

## China's Decade of Enlightenment

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Never before have millions of Chinese poured into the streets of Beijing for days at a time calling for democracy and for the premier to step down. Even on the sixth day of martial law thousands upon thousands of demonstrators flooded Tiananmen square. Initiated by university students in Beijing after Hu Yaobang's death in mid-April 1989, this protest movement against autocracy was highlighted by a student hunger strike lasting seven days and the movement itself went on for more than six weeks. A historical event that drew worldwide attention and support - though put to an end by bloody suppression - it will remain an impressive milestone in China's progress toward democracy and modernization. How did it come about? Why did millions of Chinese in all walks of life spontaneously and warmly support the students in spite of intimidation and threats of repression by the authorities? A look at the intellectual trends over the previous decade in China reveals the roots and strength of this movement.

### Changes in the Understanding of the World

There were three aspects of the basic change in Chinese thinking: First, concern about China's future and a sense of responsibility for it replaced blind optimism; second, a desire for a change of the post-1949 social structure; third, the theoretical basis of the Chinese Communist Party's policies, namely, the understanding of Marxism, capitalism and socialism, was reconsidered. Let us consider these in turn.

#### I. From Optimism to Concern

When repudiation of the Cultural Revolution became the official policy, most people readily accepted it because of their own personal experiences and hardships. Further revelations showed that not only had the Cultural Revolution pushed the national economy to the brink of bankruptcy but also earlier policies had gone too far to the left and were detrimental to China's reconstruction. Despite earlier official statements, China's position in the world was now seen as far from desirable, and even the Party and government leaders were forced to raise questions about China's "global membership". Three worries were particularly troubling: (1) The growing gap in development: China's share of global GNP dropped from 4.7 percent in 1955 to 2.5 percent in 1980.<sup>1</sup> (2) Overpopulation: Predictions of a population of at least 1.2 billion by the year 2000 made the shortages of arable land and natural resources seem even more acute. (3) Low education level: The unprecedented revolution in science and technology in the West made the demands for education and training even more pressing.

Why was China in such a state? How could China develop more quickly and catch up with the developed countries? These were the primary questions and various answers were offered, usually in the form of policy changes and theoretical discussions, in particular the following:

1. *The Criterion of Truth*: As the disastrous consequences of the Cultural Revolution launched by Mao Zedong became clear, a discussion arose juxtaposing the "two whatevers" to "practice is the sole criterion of truth". The former advocated that whatever the late Chairman Mao had said and whatever he had done should continue to be followed, while the latter was held by those who were anxious to make more fundamental changes. In the wake of this discussion in 1978 the top leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was reshuffled and Deng Xiaoping assumed supreme power. Assisted by Hu Yaobang as General Secretary of the CCP and Zhao Ziyang as Premier, Deng changed the emphasis of Party and governmental policies from class struggle to raising the level of the productive forces. This in turn led to the opening to the outside world and the structural reforms which gave greater freedom to farmers and enterprises to increase production. Moreover, people who came under attack during the Cultural Revolution and in earlier campaigns were rehabilitated. These policies were welcomed by most people and had a significance that went beyond mere policy change. By doing away with the cult of personality that had grown around Mao, they ushered in a new stage of development in post-1949 China; people began to think for themselves and, to some extent, were allowed to do so.

2. *Humanism*: Rehabilitation affected millions, most notably Liu Shaoqi, the former president of the PRC, and Peng Dehuai, former minister of defense, as well as 540,000 of the 550,000 labelled as rightists in 1957/58.<sup>2</sup> In just a few years after 1978, the framed, false and wrong cases that were rehabilitated amounted to as many as 3 millions,<sup>3</sup> yet not including millions of others the authorities still refrained from officially rehabilitating like the so-called May 16 counterrevolutionary clique involving over ten million people.<sup>4</sup> And, of course, the harm and injury done to those persecuted were irremediable. Nevertheless, what rehabilitation did occur was welcomed and literary works began to depict what people had suffered and how they had felt in the previous three decades when class struggle dominated Chinese political life. Films soon followed exposing the inhumanity of the earlier persecution. In the theoretical sphere there emerged the discussion on humanism. This began in 1980 and was quick to point out that the notion that humanism represented a revision of Marxism was in fact wrong. It was argued that the roots of the atrocities of the Cultural Revolution lay in the political and ideological alienation due to the cult of personality, which in fact "used power to safeguard the special interests of the powers that be" and "turned public servants into public masters". These ideas were strongly opposed by people claiming to be defending Marxism, in particular Hu Qiaomu, an authoritative Marxist and then a member of the Secretariat of the CCP Central Committee. He published a major and influential critical article on humanism in 1984. But this failed to intimidate the exponents of humanism and after 1986 the discussion grew. More than a thousand articles appeared in hundreds of newspapers and journals argu-



ing for humanism and explaining that genuinely human practice cannot be the realization of a higher purpose (*ti tian xing dao*) but should be the realization of humanity, its freedom and potential; the end of man is man himself.<sup>5</sup> Large numbers of similar articles dealing with human dignity, values and freedom also appeared at this time and they echoed the intellectual awakening that China had undergone seventy years earlier during the May 4th and New Culture movements. These had brought the Communist Party into being and had led to a proletarian revolution. Unfortunately, the revolution had eclipsed these earlier humanistic goals and their rediscovery in the 1980s led to the realization that in China man had to be modernized before the nation could be.

3. *Culture*: Since 1985 there has been a discussion on culture going on which has been trying to define what Chinese culture should be and how it should relate to the West. In a sense it is a revival of the earlier debate on traditional Chinese culture that erupted after the onslaught of imperialism in the Opium Wars and the increasing debility of imperial and post-imperial governments. This led to a simplistic notion of socialism and a repudiation of all things "capitalistic". Now the discussions focus on how to winnow the wheat from the chaff in both traditional Chinese and contemporary foreign cultures. Absolutism, either in the form of the total repudiation of the past or of the West, or as in the advocacy of total Westernization, is believed to be neither reasonable nor practicable. However, there is a debate over the precise source of instability in China. Some have ascribed it to such traditional cultural characteristics as authoritarianism, hierarchical values, submissiveness and the lack of personal independence. Others put the blame for the slow pace of China's modernization drive in the first thirty years on more immediate sociopolitical and cultural factors: mistaken policies, the desire for immediate results, lack of realism, etc.<sup>6</sup> This discussion has not only engaged the attention of people from all walks of life in China but has also led to contributions from such prominent overseas Chinese as Yang Zhengning,<sup>7</sup> Li Zhengdao<sup>8</sup> and Liang Houpu.<sup>9</sup> It has been covered in all mass media, including film. While the debate is not yet over, there is consensus on the point that China cannot be restricted to one culture, value or idea but must be ready to learn from the entire history of mankind.

There have also been major discussions about intellectuals and education. All these discussions have concerned the future of China and represent the new enlightenment movement of the 1980s. Studies have also been conducted at the highest levels of Party and government with the intention to learn from the past so as to avoid repeating the mistakes of one-man rule in the future. The conclusion drawn from all these is that economic reform must be accompanied by overall reform, especially reform of the political structure. And the central issue of political reform is democratization which will give priority to the rule of law and create a division and balance of power allowing for a legal system providing "external supervision and mutual restraint".<sup>10</sup>

## II. The Desire for Structural Change

After 1949 the Chinese society was reorganized in such a way that the CCP, through the government, controlled every aspect of social life. Party organizations existed alongside social organizations from the top to the bottom and acted as the "leading cores". In addition to their own professional responsibilities, or roles in the social division of labor, every social "unit" - these included factories, shops, schools, hospitals, research institutes, artistic organizations, political parties and organs of the government - had to serve as an organizational means and basic link in the state's direct management of society. Politically, Party/state policies, regulations, planning norms and administrative decrees were passed down to the local units according to administrative jurisdiction to be implemented and passed on to the rest of society. Economically the units meanwhile came to dominate people's lives because they had to rely on their unit to meet virtually all their needs. The unit also played a formal legal role in major life events as childbirth and marriage. While this system assured employees of a lifetime job, the so-called iron rice bowl, it severely restricted social mobility and made it difficult to cope with dissatisfaction. Thus socially the individual in China was fully dependent upon his unit and the unit was in turn completely under the direction of the Party/state.<sup>11</sup> In this way the Party leaders came to constitute a privileged stratum.

In the 1950s and 1960s this system of social organization was a powerful tool for socialist reconstruction and the Chinese people willingly complied with the directives from their leaders, paying no heed to personal gain or loss. But when there were mistakes in policy-making, this obedience had disastrous consequences for both the country and the individual. When, for example, the policy was "politics takes command" (*zhengzhi guashuai*), that is, priority was given to class struggle, this tightly-controlled social structure served as an organizational guarantee of its implementation. Consequently everything, from production and construction to the mass media; academic ideas, education and law, was subordinated to eliminating the "bourgeoisie" and bourgeois influences; one campaign after another of ideological remolding was launched from the top down through the unit-based organizational network. Any doubt about the official policy was treated as a serious offense; criticism and disagreement were utterly intolerable. After he had criticized the Party for its peasant policy in the early 1950s, Liang Shuming lost his right to speak<sup>12</sup> until after the Cultural Revolution. Ma Yinchu was dismissed from the presidency of Beijing University for advocating population control in China when Mao was encouraging population growth. Hu Feng, Peng Dehuai and many others were jailed after having criticized Party policies. People were encouraged to confess their own "wrong ideas" and report on those of others and during political campaigns this was done openly in political meetings or through "big character posters". In this environment hysteria and false accusations flourished and millions of Chinese were criticized and labelled "counterrevolutionary", "rightist", "revisionist", "capitalist roader", "renegade", "reactionary agent" ... Not only did these people lose their dignity, they were also demoted, held in custody, imprisoned, sent to do physical labor, and some even tortured to death. For the most part this was done by organizational decision through the unit without any sort of legal procedure.



This was the reality of China when one man had absolute authority. But in 1978 people began to calculate the costs. Economically it was estimated that the Great Leap Forward had resulted in losses of 120 billion Yuan and the Cultural Revolution cost 500 billion, losses amounting to nearly all state investment in capital construction between 1949 and 1978.<sup>13</sup> The intellectual losses were incalculable: the stifling of press freedom, the distortion of academic research, the restrictions on creativity, the diversion of intellectual talent into manual labor, all these took a heavy toll when the West and much of the rest of the world were benefitting from the postwar revolution in science and technology. This explains why China lagged farther behind advanced world levels despite all the hard work and sufferings of its people.

Consequently, when official policy priorities shifted from the emphasis on class struggle to the attempt to develop productive forces, not only did the political atmosphere show a marked relaxation but also people began to feel increasingly uncomfortable about the rigid social structure they had been living in. For example, when the diversification of ownership was introduced as part of the package of reforms of the economic structure, this meant both that risk was passed from the collective to the individual *and* that the individual enjoyed greater autonomy. Family farmers no longer in the commune organization generally improved their living conditions because they were no longer dictated by Party cadres but could decide themselves what to do besides meeting their contracted responsibilities to the state. Individual business people, who previously had been among the worst off in the society, seized this opportunity to develop and expand their business. Inspired by these examples, even some workers and administrators in state-owned enterprises and organizations gave up their job security to work in the private sector. This has become a trend not so much because people think they will get rich but because they feel they can achieve their full potential outside the limitations of the "unit" structure. Similarly, when foreign investment was allowed in China to meet the desperate need for capital and advanced technology, this provided alternate channels of employment. Jobs in this sector are more demanding and less secure, but people, especially the young, are keen to get them because they are so much better paid. All this, of course, further strengthened existing dissatisfaction with the "unit" system and stimulated the desire for a more diversified social structure.

The desire for structural change at present focuses on three points: (1) The scope of Party and state power over other social organizations needs to be redefined so that the units which have been basic links in the state's direct administration of society become autonomous corporative organizations. (2) A social security system independent of the unit system should be set up to replace the present system based entirely on the unit. (3) Some system of contracting personnel should be introduced to eliminate the existing personnel system where the individual "belongs" to the unit.

These reforms are desirable in terms of both the socialization of production and the democratization of political life. If the limitless power of leaders over individuals that led to the violation of rights provided by China's constitutions is to be checked, and if the initiative and creativity of the individual, the autonomy of all social organizations and viable market mechanisms are to be brought into

play to enhance the development of productive forces, then the reforms separating the functions of Party and government, the commercialization of urban housing, the establishment of a more broadly based social security and the reform of the personnel system will have to continue on the right track.

### III. Theoretical Reconsiderations

Along with the wide-ranging discussions of such broad issues as humanism there has been an essential and highly significant reexamination of Marxism, the theoretical basis of the CCP. Within the Party there was a consensus that the misinterpretation of Marxism was at the root of earlier mistaken policies, so, in line with the principle of practice as the criterion of truth, a more scientific attitude was adopted toward Marxism, including the works of Marx and Engels themselves, to bring it into line with contemporary developments in the world. As a result many oversimplified, rigid and dogmatic theses have been corrected and new understandings arrived at. One notable example of this is the current official designation of China as being in the primary stage of socialism. There have also been reinterpretations of capitalism, the most significant being written by Luo Rongqu, Xu Jiatusun, Li Cong, and Hong Yunshan.<sup>14</sup> Virtually every academic discipline has been affected by this reexamination and an overall summary of it would be impossible. The following highlights are only a partial summary.

1. *Class struggle*: The proposition that class struggle was the key link in the history of human civilization, in particular that this meant that some classes won and others were eliminated, dominated China's socialist reconstruction. In the particularly simplistic form that it took it impoverished academic studies and over the past decade it has been effectively refuted. The late historian Li Shu gave four reasons why this proposition was, at the least, questionable: First, human history includes not only the history of class struggle, but also the histories of the development of philosophy, politics, economy, religion, culture, science and technology; even in a class society, class struggle is inadequate to explain all of history from ancient times to the present. Second, the development of the natural sciences has never been the result of class struggle. Third, the significance of class struggle varies in different social science disciplines. Fourth, the rise of the Chinese culture, as other cultures, has not been the outcome of class struggle but the consequence of the spiritual enrichment of the Chinese nation.<sup>15</sup> Refutations such as this have eliminated the previous emphasis on class struggle in all academic disciplines and thereby made them more lively and diverse.

2. *The International Communist Movement*: The traditional Marxist analysis of the development of capitalism argued that there would be a world revolution to overthrow capitalism made by a combination of the socialist states, workers' movements in capitalist countries and national liberation movements. World developments in the post-War period have not supported the validity of this thesis; in fact, each of the three components needs reexamination.



3. *Capitalist Collapse*: Traditionally Marxism argued that capitalism liberated the forces of production from their feudal fetters but when it reached the monopoly stage it too became a fetter on the forces of production, which was bound to be eliminated by socialism. However, the history of the past century shows that productive forces have not stagnated under capitalism. Especially since World War II, the unprecedented revolution in science and technology has brought about a tremendous growth in productivity and economic performance. To be sure, there have been contradictions between the forces and relations of production. The process of development in the capitalist countries has been marked by economic crises, large and small, as well as clashed with the working class. But during this process capitalist states have learned how to intervene in the economy to reduce the anarchy of production that typified early capitalism, and have implemented legal and social security policies which, to some extent, protect the rights and interests of the working class and the poor. Modern capitalism is quite different from what it was at the time of Marx and Engels and may even be said to incorporate elements of socialism; it is certainly still vital and not subject to imminent collapse.

4. *Existing Socialism*: Closer study of Marxism reveals that socialism as it exists in the Soviet Union and in the other countries which became socialist after World War II is not the socialism envisaged by Marx. He thought socialism would follow upon fully developed capitalism, whereas existing socialism is largely the result of revolutions in countries with backward economies; socialism did not supersede capitalism but emerged in societies dominated by pre-capitalist elements. Practice has shown that it is impossible to build advanced socialism on the basis of backward productive forces. That is to say, while capitalist relations of production have been overthrown through revolution, the resultant socialist systems have not surpassed the level of productive forces already attained by capitalism elsewhere and have not built a mode of production that is higher than existing capitalism. The belief that revolutions in backward countries have been socialist revolutions of the proletariat has been the source of many mistakes in socialist countries.

5. *National Liberation*: Similar to the previous point is the recognition now that it was a mistake to believe that national and democratic revolutions had to lead to socialism rather than capitalism. Most countries that have won independence after World War II and have become newly industrialized countries, the NICs, especially the "four little dragons" of Asia, have all opted for the capitalist road. Meanwhile those countries that chose socialism account for only 8 percent of the Third World population and are the poorest and least developed. Some countries claiming to be socialist because of land reform or the nationalization of industries are, in fact, capitalist; moreover, many are now privatizing previously state-owned enterprises. Clearly, there is still room for capitalism to expand in the Third World.

6. *Coexistence*: It was believed in China that its socialist system had "surpassed" capitalism and had entered the primary stage of communism "ahead of" the developed capitalist countries. It is now acknowledged that existing socialism is in

no position to supersede capitalism in the 20th century, and it may not even do so in the 21st century. Socialism must coexist with capitalism in the contemporary world. Moreover, at its 13th national congress the CCP advanced the concept of the primary stage of socialism and argued:

As socialism in China emerged from the womb of a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society whose productive forces lagged far behind those of the developed countries, this has determined that China has to undergo a very long primary stage in order to accomplish industrialization and commercialization, socialization as well as modernization of production which many other countries have accomplished under the conditions of capitalism.

The official Chinese policy towards capitalism has clearly been shifted from the indiscriminate opposition to or elimination of capitalism to learning from advanced capitalist countries all that may benefit China's own modernization.

### Challenges to the Leadership

The May 4th Movement in 1919 introduced the modern concepts of freedom and democracy to China, 60 years later a new phase of enlightenment began which was based on a review of the policies and practices of the previous thirty years. Doing away with blind faith emancipated people's minds and generated a concern for democracy, science, law, humanism, reform and opening to the outside world, as well as modernization of the economy.

From the very beginning the emancipation of the mind in China has posed a challenge to traditional Party and state leadership, since it calls for political reform. Thus the decade of New Enlightenment has also been a decade of challenge and response. Let us consider how the decision-makers have fared.

1. *Spiritual Emancipation and Leadership Reform*: The call for spiritual emancipation was a precondition for the transfer of power from Hua Guofeng to Deng Xiaoping. Hua was Mao's heir and his power depended on adherence to the "two whatevers". His removal at the end of 1978 and the fundamental changes it entailed were justified and accepted by the people, not only by the revelation of the disastrous consequences of the Cultural Revolution but also by a criticism of the centralization of power traditionally practiced in the international communist movement, in particular by Stalin and Mao. On August 18, 1980, Deng Xiaoping made a major speech at an enlarged meeting of the CCP Politburo calling for reform of Party and state leadership. He criticized the overconcentration of power, the patriarchal system, life tenure and various privileges enjoyed by the leaders. He said:

It is true that all the mistakes we committed in the past had something to do with the way of thinking and the style of work of some leaders. However, problems existing in the systems of organization and work played a more important role.<sup>16</sup>

He then went on to analyze how these drawbacks were tainted with feudalism, such as remnants of patriarchal clan and hierarchical ideas of social relationships; inequities between staff and line, superior and subordinate; vagueness of civil



rights and obligations; as well as certain systems and work styles in the economic realm like "official industries", "official commerce" and "official farms". He even mentioned "the autocratic style of leadership in the cultural field" and "the failure to recognize that science and education bear extraordinary importance for socialism". One of the major reforms that he proposed was constitutional revisions that would guarantee management rights in state organs at all levels as well as full civil rights. These analyses and proposals were realistic and popular; it appeared likely that a major reform of China's political structure would ensue.

2. *Economic Determination, Political Vacillation*: Unexpectedly, the reforms suggested by Deng were not accepted at the 12th national congress of the Party. The draft revision of the Party constitution contained proposals for age limits on Central Committee members, terms of office, a supervisory commission, etc. These were rejected after discussion. After the congress, political reform came to a standstill. Meanwhile, economic restructuring moved forward at full speed, especially after key Party decisions made in 1984. Soon problems emerged in the new commodity economy, in particular, profiteering through resale which caused chaos in the market. This being transformed from planned economy to one incorporating market and plan at this point entailed a two-track pricing system with plenty of loop-holes through which corrupt officials could seek private gain. In the name of developing a commodity economy, there was a mushrooming of enterprises and companies run by state organs and backed by officials. People began to complain that "everyone is in business" (*quanmin jingshang*) and the state lost control of the overall situation. The result was drastic price hikes and widespread dissatisfaction.

Since the political structure had remained basically untouched, it only made the problems worse rather than solving them. For example, as concern about rising prices grew, "Central" (i.e. not the Party's Central Committee but the handful of top leaders) decided in May 1988 to "storm the pass of prices" (*chuang wujia guan*) in order to "shorten" the pain (*changteng buru duanteng*). But this decision on a major matter that concerned hundreds of millions of people was made without going through any democratic procedure. It was neither discussed by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (China's legislature), nor at a routine meeting of the State Council, nor even at a plenary session of the Party's Central Committee. It was decided by a small number of people and as a result of it the whole country was in chaos. There were runs on banks and widespread hoarding. The State Council was forced to take emergency action and announce that price reform would be postponed. Similarly, "Central" has continued to support the election of very old people to leading positions in the National People's Congress despite strong popular objections.

Why has the reform of the political structure which is so necessary been so slow? One of the essential reasons is that the Party's centralized leadership fears the loss or weakening of the power which they have held for so long as well as the loss of the benefits going along with power, which shows that the traditional leaders have lost ground theoretically and morally, while the present political structure still preserves the organizational foundation which serves to guarantee their power.

3. *Relaxation Followed by Escalated Repression*: Spiritual emancipation and reform have forged ahead against incessant warnings against liberalization. The present leadership has, on the one hand, denounced the political campaigns of the past and pledged never to resume such campaigns again, but it has also, on the other hand, always kept a vigilant eye on public opinion and intellectual trends. While the general mood is much more relaxed than before, the 1980s have seen three major clashes.

The first clash was in 1984 when the people were called upon to combat "spiritual pollution" which meant bourgeois ideological influences. Wang Ruoshui, the main exponent of humanism, was demoted from his post as deputy editor-in-chief of *People's Daily* and academics were requested to examine what had been said and published. Many new phenomena arising in the course of economic reform came under suspicion. But when the campaign showed signs of developing into a Cultural-Revolution-style political campaign, the top leadership gave word to stop it.

The second major clash occurred around December 1986 when university students in Beijing, Shanghai, Hefei and other cities took to the streets to protest against official corruption and call for political reform. These protests alarmed the top leaders and as a result they removed Hu Yaobang, who showed sympathy for the students and had been instrumental in calling off the 1984 campaign, from his post as Party General Secretary and demoted or dismissed from the Party intellectuals who had sided with the students.

The student movement of April-Juni 1989 was the third major clash, and the most important one. Student demands included "democracy and freedom", "dialogue with the leaders", "the rule of law, not of man", "down with autocracy, corruption and official profiteering". The government was targetted in the slogan, "Li Peng, Step Down". Such opposition was unthinkable in the past but this time was openly supported by people from all walks of life. Why? (1) Things had taken a turn for the worse in recent years. Since 1986 little had been accomplished in economic or political reform and the government had failed to control the overall situation. In 1989 official commerce and corruption were rampant, production costs were rising, and workers were responding by working to rule. Much of this was due to the government's myopic perspective which emphasized short-term increases in production or revenue at the expense of long-term development. Its neglect of education and science in particular foreboded serious problems in the future. All this led to popular support for the elimination of official profiteering and corruption, the streamlining of administration and cuts in administrative expenditure. (2) The chaotic economic conditions made the demand for legal reform and orderly process ever more urgent. As mentioned above, a handful of individuals still had and have the power to arbitrarily decide the fate of millions. Despite a decade of law-making many essential laws are still lacking; there is no press and publication law, or any law guaranteeing the rights of social groups. There is no assurance of judicial independence, nor of the power and role of the National People's Congress.

Facts have shown that Deng's reform has an inherent limitation: to serve the continuation of the CCP rule rather than enhancing China's modernization according to the objective needs of economic and political development. He



enjoyed great esteem when he initiated the economic reform and declared that China would no longer have political campaigns as in the Cultural Revolution. Some dissidents were even allowed to continue their professional jobs and travel abroad. But on the other hand, he also issued quite a few instructions to prevent the emancipation of the mind from going too far. He gave the instruction "not to go into details in reviewing the Cultural Revolution, it is better just to have a rough look" (*yi chu buyi xi*) trying to hold people back from thoroughly summarizing historical experience of the turmoil ten years, while people felt it imperative to do so in order that this part of history might be truly recorded as long as those who had witnessed it were still living. Deng then proposed the four cardinal principles of adhering to the socialist road, the proletarian dictatorship, the leadership of the CCP, and Marxism-Leninism/Mao Zedong Thought in 1979.<sup>17</sup> These were later included in China's new Constitution to command obedience. His other instructions were "everything can be changed but not public ownership" and "China will not have any separation of the three powers" (i.e. administration, legislation and judicature). As time passed these were found to be increasingly contradictory to the needs of China's modernization. On the economic front, his notions expressed in the "black cat, white cat" and "groping forward (across the river)", formulations which had encouraged and inspired people to find new ways to boost the economy, have been found to be far from adequate for coping with an ever more complicated situation that cried out for theoretical guidance as the reforms deepened. The dilemma arose: His prestige diminished now that people have learned to judge the truth according to the results of practice, while Deng has been placed as another Mao - above the law, the Party and the state. Hu Yaobang's dismissal from office in the wake of the 1986 student movement caused widespread and profound indignation in and outside the CCP. As things have deteriorated in recent years, the indignation has grown. Hu's death sparked off the April-June Student Movement in 1989.

China's April-June Movement was an historical event. Firstly, the students, from the very beginning of mourning for Hu Yaobang's death, showed their determination to fight official corruption and racketeering, and at the same time, they demanded democracy and freedom necessary for public supervision over the government. There was a wide response on campuses where big character posters were put up and demonstrations held. These developed into the first high-tide on April 27, a demonstration in Beijing in which several hundred thousand participated. Secondly, the students were disciplined and well organized. An autonomous students' union was set up which organized the students' actions along various different lines, such as organizing demonstrations and preparing for the dialogue with government leaders. All the actions students took in this movement were characterized by non-violence. These were peaceful demonstrations, sit-ins and hunger strikes. Drawing lessons from the past, they had their own picket lines in order to prevent people with ulterior purposes from taking advantage of the movement to cause chaos. It was very impressive - the students' processions in the streets with their banners and their slogans, as they passed by very peacefully with picket lines separating them from onlookers. There were no frenzied actions of any sort. This was all the more moving because it expressed the Chinese people's desire to enhance democracy and maintain stability and



order. Even during the days of the hunger strike when practically the whole of society rose to their support and appealed to the leaders to talk to them, and when Beijing streets were full of demonstrators, more than a million at any time over a three-day period, order was largely maintained in the city. However, the students as well as the majority of the people were wrong to believe that the Chinese government would also take it peacefully.

The students' actions brought to light the challenge to the authority of the CCP, which was unprecedented. The top leadership showed restraint at first, letting the students' movement run its own course. To the public they admitted that the students were motivated by patriotism and alleged that they were doing just what the students demanded. But they made the point that "very very few people" instigated the students who did not know what really happened to cause chaos. This was the signal for revenge in the editorial of the *People's Daily* on April 26, 1989. As the students went on hunger strike, demanding in fury that the editorial's wrong verdict be corrected, the divisions among China's leadership came into the open. In his talks with representatives of the Asian Development Bank and the visiting Soviet leader Gorbachev and in his speech at the meeting commemorating the 70th anniversary of the May 4th Movement, Zhao Ziyang, General-Secretary of the CCP Central Committee, expressed sympathy for the students. Among themselves, Zhao asked Deng to withdraw from the stand of the April 26 editorial, i.e. to withdraw the accusation of "chaos". This was the last thing Deng would do. At a meeting discussing countermeasures, Deng asked whether any concessions could be made and, if so, where to withdraw. He maintained, however, that under the circumstances, it was the CCP leadership that was at stake. Yang Shangkun, President of the state and a vice-chairman of the CCP Military Commission, responded: "We are now at the last dyke protecting the embankment. If we withdraw, the whole thing will collapse". The decision on military intervention was made there and then. Martial law was imposed. On the rostrum of the meeting where Li Peng announced martial law on May 19, Zhao was absent.

Troops were deployed all around Beijing. The situation was growing increasingly tense and dangerous. Students and Beijing residents tried for several days to persuade the troops not to enter the city, thus preventing martial law from coming into effect. But the situation could not last long. On May 30, the students erected a statue to democracy on Tiananmen Square and planned to wind up the action after displaying the statue for several days. The hardliners lost no time and escalated their previous verdict of "chaos" to "counterrevolutionary rebellion" and used guns, tanks and armoured cars to put an end to the student movement in the small hours of June 4, 1989.

Roaring guns silenced the cry for democracy. The students and the people of Beijing began to live through a period of terror. The army was everywhere. Soldiers were knocking at people's doors in the middle of the night looking for counterrevolutionaries. But that was not all. A phenomenon which had been absent for more than ten years suddenly reappeared: the re-education of people's minds. During the second half of June, the Fourth Session of the Thirteenth Central Committee defined four urgent tasks to be accomplished. They were to thoroughly eliminate all elements involved in the "counterrevolutionary riot"; to



eradicate "bourgeois liberalism"; to punish corruption; the consolidate the economy and to pursue the open policy towards the outside world. The Central Committee declared that the "rampant bourgeois liberalism" within the Chinese society had been one of the main causes of the "riots". The Beijing municipal authorities followed suit and announced that the evils of "bourgeois liberalism" and all instigators of the "riots" had to be thoroughly eliminated so that all potential for the recurrence of such an event would be eradicated at its roots. Deng Xiaoping declared that people's thinking had to totally conform to the thinking of the Centre and that no deviation would be pardoned.

The authorities are determined not to repeat the "mistake" they made during the campaigns against "spiritual pollution" in 1983 and against "bourgeois liberalization" in 1987. These campaigns had been lax and inconclusive and had been obstructed by peoples' resistance. This time, a new era of interrogation, investigations, confessions and arrests has begun to unfold. Like in the 1950s and in the 1960s, the authorities' greatest concern is the emancipated mind, and intellectuals are again the main target. According to official declarations, "bourgeois liberalism" is to be eliminated in literary and art circles, among journalists and in the academic world. The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences has become a focal point of investigation. Its Institute of Political Science, of Philosophy, of History and of Marxism-Leninism as well as the Social Sciences Press have been especially singled out. Many members of these institutions are considered infected by the evils of "bourgeois liberalism". All of them now have to participate in regular "study sessions" to examine Deng's instructions and *People's Daily* editorials. "Work teams", reminiscent of the campaigns before and during the early stages of the Cultural Revolution have been revived. One of them, composed of people from the Party's Central Propaganda Department, was sent to the Academy of Social Sciences to investigate its employees' attitude during the demonstrations. Everybody has to write reports about his thinking and activities during the "riots". Everyone's professional future will depend on how he "passes" the investigation. All intellectual work has stopped.

But the minds of the Chinese intellectuals will not be remoulded. The process of intellectual emancipation has gone too far to be reversed. The perplexed Chinese people demand answers to a number of questions: How did the student movement turn overnight into a counterrevolutionary rebellion? Can the reform and the policy of opening to the outside world still be carried on? Where will intellectual trends lead after a decade of progress? How will the present situation evolve? ... Only the future can provide the answer.

#### Notes:

- (1) Hong Yunshan, "A Redefinition of the Socialist Epoch", *Zhongguo Shehui Kexue*, 1989, no.1, p.70.
- (2) Study The CPC Decision on Some Historical Problems Since the Founding of the People's Republic of China, (Renmin Ribao Chubanshe, 1981), p.80.
- (3) Wu Linqun and Peng Fei, "Putting up a Monument for Correcting Wrong Verdicts", in *Renmin Ribao*, June 1, 1989.
- (4) Ye Yonglie, "Deep Feelings Trained by Tribulations", *Lianhe Shibao*, 23 December, 1988.
- (5) See: Bao Xiaolin and Li Jingrui, "A Mirror of Philosophy and History", *Guangming Ribao*, 12 December, 1988.

- (6) See: Zhang Shichu, "The Comparative Study of Eastern and Western Cultures in Recent Years", *Social Sciences in China*, 1986, no.1; Yan Jiaqi, "China Is No Longer A Dragon", *Renmin Ribao*, May 23, 1988; Chen Lin, "First Victory in Breaking the Confinement of Mind: Reflections on Cultural Problems in the Ten Years of Reform", *Gongren Ribao*, 19 August, 1988; Liu Zaifu, "Two Historical Breakthroughs", *Renmin Ribao*, 25 April 1989; and others.
- (7) "Yang Zhengning on Traditional Chinese Culture and the Film *He Shang*", *Tianjin Ribao*, 10 September, 1988.
- (8) Li Zhengdao, "Reflections on Reading *He Shang*", *Renmin Ribao*, 4 November, 1988.
- (9) "Liang Houpu on the Negative Side of the Chinese Traditional Culture", *Cankao Xiaoxi*, 30 October, 1988.
- (10) See Pang Song and Han Gang, "The Party and State Leadership Structure: Historical Investigation and Prospects for Reform", *Social Sciences in China*, 1987, no.4, pp.29-56; Li Kejing, "China's Political Restructuring and the Development", *Social Sciences in China*, 1986, no.3, pp.9-24.
- (11) Lu Feng, "Danwei - A Special Form of Social Organization", *Zhongguo Shehui Kexue*, 1989, no.1.
- (12) Wang Donglin, *Records of Questions and Answers by Liang Shuming* (Changsha: Hunan Renmin Chubanshe, 1988), pp.128-147; and Mao Zedong, "Criticizing Reactionary Ideas of Liang Shuming", *Mao Zedong Xuanji* (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1977), v.5, pp.107-115.
- (13) Huang Liangzheng, "Notes on Reading County Annals", *Renmin Ribao*, 1 September, 1988.
- (14) See Luo Rongqu, "An Initial Exploration for the Establishment of a Marxist Theory of Modernization", *Social Sciences in China*, 1988, no.2; Xu Jiatus, "Reconsider Capitalism, While Conscientiously Building Socialism", *Qiushi* (Seeking Truth, Organ of the CCP Central Committee), 1988, no.5; Li Cong, "A Reconsideration of the Issue of the Basic Contradiction of Capitalism", *Zhongguo Shehui Kexue*, 1989, no.1, and Hong Yunshan, *op.cit.*
- (15) Huang Chunsheng, "Reassessment of the Effects of Class Struggle in the Evolution of History - An Interview with Historian Li Shu", *Weidinggao* (Unfinalized Papers), 1989, no.3.
- (16) Deng Xiaoping, "The Reform of the Party and State Leadership System", *Sanzhong Quanhui Yilai Zhongyao Wenxian Huibian* (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe), I, p.532.
- (17) Deng Xiaoping, "Adhering to the Four Cardinal Principles", *Ibid.*, pp.87-96.