

**STATUS AND ROLE OF INTELLECTUALS
IN POST—MAO CHINA**

Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of the Degree of
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

SABAREE MITRA

**CENTRE FOR EAST ASIAN STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI—110067. INDIA**

1988



JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067

CENTRE FOR EAST ASIAN STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Telegram : JAYENU
Telephones : 667676, 667557

September 19, 1988.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I have the pleasure to certify that
Ms Sabaree Mitra, an M.Phil student of the
Centre for East Asian Studies, School of International
Studies, J.N.U., has pursued her research work and
prepared the dissertation entitled "STATUS AND ROLE
OF INTELLECTUALS IN POST-MAO CHINA", under my supervision
and guidance. This is the result of her own research
and to the best of my knowledge no part of it has
earlier comprised any monograph, dissertation or book.
This is being submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
for the Degree of Master of Philosophy in Chinese Studies,
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
said degree.



Gargi Dutt
(Mrs) GARGI DUTT
CHAIRPERSON

G.P. Deshpande
PROF. G.P. DESHPANDE
SUPERVISOR

C O N T E N T S

Page(s)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CHAPTERS

I	INTRODUCTION	1-3
II	BACKGROUND	4-49
III	THE STATUS AND ROLE OF INTELLECTUALS IN POST-MAO CHINA	50-71
IV	CONCLUSION	72-75
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	76-79

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply grateful to my supervisor, Professor G.P. Deshpande, who has been^a constant source of encouragement in the conception and writing of this thesis and who has made this endeavour a memorable learning experience. The valuable suggestions of Prof. Tan Chung, Prof. (Mrs) Gargi Dutt and Dr.N.Das have also helped to make this thesis less inadequate. I am deeply indebted to Satish, for his constant reminders of deadlines, and his support in periods when the work seemed to be making little progress. My parents have shared with patience and good humour, both the good and bad moments of thesis writing. Finally, I must acknowledge the invaluable help of Mrs.Kunjamma Varghese who not only typed the thesis with competence, but also put up with my erratic schedule.

Sabaree Mitra

(SABAREE MITRA)

Chapter I

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Intellectuals constitute a major force in all societies and it has been so for hundreds of years. It is not possible to think of development, social, economic or political, without their contribution. The political system depends upon them for survival as much as it does on the peasantry or the working class or industrialists. Intellectuals have always played an important role in the recorded history of China, as they have not only held the social structure together, as in the case of Confucian China, but have also been the final authority to pass a judgement on the existing political systems. The status enjoyed by Chinese intellectuals and role played by them in the post-Mao era are specially significant as the new policies have placed them at the centre of massive political, social and economic changes presently going on in China. Therefore, the study of the status and role of intellectuals in post-Mao China is imperative in the understanding of China of the last ten years or so.

The dissertation seeks to examine the following problems:

- (1) the role of intellectuals in the cause of intellectual freedom and relaxation of ideological control that is the pre-condition of this freedom.

(ii) the status of the intellectuals vis-a-vis that of the working class, on the basis of such criteria as social acceptance, economic situation and extent of specialized knowledge gathered by them.

This dissertation is divided into two sections. The first is a chapter which goes into the historical background. In this chapter the intellectual history of China since late 19th century till the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution has been traced in a summary form in the general framework of intellectual reform and intellectual dissent. Since, what the Chinese intellectuals have so far achieved or are trying to achieve today is closely linked with the legacy of the past intellectual reforms and past intellectual movements, this chapter is crucial for the study undertaken. In other words, the contemporary debates and struggles on the question of intellectuals cannot be discussed without reference to the historical background.

The other chapter, which has the same title as the dissertation itself, deals with (i) the major intellectual events and cases of dissent, (ii) what these cases of dissent indicate in terms of the objectives the intellectuals have been striving to achieve and finally (iii) the

status of the intellectuals vis-a-vis the working class, more specifically, examining whether the intellectuals have become the part of the working class in China today, which has been the objective of the CPC, stated as such from time to time.

The last Chapter of 'Conclusion' brings the general conclusions of this no doubt preliminary study together. The conclusions and observations have to be preliminary and tentative as the study is mainly based on secondary sources. Not many Chinese language sources were available in India and the majority of quotations from Chinese language articles cited in the dissertation have been taken from the translation of these articles published in English in various News Agency bulletins, journals and books.

In spite of these limitations, it is hoped that the conclusions reached and observations made in the dissertation, however tentative, would be useful inasmuch as they would have indicated certain tendencies dominating the world of intellectuals in China.

Chapter II

BACKGROUND

China is a huge country with a rich cultural and literary heritage of several thousand years. Through the course of history, though, Chinese cultural values and literary traditions have been continued to be prized, important changes have set in. Intellectuals have always been at the centre of this process of change, thus making the understanding of intellectual history an integral part of understanding socio-political and cultural history of China. The importance of intellectual history of China became markedly more apparent than ever in the latter half of 19th century. This was a time when fierce debate was going on about the need of reform in China and the path, the reform must take. The Chinese intellectuals, as expected, along with politicians and theoreticians of reform contributed their own more than fair share to the debate.

To understand the role played by the intellectuals in this debate, it is imperative to delve into their social position and social role in the past.

It was the Confucian ideology that had dominated the 19th century China and had held the state together over the centuries with a careful hierarchical ordering of society

from top to bottom, with clearly defined rights and obligations for every individual and every section of the society. The structural balance that resulted when these rights were recognized and duties were performed, became the dominant motivating value of Chinese society.¹ The sanction for this hierarchy sprang from the moral authority of the li (principles of social usage)², which was established not only in absolute philosophic terms but also in day-to-day practical terms.

According to this Confucian social structure, the literati formed a separate stratum of society. This stratum was a convenient buffer between the ruler and the masses as the literati were useful to both. However, the literati's loyalty was essentially to the state. Members of this social stratum (i.e., the literati) were continuously under the influence of Confucian ideology because of orthodox Confucian training through formative years and preparations for the imperial examinations in youth, which was nothing but consolidated grounding in Confucian ideology.³ Success in the Imperial examination

-
1. See Arthur F. Wright, "Struggle vs. Harmony: Symbols of Competing Values in Modern China", World Politics, VI I (1953), 31-44; Derk Bodde, "Harmony and Conflict in Chinese Philosophy" in Arthur F. Wright (ed.), Studies in Chinese Thought, Chicago, 1953, pp. 19-80.
 2. Translation suggested by Helmut Wilhelm in "Political Ideology of Nineteenth Century China" Seattle, 1949.
 3. Chang Chung-li, The Chinese Gentry, Seattle, 1955, pp. 165-82.

brought them to office as Imperial servants, incharge of mainly bureaucratic functions of the state. Thus the Confucian Literati had the double function of being a scholar as well as an officer and came to be known as scholar official section. This section was extremely useful to the ruler as the members of this class maintained a perfect social order without resorting to any physical force. Foreign observers were often surprised to see a huge population apparently governing itself in a peaceful and orderly fashion. The answer to this puzzle is the concept of li in Confucian ideology which signifies decorum, ritual, rules of propriety as accepted in the society. According to Confucius "If you govern men by laws and keep them in order by penalties, they will avoid penalties, but lose their sense of shame".⁴ To avoid such a situation Confucian state was founded on moral principles, where men's lives were gently but effectively regulated by public opinion and social pressure. Thus who would be more ideal than the scholar - official section to maintain social balance in such a Confucian social system? After all they had deep grasp of Confucian morality through long years of study in Confucian ideology. It enabled them not only to rule ideally by virtuous examples but also without needing to resort to physical pressure.⁵

4. The Analects, Book 2, Chapter 3.

5. Joseph R. Levenson, Confucian China and Its Modern Fate (A Trilogy), Vol. I, The Problem of Intellectual Continuity, 1968, pp. 16-17.

Finally, the Confucian Literati perpetuated Confucianism also in the whole society (including the illiterate masses) by continuously absorbing people from other strata of the society. This was possible because to the masses, the literati's way of life was the right way and the highest aspiration of the masses was to contribute to their respective families' advancement to the scholar-official status. Thus, the ambitious and able men who were prominent in other strata of the society were steadily drawn into this scholar-official section.⁶ Even those who could not make it to the ladder of social elevation was in constant awe of Confucianism. Because to them, Confucianism was a magic vehicle which could bring them the profound knowledge of absolute truth and eventually the material benefits like social prestige and financial gain.

The recorded history of Chinese civilization marked by wars, rebellions and successions of dynasty, shows its uniqueness in its resistance to institutional change. In other words, there were cycles of prosperity, stagnation and decline, but there has not evolved any modernising change out of these cycles. These cyclical fluctuations, emerging as inevitable cycles of ups and downs, continued till the Government of China started becoming steadily

6. Fei Hsiao-t'ung, China's Gentry, Essays in Rural-Urban Relations, Chicago, 1953, p.12.

weaker, more ineffective and more corrupt. Rebellions brewed at home and impact of the West was felt through disastrous foreign wars and unequal treaties. Thus by the latter half of 19th century China undertook to strengthen itself. The motto of the Self-strengthening Movement in 1870s was "Zhongxue wei ti, xi xue wei yong" (Chinese learning for the body, i.e., fundamentals and Western learning for use, i.e., utility). Growing number of Confucian literati spoke out in favour of this motto. Paradoxically, they insisted on change because they had traditionalistic bias against it. They rationalized this change by justifying the need of Western 'practicality' to defend the core of Chinese 'substance' or 'essence'. Their argument has been very clearly explained by Joseph R. Levenson in the following words: "Uncompromising anti-Westernizers had an attitude of radical simplicity: the way to stay Chinese was to stay Chinese in all aspects of culture. But the cautious eclectics, protesting their perfect loyalty to the basic Chinese values, believed that immobility would be a self-defeating tactic and an impossible ideal. The only alternative to outright destruction of Chinese civilization by foreign conquerors was selective innovation by dedicated Chinese traditionalists. To justify their proposal in the special sense, to satisfy their will to believe that Chinese superiority was still

unchallenged, they emphasised that these areas of innovation from the West were areas of only practical value, not of essential value."⁷ Therefore it can be said that the faithful Concucian literati provided the theoretical and philosophical basis for the Self-strengthening Movement. However, the analysis and rationalization put forth by them were so framed as to give the impression that Western 'practicality' was serving the Chinese 'superiority of substance'. During this period, the borrowing was limited to the field of scientific and technological innovations, which were regarded by the Chinese traditionalists to be of practical value (not of essential value) and the Chinese superiority remained unchallenged.

The great statesman of Qing dynasty Zeng Guofan maintained that the Chinese philosophical factions were parts of the whole Confucian conception and he aimed at recapturing the whole through his lixue philosophy, which was nothing but a synthesis of all schools on the basis of broad eclecticism.⁸ This stand of Zeng Guofan resulted into an effort for revival of Confucianism.

7. Joseph R. Levenson, Confucian China and Its Modern Fate (A Trilogy), Vol. I, The Problem of Intellectual Continuity, 1968, p.59.

8. As Hellmut Wilhelm has pointed out in "The Background of Tseng Kuofan's Ideology", Asiatische Studien, Nos.3-4 (1949), 95-97; "Tseng protested that he reversed Sung Confucianism but did not wish the Han school to be eliminated, and he intended with his li conception to integrate society and reconcile former opponents.

It is important to note here that Confucianism itself was not challenged but was believed to be the absolute truth on which Chinese society was based. Only a need was felt to revive Confucianism with the time-needed adjustments but within the bounds of orthodoxy so that ideal Confucian value system could be reinforced to restore the Chinese 'essence'. This reiteration of Confucian infallibility was in conformity with the superiority of Chinese 'substance' or 'fundamentals' implied by the literati in the ti-yong dichotomy. In other words the literati were not only rationalizing the import of Western 'utility' to serve the Chinese 'fundamentals' but were also in the forefront of the campaign of revival of Confucianism as the ideology of the ruling class in the new situation. However, there were intellectuals like Wo-jen who were most inflexible anti-Westernizers.⁹ They were both unable and unwilling to reconcile Confucianism and indeed, the whole gamut of Chinese culture with borrowings from the Western culture. In their view, the Western culture was an alternative 'ti' to the traditional Chinese 'ti' (i.e., Western culture was not regarded as 'yong' to serve the Chinese 'ti'). These intellectuals, in a very straightforward manner, supported the continuity of Confucian social system without any attempt to find even superficial

9. Joseph R. Levenson, n.5, pp.70-72.

justification for turning to the West in the face of decreasing validity of Confucianism.

By late 19th century, the 'self-strengthening' had failed for various reasons. It became more and more apparent that drastic changes were needed for China. Another eminent intellectual, Kang Yuwei saw this clearly. He along with others of Jin-wen¹⁰ school undertook to realize the goal of 'ti-yong' school. But there was a basic difference. The Jin-wen school made no attempt to separate 'ti' from 'yong'. What they proposed was Westernization with honour by making the modern Western values an integral part of Chinese tradition and thus invigorating the Chinese tradition. They stated that the Chinese tradition not only should but did possess Western values, as can be found in authentic Confucianism.¹¹

Kang Yuwei, who was basically a Confucian scholar, had been exposed to Western history and institutions through translated works. In 1898, he based his reform theory on a synthesis of Confucian doctrine of three ages and Western institutions. In this theory, Kang advocated that in this new age, which he considered to be the age of approaching

10. The literal meaning of 'Jin-wen' was 'modern text' and the 'Jin-wen' school derived its name from Han 'Jin-wen'.

11. Joseph R. Levenson, n.5, pp.77-78.

peace, the practice of self-government and the introduction of a constitution were required.¹² Although he himself proposed moderate institutional reform, Liang Qi-chao, one of his main followers, advocated radical changes by expounding the theory of popular rights in the context of parliamentary government.

On the other hand, institutional reforms were strongly opposed by the conservatives. They defended Confucian tradition and believed that its moral teaching had rendered China superior to the West. They feared that the Confucian doctrine would be undermined by these institutional changes.

In due course, Kang Yu wei's reform failed and he himself along with Liang Qichao just managed to escape the wrath of Empress Dowager.

Meanwhile, the rudimentary idea of revolution was gathering force in China and among Chinese expatriates. The first revolutionary party of China was founded in 1894 by Sun Yat-sen (Sun Zhongshan). The goal of this new party was to expel the Qing (Manchu) monarchy and to establish a republican government. Though initially the response was small - mainly because the idea of revolution was still premature - but shocked by the way the Boxer Uprising (1900)

12. Chester C. Tan, Chinese Political Thought in the Twentieth Century, 1972, p.8.

was handled by the Manchu Government and shocked by the consequent foreign imposition of humiliating treaties, many Chinese intellectuals turned to look at revolution with more hopes. As a result, number of new revolutionary organizations and revolutionary magazines started flourishing.¹³

In the decade before the revolution of 1911, the revolutionaries became dedicated to the overthrow of Manchu dynasty and that was the objective that unified them despite their conflicting views on other issues.

Nationalism began to flourish in Chinese intellectual circles in early 20th century. It represented a bold attempt to sweep away the decadent institutions, that were left over in the name of Chinese traditions. In other words, the culturalism, as manifested by these decadent values, was denied. The intellectuals looked for an alternative culture outside China to reinvigorate their motherland (the cause of nationalism).

The denial of their own culture is closely linked with change in their world view or the importance of their own culture vis-a-vis the search for alternative cultures or

13. Among the revolutionary magazines published at this time were Su-bao (The Jiangsu Journal), Guo-min bao (The Citizen), Xin Hunan (New Hunan), Yu-xue-yi-bian (Foreign Students Translation Series), Hu bei xue-sheng Zhi (Hubei Students) Zhejiang Chao (Zhejiang Tides) etc.

even the consciousness of the existence of a world outside China. In this connection, it is interesting to see the change in conceptualizing China from tian-xia to guo.¹⁴

To the Confucian literati of 19th century and earlier, China was a world, a tian-xia, in which traditional values claimed authority. But in the early 20th century, there emerged a new generation of conscious intellectuals - conscious of the existence of an alternate culture (through the exposure to Western philosophical, political and literary works), conscious of the static nature of Chinese traditional values (through continued subservience to Confucian familial and social norms which were never to be questioned) and conscious of the ineffectiveness of these Confucianism oriented social and political (monarchical) norms which were highly inadequate in maintaining national honour and security in the face of Western onslaught. Thus they questioned their own culture and morality. What was it that they were lacking in comparison to the West to be subjected to such humiliations at their hand? They became aware that there existed a whole world outside China, a world with wide variety of ideas and institutions. They

14. The concepts of tian-xia and guo have been very clearly analysed by Joseph R. Levenson in his book Confucian China and its Modern Fate, Vol. I. The Problem of Intellectual Continuity, 1968, pp.98-104. In his words: "Tian-xia signifies 'the (Chinese) Empire' - alternatively, 'the world'; as tian-xia, China is world. And guo is a local political unit, a part of 'the Empire' in classical times and in the modern world, 'the nation'.

realised that China was not a tian-xia, but only a guo in the world of nations and to survive in this world China had to become strong.

These intellectuals traced the cause of China's inability to survive in this world or in other words China's backwardness, to the feudal legacy and subservience-oriented morality of Confucianism - a legacy that suited the monarchy. Thus, to modernize China, disenchantment from Confucianism, which had taken the form of a traditional cultural dogma, was regarded absolutely necessary. They argued that abandonment of traditional values, if they seemed to be indefensible, was a patriotic duty. Thus, it can be said that the cause of Chinese nationalism and the core of its content was intellectual alienation from traditional Chinese culture.

Virulent attack on traditional Confucian philosophy and institutions began with the publication of New Century in 1907, which based its arguments on Social Darwinist theories.¹⁵

The Manchu dynasty was overthrown in 1911 and a Republic was established under the provisional leadership of

15. Social Darwinist theory is the application of Darwin's theory of 'survival of the fittest' in social context and puts forward the concept of the survival of the fittest in human history. For detail discussion on Social Darwinist theory, see T. Ball, Marx and Darwin: A Reconsideration, 1979 and T. Carver, The Guiding Threads of Marx and Darwin, 1982.

Sun Yatsen. But by 1915, it became clear that the republic was a failure as Yuan Shi Kai, with the support of his military lieutenants, had himself elected as Emperor.. However, Yuan's ambitious plan was frustrated by an armed uprising of the revolutionary forces under the leadership of Sun Yatsen and when Yuan died in 1916, there followed a series of civil wars launched by Yuan's ambitious generals to gain dominance. It was against this background of struggle and chaos that the New Culture Movement unfolded.

The intellectual ferment of the day started shortly after the incident of Twenty-one Demands. Domestic political situation became very grave and indignation and anger were rife among the Chinese students in foreign countries. At a time like this, there came an warning from Hu Shi¹⁶ to keep cool. This warning, published in the form of an open letter¹⁷ to all Chinese students stirred up a furious debate on the question of what the Chinese students' attitude should be in the national crisis. It was this very controversy which was at the heart of the most of the activities of new intellectuals during May Fourth period. According to Hu Shi the solution of the Chinese problem was

16. Hu Shi was the most influential liberal scholar in modern China.

17. Hu Shi, "A Plea for Patriotic Sanity, an Open Letter to All Chinese Students", The Chinese Students' Monthly, X, 6 (March, 1915), pp. 425-26.

to build a new China "from the bottom up" on a foundation of education.¹⁸ This idea was later advocated and put into practice by Hu Shi and some other new intellectuals during the May Fourth Movement.

From the winter of 1915 to the summer of 1917, the whole country was disturbed by the efforts of the conservatives and reactionary bureaucrats - the efforts to revive monarchy and Confucianism. At this juncture, numerous young Chinese intellectuals returned from abroad and were desperately looking around to find some means of saving the nation. Chen Du xiu returned from Japan in 1915 and founded a magazine New Youth in Shanghai, that marked the beginning of a basic reform movement. Cai Yuanpei returned from France in 1916 and started an active campaign of reorganisation in Beijing University. Hu Shi also returned from USA and joined these new intellectual leaders in their effort of reform.¹⁹

Though attack on Confucianism can be traced back to the anti-traditionalism of New Century, a journal published in 1907, it was the New Culture Movement that launched the

18. Hu Shi, "Letter to Professor H.S. Williams", January 31, 1916, Diary XII, 843. These diaries were written by Hu while studying in USA. The second edition of these diaries had been published in Shanghai during 1947-48.

19. Chow Tsetsung, The May Fourth Movement, California, 1960, p.41.

most systematic criticism of Confucianism. A famous literary figure who contributed greatly to the New Culture Movement and to the overthrow of Confucianism was Lu Xun. He was one of the bitterest critics of Confucianism. Lu Xun wrote 26 short stories and many short commentaries attacking Confucianism and traditional values between 1918 and 1925.²⁰ As Vera Schwarcz rightly points out that among his contemporaries, Lu Xun ran the risk of injuring national sentiments most consciously by continuously attacking feudal mentality, what he called the old outworn culture, an accumulated weight of outworn habits of mind.²¹

The New Culture Movement challenged the long entrenched Chinese world view and looked towards the rest of the world with a thirst for knowledge and in search of an alternative culture. Through the journals New Youth (founded in 1915) and New Tide (founded in 1918), these enlightenment-oriented intellectuals tried to bring a vision of a new culture, a culture that totally denied all traditional scholar-official thoughts, language, convention etc.

20. The stories were collected by him into 2 volumes, titled Na-han (Cries), Beijing, 1923 and Pang-huang (Hesitation), Beijing 1926. Most of the short commentaries were reprinted in Re-feng (Hot Wind), Beijing, 1925, and Fen (The Grave), Beijing, 1927.

21. Vera Schwarcz, "A Curse on the Great Wall: The Problem of Enlightenment in Modern China", Theory and Society, 13 (1984), pp.455-70.

The New Culture Movement came to be known as the May Fourth Movement after the patriotic demonstration of May 4, 1919, led by students and teachers of National Beijing University. The doyens of the May Fourth Movement were Critical Intellectuals, who advocated "reasoned doubt of all inherited customs and beliefs".²² This critical rationality, was an instrument that could be used to break away from subservience, which had become a stifling enclosure around their existence. The social discontent that had been brewing in the feudal social system took the shape of critical rationality, a means to question the repressive feudal authority. Critical rationality, which was an outcome of the social and intellectual discontent of the day, has been best explained by Vera Schwarcz: "In the Chinese context, critical rationality became synonymous with 'intellectual emancipation' (sixiang jiefang) or to be more precise, with the means to liberate individual conscience from family and state loyalties".²³ These youthful iconoclasts, to whom critical rationality was a weapon, were deeply influenced by Western thinkers. They tried to subvert entrenched ceremonial respect and challenged

22. Wu Kang, "From Thought Reform to Social Reform", Xinchao (New Tide), October 1921 (Hong Kong, 1972), Vol.4, p.50.

23. Vera Schwarcz, n.21, p.458.

parental authority by taking up Nietzsche's call for "transvaluation of all values".²⁴ This was their pioneering attack on what they regarded as dogmatism - the feudal authority. However, they were attacked by the more conservative elements for turning to the West. Considering the fact that the nation was in the midst of a populist nationalist revolution, the attack was not at all surprising. These iconoclastic intellectuals became vulnerable to charges of being unpatriotic and of being against the people.

In the years after the May Fourth Movement, the discontent among the intellectuals, of which critical thought was a reflection, spread beyond the iconoclastic intellectuals. The social spillover of enlightenment was specially strong in urban areas and culminated in the founding of the Communist Party of China in 1921.

To the majority of New Culture Movement intellectuals, Communism became a logical solution for China's future. Both the international behaviour of the new Soviet State especially regarding the "unequal treaties" and the rights of China and the ascendancy of left intellectuals in the debates in China

24. Quoted from Hu Shi, "What is the Meaning of New Thought?" Xin Qingnian (New Youth), December 1919. In this article, Hu had used Nietzsche's slogan most pithily.

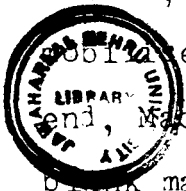
DISS
305.5520951
M6973 St

TH2741

constituted the main force behind this conscious choice.²⁵

However, as the Communist Movement gathered momentum, the original purpose of the New Culture Movement - enlightenment - which had motivated the intellectuals to look towards Communism for a final solution, did not last very long. The quest of enlightenment was gradually eclipsed as the Communist-led labour movement shifted its emphasis to anti-imperialist line. The urban revolutionary movement failed in 1927 and when the movement shifted into the countryside, the idea of enlightenment was further shelved. The Communist leaders were faced with the dilemma of Cosmopolitanism, a reflection of enlightenment, vis-a-vis Nationalism. The leadership realised that to carry forward the cause of revolution, it was imperative that the peasantry should be

TH-2741



organized and popular support should be won. Thus, to this end, Mao Zedong began to exalt the potential of the "poor and oppressed masses". As the idea of intellectual enlightenment was a less important priority than this effort of Mao, it was forgotten, at least for the time being. The Anti-Japanese War broke out in 1937, and Nationalism once again obscured the imperatives of anti-feudal enlightenment.

25. For detail discussion on the Chinese intellectuals' choice of Communism, see Chow Tse-tsung, The May Fourth Movement, California, 1960.

y. 48. 411 N8 1-2

Through almost three decades from the inception CPC in 1921 to the founding of People's Republic of China in 1949, the intellectuals served the cause of revolution with utmost loyalty and enthusiasm. However, intellectual dissent continued to exist even through these years. The year of 1942 saw another milestone in the intellectual history of China - Yanan Forum for Arts and Literature. In an extremely significant speech, Mao chalked out the outline of intellectual activity in future, giving a clear indication as to what was expected from the intellectuals. He emphasized that all phases of intellectual activity should be closely related to the masses²⁶ and should serve the cause of the party. This was the earliest signal from the leadership that in future intellectual pursuit should be in accordance with the party policies. For the first time probably, the intellectuals felt the existence of permissible parameters and unspoken limit.

Mao claimed that the intellectuals of CPC were communists only by organization, not by consciousness, thus accusing them to be lacking in class consciousness, when he said: "There are many Party members who have joined the Communist Party organizationally but have not yet joined the Party wholly or at all ideologically. Those who have

26. Mao Zedong, "Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature on Art", Selected works of Mao Zedong, Vol. III, pp.71, 75-79, 86.

not joined the Party ideologically still carry a great deal of the muck of the exploiting classes in their heads, and have no idea at all of what proletarian ideology, or communism, or the Party is."²⁷ The intellectuals understood that this accusation was an indirect rebuttal to the revolutionary writers for resisting the Rectification Movement launched by the Party, though it was veiled under the general terms of class consciousness.

On the question of the relation of art and politics, Mao rejected the contention of some of the writers that art be independent of politics. Mao maintained that any one who believed in such an approach to the question, would be using the Trotskyite formula "politics - Marxist, art - bourgeois".²⁸ He reiterated that art has to be subordinate to revolutionary task. Mao also spoke briefly about the content of literature. He insisted that literature's lone function was to extoll the masses and the party; exposing the dark spots of society through literature was non-essential.²⁹ This again indicated the limits to permissibility in the eyes of the Party and its leadership.

The overall tone of Mao's speech reflected his doubt of the intellectuals, though he accepted that the intellectuals

27. Ibid., p.94.

28. Ibid., p.86

29. Ibid., pp.70, 85, 88-93.

formed a vital organ of the Party in the cause of Revolution. However, the problems pointed out by Mao in this speech were the problems that could hamper the cause of revolution and revolution was the crucial need of the time. Therefore, Mao was justified in discussing these problems. The only thing that has been controversial and has been debated since Yanan Forum was whether the problems existed to such an intensity as to merit a disapproving tone towards the intellectuals. In other words, the question was whether Mao's speech was an indication of just his dissatisfaction of the performance of the intellectuals or whether it was the reflection of his absolute mistrust of the intellectuals which forced him to draw out a parameter within which he wanted the intellectuals to function. The question can be given a better evaluation only when the intellectual history of Mao's life-time has been fully taken into account and therefore will be dealt with later.

In the context of Mao's expectations from the intellectuals, it might be useful to see what role and social position the Marxism as a political philosophy postulates for the intellectuals. Though, Marx himself left no conclusive statement on this issue, he acknowledged that existence of mental labour was a manifestation of division of labour in the society. He also predicted that for true

communal life, the difference between mental labour and manual labour has to be abolished.³⁰ Marx and Engels were always worried that the labour movement might be misled by some half-baked, pretentious scholars, whom they referred to as the middle-class dabblers of socialism. As to the role and class origin of intellectuals, there were two dominant lines of opinion in the later Marxist thinker. On the one hand, there was Lenin, who maintained that apart from "trade union consciousness" of the workers, which can arise spontaneously in the working class, a political consciousness of the workers can only be developed by intellectuals. He said that since the intellectuals were well educated and informed and stand at a distance from the immediate production process, they are in a position to comprehend bourgeois society and its class relations in their totality.³¹ Thus, it is clear that Lenin saw intellectuals as a separate social group and assigned them the role of catalyst in the process of revolutionizing the working class.

30. See, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "The Division of Material and Mental Labour", Selected Works, Vol.I, p.52.

31. For a detail discussion see, Gyorgy Lukacs, History and Class Consciousness, 1923 (1971).

On the other hand, Gramsci, the Italian Marxist and the leading Marxist philosopher of the inter-war years had given much thought to the question of intellectuals. He distinguished between the 'traditional' intelligentsia of any country and the thinking group of each class produced 'organically' from its own rank.³² In other words, he maintained that working class will produce its own intellectuals. However, his definition of 'intellectuals' as such included all strata of directing and organizing personnel or all those who have 'an organizational function in the wide sense',³³ who he hoped would be the practical builders of the society.

In general, the Western Marxism has attached great importance to the intelligentsia. This is quite understandable, when the fact that in the Marxist tradition generally and in Western Marxism in particular the influence of ideas on history has always been emphasized.

When the Communists came to power in China in 1949, the immediate task that they faced was to set up a new government for whole of China. The CCP leadership needed trained intellectuals to fill important positions within the administration and to handle the increasingly complex duties facing the new regime. As a result the Party leadership was

32. Antonio Gramsci, The Modern Prince and Other Writings (1957), pp.118-20.

33. Antonio Gramsci, Selection from the Prison Notebooks 1925-35 (1971).

understandably not very keen on enforcing ideological control over China's intellectuals. This reluctance also contributed towards consolidation of the new Communist regime.

However, the idea of ideological education was not forgotten totally. Though no ideological control was enforced, in the general framework of the "Common Programme" presented in September 1949, the CPC declared that all intellectuals would be given political education in Marxist ideology. In the early months after the Liberation, the intellectuals were mobilized to participate in several campaigns, such as land reform and "Resist America - Aid Korea", though these campaigns did not effect them directly. Gradually, the Party's policy towards intellectuals became clear when it launched the campaign of "Uniting, Educating and Remoulding" the intellectuals. By the second half of 1950, the thought reform and ideological remoulding campaign had gathered momentum and were focused on the "liberalism" among the intellectuals. At the third conference of the National Committee of the CPPCC, in October 1951, Mao emphasized that thought reform was particularly for the intellectuals. In this speech, which was later published in Guang ming Ri bao, Mao declared that "Ideological remoulding, especially the ideological remoulding of all types of intellectuals, is one of the important conditions for

realizing industrialization and democratic reform".³⁴
Hence, a concentrated campaign of thought reform began in the summer of 1951 and by 1952 the thought reform drives were carried out against both the Communist and the non-Communist intellectuals. In a declaration of the CPPCC on June 6, 1952, it was clearly mentioned that ideological remoulding would be a regular phenomenon to be carried out once a year.

China's agricultural and industrial productions were restored and economy was stabilized by the end of 1952. The first Five Year Plan was officially launched at the beginning of 1953. As the plan progressed, it was apparent that inefficient and overambitious planning of individual enterprises was the major problem. As a result, the period of 1953 and the first half of 1954 was devoted to study and remedy defects evidenced in the first year of the Plan.

This was a period of exploration and preparation. During this time, CPC's policies towards the intellectuals were somewhat contradictory and exploratory in nature. The cadres of the academic realm were told to lighten the party's organizational controls and at the same time were

34. "Intellectuals and People of All Circles Should Persistently Reform Their Ideology", GMRB Editorial, July 1, 1952. Translation by the student.

urged to allow the intellectuals and scholars more freedom in using their individual talents. There was a combination of regimentation and relaxation. However the process of regimentation was carried out with much less pressure than the previous ideological remoulding campaigns and the Party tried to lessen the hold of the cadres over individual academic and artistic endeavours.³⁵ The Party now openly praised the intellectuals' achievement and enhanced their prestige by praising them as assets of the nation and the regime. A Ren-min Ri-bao editorial read "Some comrades fail to see the value of the old teachers to national construction because they take the ability to grasp Marxism-Leninism as the sole criterion on which to base their judgements... We should first see whether the old teachers are capable of working honestly and of knowing their work".³⁶ The Party not only showed its concern about the lack of enthusiasm among the intellectuals and the increasing tension between the intellectuals and the party cadres, but explicitly blamed the cadres for these problems and also for their hasty

35. Merle Goldman, Literary Dissent in Communist China, 1967, pp.106-07.

36. "Strengthen the Ideological Leadership Over Teachers of Institutions of Higher Education", Ren-min Ri-bao Editorial, December 22, 1953, Translation by the student.

actions.³⁷ Finally, a rectification drive against the cadres got underway and there followed a period of relaxation, when the intellectuals were urged to put forth their critical views on these problems.

Several non-orthodox views on intellectual activity emerged and were given public expression during this phase of relaxation. Two major demands were: (a) intellectual activity be permitted to break out of the narrow confines of politically dictated parameters and (b) more professional standard in creative art.³⁸ In his speech delivered to the Second National Congress of Writers and Artists in September 1953, Mao Dun gave voice to these demands when he urged the writers "to cast wide their nets in selecting themes and styles to satisfy the diversified needs of the people" and said "After liberation many literary workers took up administrative duties in the government and other organs;

37. Several communications were issued by the Party to the cadres of various educational institutions regarding this problem. One such communication commented: "Some Party cadres do too much in too short a time and one pre-occupied with the grandiose. The number of students and teachers who support them is very small". Published as "Measured Advance in the Promotion of Pedagogical Reform in Higher Engineering Schools," Ren-min Ri-bao Editorial August 16, 1953.

38. For detail discussion on these demands, see Merle Goldman, Literary Dissent in Communist China, 1967, pp.111-13.

this weakened their creative efforts".³⁹ This new emphasis not only came from intellectuals, but also from the top leaders as well.

In the latter half of 1964, CPC reverted back to tightening up, when the combination of conciliatory and regimentation approach failed to produce any result or at least not the result the Party wanted. The most significant reason can be traced to the Party's economic plans at this time. As the Party was completing plans for a nationwide collectivization and industrialization programme, the leadership realised that the whole population and in particular the intellectuals had to be prepared for these great changes. Because, it was with the ability and technical know-how of the intellectuals, that these changes could be implemented. Since these plans were vitally important according to the leadership, nothing could be allowed to compromise these changes. Therefore, full cooperation and participation of the intellectuals had to be secured.

The other factor was the lack of desired result out of the relaxation. The relaxation was probably meant to

39. Mao Dun, "New Realities and New Tasks", speech delivered at Second All-China Conference of Writers, NCNA (September 26, 1953); in SCMP, No.658:18. This speech was also published with the same title in Ren-min Ri-bao of October 10, 1953 and can be found in CB, No.282:4.

conciliate the intellectuals, so that they would be more willing to serve the Party. But when the intellectuals started talking in terms of "narrow confines of politically dictated parameters" and "more professionalism and less ideology", the leadership realised that the intellectuals were definitely not ready to accept this conciliatory approach at the cost of intellectual professionalism. In other words, the criticism had gone far beyond the parameters "permissible" to the party and had entered the "off-limit" zone, where the Party demanded a total acceptance of its policies without any dissent. Thus by the close of 1954, the Party had already set in motion widespread ideological remoulding campaigns, which continued through 1955 under different names.

During the course of collectivization and industrialization, the CPC leadership encountered some grave economic problems, such as irrational planning, dislocation, shortage and wastage. Consequently, the leadership decided to put more trust in technical advise and professional skills. However, because of previous ideological remoulding campaigns and unprecedented ferocity of Hu Feng campaign, a large section of China's intellectuals was totally demoralized by the end of 1955. Therefore, when the party shifted its approach once again to relaxation in early 1956, it was confronted with a passive intellectual community.

A report of Zhou Enlai to the CC on January 14, 1956 marked the beginning of Hundred Flowers Movement which was a result of the Party's approach of relaxation. He claimed, since the majority of the intellectuals have been ideologically transformed, they were ready for responsible posts and must be given authority and respect. Zhou called for respect for intellectuals, value for their professional research and improved work facilities and greater monetary benefits. Though he still felt the need for ideological remoulding but maintained that erroneous intellectual views should be reformed with less violent methods. Around the same time, many articles were published in Ren-min Ri-bao criticizing the interference of cadres in areas, in which they had no expertise. One such article said "There is no denying that some Party members still do not fully comprehend the Party's policy toward the intellectuals and do not understand the part played by the intellectuals in national construction... Some party members do not trust technical persons".⁴⁰

However, the intellectual community remained reluctant for the first few months of 1956. It was only after Mao's speech on May 2, 1956, in which he introduced the slogans of

40. An Zhao zun, "Make Better Use of Technical Persons", Ren-min Ri-bao (January 12, 1956); in Current Broadcast No.379:1.

"Let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thought contend", that the party's new policies regarding the intellectuals were implemented. As in the earlier relaxation of 1953, the intellectuals were encouraged to express different ideas and the party sought to establish a genuine, free exchange of ideas in the academic realm. Lu Ding yi in his subsequent explanation of Mao's speech, insisted on the right of the intellectuals to maintain independent ideas and individual opinions and unity was to be achieved through voluntary agreement instead of pressure.⁴¹

Finally in the second half of 1956, the 'blooming' and 'contending' started. Many were affected by the intellectual ferment going on in literary circles in the Soviet Union. Criticisms put forth by the intellectuals in the summer and fall of 1956 were fundamental to the very nature of party control over intellectual activity. Dogmatism of the party cadres was attacked and they were held responsible for the stagnation in the intellectual work. The centre of the fierce debate was implementation of socialism and it hit directly at the party's overall policies. In an article published in Ren-min Wen-xue

41. Lu Ding Yi's revised speech was published in Ren-min Ri-bao on June 13, 1956.

Huang Qiuyun, an old leftist writer very categorically stated: "Nobody knows whether or not we will have any grief or tears twelve years from now, but at least at present, this kind of 'heaven' is only an illusion.

...No one can deny that in our country at present, there are still floods and droughts, still famine and unemployment, still infectious diseases and the oppression of bureaucracy plus other unpleasant and unjustifiable phenomena... If a writer does not have the courage to reveal the dark diseases of society... then can he be called a writer?"⁴² Eminent scholars in the field of art and letters started debates on such controversial topics as materialism versus idealism, the question of aesthetics, realism in art and literature, bureaucratic control etc.⁴³

The Hundred Flowers Movement had gathered a tremendous momentum, which went on till mid-1957. Then suddenly in June, 1957, the party turned from relaxation to tightening of control. In attempting to enlarge the role of the intellectuals, the party had opened the way for demands and

42. Huang Qiuyun, "We must not close our eyes to the hardships of the people" Ren-min wen-xue, No.9:58(1956).

43. Guang-ming ri-bao, January 29, February 9, 1957: in NCNA, March 26, 1957.

questions, that challenged the competence of the party itself. The leadership had hoped that the recognition of difference of opinion would enhance the unity of the country. But, since free discussion and criticism could not be confined, the flood of criticism went far beyond the permitted limits and did not in any way enhance unity.

The reversal of party's policy was indicated in the editorial of Ren-min Ri-pao on June 9, 1957, which called for the criticism as well as counter-criticism. Consequently, in the second week of June, a campaign against the leading intellectuals were set in motion with unexpected speed and intensity. The intellectuals who had criticized were labelled 'rightists' and the drive was called the Anti-Rightist Campaign. As the movement progressed, sweeping attacks were directed against those who had been out-spokenly critical. The first to be attacked were the older leaders of non-Communist intellectuals. However, it was the Communist intellectuals, like Hu Feng, who were criticized through endless public denunciations.

By late 1957, the cycle in the intellectual field had done the full circle returning to the strict rigidity of 1955. Of all the segments of the population, the intellectuals were now regarded as the most untrustworthy, being compared to the poisonous weeds, that need to be pulled out

mercilessly.⁴⁴ Among the intellectuals, most suspect were the writers who were regarded as arrogant and full of self-importance.⁴⁵

As before, ideological remoulding and political indoctrination sessions were carried out all over the country, but in 1958, the main method of reform was through learning from workers and peasants. The intellectuals were sent to the lowest echelons of the party in the countryside and factories for labour reform. The party concluded that these measures would help to transform the rightist intellectuals into intellectuals of the working class. This becomes clear from the following statement of Zhou Yang: "Our ultimate goal... is to obliterate the boundary between mental labour and physical labour so that everyone has culture and at the same time is a physical as well as mental labourer".⁴⁶

The abrupt reversal in policy from Hundred Flowers Movement to Anti-Rightist campaign can be broadly attributed to three factors:⁴⁷ (a) Within the context of the then prevailing policies of relaxation the intellectuals had in all

44. Ren-min Ri-bao editorial, July 12, 1957.

45. "Party Directive on Rectification Campaign", NCNA (April 30, 1957); in SCMP, No.1523:41.

46. "Refutation of the Preposterous Idea of Party Empire", Xin Jian-she, No.1, January 1958.

47. For detail discussion see, Merle Goldman, n.35, pp.203-04.

probability taken positions which were presumably unacceptable to the party. The demands raised by the intellectuals constituted a challenge to the competence of the party. If their demands were given serious consideration or were given serious consideration or were met, it would have shaken the credibility and political control of CCP.

(b) China's continuing economic difficulties was another reason. One of the explanations of these difficulties was given as the negative effect of criticism, which had weakened the zeal and enthusiasm of economic construction.

(c) The third important factor was the uprisings of Hungary and Poland. The leadership was afraid that if allowed further growth, the Hundred Flowers Movement might follow the same path as Hungarian and Polish uprisings. Moreover, they were anxious to minimize China's ideological difference with the rest of the Communist block and was concerned about maintaining solidarity.

The intellectuals were despatched to factories and villages for labour reform during the years of Great Leap Forward (1958-60) which aimed at rapid advances in industry and agriculture and is best known for the introduction of communes. The emphasis was on political reliability rather than professional skill. The slogan advanced at this time was "Red and expert" meaning whoever was 'expert' should also

have their politics right, i.e., become 'red'. However, the implementation of this slogan became totally wrong and expertise was downgraded as all experts were considered to be lacking the element of 'red'.

The party claimed that the peasants and workers were capable of great achievements. In contrast, as the intellectuals were imbued with middle class concepts of individualism, liberalism and anarchism, they are bound to fail. The slogan was so much twisted that intelligence was defined as political consciousness. Thus, the peasants and workers, who were politically conscious proletariat, were praised as scientists, philosophers and poets. As various articles explained, the party wanted "to eliminate the concept of private ownership of knowledge"⁴⁸ by placing knowledge in the hands of masses. The intellectuals and experts were directed "to mingle with the masses and learn from them."⁴⁹

A thorough downgradation of knowledge took place during this period, when professional expertise was slighted. Even the highly specialized scientists and technicians were told to learn from the ordinary peasants and workers, who

48. Quoted from "The Road of Development of Our Country's Scientific and Technical Work," Hong-qi, No.9 (October 1, 1958) in ECMM, No.154:12.

49. Ibid.

had suddenly gained dominance in the world of knowledge and expertise only by their virtue of 'redness'.

With the failure of the Great Leap Forward and continued worsening of economy, the party bureaucracy, intellectuals and technocrats became gradually disillusioned with Mao's policies. Peng De huai, the head of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) criticised the Great Leap Forward at a party meeting in Lushan in July 1959, for which he was dismissed from his post in August, 1959. The party leadership was very anxious about the economic condition of the country and in a sense of urgency, sought to revive the economy. Among other means, the party bureaucracy also made effort to reenergize the intellectuals, who had been demoralized by the downgradation of knowledge and expertise during the Great Leap Forward period. Thus, the party initiated a period of relaxation in order to gain the much needed cooperation of the intellectuals to help solve the economic difficulties and to replace the Soviet experts withdrawn in 1960 at the wake of the Sino-Soviet rift.

As happened in previous periods of relaxation, groups of relatively liberal intellectuals used this relaxation to engage in intellectual discussions in the first half of 1960s. Their discussions were in reality, veiled political debates. But, despite these critical debates, no organized campaigns was carried out against them for some time to come.

As the economy gradually improved, Mao reasserted himself again ⁱⁿ policy matters, though he had withdrawn from day-to-day political activity of the party. In agriculture, he sought to halt the trend toward "capitalism", indicating material incentives and private ownership of plots. In culture, he sought to reverse the trend towards "revisionism" and emergence of intellectual elite as a by-product of the party's effort to rehabilitate the economy. Thus in 1963, the Socialist Education Movement was launched to curb the ideological erosion. Though, Mao had called for major rectification of the cultural and intellectual realm, the implementation was very superficial till the early months of 1964. As the cultural officials were side stepping or ignoring his orders, Mao issued a more emphatic directive on June 27, 1964, in which he accused the cultural officials of having "slid right down to the brink of revisionism" and thus needed to "remould themselves in real earnest".⁵⁰

Finally in the summer of 1964, a rectification campaign was launched in the cultural and intellectual realm. Though, this was a direct effort on the party's part to tighten control, however, the cultural officials of the Party diverged from Mao's opinion on the question of

50. "Instructions Concerning Literature and Art", Long Live Mao Zedong Thought: Current Background, No. 891 p.41.

how to reimpose a tight control. Thus, this rectification campaign was somewhat different from such previous campaigns in being less direct and less thorough and in taking a more tolerant attitude towards the victims. One of the reasons was probably that the officials of the Propaganda Department were doubtful of Mao's policies. They also might have been afraid that a full-scale campaign might get out of control.

The rectification drive continued till spring of 1965. Through out its course, the army carried it out in a fashion that was more in line with the ideological revitalization called for by Mao. The various cultural groups of the army continuously stressed class struggle as the key to transforming Chinese opera, music, dance and other cultural activities. However, in general, the rectification campaign did not at all take the road Mao wanted it to take and did not become a major mass movement. In the sciences, as well as in the arts and humanities, Mao's views were disregarded. The magazine Chinese Youth even published a series of articles, one of which implied that the youth should become 'expert' with or without being 'red' by saying "Some bourgeois technical experts whose world outlook has not been remoulded can still serve socialism under proletarian leadership. Had they spent too much time

on Marxism-Leninism, their expertness surely would have suffered".⁵¹

Understandably, Mao was very dissatisfied at this superficial implementation of rectification campaign. Consequently, at the face of outright opposition from the cultural and political bureaucrats, in the fall of 1965 Mao decided to launch the cultural revolution. With a resolution of the CC of the CPC in August, 1966, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was formally launched.

Towards the end of 1965, Wu Han was criticized by Yao Wen yuan in an article⁵² published in Wen-hui Bao, a newspaper based in Shanghai. The article accused Wu Han of having written his play "The Dismissal of Hai Rui from office"⁵³ in order to criticize Mao's dismissal of Peng De-huai, alegorically. This attack on Wu Han, which can be regarded as the starting point of Cultural Revolution, resulted into a public debate, in which the army organs criticized Wu and Beijing newspapers implicitly defended

51. Tian Heshui, "When One Cannot be Both Red and Expert", Zhong-guo Qing-nian Bao, December 26, 1964, in Current Background No.757, p.6.

52. This article was published in Wenhui Bao on November 10, 1965.

53. "The Dismissal of Hai Rui from Office" was first published in 1961.

him. More and more liberal intellectuals spoke out in favour of Wu Han, camouflaging their defense with academic debate and historical allusion. But finally Wu Han was forced to write a self criticism and the only error that he admitted was the bourgeois academic one of portraying "an ancient event for its own sake" instead of admitting "making modern use of ancient events".⁵⁴

Though the debate over Wu Han went on for over three months, the intellectuals in general maintained a steady support of Wu Han. Even Zhou Yang and his associates sought to limit the discussion of Wu Han's play to an academic level. In the wake of the Wu Han episode, several other literary intellectuals, such as Tian Han, Xia Yan, Shao Quanliu, were also criticized.

The next phase of the Cultural Revolution started with the presentation of a report at a forum of literature and art, convened in Shanghai on February 2, 1966.⁵⁵ This report initiated an all-out attack against the May Fourth intellectuals for their Westernized cultural legacy. The report viewed May Fourth intellectuals to be the representatives of an elite section, divorced from the masses.

54. Wu Han, "Self-Criticism on Dismissal of Hai Rui", Ren-min Ri-bao, December 30, 1965; in Current Background, No.783, pp.31, 48.

55. "Minutes of the Forum on Literature and Art in the Armed Forces" convened by Jiang Qing, February 2-20, 1966, in SCMP, No.3956, p.11.

However, ironically Lu Xun, a doyan of the May Fourth Movement, was lauded in the forum report for his "militant leftwing literature".

Although repudiation of Western culture set the general tone of this phase, Russian intellectuals, specially the writers and poets were also denounced with extreme vehemence. In the words of Merle Goldman "Most of Europe's great nineteenth century writers - Balzaek, Zola, Gogol, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Chekaov and Tolstoy - were denounced because of the profound effect of their critical realism and Western humanism on the May Fourth intellectuals, ...They were accused of "glorifying" love, individualism, and alienation - values opposed to the spirit of self-sacrifice, collectivism, and ideological commitment which the revolution sought to instill".⁵⁶

Attack on foreign culture and thought finally took the shape of violent dogmatic display of nationalism and Chinese-Communist self-sufficiency. The degree of dogmatism was almost equivalent to that of late 19th century. In fact, Mao had even used the 'ti-yong' dichotomy of China's 19th century literati reformers by rephrasing it thus: "We cannot adopt Western learning as a substance, nor can we use the

56. Merle Goldman, China's Intellectuals: Advise and Dissent, 1981, p.126.

substance of democratic republic. We cannot use the 'natural rights of man', nor the 'theory of evolution'. We can use only Western technology".⁵⁷

The attack on May Fourth intellectuals for their Westernized cultural legacy gradually engulfed the whole intellectual community. A reign of terror spread through China in the spring of 1966 as all intellectuals were fiercely persecuted for the very crime of being intellectuals and pursuing intellectual activity, no matter what their beliefs were. The most abused victims of the movement were the liberal intellectuals. Eminent intellectuals, such as Deng Tuo, Wu Han, Tian Han, Shao Quan-lin, were either tortured or persecuted to death, while their political patrons, such as Peng Zhen, Lu Dingyi, Zhou Yang etc. were forced to endure extreme public humiliations at meetings convened against them.

With the ruthless purge of the liberal intellectuals, a new group called the Cultural Revolution Group, assumed direction of China's cultural life. After the removal of the bureaucratic leaders in the winter of 1966-67, the Cultural Revolution Group, along with Lin Biao purged the intellectuals on an increasingly massive and turbulent scale,

57. Stuart Schram, ed., Chairman Mao Talks to the People: Talks and Letters, 1956-1971, New York 1974, p.235.

for their imagined crimes. Virtually all academic and scientific journals stopped publication and all universities, libraries and museums were closed. The predominant culture that emerged in and continued through the Cultural Revolution was Jiang Qing's model revolutionary works.

Finally, radical intellectuals became the scapegoat of the Cultural Revolution, which was a brainchild of Mao and of which he could not foresee the consequences. Though, Cultural Revolution was officially called off in 1969, void in intellectual life continued through the Gang of Four regime. The education system was destroyed and a whole generation of youth lost their chance of formal educational training. Intellectuals, in fear of labelling, harassment, persecutions and humiliations remained mute and intellectual activity came almost to a standstill.

The intellectual history of Communist China till the end of GPCR has been made up of many cycles of relaxation and control - relaxation in the hope of conciliating the intellectuals or in the hope of ensuring their cooperation for the cause of national construction and control after the intellectuals have dared to enter the "off-limit" zone during a previous phase of relaxation. The concept of this "off-limit" zone has all along remained controversial. According to the intellectuals, no "off-limit" zone should exist in a socialist system when the intellectuals

themselves are also supporting the system or contributing to the ideology, of which the socialist system is the manifestation. They are only trying to carry forward the cause of socialism by raising certain fundamental questions, because these questions need to be answered. On the other hand, according to the leadership these fundamental questions are only meant to undermine the authority of the party, which is firmly adhering to the socialist path. In other words, from the point of view of the leadership, the intellectuals have been prone to raise questions about the leadership role of the Party thereby questioning the entire socialist rubric.

However, on the other hand it is also true that the Party leadership has been to a certain extent ambivalent about the role of intellectuals. This ambivalence resulted into equally uncertain and forever changing policies towards the intellectuals. The cycles of relaxation and control are but a manifestation of this ambivalence and uncertainty of the leadership.

During the GPCR, there was intellectual disorder of a kind in China. The universities and research institutions closed down and there were no academic debates. No developing state, a large and ambitious one like China much less so, can afford such a colossal loss and waste.

For reasons of development alone if for none other, the ideological zeal and aggressive dogmatism of the Cultural Revolution and the treatment meted out to the intellectuals during this phase, are unlikely to be repeated by the leadership in China for at least a very very long time to come.

Chapter IIITHE STATUS AND ROLE OF INTELLECTUALS IN
POST-MAO CHINA

The oscillation between relaxation and control, a manifestation of ambivalence of the leadership towards the intellectuals, persisted in the post-Mao years. The shift away from the control which marked the Cultural Revolution years and ^{to} the relaxation became apparent in 1977, when the Party itself revived the ideal of intellectual emancipation, on the occasion of the thirty-fifth anniversary of the Yanan forum on art and literature.¹ The new goal was emancipation for the sake of modernization. The change in approach to intellectuals explicitly spelled out in Deng Xiaoping's speech to the National Science Conference in 1978, which called for political and social rehabilitation of "mental labourers" through a series of concrete measures. Deng also pointed out that the great majority of the intellectuals "have become a part of the working class itself... Those who engage in physical labour and those who engage in mental labour are all labourers of the socialist society".² Deng was seeking

-
1. A detail discussion of the thirty-fifth anniversary of the Yanan Forum and its impact on post-Mao intellectual reform has been given by Liang Heng and Judy Shapiro in Intellectual Freedom in China after Mao - With a Focus on 1983, New York, 1984.
 2. Quoted in Luo Fu, "China's Intellectuals - Part of the Working Classes", Beijing Review, March 31, 1980, p.23.

to make the intellectuals more efficient producers in the drive for modernization.

The Democracy Wall Movement, that had come to life spontaneously after Mao's death, continued till spring and was led by a new generation of critical Marxists of 1979. The Democracy Wall, located in Beijing, was a wall that originally served as a screen for a parking lot for buses. This wall came to be used for putting up posters during the phase of Democracy Movement and thus came to be known as Democracy Wall. Henceforth, the movement has frequently been referred as the Democracy Wall Movement. According to Vera Schwarcz, this was the most recent re-emergence of the enlightenment movement of the May Fourth intellectuals.³ During its initial phase, the Democracy Wall Movement was encouraged by the leadership, as it was in conformity with the government's own propaganda effort against the Gang of Four and the Party's effort to revive intellectual emancipation. In the summer of 1978, the Chinese newspapers carried a series of articles hinting at the "dogmatism of the Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong thought" that prevailed during the Cultural Revolution years and the Gang of Four regime and called for an "enlightenment movement" in China to deal with the problem of superstitious belief. A typical article

3. Vera Schwarcz, "A Curse on the Great Wall: The Problem of Enlightenment in Modern China", Theory and Society 13 (1984), p.457.

of the time read in parts: "They borrowed the name of Marxism so they could enchain the population to their own cause. The material damage caused by the Gang of Four, although considerable, can be estimated, measured. The spiritual damage is beyond calculation. Therefore, we need a new enlightenment movement that would reinvigorate our philosophical theory".⁴ Thus, scientific rationality, which was necessary to uproot superstitious Marxism, was also declared a necessary precondition for the modernization plan. However, when the posters appearing on the Democracy Wall in Beijing insisted that the problem of dogmatism still existed in China, the criticism went beyond the unspoken limit sanctioned by the government. A series of posters in spring of 1979 also criticized the insufficiency of the government's four modernization programme and called for a "fifth modernization": democracy, to draw attention to the human rights problem in China.

The leadership, once again, reverted back to control. Wei Jingshen, the author of the fifth modernization was arrested and was subsequently condemned to fifteen years of jain sentence.⁵ By the winter of 1979, the Chinese constitution was amended to take out the right to put up wall posters

4. "The Enlightenment of Philosophy and Philosophical Enlightenment", Ren-min Ri-bao, July 22, 1978, Translation from Vera Schwarcz, n.3.

5. Information taken from, Vera Schwarcz, n.3.

and in spring of 1980, Democracy Wall itself was outlawed and dismantled.

Though, the unofficial dissent of the Democracy Wall Movement was crushed, the policy to revive intellectual emancipation continued. On the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the May Fourth Movement, in 1979, the recently rehabilitated literary figure Zhou Yang argued in his May 5th article that intellectual freedom has always been a central goal of party policy and implied that the present reforms were the natural result of this tradition. He wrote "The party's consistent policy (from 1921 to the present) has been intellectual emancipation. This is what Chairman Mao called 'setting free' (fang). 'Setting free' means nothing less than letting people speak their mind, voice their opinions. Unfortunately, in recent years, instead of fang we have had shou (closing off). We need the former and must fight tendencies to revert to the latter".⁶ This notion of speaking one's own mind was, however, limited to knowledge in limited fields of expertise. Meanwhile, semi-official dissent continued and the methods of protest used were borrowed from the traditional and indirect Confucian practices that had been developed by the literati

6. Zhou Yang, "Sanci weida de sixiang jiefang yundong" (Three great movements for intellectual emancipation), Guang-ming Ri-bao, May 5, 1979, pp. 1, 3.

over the centuries. Many of these dissenters were well-known intellectuals and expressed their views in the official press. Therefore, they had to camouflage their criticisms and political views in analogies and allusions. Merle Goldman in her article "Human Rights in People's Republic of China" has given a detailed discussion on the semi-official dissent of this period, in which specific examples of such indirect criticisms have been sighted.⁷

Finally, when the semi-official dissent went beyond the criticism of the Cultural Revolution and bureaucracy to criticize the system itself, the control was tightened again. A number of writers were attacked for their "expose" works. Bai Hua was the first to be blamed for his work Unrequited Love of being harmful to socialism. However, the tightening up was different from others in being not accompanied by large-scale campaigns as before. This time, only a particular work of a writer was condemned and did not preclude praise of his other works. The Bai Hua case was concluded in December 1981 and subsequently the limit of criticism was spelled out: the bureaucratic defects could be criticized, but not the system itself.⁸

7. Merle Goldman, "Human Rights in the People's Republic of China", Daedalus, 112(4), Fall, 1983; pp.126-24.

8. Hu Qiaomu set the limits of criticism. See Beijing Review, June 7, 1982, p.20.

The next landmark was the birth centenary of Marx in 1983. On this occasion, Zhou Yang went one step further from 1979 and explored deeper into neglected themes like alienation. He linked the theme of the emancipation of intellectuals to ideological emancipation and by doing so overstepped the boundary. Because, the demand of intellectual emancipation was accepted by the leadership as a part of the reform programme, but any talk of ideological emancipation was viewed by the leadership as a direct criticism of the Party and the socialist cause. There followed an "anti-spiritual pollution" campaign after the Marx centennial. Zhou Yang was one of the prime targets.⁹

Though Zhou Yang's stand between 1979 and 1983 had received strong public support the writers had some cause of worry because of the anti-Bai Hua campaign of 1981 and anti-spiritual pollution campaign of 1983. However, when they gathered again in the Writer's Conference in the winter of 1984-85, they reiterated their resolve not to go back to dogmatism of earlier years. This conference which was planned by ultra-leftists, saw the victory of supporters of reform.¹⁰ What was unusual about this conference was

9. Vera Schwarcz, "Behind a Partially-Open Door: Chinese Intellectuals and the Post-Mao Reform Process", Pacific Affairs 59(4); Winter 1986-87; p.581.

10. This conference has been discussed at length in Liang Heng and Judy Shapiro, n.1, p.46.

that the delegates voted their own rather than the party's choice for the official posts and thus a democratic process was begun. This conference also ratified a new constitution for the Chinese Writers' Association. Of course, the constitution was presented by the leadership. But just like the vote for the official posts, the provisions of the constitution were debated and revised before being adopted.¹¹

The Fourth Writers' Conference sparked off a barrage of demands from other intellectual quarters. There were calls in the press and at academic forums for freedom of academic research, publication and comment.¹² These demands became very loud in the early months of 1985. The first indication that the limit has been crossed came from Hu Yaobang's speech at an inner-Party meeting of the Secretariat held in February, 1985.¹³ He stated very clearly that there could be no freedom of the press and the press must be "the mouth-piece of the Party". He also laid down a set of rules as to the kind of coverage to be done by the journalists. In the same speech, he explained the necessity of anti-spiritual pollution campaigns. Although he recommended that

11. See Merle Goldman, "The Zigs and Zags in the Treatment of Intellectuals," The China Quarterly (104), December 1985, pp.710, 711.

12. Ibid., p.712.

13. Hu Yaobang, "On the Party's Journalism Work", a speech given on February 8, 1985 and was published in Ren-min Ri bao, April 14, 1985.

term to "eliminate" spiritual pollution not be used, he maintained "this certainly does not mean that there is anything wrong with the principle of opposing spiritual pollution and still less does it mean we need not resist or oppose... erosion caused by decadent and moribund exploiting class ideas... to abstain from bludgeoning also does not mean to abstain from criticizing or punishing those who should be criticized and punished".¹⁴

Hu Jiwei, who was associated with the pro-reform political leadership, responded to Hu Yaobang's speech in "Special Commentary"¹⁵ in the first issue of a new journal Xin wen xue kan (Journalist Bulletin). Hu Jiwei was unwilling to accept that journalism should speak with one voice and pointed out that such practices would produce disasters, as happened in the case of Great Leap Forward. He also wrote that journalism is a "branch of learning" and thus, should be allowed "the freedom" granted in case of academic subjects.

There were contradictory signals from the Party in the spring and summer of 1985. On one hand, there was

14. Quoted from the translation of the speech published in FBIS, April 15, 1985.

15. This commentary was reprinted in Renmin Ribao (overseas edition), August 4, 1985, p.2. Translation, FBIS, August 7, 1985.

increasing stress on ideological discipline. On the other hand, there were articles published which were much more liberal and tolerant. In one such article, while talking about "contradiction" in society, Hu Qiao mu, a comparatively conservative political leader, wrote "All these questions in reality have gone beyond the framework forecast by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin". He also added that "the individual may play a positive role in society (and even in Socialist society)."¹⁶

It was against this background that Fang Lizhi, Liu Binyan and Wang Ruowang emerged on the political stage. Though as early as 1981, Fang Lizhi an astrophysicist, had criticized Deng's science policy,¹⁷ it was in his speech to electronics students at Beijing University on November 4, 1985, Fang called for "struggle to bring about a better intellectual environment".¹⁸ He had put forward his now notorious doctrine that "democracy is something to be struggled for, not conferred from above".¹⁹ He also complained that the intellectuals themselves were responsible

16. Guangming Ribao, April 13, 1985, p.1. Translation from Merle Goldman, n.11.

17. "Kexue yu jishu de guanxi" (The Relationship Between Science and Technology), Guangming Ribao, April 10, 1981; China News Analysis, no.1209 (June 19, 1981), p.6.

18. See Fang Lizhi, "The Duties of Young Intellectuals in Our Time", trans. in Inside China Mainland, December 1986, pp.8-11.

19. Ibid.

to a great extent for the status quo as they did not fully utilise the considerable freedom of speech granted to them.

The same kind of message was delivered by Liu Binyan and Wang Ruo-wang almost at the same time. In his article titled "The Second Kind of Loyalty",²⁰ Liu Binyan put forth the concept of three kinds of loyalty and favoured the second kind of loyalty which was characteristic of those who try to serve as the Party's moral conscience. Wang Ruo-wang played essentially a role of such a critic, by being outspoken in his criticisms. However, it is believed by some experts that though Liu and Wang both were critical of the present policies of the Party, they were not opposed to the continued existence of the Party. This in turn justifies their claim of serving as the Party's moral conscience.

A new wave of intellectual dissent started in March 1986, during which not only the ultra-liberal newspapers such as Shijie Jinqi Daobao and journals, but also the mainstream organs, such as Ren min Ribao, Guangming Ribao and even at times Hongqi supported the ultra-reformers active in this dissent.²¹ In an article entitled

20. Liu Bin Yan, "Dierzhong Zhongcheng" (The Second Kind of Loyalty), Kaituo, March 1985; reprinted in Lin Binyan Chuanqi (The Legend of Lin Binyan), Taipei, 1987, pp.45-94.

21. See David A.Kelly, "The Chinese Student Movement of December 1986 and Its Intellectual Antecedents", The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs, No.17, January 1987, p.135.

"Breakthroughs" in the study of Marxism²² published in the Renmin Ribao on March 14, 1986, Deng Weizhi supported the view that had come to surface from time to time since Deng Xiaoping's proclamation of "Four Cardinal principles"²³ in 1979, that development of Marxism was often achieved by breaking away from such "cardinal principles" and outdated Marxist conclusions. Publication of this article unleashed a violent debate in which prominent intellectuals and political leaders engaged in criticisms and counter-criticisms. This debate continued into the fall and winter of 1986.

The Sixth Plenum of the Twelfth Party Central Committee was held in September 1986. It is believed that the plenum acted as a watershed. It was during this time, an article in Hongqi hinted that this new surge of free-thinking was creating turbulence and was endangering the leadership's reformist policy of 'tolerance and harmony'.²⁴ Following this, the interpretation of freedom soon became an issue. Various interpretations of freedom were put forward in newspapers and journals both in philosophical sense and in sociopolitical sense. The overall effect of this intellectual campaign stimulated the students to

22. "Makesizhuyi yanjiu zhong de 'tupo'", Renmin Ribao, March 14, 1986, p.1.

23. The "Four Cardinal Principles" are: (1) The Socialist Path, (2) Leadership of the Party, (3) Marxism-Leninism Mao Zedong thought, and (4) Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

24. Wu Jianguo, "Guanyu ziyou wenti de 'fanshi'" (Reflections on the Question of Freedom), Hongqi, No.17, September 1, 1986, pp.32-38.

to reflect more on the contemporary society. This in turn acted as a catalyst of the students' demonstration.

Finally in December, 1986, university students came out on the streets in almost a dozen of major Chinese cities, demonstrating for improvements in democracy and other political freedoms. As before, the leadership decided to tighten the control in January 1987, after the students had overstepped the boundary. Fang Lizhi, Liu Binyan and Wang Ruowang were expelled from the Party by a public proclamation of the Party Central Committee, which charged them with instigating the students' demonstration and spreading 'bourgeois liberalisation', an extremely serious political offence.²⁵ However, quite interestingly, Fang Lizhi was given permission subsequently to attend conferences abroad, which by itself has no precedence in the history of Communist China.

There are various opinions as to the origin and reason behind the students' demonstration of late 1986. Suzanne Pepper, who has also written about the 1985 students demonstration, is of the opinion that the student movement of late 1986 was initially designed to generate public opinion in favour of political reform and was officially

25. BBC, Summary of World Broadcasts, Part 4, The Far East/8462/B II/2-3, January 10, 1987.

inspired to transform the anti-reform sentiment of the students in 1985. But the situation became serious when the students asserted their political independence too forcefully and started winning a wider social support.²⁶

On the other hand there are also commentators, who believe that the student movement of late 1986 was a spontaneous event and had a self-direction.²⁷ However, it has been argued by David A.Kelly that these two views are not really mutually exclusive as they appear. He also goes on to say that though the media and the intellectuals were important factors for the students' demonstration, it was the conservative faction in the leadership which sparked off the demonstrations by their anti-reform attitude and statements.²⁸

Role of the Intellectuals

There have been major changes in the attitude towards intellectuals since the ouster of Gang of Four in October 1976. The guidelines for these changes, which were first spelled out in the Central Committee's circular of September

26. See David A.Kelly, "The Chinese Student Movement of December 1986 and Its Intellectual Antecedents," The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs, No.17, January 1987, p.141.

27. Ding Wang et al, "Social Influences of the Chinese Student Movement" "Some Posters from Peking", Inside China Mainland, March 1987, pp.27-28.

28. David A. Kelly, n.23, pp.141-42.

18, 1977, were given more definite shape after the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Party Congress in late 1978.

Following concrete measures have been taken to implement these new policies towards the intellectuals.

- (1) Redressing cases of frame-ups, wrong and false charges imposed on intellectuals.
- (2) Promoting competent Party and non-Party intellectuals to leading positions.
- (3) Admitting into the Communist Party those intellectuals who applied for Party membership many years ago and who were qualified.
- (4) Reassigning work to scientific and technical personnel whose previous work was not related to their own field.
- (5) Restoring and perfecting the system of conferring titles on intellectuals in universities, colleges, and in research institutes.
- (6) Honouring and citing those intellectuals who have made outstanding contributions, as is done in the case of workers and peasants.
- (7) Improving their material well being wherever conditions permit.²⁹

29. The policies are quoted from Luo Fu, "China's Intellectuals - Part of the Working Classes", Beijing Review March 31, 1980, p.24.

Measures were also taken nation-wide to enhance the status of teachers, improve the quality of their teaching and restore the influence of intellectuals over academic affairs, though implementation varied from place to place.

It is evident that the present policy towards intellectuals is one of pacification and accommodation. However, as Hu Yaobang's instruction to "unite with the broad masses of intellectuals and other labouring people to realize the 'Four Modernizations' by the end of this century"³⁰ made on the occasion of the death centenary of Karl Marx, goes on to prove that the emphasis on economic construction and Four Modernizations cannot be ignored while assessing these policies. Hu Yaobang's statement and statements by many other leaders also indicate that the leadership obviously understands that it is only with full cooperation of the intellectuals that the goals of Four Modernizations can be realised.

As the policies of Four Modernizations and open-door policy are closely related, the implications of open-door policy on the intellectuals also need to be examined in order to understand the post-Mao intellectual situation. China,

30. See Hu Yao-bang, "Makesizhuyi weida zhenli de guangmang zhaoyao women qianjin" (The Radiance of Marxism's Great Truth Lights Our Advance), Renmin Ribao, March 14, 1983.

as a result of the two above mentioned policies, is sending students, scientists and technical personnel abroad and is increasing access to foreign language, technology and literature at home. This has triggered off different expectations in the political leadership and the intellectuals and they have exhibited different criteria in the process of selective borrowing. In this context, Vera Schwarcz has developed on the interesting concepts of Kaimen and Kaifang.³¹

According to her, the leadership's idea of Kaimen is to provide the intellectuals with opportunities to improve their skills. But what the intellectuals have in mind is perspective, i.e., the added connotation of Kaifang - internal relaxation of ideological controls over intellectual activity. The intellectuals apparently are not questioning the quantity of knowledge involved, but they are questioning the quality of perspective. They are insisting that intellectual emancipation does not involve only accumulation of knowledge, but also involves relaxation of perspective and expression. In other words the question of intellectuals and the question of reform cannot be viewed or dealt within

31. Vera Schwarcz, "Behind a Partially Open Door: Chinese Intellectuals and the Post-Mao Reform Process", Pacific Affairs, 59(4), Winter 1986-87, pp.577-604.

isolation, as is done by the leadership. As far as the intellectuals' participation in modernization drive is concerned, it should include intellectual reform as much as any other form of reform, because intellectual reform is a distinctive and critical aspect of modernization. This is what was said by the democratic activist Wei Jingshen in his "Fifth Modernization" poster as early spring of 1979. This demand, since then, has been reiterated by many intellectuals countless times and the same thought was even echoed in the editorial of Renmin Ribao on January 3, 1985, which argued that "the four modernizations must be accompanied by political democracy".³² The editorial also pointed out clearly: "Forbidding people to speak out, ...practising rule by the voice of one man alone...this kind of centralization cannot in the least push forward modernization. On the contrary, it can only impede modernization".³³

Thus, what the intellectuals of China are striving for today are freedom and democracy; not only in their own specialised field, but regarding anything that is related to the interest of the intellectual community, people,

32. Renmin Ribao editorial, January 3, 1985, p.1. Translation from Merle Goldman, n.11, p.711.

33. Ibid..

national construction and of course, the cause of socialism. But, since the criticisms offered by intellectuals on these matters are to a large extent, interpreted by the leadership as an effort to undermine the authority of the Party and thus socialism itself, there is a continuous tug and pull between the leadership and the intellectuals as to the extent of criticism to be allowed.

This is a phenomenon, which has been ever present since the establishment of PRC. The leadership, as in the Mao-era, is uncertain about the extent of freedom to give to the intellectuals. Intellectuals, on the other side, are continuously trying to stretch the parameter of freedom given to them by arguing their case for intellectual emancipation by the very ideology on the basis of which the leadership is imposing control over them. Therefore, the degree of relaxation in perspective and expression still remains a controversial issue between the intellectuals and the leadership. This is the main cause of periodic intellectual dissent and its after effect, the tightening of control. However, one significant thing in this unending cycles of dissent and control is that, 'in post-Mao China, the intellectuals have been able to go much further in their dissent or in the degree of their criticism, than they were ever able before in the history of Communist China. This in itself is a considerable

achievement of the post-Mao intellectuals for their cause of intellectual emancipation.

Status of Intellectuals

On the death centenary of Karl Marx on March 13, 1983, Hu Yaobang addressed the nation, in which he briefly presented the Party's approach towards intellectuals. Apart from other things, he also declared: "Despite the important differences in the pattern of labour between intellectuals, workers and peasants, we are not prevented from dearly affirming that, in general, according to their source of income and who they serve, our country's intellectuals have already become part of the working class".³⁴ Though, Hu had made it very clear on what basis intellectuals were considered a part of the working class, there are other criteria of judgement that must be taken into account before the intellectuals could be accepted as a part of the working class.

Though both physical labourers and mental labourers have been declared as labourers of the socialist society, there are a lot of differences between the two such a degree of expertise (quantity/quality of knowledge), social acceptance and economic incentives. As far as the quantity or

34. Quoted from the published version of the speech, n.27.

quality of knowledge and economic incentives are concerned, the intellectuals remain a more privileged group as compared to the physical labourers. This is borne out by Hu's statement: "It is necessary to tell the vast people clearly that in socialist society in general, slightly higher material remuneration for a higher compared with a somewhat lower level of scientific culture or for mental compared with manual labourers is not only an indispensable condition for mental labour in itself but, more importantly, will be very beneficial... for the intellectualisation (zhishihua) of the working class and all manual labourers, and beneficial in encouraging the sons and daughters of workers and peasants to study science and culture diligently so as to train more intellectuals."³⁵ This is a clear admission of the fact that though Marxism predicts and strives for bridging the gap between mental and manual labourer in a socialist society,³⁶ in Chinese reality, at least till now

35. Hu Yaobang, n.27.

36. Among other statement on this subject of division of mental and manual labour, Karl Marx and Frederic Engels have also written: "The transformation, through the division of of labour of personal powers (relationships) into material powers, cannot be dispelled by dismissing the general idea of it from one's mind but can only be abolished by the individuals again subjecting these material powers to themselves and abolishing the division of labour". Quoted from Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The German Ideology, New York, 1970, p.83.

the gap exists. Moreover, since the opportunity and access to specialized knowledge is very limited in China, it is unlikely that this difference will disappear completely in the near future.³⁷

As far as the social acceptance criterion is concerned, the intellectuals still remain a controversial community, because they continuously raise such fundamental questions as are unacceptable to the leadership. Though, the leadership now is much more tolerant of even strong criticism by the intellectuals, than ever before, the leadership still has to from time to time resort to tightening of control when the permissible boundary has been overstepped. Thus, there continues to exist an element of uncertainty in the Party-intellectuals relationship. On the other hand no such controversy exists in case of the workers and peasants. In other words, workers and peasants are much less controversial than the intellectuals and therefore much more socially accepted at least in the eyes of the political leadership and cadres.

Therefore, it can be argued that though intellectuals in China today are accorded a comparatively accommodating and tolerant treatment by the leadership (whether or not

37. The difference in the quantity/quality of knowledge between the intellectuals and the working class has been discussed in detail in Ellen R. Judd, "Working Class Intellectuals in China," Journal of Contemporary Asia, 14(2), 1984, pp.709-15.

because their cooperation is needed in the modernization drive remains debatable), they definitely form a distinct social force, if judged by the criteria of degree of knowledge possessed, acceptability and economic incentive. Moreover, the role the intellectuals are playing today for the cause of intellectual emancipation in particular and ideological relaxation in general, also strengthens their claim of forming a distinct social force.

Chapter IV
C O N C L U S I O N

The literal meaning of the Chinese expression jiefang sixiang, which is often used in the context of the intellectual situation in today's China is "freeing of thought". Though, this expression has been frequently used in the past few decades of Chinese intellectual history, it has gained a special significance in the post-Mao era, as it has been explicitly linked with ideological relaxation.¹

The main issue between the leadership and the intellectuals is not the need of intellectual emancipation but its meaning and limitations. In the context of intellectual emancipation, the intellectuals have been demanding much more than what the leadership is ready to grant. They are continuously trying to widen the scope of intellectual emancipation, which at present is limited only to specialized fields of knowledge. They would like it to include other areas as well; specially the ideological realm. When they demand the jiefang in the ideological realm they do not mean to question or undermine, the ideology of socialism, but rather to have the right to criticize the policies and attitudes adopted by the Party

1. This aspect of intellectual freedom has already been discussed in Chapter III, pp.53, 59, 66.

in the name of socialism. In other words, the intellectuals would like to question those policies which they as a whole or a section of them find not conforming to the principles of socialism and are therefore in their view open to debate. In doing so, the intellectuals want to function as the critical conscience of the Party. They are thus ideologically loyal to the Party but critical of what is being practiced in the name of that ideology. In this regard, the intellectuals' proposed function as a critical conscience is in conformity with the concept put forward by Liu Binyan in his "The Second Kind of Loyalty".²

However, the leadership is still very uncertain about the extent of permissible freedom. Because, the critique offered by the intellectuals has been quite often interpreted by the leadership as an effort to undermine the authority of the Party and the cause of socialism. Therefore the relaxation is almost always followed by a tightening of controls. The cycles of relaxation and control that have marked the intellectual history of Communist China till Cultural Revolution, still continue to exist in the post-Mao era. However, there have emerged two important trends in the last decade. First, the degree of relaxation is markedly higher in the post-Mao era than in the earlier

2. For details see Chapter III, p. 59.

period. This has resulted in the intellectuals being able to link the subject of ideological relaxation to intellectual emancipation. This is definitely a new development which could be interpreted as an important achievement. Moreover, the right of intellectual freedom in specialized fields was not always beyond question in the last decade.

Secondly, though a phase of relaxation is even now followed by a phase of control as an aftereffect, there are no more any mass campaigns against the intellectuals as a community. Even those intellectuals, who are politically criticized, continue to be esteemed academically as can be seen in case of Fang Lizhi and many other intellectuals.³

It can thus be argued that the cause of intellectual emancipation has moved forward and continues to do so, albeit at a very slow pace. Though, it is almost inevitable that there will be setbacks from time to time, there will not be anything as major as the frontal attacks on intellectuals which marked the period of Cultural Revolution.

3. For details see Chapter III, p. 61.

In this context, it is interesting to recall the title of Lenin's work "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back" (The Crisis of Our Party).⁴ If this title is put the other way round, it would probably be the best way to describe the intellectual movement of China today: "Two Steps Forward, One Step Back". In other words, for every bit of progress in the cause of intellectual emancipation, there is a setback. Be that as it may, it is possible to argue that in the post-Mao China the role of intellectuals and intellectual freedom itself have moved to a safer course than ever before.

4. V.I. Lenin, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back", Collected Works, Vol.7.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary SourcesArticles

- AN, Zhaozun, "Make Better Use of Technical Persons", Ren-min Ri-bao, January 12, 1956.
- Hu, Shi, "A Plea for Patriotic Sanity, An Open Letter to All Chinese Students", The Chinese Students' Monthly, X,6 (March 1915), pp.425-26.
- Hu, Shi, "What is the Meaning of New Thought?", Xin Qing nian (New Youth), December 1919.
- Hu, Yaobang, "On the Party's Journalism Work", Ren-min Ri-bao, April 14, 1985.
- Huang, Qiuyun, "We Must Not Close Our Eyes to the Hardships of the People", Ren-min Wen-xue, No.9:58, 1956.
- "Intellectuals and People of All Circles Should Persistently Reform Their Ideology", Guangming Ribao Editorial, July 1, 1952.
- "Kexue yu jishu de guanxi" (The relationship between science and technology), Guang-ming Ri-bao, April 10, 1981.
- Liu, Binyan, "Dierzhong Zhongcheng" (The Second Kind of Loyalty), Kaituo, March 1985.
- Luo, Fu, "China's Intellectuals - Part of the Working Classes", Beijing Review, March 31, 1980.
- "Makesizhuyi yanjiu zhong de 'tupo'", Ren-min Ri-bao, March 14, 1986.
- Mao, Dun, "New Realities and New Tasks", Ren-min Ri-bao, October 10, 1953.
- "Measured Advance in the Promotion of Pedagogical Reform in Higher Engineering Schools", Ren-min Ri-bao Editorial, August 16, 1953.
- "Party Directive on Rectification Campaign", NCNA (April,30, 1957).

"Refutation of the Preposterous Idea of Party Empire",
Xin Jian-she, No.1, January 1958.

"Strengthen the Ideological Leadership Over Teachers of
Institutions of Higher Education", Ren-min Ri-bao
Editorial, December 22, 1953.

"The Enlightenment of Philosophy and Philosophical
Enlightenment", Ren-min Ri-bao, July 22, 1978.

"The Road of Development of Our Country's Scientific and
Technical Work", Hongqi, No.9, October 1, 1958.

Tian, Heshui, "When One cannot be Both Red and Expert,"
Zhong-guo Qing-nian Bao, December 26, 1964.

Wu, Han, "Self-Criticism on Dismissal of Hai Rui",
Ren-min Ri-bao, December 30, 1965.

Wu, Jiangguo, "Guanyu Ziyou wenti de 'fanshi'," Hong-ci,
No.17, September 1, 1986, pp.32-38.

Wu, Kang, "From Thought Reform to Social Reform",
Xinchao (New Tide), October 1921, Vol.4.

Zhou, Yang, "Sanci weida de sixiang jiefang yundong"
(Three Great Movements for Intellectual Emancipa-
tion), Guang-ming Ri-bao, May 5, 1979.

Secondary Sources

(i) Books

Chang, Chung-li, The Chinese Gentry, Seattle, 1955.

Chow, Tse tung, The May Fourth Movement, Stanford University
Press, California, 1960.

Fei, Hsiao-tung, China's Gentry (Essays in Rural-Urban
Relations), Chicago, 1953.

Goldman, Merle, Literary Dissent in Communist China,
Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1967.

_____, China's Intellectuals: Advise and Dissent
Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1981.

Gramsci, Antonio, Selection from the Prison Notebooks 1925-35, (1971).

-----, The Modern Prince and Other Writings
(1957)

Levenson, Joseph R., Confucian China and Its Modern Fate
(A Trilogy), Volume I, The Problem of Intellectual
Continuity, University of California Press,
Barkeley and Los Angeles, 1968.

Liang, Heng and Shapiro, Judy, Intellectual Freedom in
China After Mao - With a Focus on 1983, New York
Fund for Free Expression, 1984.

Lu, Xun, Selected Works, Translated by Yang Xianyi and
Gladys Yang, Foreign Language Press, Beijing,
1957.

Mao, Zedong, "Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and
Art," Selected Works of Mao Zedong, Vol.III

Marx, Karl and Engels, Frederick, "The Division of
Material and Mental Labour", Selected Works,
Vol.I

Schram, Stuart, (ed.), Chairman Mao Talks to the People:
Talks and Letters, 1956-1971, New York, 1974.

Tan, Chester C., Chinese Political Thought in the Twentieth
Century, 1972.

Wright, Arthur F (ed.), Studies in Chinese Thought,
Chicago, 1953.

(ii) Articles

Copper, John F., "Recent Troubles in China", Asian Affairs
14(1), Spring 1987, pp.43-51.

Gold, Thomas B., "'Just in Time': China Battles Spiritual
Pollution on the Eve of 1984", Asian Survey, 24(9),
September 1984, pp.947-74.

Goldman, Merle, "Human Rights in the People's Republic of
China", Daedalus, 112(4), Fall, 1983, pp.111-38.



- Goldman, Merle, "The Zigs and Zags in the Treatment of Intellectuals", The China Quarterly, December 1985.
- Harrison, James P., "Problem of the Fifth Modernization", Journal of Asian Studies, 42(4), August 83, pp.869-78.
- Judd, Ellen R., "Prelude to the 'Yanan talks': Problems in Transforming a Literary Intelligentsia", Modern China 11 (3); July 1985, pp.377-408.
- , "Working Class Intellectuals in China," Journal of Contemporary Asia, 14(2), 1984, pp.156-70.
- Kane, Anthony J., "Literary Politics in Post-Mao China," Asian Survey, 21(7), July 1981, pp.775-94.
- Kelly, David A., "The Chinese Student Movement of December 1986 and Its Intellectual Antecedents", The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs, No.17, January 1987.
- Li, Ze hou, and Schwarcz, Vera, "Six Generations of Modern Chinese Intellectuals", Chinese Studies in History, 17(2), Winter 1983-84, pp.42-56.
- Schwarcz, Vera, "A Curse on the Great Wall: The Problem of Enlightenment in Modern China", Theory and Society, 13 (1984), pp.455-70
- Schwarcz, Vera, "Behind a Partially Open Door: Chinese Intellectuals and the Post-Mao Reform Process", Pacific Affairs, 59(4), Winter 1986-87.
- Wright, Arthur F., "Struggle vs. Harmony: Symbols of Competing Values in Modern China", World Politics VI, I (1953), pp.31-44.