

DEMOCRACY, THE RULE OF LAW, AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN
BEIJING'S UNOFFICIAL JOURNALS, 1978-1979

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The unofficial publications¹ which appeared in limited numbers mainly in the Beijing area from October 1978 to April 1979, during the height of the "Peking Spring", are usually portrayed as having raised similar issues from generally similar perspectives, focusing on demands for more democracy, greater protection of human rights, and strengthening of the legal system. Yet it is obvious that the authorities in Beijing, by suppressing some journals and not others, recognized significant differences among the positions taken by these publications. What, then, were the positions of the unofficial journals on such topics as 'democracy', 'human rights', and 'the rule of law'? How did these positions differ from more orthodox views? Finally, on what other issues did the journals differ?

In addition to analysing the definitions of 'democracy', 'human rights', and 'the rule of law' offered by the journals, the range of opinion expressed by the journals can best be illustrated by focusing on three topics:

- 1) the 'four basic principles' which all Chinese citizens are exhorted to support, (Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought; the role of the Communist Party; the dictatorship of the proletariat; and socialism);²
- 2) the interpretation of the past 30 years of Chinese history, especially the Cultural Revolution; and
- 3) the legitimacy of the present post-1976 regime. The most radical journals, such as *Exploration*, have consistently challenged official orthodoxy in all three areas, while the more moderate journals, such as *Peking Spring* and *April 5 Forum*, have affirmed the official interpretation in these areas. The issues are, of course, linked. An attack on the 'four basic principles' can be seen as a rejection of the legitimacy of the present regime's legitimacy. But not all journals which questioned this legitimacy have attacked the 'four principles'. Which journals have taken stands on these issues, and whether the journals can be ranged along a continuum from most critical to most supportive of the government, are the objects of this study.

Because the unofficial journals were circulated in limited numbers among a small group centered mainly in Beijing, of what significance are their views, much less the differences among them? First, in so far as unorthodox positions on key issues were being advocated, even by a small group, our findings confirm that the channels for and means of political socialization in China have varied, and that political socialization into one ideological pattern has been incomplete.

Second, because foreign news services broadcast the content of these publications to other parts of China, the influence on provincial intellectuals of the debates carried out within this forum has been wider than is sometimes realized. Indeed, there is evidence that unofficial publishing activities are still continuing in Shanghai and Guangzhou. Finally, by examining specifically the differences among the journals we can come to a more precise understanding of what challenges to official orthodoxy the authorities in Beijing have been willing to accept, and, conversely, what they have been unwilling to accept.

Although few complete collections of unofficial journals are available outside China, sufficient numbers have been obtained to permit at least a preliminary survey for comparative purposes. Data for this paper comes from the ten unofficial journals published in Beijing from October 1978 to April 1979 wholly or partially available in English translation.³

Peking Spring	Enlightenment
Voice Of The People	China Human Rights League Journal
Exploration	Thaw
Seek The Truth Journal	Democracy And The Times and
April 5 Forum	Mass Reference News

These journals in translation are the most complete collection in either Chinese or English available in the west.

Issues of these journals published from October 1978 to April 1979 are included in this review. By April 1979 the journals had been suppressed. Editors were arrested⁴, and official notices banning their printing or distribution and appeared in Beijing and other large cities⁵. It was during these short seven months that unofficial views were published with the least restriction since the Hundred Flowers episode in 1957. For this reason then, I have confined my discussion to the content of the journals during this time period. Although some journals escaped official suppression in 1979, they turned to less controversial themes, such as the popularization of science in the four modernizations, or purely literary exposition.

DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND THE RULE OF LAW

One of the most striking similarities of the unofficial journals was their claim to be speaking for "the people". A joint statement issued in January 1979 and signed by most of the publications, claimed that the journals were "run by the people of Beijing".⁶ The Human Rights League in February 1979 affirmed that it "would act according to the will of the people".⁷ And April 5 Forum asserted in April that it was "the people's mouthpiece".⁸ In the name of the people, then, the journals demanded democracy, human rights, and a return to legality.⁹ "People want democracy and freedom. This is the desire and hope of the people. Anyone who attempts to obstruct and suppress the democracy movement will come to no good."¹⁰ If the language of the journals was the same - democracy, human rights, and legal system - what did they mean by these concepts?

At least three different notions of democracy appeared in the unofficial journals:

- 1) democracy as rule in the interests of the people;
- 2) democracy as a guarantee of equal rights for all; and
- 3) democracy as rule through certain defined and explicit procedures (election and recall) to ensure that people can participate in and/or supervise governmental decision-making.

The first two notions stress the results of governmental activity as indicators of whether the system is democratic. The last notion emphasizes the procedures used as the most important measure. These conceptions of democracy can all be found in the unofficial journals, and indeed even in the same journal.

The attack on Deng Xiaoping made by one journal, for example, provides evidence of the view that democracy means rule in the interests of the people. "Deng is no longer worthy of the people's trust and support", the journal argued, "because his actions have shown that he does not want to pursue democracy. He no longer safeguards the people's interests."¹¹ This view attaches little importance to how officials achieve power, focusing instead on their actions in power. If they act in the interests of the people, then the system is democratic.

The second notion of democracy, which defines it in terms of human rights, also focused on the results of governmental activity. Systems are democratic, in this view, if they guarantee "the equal rights of all".

Democracy recognizes the equal rights of all human beings... it provides all with an equal opportunity to realize human rights because it is founded on the recognition of everyone's equal right to live¹².

A system, then, which ensures these equal rights is democratic in this view.

More frequently, democracy in the unofficial journals was tied to certain

procedures, and relied heavily on election outcomes and voting rights.

Democracy means letting people be masters of their own affairs. It means that people have the right to exercise control over all things in human society as they desire, including control over economic, political, cultural and social affairs¹³.

This view of democracy emphasizes how decisions are made - democracies put the people in a position to decide¹⁴, giving them "the final say in crucial matters, and matters of concern to them".¹⁵ Democracy means the people having a decisive influence on the destiny of society¹⁶, or the people influencing, controlling, and supervising government decisions¹⁷. Such a system entails the "transfer of power to the laboring masses".¹⁸

Elections are an important procedure for realizing this kind of democracy¹⁹.

True democracy means the right of the people to choose their own representatives, to work according to their will and in their interests. The people must also have the power to replace their representatives any time so that these representatives cannot go on deceiving others in the name of the people²⁰.

This notion of democracy depends, then, on elections "conducted from the bottom up and which are modeled on the Paris Commune".²¹

Although these conceptions of the meaning of democracy differ, the unofficial journals shared the view that democracy was a means to further ends, and was not an end in itself. Democracy was usually seen in the journals as a means of achieving the 'four modernizations'. "Democracy is a means not an end. The purpose of democracy is to concentrate various forces to serve the 'four modernizations'. Democracy is a prerequisite for their realization."²²

Some journals, however, went much further than this, pointing out that modernization itself is a means to yet further goals. One journal suggests that modernization is a means to "happiness, which Chinese citizens can truly enjoy, to freedom, prosperity, wealth and power".²³ Why, it asked, must human history take the road toward prosperity and modernization?

The reason is that human beings need a prosperous society to produce realistic fruits to provide them with maximum opportunity to pursue their first goal of happiness, namely freedom. Democracy means the maximum attainable freedom so far known by human beings. It is quite obvious that democracy has become the goal in contemporary human struggles²⁴.

"The people's desire for democracy and the nation's desire for wealth and power are irresistible", proclaimed one journal²⁵. These are not demands for social justice or for equality, on which the party rose to power, but demands for some measure of freedom from party control to pursue the goals first advocated by Yen Fu and later by the May Fourth Movement. Indeed the journals quite self-consciously drew the parallel between the movements of

the early 20th century and the needs of China today²⁶. The instrumental nature of the conception of democracy is clear. Democracy was seen as a way of modernizing the country, and, at least by some journals, as a means of achieving freedom for the people, and wealth and power for the nation.

The unofficial journals also agreed that the notion of democracy should not be linked to either centralism or dictatorship. This view runs directly counter to the official view that democracy must be seen in terms of dictatorship, and which sees democratic centralism as a unified concept²⁷. In general, the journals denied that democracy must be linked to centralism or to dictatorship. Such a link is logically impossible, for dictatorship negates democracy, and centralism prevents its effective operation.

While official discussions of democracy also define democracy in terms of "the people's right to determine and direct the nation's affairs, and making the people the masters of their own house,"²⁸ democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat are seen as inseparable concepts. Only by means of dictatorship, in the official view, can the democratic rights of the proletariat be guaranteed. And although democracy is indispensable, it is only part of a total concept, democratic centralism. Without centralism, the unity and stability needed to govern effectively cannot be attained. These views were ignored by the unofficial journals.

A uniform list of prerequisites for realizing democracy was not offered by the journals. Democracy could be achieved, some journals said, by "awakening and emancipating the people's minds";²⁹ by first achieving a redistribution of power (or democratization) of economic management;³⁰ by "reforming the political system": and by "strengthening the legal system" either concurrently with the growth of democracy, or after democracy has begun to take hold. The close relationship between achieving democracy, on the one hand, and protection of human rights and strengthening the legal system, on the other, was emphasized in all the journals. It is to these concepts that we now turn.

Although there was no general agreement on a definition of democracy, there was some measure of agreement on the importance and content of human rights. First, the appeal for human rights was made in universalistic language in the journals:

Man has the right to live and live more meaningfully. The reason man must have these rights is that life will not be worth fighting for without such rights. Once a man loses his human rights, he loses his rights as a human being, and what is left to him is but a subservient position always subject to enslavement by others³¹.

The official view, while accepting the existence of human rights, denies their universality. In capitalist societies, for example, human rights "cannot involve all men. They are only the rights of the bourgeoisie."³² There is, then, disagreement on the status of the human rights.

The most systematic discussion of the content of human rights in the unofficial journals occurred in April 5 Forum. Human rights here were analyzed in terms of 'citizen's rights' and 'people's democratic rights'. Citizen's rights include: rights of living, multiplying, education, giving free reign to creativity, and developing individuality enjoyed by individuals living in society, such as labor, rest, education, freedom of marriage, freedom of movement, freedom to select one's occupation, personal freedom, freedom from violation of life and property. "People's democratic rights" included: protection of the determining influence of the people's will on the state and society and, as the legitimate rights of the citizens, include the rights of information, speech, and supervision³³.

Other unofficial journals conceived of human rights as voting rights, freedom of speech and the freedom to demonstrate, freedom of publication, belief and association³⁴, activities necessary for a functioning democracy if the more procedural notion is adopted. A more detailed and idiosyncratic list came from the Human Rights League, which included the now familiar freedoms of speech, voting rights, the right to information, and rights to publication, all mentioned above³⁵. Other publications were satisfied with the 'citizen's rights' listed in the 1978 Constitution, again including freedom of speech, press, and assembly³⁶.

More orthodox views argue that conceiving human rights as political rights, or as 'democratic rights' in April 5 Forum's analysis, is too narrow. The concept must be broadened to include "social, economic, and cultural rights" as well. These rights are collectivist in nature, and unlike bourgeois human rights do not take the protection of private property as a fundamental principle. (Note that the April 5 Forum list of human rights included protection of individuals and individuality, as well as protection of property). The proletariat, the official view continues, cannot restrict itself to the bourgeois demands for liberty and equality, but must put forth its own 'higher demand' for the realization of socialism and communism.

Communist orthodoxy does, however, recognize 'citizen's rights', which are a kind of human rights, and these have been incorporated in the 1978 Constitution. If, however,

the slogan of human rights is put forth in abstract terms and in deviation from our fundamental slogan (realize socialism and communism), especially under the circumstances when extremely complicated content has been infused into the slogan, it will only dim our objective and cause confusion in our minds³⁷.

Human rights, one party member concludes, "is not a major slogan of our party."³⁸

Both official and unofficial positions on human rights concur that the rights are relative, restricted in the words of Beijing Review by "certain

material conditions and cultural level."³⁹ As one unofficial journal has pointed out:

Freedom does not mean unprincipled freedom. Exercise of the right of freedom is limited by non-interference in other people's freedom and non-denial of other people's freedom⁴⁰.

Although recognizing the limits of human rights, both positions see reasons for the limits in different terms. The more orthodox view is essentially materialist, while the unofficial position suggests that human rights are limited by man's need to live in society. Nonetheless the relative and limited notion of human rights is a common theme.

If, according to the unofficial journals, human rights are a necessary part of a functioning democracy, so too is a 'strong' legal system. While most journals recognized this, they rarely went beyond the simple statement. Democratic rights "should be clarified by a series of legal provisions and insured by a strict judicial system and proceedings for rights to the legally exercised". A 'strong' legal system, thus, was an essential characteristic of democracy in the unofficial view.

The rule of law does not mean democracy, however, for law can be used by both democracy and autocracy alike. Whether or not the legal system ensures democracy

depends on the nature and substance of the political system concerned...

We want the rule of law, but we want the kind of rule of law which is conducive to the realization of the equal rights of man⁴¹.

If democracy must be based on a 'strong' system of laws, it must also precede the establishment of the rule of law.

We do not merely mean that democracy is complete after a set of laws have been written. Democracy must be realized before laws are established. Then a legal system is set up to recognize it and protect it. Before the people and the masses have obtained a true democracy, a complete set of laws that recognizes democracy and a strong system that protects the democratic system will be meaningless. To avoid empty talk, the first thing to do is to allow democratic theory to become reality⁴².

In addition to promulgating new laws, some hint of what 'strengthening' the legal system entails was provided in an April 5 Forum analysis of a Central Committee decision to remove the labels of 'four bad elements'.⁴³ The journal deplored the extreme vagueness and ambiguity of the wording of the decision, arguing that as a result local officials were given almost complete discretion to do as they pleased. Objective standards were lacking, which made the policy meaningless. Scientific, unambiguous language is required⁴⁴. The tendency toward vagueness and ambiguity finds its source in Mao's own writing, the journal concluded. Precise, unambiguous wording of the laws was, then, an important aspect of 'strengthening' the legal system.

While the concepts of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law were used by all the unofficial journals, often with different meanings as we have seen, I have found no major grounds for differentiating among the journals based on these definitions. Where the concepts have differed there has not been a consistent difference among the journals - indeed different meanings for the various concepts can occasionally be found in the same issue of the same journal! There were, however, clear editorial differences if we consider the unofficial journals' positions on the 'four principles'; the Cultural Revolution; and the legitimacy of the present post-1976 regime.

THE FOUR PRINCIPLES

The 'four principles', featured in the 1978 Constitution, include upholding Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought; the leadership of the Communist Party; the dictatorship of the proletariat; and the socialist road. One unofficial journal, *Exploration*, has openly attacked the accepted official position on each principle⁴⁵. The other journals have either affirmed or ignored the principles. We will see, that there are grounds for differentiating among the journals based on a consideration of these principles. We turn now to a review of the evidence, looking at each of the four principles in turn.

Exploration's attack on China's dominant ideological system, Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought, took the form of an objection to a "single ideology having been pushed through by force." The journal based its attack on 'single ideologies' on its analysis of the relationship between society and the individual:

Human beings have two natures - individuality and sociality. People's sociality depends on individuality just as human societies necessarily depend on the existence of individuals. Therefore, we conclude that people's individuality enjoys priority over their sociality, although both are important constituents of human nature... Human society like the universe is pluralistic and not monistic⁴⁶.

The journal then endorsed a pluralistic approach to the question of ideology: "Let every Chinese think freely." The implication that Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought must be abandoned as the only single legitimate doctrine in China was explicitly stated in the same issue of the journal⁴⁷. Suppressing all other viewpoints has left China with the "emotional and cultural reality we face now," the journal pointed out, "including deadliness, numbness, stupidity, stagnation, ignorance, and simplemindedness."⁴⁸

Today we challenge Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought because we are fed up with your (the authorities) unreasonableness. If the existence

and triumph of Marxism-Leninism must rely on bloody suppression of all opposing views, we as clear-headed youths of the 20th Century are not prepared to tolerate it⁴⁹.

The journal concluded:

If the road we choose raises the people's standard of living, though incompatible with Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought, we must not hesitate to jettison the later. Dogmas such as the 'Inviolability of Marxist-Leninist principles' expounded by Mao Zedong, and the pledge 'to hold high and defend the great banner of Chairman Mao' provided in the existing Constitution represent utter ignorance of the purpose of human existence⁵⁰.

The notion of a single legitimate ideological mould into which all people must be fitted, was, then, explicitly rejected as unsuitable for any society.

The other journals have either taken an intermediate position, indicating that Marxism-Leninism as the only legitimate ideology, was acceptable (although perhaps needing modification), or have endorsed Marxist-Leninist principles without qualification. Thaw and Enlightenment are examples of journals which while accepting a general Marxist-Leninist framework, have called for revision of some of its basic tenets. The Thaw Society called for revision of the 'impractical portions of Marxism', and in particular deletion of concepts of "class struggle, violent revolution and all types of dictatorship".⁵¹ It also would remove the "outdated portions" of Mao Zedong Thought. In the same spirit, Enlightenment called for a restoration of the "scientific features" of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought⁵².

Unqualified endorsement of the ideology, to complete the other end of the spectrum, characterized the editorial policy statements of April 5 Forum and Peking Spring⁵³.

Criticism of the second basic principle, which acknowledged the supreme role of the Communist Party in Chinese society, followed a similar pattern. Exploration's critique of the party's position stemmed from its rejection of a single ideology imposed by force on the Chinese people:

Those who use force to put down opposition views to defend the existing program and policy of the Chinese Communist Politburo are actually working against the wishes of the Chinese people for modernization⁵⁴.

Not only would the policy of modernization fail, but all progress is jeopardized if the party is permitted to maintain its position:

The Chinese people have learned from years of autocratic dictatorship that if we permit the Communist Politburo to exercise exclusive control, permit a few to prescribe a lifestyle for several hundred million people, and permit the use of force to suppress theories and opinions different than Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought, the end result will be to turn China back to the 'anti-rightist' days of 1957, and back to the days

of the Cultural Revolution of 1966. Please remember that Mao Zedong once predicted that this kind of revolution will occur once every seven or eight years⁵⁵.

Exploration's denunciation of one-party rule was explicit. The critique was all the more powerful because it was not aimed at the party organization itself, but rather at the highest leadership organ of the party, the politburo.

Enlightenment occupied the other end of the continuum. In November, 1978, it fully endorsed "the strategic plans of the Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Hua", and saw itself as an ally of the party press People's Daily⁵⁶. And in January 1979 it reaffirmed this position: "We mean what we say about accepting the party's leadership and guidance in the political, economic, cultural, and various spheres".⁵⁷

Intermediate positions were taken by April 5 Forum, Peking Spring, and Thaw. While affirming their support for "the fundamental principles of the party", each journal suggested either that the party's leadership position be altered, its internal composition changed, or that at basic levels the party "wither away" as class struggle has diminished. April 5 Forum questioned the role of the party in society, pointing out, first, that "party leadership" has not always been correct (e.g., recalling the "reactionary" leadership of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four) nor has it always been necessary (e.g. citing the "revolutionary and spontaneous Tienanmen incident"). Of the later, April 5 Forum asked, "Here even without party leadership, as we can clearly see, has not a soul-stirring melodrama already been enacted?"⁵⁸

Thaw argued that the party, for too long the personal possession of Mao, must be converted into a party "belonging to all party members and people throughout the country", that its decision-making system must be made more "democratic collectivist", and that it be clearly separated from the state⁵⁹, a move that Deng Xiaoping appears to have endorsed.

While fully accepting the party's guiding role, Peking Spring argued that just as class struggle is withering, so too should the role of the party at basic levels. "People have felt more and more strongly that the power of the administrative leadership of basic level party organizations has now become an obstacle to the development of production". The journal hastened to add, however, that it did not advocate "total abolition of party leadership at this stage", and pointed out that the process must be gradual. Middle and upper-level party leadership is necessary "at this stage", and should not be "done away with".⁶⁰ These moderate statements which basically accepted party leadership, contrast sharply with the views expressed in Exploration, as we saw above.

The third principle, support for the dictatorship of the proletariat, was also challenged by Exploration. Interestingly, the other journals had little to say on this subject, and I could find no explicit statements supporting or challenging the concept in them. Support for the notion of dictatorship of the

proletariat may perhaps be inferred for those journals, like April 5 Forum and Peking Spring, which have explicitly endorsed Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought and party leadership.

Exploration's attack on proletarian dictatorship, and indeed on all dictatorship, was based on its conception of democracy as entailing a guarantee of equal rights for all. Dictatorship "negates the fact that different members of society have the right to satisfy their different desires". Thus, the dictatorship of the proletariat (or any dictatorship) denies man's right to live as equals. It denies each man's

right to carry out political activities to satisfy his personal desires in life and to fight for survival - and this is the out and out negation of the most fundamental principle of democracy.

It ignores, then, society's basic pluralism. "This explains why all social systems based on Marxist socialism are without exception undemocratic and even anti-democratic autocracies", the journal concludes⁶¹. Given democracy, and the respect for the equal rights of every other member of society which democracy entails, dictatorship is impossible.

Not only is any kind of dictatorship a negation of democracy, but the Marxist notion of "dictatorship by the majority" is simply an "Utopian dream". Dictatorship is always dictatorship. "A concentration of powers is bound to fall into the hands of a few". Thus, the democratic movement, Exploration argued, "is being carried out on the premise of negating the Mao Zedong-type dictatorship, and is aimed at reforming the social system".⁶²

Finally, support for socialism was a feature of the 'four basic principles'. Exploration has attacked the notion that establishment of a Marxist socialist state can ever lead to democracy. But the journal did not disapprove of socialism per se (indeed socialism is seen as letting the people be their own masters). Rather the journal argued that socialism has not been achieved in China. Here Exploration drew a clear line between socialism in general, and Marxist socialism. The latter negates democracy because it relies on dictatorship, while the former is defined in terms of democracy - "people being their own masters". But, the journal asks of the Chinese people:

With the meager wages you get every month, whose master and what kind of master can you be? Sad to relate, you are 'mastered' by somebody else even in the matter of matrimony. Socialism guarantees the producers' right to the surplus production from their labor over what is needed as a service to the society. But this service is limitless (in China). So, are you getting only that little miserable wage 'necessary for maintaining the labor force for production'? Socialism guarantees many rights, such as the right of a citizen to receive education to use his ability to the best advantage and so forth. But none of these rights can be seen in our daily life⁶³.

The implication then, was that the 'socialist' state in China not only was a fraud, claiming to be what it was not, but that it was also exploiting its workers by paying them only enough to maintain the labor force in production. Exploration did not, however, reject socialism, but only socialism as it was practiced in China.

Apart from one statement in Peking Spring in which it was announced that the journal "adheres to the socialists path", the other journals did not explicitly address this issue. We can infer from their support for Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought and for party leadership, however, that they did not share the Exploration critique.

There is, then, adequate ground for distinguishing among the journals based on their position on the four basic principles. A radical critique of the ideology, party, and state is offered by only one of the journals, and appears to be based on a definition of democracy in terms of human rights - in particular, that democracy means guaranteeing the equal rights of all in society. At the other end of the spectrum can be found Peking Spring and April 5 Forum. Journals like Enlightenment and Thaw occupied an intermediate position, characterized by general support for the principles, but calling for important revisions of their content.

THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

Their stand on the 'four principles' led the unofficial journals to differing appraisals of the past 30 years of Chinese history, and in particular to differing conclusions about the nature of the Cultural Revolution. The more moderate journals confined their criticism of the past 30 years exclusively to the Cultural Revolution years (1966-1976), denouncing the "evil and pernicious" influences of Lin Piao and the Gang of Four. It was during this period that the "dictatorship hosts were turned into objects of dictatorship" and peoples' democratic and human rights were abused⁶⁴. This position differs little from more orthodox views. The moderate journals saw the cause of the Cultural Revolution misfortune in terms of a 'weak' legal system⁶⁵. The people had no real legal protection from the dictators, Lin Piao and the Gang of Four. Hence the moderate emphasis on the rule of law.

Exploration, on the other hand, saw the entire 30 years as one of "tyranny and dictatorship"⁶⁶, and did not, in general, single out the Cultural Revolution years for special treatment. The journal's comments on the Cultural Revolution were, however, very interesting, because it saw this movement in a different light. The Cultural Revolution, Exploration argued, began as a popular democratic mass movement:

The Cultural Revolution demonstrates that the Chinese people want democracy - it was the first occasion for them to demonstrate their strength, and all reactionary forces trembled before them⁶⁷.

The campaign was, however, corrupted by the leadership, who sought to turn it to their own ends.

Because the people had then no clear orientation and the democratic forces did not play the main role in the struggle, the majority of them were bought over by the autocratic tyrant, led astray, divided, slandered, and finally violently suppressed. Thus, these forces came to an end⁶⁸.

The more moderate journals confined their attack to the Cultural Revolution years, endorsing the progress made before that time. The most radical position, adopted by *Exploration*, condemned the previous 30 years, but looked for inspiration to the spontaneous democratic elements of the early Cultural Revolution, reflecting in its analysis the disillusionment of the more radical Red Guards.

Legitimacy

Different positions were also taken by the journals on the legitimacy of the present post-1976 regime in China. More radical opinion on this issue, defining democracy in terms of elections, questioned the legitimacy of the current leadership, including Deng Xiaoping and Hua Guofeng. Who elected them? asked *Exploration*, *Human Rights League*, and *Enlightenment*. "Although the people may favor some of the deputies, the Fifth National People's Congress does not enjoy due authority because it is not the direct embodiment of the people's will."⁶⁹ And, *Enlightenment* pointed out: "The supreme leaders of the state still do not have the courage to be elected by the people."⁷⁰ *Exploration*, always the most outspoken, suggested that "the masses are dissatisfied because state leaders have won the people's trust by fraud..."⁷¹ And in a direct challenge to the Peking-Municipal Committee, the journal pointed out: "In fact, no one has entrusted you with the task of ruling. You do not represent the people."⁷²

We would like to ask a question of senior government officials who have incited the arrest of people: Do you hold power legally or illegally (legitimately or illegitimately)? We would also like to ask a question of Chairman Hua and Vice Chairman Deng, Do you hold your posts of premier and vice premier legally or illegally?⁷³

The attack on Deng was taken even further:

He is no longer worthy of the people's trust and support, because his actions have shown that he does not want to pursue democracy. He no longer safeguards the peoples' interests. He is currently following a dictatorial

road after deceitfully winning the people's trust⁷⁴.

This attack on the regime's legitimacy may also help to explain why intellectuals in China have failed to rally to the journals' support. Although intellectuals could be expected to champion demands for increased democracy, reduction of the arbitrariness of the legal system, and the protection of human rights - especially liberalization of academic and literary discussion and publishing rights - they can not have been happy with the attack on Deng's legitimacy. He, after all, was leading the liberalization, and restoring 'unity and order'. In this sense "The Peking Spring" differed from the intellectual - led Hundred Flowers in 1957.

Second, the most radical journal, *Exploration*, in its rejection of the 'four principles', lashed out at Marxist intellectuals and theoreticians. "Let us look at the real history of China, and not the history written by the hired scholars of the socialist government", the journal demanded⁷⁵. The 'hired scholars' were precisely those intellectuals in China who if the defense of democracy had been more moderate, might have supported the journals. As it was, they were indicted along with the state and party bureaucracy, and never gave their support.

If the intellectuals did not lend their support to the journals, who was involved in these unofficial publishing activities? The answer to this question is not clear, but we can at least speculate on the background of these writers. Many of the editorial boards of the unofficial journals seem to have been composed of former Red Guard activists, who now must be in their late 20's or early 30's. They were educated, probably middle school graduates, and widely read. Many undoubtedly had relatives who were cadres. Finally their access to printing materials and paper, indicates that they were not unemployed, but probably had minor bureaucratic jobs in Beijing's prolific bureaucracy. It was from these sources that discontent sprang in 1978-1979⁷⁶.

CONCLUSION

While adopting a common language - democracy, human rights, and the rule of law - the unofficial journals have used these terms in a variety of ways, which however, often ran directly counter to official usage. Further there are grounds for differentiating among the journals. Their position on the 'four principles', the Cultural Revolution, and the legitimacy of the present regime, suggests that the journals can be ranged along a continuum from the more radical and openly critical journal, *Exploration*, to the journals generally supportive of the regime, such as *Peking Spring* and *April 5 Forum*. Other journals, such as *Enlightenment* and *Thaw*, occupied an intermediate position.

The fact that such unorthodox views can be expressed in China, while not surprising, indicates that political socialization into a common ideological tradition is far from complete. Views directly contradicting official thinking have been expressed occasionally by all of the journals surveyed here, and consistently by one journal, *Exploration*. This journal's radically different use of terms such as 'democracy', and 'human rights', in addition to its denunciation of the 'four principles', unorthodox interpretation of the Cultural Revolution, and its open challenge of the legitimacy of the present regime, have led to its suppression by the authorities. Which of these characteristics finally prompted official Beijing to act, however, remains unknown.

Notes

- 1) The journals call themselves 'unofficial' or 'mass' publications, while the government has sought to label them 'underground' or 'other' publications. These labels have been protested by the journals.
- 2) See Beijing Review No. 49, December 7, 1979, p. 3 for a statement of the 'four principles'. They appear in Chapter I, Articles 1 and 2 of the 1978 Constitution of the People's Republic of China.
- 3) The translations appear in "Translations on People's Republic of China", U.S. Joint Publications Research Service (hereafter abbreviated JPRS) Nos. 509 (April 12, 1979); 520 (May 10, 1979); 532 (June 20, 1979); 533 (June 1979); 534 (June 26, 1979); and 536 (June 29, 1979) (Washington, D. C.: National Technical Information Service) and "China Report" Foreign Broadcast Information Service (hereafter abbreviated FBIS) Nos. 5 (July 27, 1979) and 8 (August 9, 1979) (Washington, D. C.: U.S. Department of Commerce). More recently translations for this period have appeared in James D. Seymour, ed., *The Fifth Modernization: China's Human Rights Movement, 1978-1979* (Stanfordville, New York: Human Rights Publishing Group, 1980) and David S.G. Goodman, *Beijing's Street Voices: The Poetry and Politics of China's Democracy Movement* (London: Marion Boyars, 1981). Major collections of original documents in Chinese include Claude Widor, ed., *Chungguo Minban Kanwulupian (Documents on the Chinese Democratic Movement, 1978-1980: Unofficial Magazines and Wall Posters)*, Volume 1 (Hong Kong: The Observer Publishers, 1981) and *Dalu Dixia Kanwu Lupian (Collection of the Mainland Underground Publications)* Vols. 1-5 (Taipei: Institute for the Study of Chinese Communist Problems, 1980-1981).
- 4) See AFP dispatch, Beijing, May 30, 1979 in *South China Morning Post*, May 31, 1979; and AFP dispatch, Beijing, May 2, 1979, in *South China Morning Post*, May 2, 1979.

- 5) See Reuter's dispatch, Peking, March 31, 1979 in South China Morning Post, April 1, 1979. For the re-emergence of 'unofficial' publications in 1980-1981 and their suppression, see Fu Roshek, "The 'Unacknowledged Phase' of the Chinese Democratic Movement: 1980-1981", (unpublished paper, Stanford University, 1982) and Monthly Bulletin on the Chinese Democratic Movement (In Chinese) (Hong Kong: Democratic Movement Resource Center, 1981).
- 6) Exploration (Tansuo), January 29, 1979 in JPRS 520, p. 26.
- 7) Human Rights League (Zhongguo Renquan) February 1979, in JPRS 520, p. 64.
- 8) April 5 Forum (Swi Luntan) April 1, 1979, in FBIS 8, p. 21.
- 9) See Peking Spring (Beijing Zhi Chun) January 27, 1979 in JPRS 532, p. 36, for a similar statement.
- 10) Enlightenment (Qimeng) March, 1979 in JPRS 520, p. 51.
- 11) Exploration March 25, 1979 in JPRS 520, p. 28.
- 12) Ibid., January 29, 1979 in JPRS 536, p. 32.
- 13) Ibid., March 11, 1979 in JPRS 520, p. 31; Enlightenment January 1, 1979 in JPRS 520, p. 58; April 5 Forum April 1, 1979 in FBIS 8, p. 5.
- 14) Exploration March 11, 1979 in JPRS 520, p. 33.
- 15) Peking Spring January 27, 1979 in JPRS 520, p. 15.
- 16) April 5 Forum April 1, 1979 in FBIS 8, p. 21.
- 17) Exploration March 11, 1979 in JPRS 520, p. 33; and April 5 Forum April 1, 1979 in FBIS 8, p. 21.
- 18) Exploration December 1978 in JPRS 534, p. 11 and Exploration March 11, 1979 in JPRS 520, p. 33.
- 19) April 5 Forum December 10, 1978 in JPRS 536, p. 17.
- 20) Exploration December 1978, in JPRS 534, p. 11.
- 21) Peking Spring January 9, 1979 in JPRS 520, p. 1.
- 22) April 5 Forum April 1, 1979 in FBIS 8, p. 5; Exploration December 1978, in JPRS 534, p. 22; and Enlightenment January 1, 1979, in JPRS 509, p. 45.
- 23) Exploration December 1978 in JPRS 534, p. 11; and Democracy and the Times (Minzhu Yu Shidai) undated in FBIS 5, p. 65.
- 24) Exploration December 1978, in JPRS 534, p. 13.
- 25) Peking Spring January 9, 1979 in JPRS 532, p. 1.
- 26) See Enlightenment November 24, 1978 in JPRS 509, p. 28.

- 27) One possible exception comes from Enlightenment which pointed out:
 "Without democracy it is also impossible to achieve highly centralized and unified command in modernization. Without a competent and authoritative command and co-ordination system which is adopted through democratic processes . . . and constantly renovated, modern machines are just a heap of scrap iron."
 January 29, 1979 in JPRS 520, p. 45.
- 28) "Learn from Chairman Mao to Struggle for Carrying Forward Democratic Concepts and Fully Implement Socialist Democracy", Philosophical Research (Zhaxue Yanjiu) No. 12, Dezember 25, 1978 in JPRS 073197, p. 40.
- 29) April 5 Forum April 1, 1979, in FBIS 8, p. 5.
- 30) Peking Spring January 9, 1979 in JPRS 532, p. 1.
- 31) Exploration January 29, 1979 in JPRS 536, p. 32.
- 32) Beijing Review No. 45, November 9, 1979.
- 33) April 5 Forum March 11, 1979 in FBIS 5, pp. 12-13.
- 34) Enlightenment January 1, 1979 in JPRS 509, p. 65.
- 35) In its "Declaration on Human Rights", the Human Rights League lists the following:
- freedom of thought and speech ;
 - right to criticize and assess party and state leaders ;
 - right to 'sufficient autonomy' for minority nationalities ;
 - right to elect state leaders and the leaders at all levels in various areas, and to elect a 'citizens court' to be a standing committee of the National Peoples' Congress ;
 - right to examine the national budget, final financial statements and the grossnational product ;
 - right to attend proceedings of the NPC, its standing committee and preparatory meetings ;
 - reduction and gradual abolition of state ownership of the means of production ;
 - establishing friendly relations with Yugoslavia, Soviet Union, US and Japan ;
 - the right to develop freely ;
 - freedom to go in and out of foreign embassies, freedom to talk, to foreign correspondents and freedom to publish abroad ; Freedom to receive 'nei-bu' (internal) publications, to subscribe to foreign magazines and newspapers, and to listen to foreign television and radio stations, to publish and print ;
 - freedom to choose ones own vocation, freedom to express support for a leader or a movement ;
 - state guaranteed food rations ;
 - right of reassignment for educated youth in the countryside ;

- abolition of the use of deceptive means to recruit technical workers;
 - abolition of the system of secret police;
 - abolition of slums and overcrowded housing conditions;
 - encouragement of internationalism, with open borders, trade, exchange of labor, freedom to work and study abroad, to travel or live abroad.
- 36) Exploration December 1978 in JPRS 534, pp. 6-7. Exploration also mentions "freedom of travel, and the freedom to live a civilized life which man should enjoy..." January 29, 1979, in JPRS 536, p. 39. The 1978 Constitution of the People's Republic of China recognizes the following rights: right to vote, freedom of speech, correspondence, press, assembly, association, procession, demonstration, and the freedom to strike, freedom of religion, of person, right to work, to rest, to material assistance in old age or in case of injury or illness, right to education, freedom to engage in scientific research, literary and artistic creation, and the right to lodge complaints. In Beijing Review No. 11, March 17, 1978.
- 37) Beijing Review No. 45, November 9, 1979, p. 19.
- 38) Ibid.
- 39) Ibid., p. 20 and Exploration January 29, 1979 in JPRS 536, p. 44; April 5 Forum April 1, 1979, in FBIS 8, p. 5.
- 40) Enlightenment January 1, 1979 in JPRS 509, p. 65.
- 41) Exploration January 29, 1979 in JPRS 536, p. 32.
- 42) Enlightenment January 1, 1979 in JPRS 509, p. 58.
- 43) The 'four bad elements' included landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries, and rightists.
- 44) April 5 Forum March 11, 1979, in FBIS 5, p. 24.
- 45) Beijing Review December 7, 1979, p. 3.
- 46) Exploration December 1978, in JPRS 534, p. 17.
- 47) Ibid., January 1979, in JPRS 536, p. 41.
- 48) Ibid., p. 89.
- 49) Ibid., p. 44.
- 50) Exploration January 29, 1979, in JPRS 536, p. 42.
- 51) Thaw (Jie Dong) March 8, 1979 in FBIS 5, p. 6.
- 52) Enlightenment October 11, 1978 in JPRS 509, p. 16.
- 53) April 5 Forum December 30, 1978 in JPRS 536, p. 10; and Peking Spring January 9, 1979 in JPRS 532, p. 1.
- 54) Exploration January 29, 1979 in JPRS 536, p. 42.

- 55) Exploration January 29, 1979 in JPRS 536, p. 41.
- 56) Enlightenment January 29, 1979 in JPRS 536, p. 18.
- 57) Ibid.
- 58) April 5 Forum April 1, 1979 in FBIS 8, p. 30.
- 59) Thaw March 8, 1979 in FBIS 5, p. 6.
- 60) Peking Spring January 1979, in JPRS 520, p. 15.
- 61) Exploration March 11, 1979 in JPRS 520, p. 31.
- 62) Ibid., March 25, 1979 in JPRS 520, p. 28.
- 63) Ibid., December 1978, in JPRS 534, p. 10.
- 64) Voice of the People (Jenmin Zhisheng) December 1978, in JPRS 534, p. 1.
- 65) Sound the Truth Journal (Qiushi Bao) February 1979 in JPRS 534, p. 18.
- 66) Exploration March 25, 1979 in JPRS 520, p. 38.
- 67) Ibid., December 1978, in JPRS 534, p. 13.
- 68) Ibid.
- 69) Human Rights League March 22, 1979 in JPRS 520, p. 61.
- 70) Enlightenment March 1979 in JPRS 520, p. 51.
- 71) Exploration March 11, 1979 in JPRS 520, p. 42.
- 72) Ibid., January 29, 1979 in JPRS 520, p. 23.
- 73) Ibid., March 25, 1979 in JPRS 520, p. 28.
- 74) Ibid.
- 75) Exploration December 1978, in JPRS 534, p. 13.
- 76) For a profile of those engaged in the 1980-1981 activities, see Monthly Bulletin on the Chinese Democratic Movement Vol. 1, No. 5 (May, 1981), pp. 3-4.

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