeavour to substitute egotistical motives (*si*) with moral impulses (*gong*) as incentives to increase production and development. The Maoist wage policy attempting to bridge income differences at that time reflected such incentives. In urban industries, wage differences were under control and their reduction was encouraged, whereas in the people's communes, income through allotting workpoints was based not only on the individual's physical contribution to production, but also on the level of his/her political consciousness and socialist devotion.

Chinese socialism, as Mao saw it, is a transitional stage between capitalism and the future communism; in other words, a socialist society by its nature is a transitional society, a society in constant change. One has to understand the past as well as the future in order to comprehend a society in transition. Learning from the negative experience of the Soviet Union and given the transitional nature of Chinese society, Mao was keenly aware of the possibility of a transition *back* to capitalism or semi-feudalism.<sup>16</sup> He realized that in the historical period of socialism, there were still classes,<sup>17</sup> class contradictions and class struggles. Since there still existed a two-line struggle between the socialist road and the capitalist one, the danger and the possibility of capitalist restoration was still there. He was aware that unless and until human beings were transformed into the antithesis of the selfish, egotistical, and aggressive bourgeoisie, it was possible that capitalism could be restored; and that building a socialist economy was not



enough, man should be changed accordingly and a new social moral order and political consciousness had also to be created.<sup>18</sup>

Mao believed that class struggle could emerge at different levels. He was convinced that after the exploitative class relations based on ownership of the means of production were abolished and China's modern cultural struggle entered a new historical stage, the source of resistance to the socialist project shifted from the socio-economic base of the old bourgeoisie to a newly identifiable social stratum and ideology which emerged within the party leadership<sup>19</sup> itself — "revisionism." Those party and government elites labelled as revisionists had two faces, combining both proletarian and bourgeois qualifications. In their view, the Chinese revolution had already accomplished its goal, and class struggle had basically come to an end, so certain bourgeois values could be utilized for socialist construction.

As a result, the ideology of economism of high-level government and party elites had a great impact on China's development policies producing some practices in the countryside such as "more plots for private use," "more free markets and more enterprises with sole responsibility for their own profit or loss," and "fixing output quotas on a household basis," which were conceptualized by Mao as being capitalistic in nature. During the CR these people were identified and criticized as capitalist roaders.<sup>20</sup> According to Mao's analytical conceptualization, the term "capitalist roaders" had two connotations: firstly, it referred to those who "held the red flag" and spoke the revolutionary language while supporting capitalist practices. Secondly, and more importantly, it referred to people within the highest hierarchy of the Communist organization who "created organizational structures and promoted value systems that would allow the future generation to privatise property and subvert the collective power of the working class and peasants."<sup>21</sup>

Mao attempted to avoid any possibility that might lead the CCP, after assuming the vanguard role of the working class, into becoming a hegemonic class of its own. As the *Communist Manifesto* states, communists "have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole. They do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement."<sup>22</sup> However, as Wallerstein observes, there were two dilemmas which Mao faced:

He saw first of all the dilemma suggested by Miliband: that an organization is central to revolution but creates problems for revolution. If an organization has

state power, there tends to emerge a privileged stratum in the party and in the state-structure, who develop interests that are not identical with those who are direct producers. He saw, second of all, that the concept of an intermediate socialist stage within which there were no contradictory classes could and did serve as ideological protection for this privileged stratum.<sup>23</sup>

Mao had insight into the problem that after a long period of peaceful development, the CCP as the dominant organization of Chinese society could develop the tendency to design its own hegemonic project and to identify its own agenda and interests, which did not necessarily correspond exclusively with those of the peasantry and working classes. Under such conditions, the Communist leadership would eventually become a new form of hegemonic class. Within the CCP there was a long-lasting “two-line struggle” between the Maoist socialist line and the revisionist line. The ongoing market reform symbolizes the victory of the revisionist line. Seen from today’s perspective, it is an indication that the CCP is determined, in the name of the working class, to pursue its own hegemonic project in which many practices are actually harmful to the interests and welfare of the working class.

Mao was also concerned with the gradual disappearance of a general spirit of selflessness devotion, and willingness on the part of Communist cadres to adhere to the revolutionary cause and to keep in close contact with the masses. With the victory of the revolution and the move from the rural areas into cities, many officials, as Mao observed, were becoming bureaucratic in their working style and were concerned about their own comforts and privileges. To tackle this problem, he assumed that the Hundred Flowers Campaign would help create a more open atmosphere in which a variety of thoughts, ideas and especially critical opinions could be utilized to influence the CCP from the outside. This campaign was directed to bring intellectuals into this atmosphere thus drawing them firmly behind the socialist line.

The role of intellectuals, technocrats and management elites in the process of socialist industrialization has been the subject of controversy. Traditionally, higher learning in professional schools and universities was seen as the preserve of a scholarly class consisting of Mandarin-like of bourgeois intellectuals who usually looked down on those of peasant and worker origin. Mao understood the importance of gaining the support of bourgeois intellectuals for the development of China’s socialist economy. However, “80 percent of the intellectuals are the children of the landlords,

rich peasants and capitalists,” and thus the class backgrounds of China’s intellectuals could become a considerable impediment to their commitment to the cause of socialist construction.<sup>24</sup> To Mao, the bringing of non-revolutionary classes into the cause of socialist construction was an inseparable part of the CR.

Due to the fact that people with a bourgeois family background were financially able to obtain higher education and could easily gain a monopoly in knowledge and bureaucratic skills, they were also able to play a dominant role in China’s political, economic and cultural spheres. This was also a direct outcome of the socialist planned industrialization, which favoured specialization and hierarchical leadership, and which helped to develop a technical intelligentsia. Over-concentration of the productive forces would eventually generate a new privileged class. Furthermore, those who received foreign training were treated as indispensable because of China’s low economic foundation and its lack of advanced intellectual resources. As an observer noted, after 1949 China “had become a people’s democratic dictatorship in theory, in practice both political and cultural power came to be widely distributed among scholarly or bureaucratic intellectuals who commanded vast influence and prestige in Chinese society.”<sup>25</sup> Expertise in knowledge, including science and technology, does not necessarily increase political consciousness.

Awareness of these possibilities was perhaps the motivation behind Mao’s CR policy to halt the university entrance examinations and enrol large numbers of poor peasants and ordinary workers into institutions of higher learning. As early as 1957 Mao realized that “the working class must have its own army of technical cadres and of professors, teachers, scientists, journalists, writers, artists and Marxist theorists” for building socialism.<sup>26</sup> He could not allow elitist policies to widen the gap between people, and he wished to create people who were both “red and expert” — politically conscious and professionally competent.

In a word, the CR was initiated by Mao, in a crucial emendation of Marxist revolutionary theory, as a continuous part of the Chinese revolution. Such a revolution was seen as necessary to facilitate and be facilitated by the revolutionary transformation of the social and economic foundations of Chinese society. It aimed to achieve both material transformation (objective condition) and ideological transformation (subjective condition). And it intended to achieve an ideological hegemony as an attempt to create the necessary subjective condition for consolidating socialist development.

## **A Critique of the Current Assessments on the Cultural Revolution**

The present dominant assessments of the CR from the Chinese official, semi-official lines and intellectual communities, as well as foreign scholars all seem to blame Mao and a handful of other evil people for the unprecedented nationwide mass movement. In the context of studying the relationship between Mao's ideology and its effect, we should be aware that Mao's power was embedded in his discourse, and when power is perceived we can understand the effect unleashed from below. As the CR was initiated and called for from above and answered and reacted to from below, to condemn Mao alone was to condemn millions of Chinese, including intellectuals, to the status of mindless animals, blindly following the wrong path.<sup>27</sup>

For many people, their close relations with the Maoist discourse, especially the CR, cannot just be abandoned by attributing their involvement to the result of misinformation, erroneous evaluation and self-misinterpretation. Attributing one's previous active participation in the CR to erroneous ignorance fails to answer the key question why millions of people, both inside and outside China, voluntarily and vigorously engaged themselves in such a great "error." The puzzling question that has to be addressed is why so many people actively followed this so-called "historical error" even when there was some evidence of irrationality and destructiveness. The post-Mao official verdict on the CR was very contradictory when it said that the CR "was devoid of mass support although it involved large numbers of people."<sup>28</sup>

The negative assessment of Mao's political theories in relation to the CR is largely centred at an empirical level. This is obviously one-sided and shows a lack of dialectics. As far as his vision is concerned, Mao's CR theories should not be evaluated or judged merely on a practical level because they were based on a vision of a society which was subjectively envisioned by Mao. Even though theory can serve as a guideline for practice, Mao's CR vision embedded in his political thought could hardly be fully realized. The gap between theory and practice represents also the contradiction between Mao's revolutionary vision and the applicability of such a vision to China's social reality. However, while criticizing Mao, we have to look into his inner world for the projection that depicts a model society. His vision of such a society did not only come from his wild fantasy, it also conformed to the will and aspiration of the Chinese people after a century of struggle.

Mao's efforts in attempting to actualize his utopian ideal may be subject to dispute. Until his death, China was still far from the just society he envisioned. China's internal social conditions as well as external hostile forces had placed constraints on the realization of such a vision. However, as an ideology, his philosophical conception reflected popular sentiments<sup>29</sup> even though nowadays it is under severe criticism. Seen from this perspective, it can be said that the values embraced in Mao's vision for China "can transcend space and time and serve the ideal according to which China can always be modeled."<sup>30</sup>

One unanswered question encountered by China in both the past and present is: if China wants to seek wealth and power so as to ensure its existence as a nation and political entity, what are the changes necessary to create a new consciousness and viable culture capable of demolishing China's feudal system and developing a new society? Both earlier reformers and conservatives found their attempts to build a new society hopeless because of enormous challenges from different directions. The numerous failures of the previous revolution made Mao aware of the vital role of political consciousness and the importance of cultural and ideological change. China's historical development since 1840 can be seen as a series of cultural revolutions struggling to establish a new ethical value system and worldview needed for building a new society. Seen in this perspective, the CR can be understood as an integral part of the series of revolutions and a new stage in that struggle.

One of Mao's motivations in launching the CR was based on his conviction that a new bureaucratic ruling class had emerged because of the centralized and authoritarian nature of the political system, which provided little hope for popular participation in the process of economic development. During the CR, three-in-one production teams consisting of workers, technicians and cadres were established as an attempt to raise both production and productivity through workers' active participation and creative innovation. The objective of this "mass line" approach was to design policies in closely linked to ideas from the masses, which should be brought back to the masses in the form of concrete proposals which reflected those ideas.

The CCP's indifference to criticism from the outside convinced Mao of the emergence of a new elite class, and China's intellectuals had provided a further perimeter of defence around it, making it impossible for critics to gain a hearing.<sup>31</sup> He endeavoured to eliminate elitist and professional privileges and to narrow the "three differences," i.e. differences

between mental and manual work, between workers and peasants, and between cities and countryside. Although some practices of the CR proved to be counter-productive in many ways, we must not ignore some positive aspects which had already been shown in the decentralized, collective development alternatives accompanied by the participation of farmers in rural development operations and workers in industrial management as well as intellectuals in a part-work and part-study system of education.

Mao's assertion that a class of capitalist roaders and other antagonistic forces blocking the advance of socialism came directly from within the CCP was both unprecedented and surprising. Few people, including Mao's closest comrades, could really understand it. It deviated both from orthodox Marxism and the traditional conception of the CCP itself. Former Premier Zhou Enlai once asked the question to one of his assistants: the contradictions within the party lines were usually defined as either leftism or rightism, how could we conceptualize the theory that a capitalist class existed inside the party?<sup>32</sup> Most people were unable to comprehend it at that time. This was explained by the leaders of the Communist Party from Long Bow village in the following way:

We didn't really have any idea what the capitalist road was. Mao talked about it, explained it, but we didn't have any clear idea of it, what it might mean in practice to our lives. It is only now, since the reform, since the responsibility system, since we have had to contract everything out for private profit that we have had some experience of the capitalist road and can form an opinion of it.<sup>33</sup>

It was until market reform tore down one sector after another of China's socialist economic base that people began to understand what Mao meant by "capitalist roader."

The capitalist roaders came to power after Mao died. At this point, it can be argued that Chinese socialism did not fall apart because of its demerits. Rather, it was intentionally torn down by members of its own elite who became increasingly pro-capitalist. The ongoing marketization process was not the result of a revolution from below, since the majority of Chinese obviously did not have the intention of totally destroying socialism in spite of its many limitations and flaws. Rather, it was enforced by a "revolution" from above led by an elitist coalition that supported and benefited from it. This proves that Mao's conviction was accurate when he pointed out that the anti-socialist forces — capitalist roaders — existed right inside the central organization of the CCP.

In retrospect, we can well claim that the CR was basically right in foreseeing the degeneration of the CCP and its abandonment of Marxism as a theoretical guideline, as well as the restoration of capitalism in the politics of its leadership. Those previous “capitalist roaders” have indeed established themselves as today’s compradors of “market socialism.” Even the CR would not have been “radical” enough to predict the degree of what is happening today: the widening gap between urban and rural living conditions, class polarization, rampant official corruption, massive unemployment, the return of drugs, prostitution and gangsters, child labour, proto-capitalist exploitation, and external vulnerability and dependence. Mao would hardly be surprised to see the restoration of capitalism in China. But he could never have imagined the depth and breadth to which his entire revolutionary cause would be subverted.

What is most interesting with regard to the CR is that it is still profoundly relevant as a useful framework to understand the nature of the contradiction of the Dengist model of modernization. The situation in China today resembles so much what the CR was initiated to avoid: economism and productivism; technocrat- and elite-led economic development; centralization and concentration of wealth and means of production through the exploitation of workers and migrant labours from the countryside; corruption and regional inequality as a result of the “let-some-be-rich-first” policy; economic growth based on extensive foreign concessions and excessive dependence on foreign market and so on.

The mainstream condemnation of the CR is largely based on anti-CR literature which describes the lives and sufferings of various intellectuals, government officials and members of the petty bourgeoisie at different levels. They generally revealed what had happened in cities and towns. From these writings, it is understandable that China’s bureaucratic and intellectual classes, who were the target for ideological and political remoulding during the CR, have been critical of Mao and the CR. Then, the questions are: what about China’s working class? and what about China’s vast countryside, where 80% of China’s population reside? According to some research findings, their attitudes are different and mixed.<sup>34</sup> This is not to deny the genuine evils involved in the CR movement, but if the writings of the critics are true, they represent only a part of the truth and they cannot and should not reject the other side of the story. Only in this way can we understand the recurrent upsurge of public dissatisfaction over the post-Mao regime and the re-emergence of “Mao Re” (Mao-Craze)<sup>35</sup> and “CR nostalgia”<sup>36</sup> at a time when the Chinese people’s general living standard

has risen substantially. Contrary to the belief that China has “de-Maoed” or buried Mao, as Russia did Stalin, Mao still remains the dominant central figure in Chinese political culture.<sup>37</sup>

To many critics, the CR was the most depressed and constrained period. Yet the CR has been both remembered and criticized as a period of uncontrolled openness and mass democracy. It was characterized by the “four practices” (in Chinese *Si da*): Speaking out freely; airing views fully; holding great debates; and writing big-character posters. So, a normative understanding would interpret the CR as the most open and democratic period in the whole of Chinese history. It is understandable that people who had to face public criticism and direct challenges from the masses naturally felt depressed. In contrast, the vast majority of peasants, workers and students, who actively participated in the movement, felt quite “liberated.”

This is also related to the issue of class relations. Dengism posits that science and technology rather than class struggle and human consciousness are the prime productive forces behind social and economic development and transformation.<sup>38</sup> But ironically many of today’s contradictions in China’s market socialism are of a class struggle nature. Not only has the national labour force been divided into formal contract and temporary workers with members of each group receiving differentiated salaries and welfare benefits, but also the growth of class divisions has been enlarging between various official-business classes that are enriched by the proto-capitalist marketization process and the working class and various types of wage labour whose welfare and security have been badly affected and endangered.

What is ironic is that during the CR period (or socialist period in general), as argued by some scholars, despite the fact that China was one of the poorest countries in the world, its social security, especially for the working class in terms of medical care, education, housing, and all sorts of state subsidies, although at a low level, was relatively comprehensive coverage.<sup>39</sup> Some scholars argue that “the workbased welfare system provides a level of coverage that would be considered comprehensive and generous in comparison with the most advanced welfare states in the West.”<sup>40</sup> These social welfare rights that the working class enjoyed in the years of Chinese socialism and the CR not only implied material benefits, but also had an important impact on the relations of production. These social rights represent a significant degree of workers’ control of the process of production, a right of much greater importance than the legal



and formal “civil rights” or “human rights” that are on the lips of reformist intellectuals and political dissidents.

The Chinese constitution theoretically defines the working class as the key socio-political component in control of society and work unit. However, industrial labour today has in reality been turned by economic marketization into a commodity “owned,” or at least controlled, by party elites, private business groups and multinational corporations. The state is more and more willing to sacrifice labour welfare and social stability in exchange for rapid increase in productivity. Class divisions and struggles at local and regional as well as national level will soon become the key socio-political problem affecting China’s industrialization.

The economic marketization has brought the transformation of social/class relations in a number of areas: first, it makes economic calculations the priority of *guanxi*,<sup>41</sup> promoting economic antagonism and precluding solidarity. Second, it absorbs people’s attention, energy, capacity and resources, and confines them within a narrow framework of economism. Third, it hides production/class relations and separates them from market relations so that the exploitation or *unequal* social/class relations in production are ignored while the *equal* relationship in market competition is emphasized.

With the increase of privatization, the economic power of China’s new bourgeoisie (middle class) is also growing.<sup>42</sup> The situation is very ironic: the new capitalists today are much stronger and wealthier than they were before the socialist transformation in 1953. To protect their interests, they have demanded for political recognition and governing power. Besides creating their own types of associations, a large number of private capitalists have already entered People’s Congresses and People’s Political Consultative Conferences at different levels.<sup>43</sup> The change in the compositions of class relations and will sooner or later affect the existing political system and power structure.

The post-Mao leadership — the CR’s “capitalist roaders” — realized that the only way to maintain both their political power and economic interests was to transform themselves quickly into a new dominant class that could continue to rule through new class relations under the market economy. Breaking down the socialist economic system and replacing it with the market mechanism would enable them to become not only de-facto owners of the means of production but also managers of the new economy. In this way they could capitalize on their official power while turning their bureaucratic privileges into economic advantages. At the

same time they have resisted any political reforms under the banner of “maintaining social stability” because such reforms would challenge their privileged position.

Much criticism of the CR is also centred on Mao in connection with the popularity of his authority and ideology which mobilize the mass participation in the CR. Mao’s personal influence and the affection for him is currently degraded as a *personality cult* or religious charisma. In my view, it is too simplistic to use the term “personality cult” to explain a social phenomenon with immense implications. There is no doubt that during his heyday Mao had popular support and trust from the general public. It also cannot be denied that the CCP leadership itself, including people around him, was active in perpetuating the myth of Mao. Ironically, the term “Mao Zedong Thought” was first established by the former President Liu Shaoqi,<sup>44</sup> who was the primary victim of the CR. As one scholar rightly concluded: “One further key element [of the CR] was the acceptance by all leaders, ..., of Mao’s primacy in both ideological and organizational terms, and his right to interpret events on behalf of the Party and to seek compliance with that interpretation.”<sup>45</sup>

Nevertheless, the personality cult types of argument consciously or unconsciously reduce Chinese people into blind masses and fanatical followers who uphold whatever is the dominant ideology. Following this line of thinking, the personality cult of Mao is naturally connected to religious worship: reverent love and devotion for a deity or sacred figure. However, on the one hand, very few Western academics will dismiss religions, including Christianity, as “cults” or belief systems, and on the other hand, they tend to study and understand them in broader perspectives, encompassing cultural, historical and social boundaries. That is to say, even a purely religious cult must be understood in terms of the multiple perspectives of the social sciences.

Furthermore, the personality cult of Mao is also attributed to the deep-rooted Chinese tradition of obedience, filial piety and respect for authorities. If this is so, then why did millions of people join the Chinese Communist rebellions which struggled to overthrow the old socio-political structure? Why did they continue to stand up and participate in the CR against the state bureaucracy? In many ways Chinese people can be characterized as adoring great heroic leaders, such as wise emperors, daring generals; and especially leaders like Mao, who had the vision and determination to guide people to regain their lost pride and glory and to stand up from the humiliations imposed by Western powers. Mao’s legacy was first

and foremost built on his image of being a symbol of a courageous revolutionary rebel. His “right to rebel”<sup>46</sup> influenced China not only in having charted the country’s historical course, but also in the way of thinking and behaviour of ordinary Chinese in their daily life.

Critics of the CR claim that Mao’s political writings were misused as a “de facto constitution.” But they may forget that it was precisely through his writings that people for the first time in China’s history began to have direct access to the country’s “constitutions” and the idea that everyone should be equal in front of the national “constitution” regardless of his/her position and status. The traditional ideology of Confucianism had developed China into a highly hierarchical state, and for a long time common people only had the consciousness of duty rather than rights. It was commonly accepted that the state granted rights and determined their limits. People were brought up to respect the established order and authority. Who has ever given people the rights to enjoy equal political, economic and social relationships? It was Mao’s writings that raised people’s awareness and consciousness of their rights, and it was the CR that turned them into social actors and give them an opportunity to practise their rights. Hence, the significance of a certain democratic consciousness that the CR transmitted to the masses should not be denied.

## **The Cultural Revolution Foundation of the Reform Achievements**

If we do not make a realistic assessment of the CR in the context of the entire period of China’s socialist development, in which China developed from a backward agrarian society before the 1940s to a major industrial power in the 1970s, we will not be able to understand the economic problems inherited from that era. Before drawing any deterministic conclusions on the CR, we have to keep in mind that what Deng’s China has been doing since the end of the 1970s is not economic *reconstruction*, but economic *reform* aiming at correcting the “irrational” parts of the previous policies.

The economistic ideology of the Dengist market reform emphasizes the magical functions of the market mechanism which have brought about phenomenal economic growth. But it ignores the fact that many fundamental changes and achievements during the reform period in the 1980s and 1990s are a clear indication of the success of the CR’s socialist development strategies rather than a sign of their failure.<sup>47</sup>

For example, it is commonly recognized that China's township and village enterprises (TVEs) have been the engine of economic growth and the most dynamic part of China's economy since the economic reform started. According to the World Bank, the growth and performance of China's TVEs have been extraordinary. Their share in GDP rose from 13% in 1985 to 31% in 1994; output has grown by about 25% a year since the mid-1980s; they now account for a third of total industrial growth in China; and in the past 15 years TVEs have created 95 million jobs.<sup>48</sup>

The official wisdom posits that the rapid development and success of TVEs is largely due to the role of the economic marketization under the post-Mao leadership which unleashed enormous potential for entrepreneurship. While such a view contains elements of truth, it is not historically correct and can be seriously misleading. What we must not forget is that the history of TVEs is not a product of the reform policy, rather, it is the direct result of Mao's development strategies of mass mobilization and economic decentralization in order to promote rural industrialization and transform rural areas into centres of industrialization alongside major industrial cities. What was behind Mao's economic thinking was his standpoint that Chinese peasants would ultimately bear the burden of industrial investment in one way or another. Instead of overtaxing them and widening the rural-urban gap, the state should help them develop their own industries. The essential rationale of this strategy was to create a simultaneous process in which collectivization went hand-in-hand with industrialization.

Therefore, TVEs are actually the natural extension of the "new development" and "new things" which emerged during the period of the CR. In other words, they are direct "descendants" of those enterprises previously owned by communes and brigades. The roots of their current success during the reform period can be traced back to the policies and institutions of the CR era.<sup>49</sup> The development of TVEs was a historic and gradual process based on a number of creative innovations during the CR, such as "factory and commune linkage," "young intellectuals going to the countryside," "cadres and technicians working in grass-roots units," and "linkage between industry and agriculture," and so on. About 28 million people were employed in commune and brigade factories out of a total labour force of about 300 million.<sup>50</sup>

During the CR, the policies of "intellectuals going to the countryside" and "agriculture linking with industry" brought a large number of technicians to the rural areas. As a result, the benefits to rural development were

far-reaching, and many communal and village technologies and enterprises were developed during this period. Even some severe critics of the CR admit that the policy of promoting communal and village enterprises reduced the gap between urban and rural areas, and the present success of township enterprises should be seen as an extension or continuation of communal and village enterprises.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, these developments, whose impact remains significant, must receive an objective assessment. As Gao (1997) points out,

we must look at the issues in a historical perspective, and should not view the success of the reform as merely the victory of capitalism. The living standard of Chinese people has indeed risen substantially in the 1980s, however, this is not a sudden miracle, but a process of foundation and evolution. We must not ignore the political and economic continuation between the Mao period and the post-Mao period.<sup>52</sup>

Moreover, the phenomenal progress achieved during the post-Mao period in terms of human development must also be understood in a historical context. A recent report by the UNDP on China's overall achievement during the pre-reform period in the most fundamental aspects of human development, especially in terms of health care, contains some valuable observations:<sup>53</sup> firstly, during the CR, Mao's critique of urban bias in public health care resulted in a substantial redistribution of health care resources towards the countryside and remote areas. Secondly, the barefoot doctor strategy of medical and health care in rural areas, along with a system of local basic clinics and cooperative insurance programmes within the rural people's communes, contributed to an overall improvement in health status and life expectancy of rural population.<sup>54</sup> Especially, improved life expectancy at birth was made possible by a broad and publicly financed health policy which made primary health care widely accessible for mothers and children. Thirdly, despite the fact that only a minority of the urban population enjoyed full job and income security including generous health coverage and a pension, the rural majority were generally assured of some degree of protection against the most extreme effects of disease, injury and other misfortunes through commune insurance schemes and the collective distribution system. As a result of these innovative strategies and policies, China's human development (food, basic health care and life expectancy), was claimed by the World Bank as outstandingly high for a country at China's per capita income level.<sup>55</sup>

In sum, those unique alternative-seeking experiments during the CR,

which are blamed for being the obstacles to China's industrialization, helped to lay a solid foundation and paved the way for a comparative advantage in China's economic integration with the world market.<sup>56</sup> The present contradiction between China and the West, especially the US, is that the latter wants to make sure that China competes in the world market according to the "established rules," because its comparative advantage could be used to break these rules. Therefore, it is ahistorical to stress present successes without giving a proper assessment of the contribution of the CR and Chinese socialist achievements in general.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The CR played an important role in shaping the direction of China's socio-economic development. In this period, ideology provided the framework for the designation of political and economic priorities as well as development objectives. China's transformation from Maoist socialism to Dengist capitalism represents, in my view, not only a generation change of leaders and governments, but also more significantly a fundamental change of political ideology and development thinking. More than ever, the CR has profound relevance in the age of capitalist restoration.

The CR has been condemned as a failure. Yes, superficially and practically this might be the case. Yet, seen from the perspective of its social effects it can be noticed that the CR planted the seeds in society and transmitted the ideas to the population. Based on this view, the CR was not a total fiasco. Many positive democratic ideas, consciousness of political, economic and social rights have penetrated into people's way of thinking, and they cannot be simply dismissed by denouncing the CR. The "Tian'anmen incident" in 1976,<sup>57</sup> the "Minzhu Qiang" (Democracy Wall) movement in the end of the 1970s,<sup>58</sup> and especially the student demonstration in 1989, together with the support it received from citizens who stood up to protest at the new social gaps and official corruption, all indicated a great deal of spirit and courage inherited from the CR.<sup>59</sup>

In assessing the CR, the approach that the post-Mao leadership took showed a deficiency of dialectical thinking. The total rejection of the CR today has served to legitimize the Dengist reform programme ideologically and politically. Being afraid of the possible consequences that mass movement and political democracy would lead to anarchy and disorder, the post-Mao regime refuses to consider any suggestion of using the participation of the people to solve emerging societal problems. The failures of the govern-

ment to solve the country's rampant corruption problems explain the fact that the mobilization of people's direct participation and active involvement is as equally important as the legislation of various new laws and regulations in order to solve China's growing social ills. Neither can the post-Mao regime's political legitimacy be independently derived from any "socialist legal reform" without popular support.<sup>60</sup>

This signifies that some of the CR political thoughts continue to be of ideological significance in China. When we watch carefully the problems emerging from the process of economic marketization which China is painfully pursuing, it is worthwhile recalling some of Mao's teachings and insights. Many of his warnings and predictions in the course of the CR have been confirmed today.

It is believed that the meaning and significance of China's future development, whether political, economic or cultural, will inevitably in one way or another be linked to some of the historical roots originating from Mao and the CR.<sup>61</sup> If such bases were overthrown and Mao's thought was totally repudiated, the "real" China would hardly exist. In order to be objective to the historical significance of this period it is essential that the history of the Chinese Revolution (1921–1976) and Maoism must not be left only to the mainstream interpretation and market discourse. More importantly, the CR should not be evaluated or even denounced on the basis of the rationale of today's economism, since the two are founded on completely different worldviews and ideological paradigms.

Finally, in assessing past history, such as Mao's historical role and the CR, it is perhaps worth remembering E. H. Carr's warning, issued upon finishing his unprecedented history of Soviet Russia: "The danger is not that we shall draw a veil over the enormous blots on the record of the Revolution, over the cost in human suffering, over the crimes committed in its name. The danger is that we shall be tempted to forget altogether, and to pass over in silence, its immense achievements."<sup>62</sup>

## Notes

1. A recent new report from the Chinese Communist Party's inner sanctum, *China Investigation Report 2000–2001: Studies of Contradictions Within the People Under New Conditions*, frankly admitted that economic, ethnic and religious conflicts in China are increasing and spreading, and relations between party officials and the masses are "tense, with conflicts on the rise." Inequality and corruption are seen as overarching sources of discontent and social unrest.

- See Erik Eckholm, "Chinese Warn of Civil Unrest Across Country," *International Herald Tribune*, 2–3 June 2001, p. 1.
2. This is the Chinese Communist Party's official critique of Mao Zedong and the Cultural Revolution. See *Resolution on CPC History: 1949–1981* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1981).
  3. Arif Dirlik and Maurice Meisner, "Politics, Scholarship, and Chinese Socialism," in *Marxism and the Chinese Experience*, edited by Arif Dirlik and Maurice Meisner (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1989), pp. 7–9.
  4. Ibid.
  5. Zhang Kuiliang, "Marx's Vision in His Late Years and Deng Xiaoping's Theory of Building Socialism with Chinese Characteristics," *Social Science in China*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (1995).
  6. There is a wealth of literature with an extensive descriptive and analytical coverage of the CR ranging from history to politics. Here, only a few of them are mentioned. Officially, the history of the Chinese Communist Party including the CR and the role of Mao Zedong were concluded by the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee Meeting of December 1978: *Resolution on CPC History: 1949–1981* (Note 2). Extremely negative assessments of the Cultural Revolution and Mao Zedong came from various high-level Chinese Communist Party research institutes and especially from the Party School of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. For example, Xi Xuan and Jing Chunming, *Wenhua da geming jianshi* (A Brief History of the Great Cultural Revolution) (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 1996).

Both Chinese and non-Chinese researchers have published extensive accounts of the CR: the intense debate between Charles Bettelheim and Neil Burton on "China Since Mao," *Monthly Review*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (1978); Joan Robinson, *The Cultural Revolution in China* (London: Penguin Books, 1969); Yan Jiaqi and Gao Gao, *Zhongguo "wenge" shinian shi* (A History of the Decade of China's "Cultural Revolution") (Hong Kong: Dagongbao Press 1986); Roderick MacFarquhar's three volumes: *The Origin of the Cultural Revolution, 1: Contradiction Among the People 1956–1957*, 2: *The Great Leap Forward 1958–1960*, 3: *The Coming of the Cataclysm 1961–1966* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974, 1983, 1997); Barbara Barnouin and Changgen Yu, *Ten Years of Turbulence* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1993); Lynn T. White III, *Policies of Chaos: The Organizational Causes of Violence in China's Cultural Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); Shaoguang Wang, *Failure of Charisma: Cultural Revolution in Wuhan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Elizabeth Perry, *Proletarian Power: Shanghai in the Cultural Revolution* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1997).

However, few formal publications are currently available which emphasize the contemporary relevance of the CR.



7. To define post-reform China as a capitalist society is problematic since it does not fully meet one of the key criteria of capitalism — private ownership of means of production — as defined by orthodox Marxism. The question of ownership in China is still an issue of constant debate. Much corruption in China today is in many ways connected with the ambiguity of ownership, for example, “private enrichment via non-private property.” In my view, “capitalism” in China cannot be entirely conceptualized only in terms of ownership of means of production. In this paper, the use of “capitalism” in China refers to economic calculations, rather than forms of property, that have become the pivotal state ideology in post-Mao China, i.e. profit motivation, capital accumulation, free wage labour, commercialization /marketization. In other words, economism (profit-making, competition and the rule of capital) is gaining priority as the determinant driving force of societal development. This is also compatible with Mao’s understanding during the CR when he referred to “capitalist roaders” and Soviet “revisionism.” See also the discussions on “property,” “exchange relations” and “property relations” from *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, edited by Tom Bottomore (England: Basil Blackwell Publisher, 1983), pp. 399–400, 484–85; and on China’s “reform” from *Marxism and the Chinese Experience* (Note 3), p. 22 (note 13).
8. See also, for example, David E. Apter and Tony Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao’s Republic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994).
9. The Gramscian theory of hegemony maintains that the capture of state power does not mean the realization of complete hegemony. Hegemony had to be built constantly even after the assumption of leadership. This indicates that the proletarian class has to continue the struggle for hegemony and deal endlessly with the relations of the elements of the new society. See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, edited by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971); Roger Simon, *Gramsci’s Political Thought* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1982); and Anne Showstack Sassoon, *Gramsci’s Politics* (London: An Imprint of Century Hutchinson Ltd., 1987).
10. Xing Li, “A Gramscian Approach in Conceptualising the Crisis of Socialism: Some Reflections on the Chinese Socialist Experience,” Working Paper No. 62 (Department of Development and Planning, Aalborg University of Denmark, 1998).
11. Mark Selden, “Mao Zedong and the Political Economy of Chinese Development,” in Dirlik and Meisner (eds) (Note 3), pp. 54–55.
12. Victor Nee and James Peck, “Introduction: Why Uninterrupted Revolution?” in *China’s Uninterrupted Revolution from 1840 to the Present*, edited by Victor Nee and James Peck (New York: Random House, 1975), p. 45.
13. Chungwu Kung, “Cultural Revolution in Modern Chinese History,” in Nee and Peck (eds), *ibid.*, pp. 292–93.

14. Willem F. Wertheim, *Evolution and Revolution, The Rising Waves of Emancipation* (England: Penguin Books, 1974), p. 345.
15. Joan Robinson, *The Cultural Revolution in China* (London: Penguin Books, 1969), p. 95.
16. Kuang Huan Fan and K. T. Fan, *From the Other Side of the River: A Self-Portrait of China Today* (New York: Anchor Books, 1975), p. vi.
17. The concept and definition of “class” during the CR was both economic, based on family history (landlord, peasants, rich peasants, workers, capitalists, urban poor people, etc.), and political (revolutionary cadres and soldiers, rightists, anti-revolutionaries, reactionary intellectuals, capitalist roaders, etc.).
18. Fan and Fan (Note 16).
19. The social composition of the Chinese Communist Party consists of three major groups: those of poor and lower-middle-class origins; the bourgeois and landlord classes; and those who received Western and Russian training.
20. Refer to Note 7 for the meaning of “capitalist roaders.”
21. James Petras, “The Chinese Cultural Revolution in Historical Perspective,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (1997), pp. 445–59.
22. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848), Section II “Proletarians and Communists.”
23. Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Politics of the World-economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 91.
24. Nick Knight, “Review Essay: Mao Zedong’s Thought and Chinese Marxism — Recent Documents and Interpretations,” *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (1993), p. 61.
25. Chungwu Kung, “Cultural Revolution in Modern Chinese History,” in Nee and Peck (eds) (Note 12), p. 288.
26. Tse-tung Mao, *Selected Works*, Vol. V (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1977), p. 479.
27. Mobo C. F. Gao, “Maoist Discourse and a Critique of the Present Assessments of the Cultural Revolution,” *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (1994), p. 30.
28. Xi Xuan, “Had ‘Cultural Revolution’ Mass Support?” *Beijing Review*, No. 47 (1981), p. 20.
29. This can be seen from the popular support that the Chinese Communist Party received during the period of the Chinese Revolution, and the mass participation in the series of the political movements since the 1950s.
30. Francis Soo, “Mao’s Vision for China,” in *Contemporary Chinese Philosophy*, edited by F. J. Adelman (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publisher, 1982), p. 76.
31. Jack Gray, *Rebellions and Revolutions, China from the 1800s to the 1980s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 335.
32. Ziyuan Cui, “Mao Zedong wenge lilun de deshi yu ‘xiandaixing’ de

- chongjian" (The Success and Failure of Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution Theory and the Reestablishment of Its "Contemporary Relevance"), *China and the World* (Chinese electronic journal), February (1997). <<http://www.chinabulletin.com/indexe.htm>>.
33. William Hinton, "Mao, Rural Development, and Two-line Struggle," *Monthly Review*, Vol. 45, No. 9 (1994), p. 12.
34. Yangyan Si, "Wenhua da geming yu Zhongguo nongcun zhengzhi de minzhuhua — beifang nongcun wenge zhong de bianqian," (The Cultural Revolution and the Political Democratization in China's Villages — The Transformation of Northern China During the Cultural Revolution), *China and the World* (Chinese electronic journal), February (1997). <<http://www.chinabulletin.com/indexe.htm>>.
35. This refers to the unexpected revival of interest in Mao Zedong which swept China in the early 1990s.
36. This refers to a nostalgia for the era of those "lost years" of the 1960s, suggesting a sentiment of rethinking and re-evaluation of the CR and its positive and negative effects on individual development. Since the 1990s, besides the emergence of personal accounts of the CR (stories and memoirs) and TV documentary programmes, several "Cultural Revolution" restaurants were opened in Beijing and other cities and were decorated with posters of Mao. Many successful professional and administrative urbanites truly felt the need to attribute the success of their career in one way or another to those years of hardship when their characters were formed. See also, Robert Weil, *Red Cat, White Cat: China and the Contradictions of "Market Socialism"* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1996), pp. 93–94.
37. Jacob Heibrunn, "Mao More Than Ever," *The New Republic*, Vol. 216, No. 16 (1997), p. 21.
38. Shixing Feng and Weiming Lu, *Deng Xiaoping jingji fazhan sixiang yanjiu* (The Studies of Deng Xiaoping Thought on Economic Development) (Beijing: Jingji kexue chubanshe, 1996).
39. See also, for example, Mark Selden and Laiyin You, "The Reform of Social Welfare in China," *World Development*, Vol. 25, No. 10. (1997).
40. Joe C. B. Leung and Richard C. Nann, *Authority and Benevolence: Social Welfare in China* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1995), p. 61.
41. *Guanxi* means "relations" or "relationship." It implies that in dealing with social, business and personal relations, the "human" or the non-economic aspects of these relations (i.e. friends and family) are placed higher than economic calculations.
42. For further information on China's private ownership and employment, see Sun Sheng Han and Clifton W. Pannell, "The Geography of Privatization in China, 1978–1996," *Economic Geography*, Vol. 75, No. 3 (1999).
43. Feng Chen, "An Unfinished Battle in China: The Leftist Criticism of the

- Reform and the Third Thought Emancipation,” *The China Quarterly*, No. 158 (1999)
44. Shaoqi Liu, “Guanyu xiugai dang de zhangcheng de baogao” (Report on the Revision of the Constitution), in *Three Essays on Party Building* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1980).
  45. Tony Saich, “The Historical Origins of the Chinese Cultural Revolution,” *China Information*, Vol. 11, Nos 2/3 (1996), p. 34. Within the quotation, [of the CR] is my addition.
  46. Historically, the notion of the “right to rebel” is closely connected with the loss of “the Mandate of Heaven” by an imperial dynasty. It has been used as retroactive justification for rebellions which overthrew a corrupt regime.
  47. Xing Li, “Socialist Foundations of Market Reforms: Assessing the Chinese Past,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 34, No. 49 (1999).
  48. World Bank, *From Plan to Market: World Development Report* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1996), p. 51.
  49. Louis Putterman, “On the Past and Future of China’s Township and Village-Owned Enterprises,” *World Development*, Vol. 25, No. 10 (1997).
  50. Victor Lippit, “Socialist Development in China,” in *The Transition to Socialism in China*, edited by Mark Selden and Victor Lippit (London: Croom Helm, 1982), p. 128.
  51. This view is also shared by the well-known Chinese scholar Fei Xiaotong, who is a harsh critic of the CR. See Changfan Gao, “Mao Zedong de youling hai zai dalu paihuai: Mao si hou de Zhongguo jingji gaige yiji Zhongguo ren de taidu” (Mao Zedong’s Ghost Is Still Pacing Up and Down in China: Post-Mao Economic Reform and the Attitude of Chinese People), *China and the World*, September (1997) <<http://www.chinabulletin.com/indexe.htm>>.
  52. Gao, *ibid*.
  53. UNDP, *The China Human Development Report* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 20–21.
  54. The Chinese alternative strategy of medical and health care had a tremendous impact on the World Health Organization (WHO) which later published many books and materials, such as *Health by the People*, edited by Kenneth Newell (Geneva: WHO, 1975) and *Alternative Approaches to Meeting Basic Health Needs in Developing Countries*, edited by V. D. Djukanovic and E. P. Mach (Geneva: WHO, 1975), emphasizing the decentralized approach to medical and health care services including indigenous health workers and the combination of traditional with modern medicine. See also, for example, Ruth Sidel and Victor W. Sidel, *The Health of China* (London: Zed Press, 1982), p. xiv.
  55. World Bank, *World Development Report 1981* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981).
  56. Li (Note 47), pp. 3462–63.

57. This is a reference to the mass movements against the “Gang of Four” in the spring of 1976.
58. During the winter months of 1978–1979, many people in Beijing put up written protests about the problems of China on a stretch of blank wall on Chang’an Avenue calling for political reforms and democracy. This became known as “Democracy Wall.” One of the key figures of that movement was Wei Jingsheng, a political dissident who is now living in exile in the United States.
59. See also, for example, Xiuyuan Lu, “A Step Toward Understanding Popular Violence in China’s Cultural Revolution,” *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 67, No. 4 (1994), pp. 561–62.
60. Pitman B. Potter, “Riding the Tiger: Legitimacy and Legal Culture in Post-Mao China,” *The China Quarterly*, No. 138 (1994).
61. See also, Xin He, *Wei Zhongguo shenbian* (Defending China) (Shandong: Youyi chubanshe, 1996), p. 64.
62. Edward Hallett Carr, as quoted in Dirlik and Meisner (Note 3), pp. 18–19.