

CHINESE SOCIETY IN TRANSITION
A STUDY OF THE STATE - SOCIETY
RELATIONSHIP IN THE POST- MAO PERIOD

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DECLARATION

Certified that the dissertation "Chinese Society in Transition: A Study of the State-Society Relationship in the Post-Mao Period" submitted by K. Sabarinath is in partial fulfillment of six credits out of a total requirement of twenty credits for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy of this University. This dissertation has not been submitted for the award of an M.Phil. degree in this or any other University. This is his own work.

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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INTRODUCTION

Integrating theories which are Eurocentric in nature to the realities of developing nations are wrought with problems of conceptualisation and application. It is all the more so in the study of the Peoples Republic of China. Mechanical application of western concepts to the modernising traditional societies of the East has resulted in what can be called the neo-colonial perspective, and the bench mark, as can be seen in western scholarship on the East, has been the model of western liberal democracies. Thus concepts ranging from that of nation-state, democracy, socialism and constitutional Government has primarily a western connotation, and the period of colonialism helped in universalising such concepts.

These ideals were strengthened with decolonisation as the ruling elite in these erstwhile colonies looked up to these models for modernisation and development. This process gained acceptance from the local populace, as colonialism destroyed the basis for feudalism in these countries. The Russian revolution of 1917, put forward an alternative to the concept of the capitalist state, which was characterised by exploitation, and which according to Lenin was at the imperialist stage of development. The

newly independent nations of the third world , suffering from the chronic problems of colonialism , saw in socialism conditions for genuine liberation . Socialism became a liberating force for these nations to do away with the vestiges of colonialism . In the Chinese revolution , socialism played the historical role of a liberating ideology. As the capitalist states transformed in the course of this century , primarily to combat socialism, the post-revolutionary socialist states in due course set an agenda for totalitarian states. In almost all socialist states Party monopoly , bureaucratism and the dogmatic application of Marxism-Leninism resulted in the increasing alienation of the Party - state from the society. In China during the Maoist phase , there was a ^eheightened concern for this phenomenon, which laid the basis for Maoism as an ideology.

In the Maoist phase, if the concern of the Party was in building socialism with Chinese characteristics , the post -Mao period~~§~~ saw the Chinese leadership trying to build a unique brand of Chinese socialism with capitalist characteristics, as the reform era would testify . In the reform decade the Chinese leadership has been concerned solely with the development of productive forces and has introduced market reforms which has integrated China's economy with the world capitalist economy. Although the PRC's

economic success has muted the criticism of Chinese state both from within and outside China, the relation between the Chinese state and society has been strained to the point of confrontation which erupts periodically. These conflicts in the last instance have tipped in favour of the state which is still in control of its coercive and repressive mechanisms, as seen in June 1989. Throughout the reform or modernisation decade, various sections of the masses, especially the urban residents have voiced a greater demand for more democracy, freedom, individual rights and so on and so forth.

Aided at times by the reform faction within the Party, reflected in the intra-party conflicts over reform and modernisation policies, the movements have over a period gained legitimacy. The Chinese state has shown no signs of relinquishing power or giving in to the demands of the protestors, as the more conservative leadership took control of the Party in the post-Tiananmen phase. The relative strength of the state in relation to the society has been attributed to the absence of civil society in China. This interest in civil society has emerged as a result of the collapse of communism in Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. This collapse according to political theorists has been the result of the existence of an active civil society

resisting the party-states hegemony, and had played the major role in bringing down these regimes. Thus China became a focus of study, as it had with stood the collapse, and an active interest in the study of China's civil society came about. While the dissent movements have been seen as a result of the growth of autonomous centres of power, this has been actively aided by the process of economic modernisation which provided the material basis for such democratic movements. Within the Party also, there is a reform faction which, unlike the current leadership, believes that economic reforms are meaningful only with political reforms.

This study aims to focus on the State-society relations as it unfolded during the post -Mao era. As this period witnessed unprecedented economic reforms initiated by the Party, which led to the de radicalisation and de-ideologisation of the Chinese society, chapter one of the study traces the political and the ideological conflicts and its re-orientation in the post- cultural revolution period. The notion of the growth of autonomous centres of power has been linked by China scholars in the recent times to the transformations that have occurred in the economy with the adoption of the market mechanism and 'open door ' to foreign capital. The second chapter deals with the dynamics of economic modernisation and its impact on

the Chinese society. Studies on the democracy movement and dissent in the post Tiananmen period has argued that these protests symbolises the emergence of an 'embryonic civil society' in China. The third chapter examines the polemics related to the civil society, a paradigm that has been employed to analyse the dynamics of the State-Society relations in the post Mao period.

CHAPTER - I

POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL CONFLICTS IN CHINA:

THE POST - CULTURAL REVOLUTION SCENARIO

The political and ideological conflicts in the post - Cultural Revolution era (1965 - 69) are taken as the starting point of this study of the State-Society relations in the post-Mao china. This transitional phase saw a shift in the politics of the Communist Party of China (CPC) regarding the future and modernisation of the Chinese society. The shift in perception can be seen as a result of the struggle within the Party, the 'Two -line struggle' of which Mao Zedong had constantly warned. It can also be seen as arising from the power struggle between various groups within the CPC. The major ideological debates in the 1970's centred on the questions of modernisation reevaluation of the Cultural Revolution and the continuation of its policies. The nature of the policy shifts which amounted to the complete reversal of the policies of the Cultural Revolution which was approved at the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee in December 1978 had wide ramifications for the relationship between Chinese state and society. It is

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in this context that the study of the political and ideological conflicts of the 70's acquires significance.

This can also be seen as a consequence of the ideology of Marxism-Leninism and Maoism which has been the guiding light of the Chinese state and its leading organ the CPC. Another major reason prompting the study of the ideological and political conflict is the pervasive economic determinism which has characterised Marxist thought since the Second International. With the discovery and publication in 1952 of Marx's "The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," heavily influenced by Hegelian subjectivism, the subjective side of Marxian theory was re-emphasised. Marxian scholars like Georg Lukacs and Antonio Gramsci sought to broaden and extend the ideas of Marx. Various Neo-Marxian schools ranging from 'Hegelian Marxism' to 'critical theorists' and 'structural Marxists' have contributed to the rejuvenation of Marxian concepts. While major differences exist between these various schools there was a shift in focus from the 'base' to the 'superstructure' reversing the traditional Marxist practice of studying the 'superstructure' in relation to changes in the economic 'base'.

This does not mean that the economic realm is dismissed, rather that it is related to the 'superstructure' in a dialectical manner. To the structural Marxist, Nicos Poulantzas the study of society is composed of three major components- the state, ideology and the economy. It can be seen that many of these theorists have re-interpreted Marx's deterministic statements as partial ones existing within a broader dialectical system. The argument of Bertell Ollman, that when Marx says, "The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life", has to be understood, "in a way that allows the latter group of factors to vitally affect the mode of production, and in a way that removes the automatic dependence of the social superstructure on the economic base", is relevant in this context. At a general level the dialectical approach focuses on the social totality, as no partial aspect of social life or isolated phenomenon can be comprehended unless it is

1. Cited in, George Ritzer, Contemporary Sociological Theory(New York : Alfred A Knopf,1988) pp-144 -145

related to the historical whole. This is true as much of the Chinese society as it is of any other.

Mao himself in his seminal essay 'On Contradiction' held the view that, "the world outlook of materialist dialectics holds that in order to understand the development of a thing we should study it internally and in its relations with other things. In other words, the development of things should be seen as their internal and necessary self movement, while each thing in its movement is inter related with and interacts on things around it. Contradictoriness within a thing is the fundamental cause of its development, while its interactions and interrelations with other things are secondary causes.² "Mao while accepting the primacy of the productive forces, practice and the economic base admits" that in certain conditions, such aspects as the relations of production, theory and the superstructure in turn manifest themselves in the principal and decisive role."³

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2. Mao Zedong, Selected Works of Mao Zedong, VOL - I (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1977) p. 313
 3. Ibid, p. 336

This can be seen as valid for the Russian as well as the Chinese revolutions. That contradictions existed within the Communist Party which had to be resolved by the method of 'criticism unity-criticism' is the consistent position adopted by Mao in the Post-liberation period, which has also been practiced in the mass movements ranging from the 'Hundred Flowers Campaign, the Anti-Rightist Campaign in the late 50s, the Great Leap Forward of 1958 to 60 and the Cultural Revolution in the latter half of the 1960s

Mao's emphasis on the 'two line struggle' within the Party, that between the revisionist and the proletarian line, as can be seen in his criticism of Peng Dehuai resulting from Peng's criticism of the GLF and regarding his efforts at the modernisation of the army in the late 1950's and later Mao's criticism of Liu Shaoqi over economic development and modernisation culminating in the Cultural Revolution, are pointers to the theoretical rigour practiced by Mao.

ROLE OF IDEOLOGY IN CHINESE POLITICS

To come to an understanding of ideology in Chinese politics one has to start with the premises from which Marx and Engels analysed the function of ideas. According to Jorge Larrain this can be summarised in the three principles put forward by Marx : (a) historical materialism explains the formation of ideas of the ruling class in every epoch the ruling class from material practice; (b) the ideas; (c) consciousness must be explained from the contradictions of material conditions.⁴ Marx critically analyses both the materialism of Feuerbach and the idealism of Hegel to arrive at these conclusions. In 'The German Ideology' Marx thus asserts his conviction that consciousness is not independent of material conditions, as against idealism; and that consciousness is not a passive reflection of external reality, against the old⁵ materialism.

While Marx has been criticised as arguing against materialism in idealist fashion, and idealism

4. Jorge Larrain, Marxism And Ideology, (London:

Mac Millan press Ltd, 1963) p - 21.

5. Ibid, p - 18

in materialist fashion, his concept of practice plays a crucial role for understanding the formation of ideas and therefore of ideology. For Marx, social reality, itself should be conceived as practice, and in a capitalist society this entails a division of labour by which the material conditions and social institutions produced in human practice acquires independence dominating the masses constituting an objective power. On the other hand practice has another dimension by which it transforms social relations and places them under the conscious control of individuals. Practice thus according to Marx has a double dimension. It reproduces material life within certain unquestioned social relations, and its labour; it transforms social relations, thus changing the conditions of labour, and is revolutionary practice.⁶

For Marx as well as for Mao, the praxis of social conflict was necessary to overcome false consciousness and in distinguishing what is from what ought to be.

6. Ibid, p - 21

In his correspondence with Mehring, Frederick Engels has emphasised the aspect of false consciousness in relation to ideology, "Ideology is a process accomplished by the so called thinker consciously, it is true, but with a false consciousness. The real motive force impelling him remains unknown to him, otherwise it would not be an ideological process".⁷ The Gramscian notion of the struggle of political 'hegemonies' or 'lines' also tries to bring reality and theory in conscious conjunction. As Gramsci phrased it, "Critical understanding of oneself, therefore, comes through the struggle of political 'hegemonies' of opposing directions, first in the field of ethics, then of politics, culminating in a higher elaboration of one's own conception of reality. The awareness of being part of a determined hegemonic force (political consciousness) is the first step towards a further and progressive self consciousness in which theory and practice finally unite."⁸

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7. Karl Marx And Frederick Engels, Selected Correspondence (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976) p - 272
 8. Antonio Gramsci, Modern Prince And Other Writings, (London: Lawrence And Wishart Ltd., 1957) p - 66

The theme of class restoration emphasised by Mao at the 10th Plenum of the Eighth central committee in 1962 was a result of the two line struggle, between the 'revisionist' and the revolutionary line Mao was critical of Liu Shaoqi's 'Four Freedoms'-freedom to practice usury, hire labour, buy and sell land and engage in private enterprises-seeing in it the shift from the goal oriented ideology of the Great Leap Forward campaign to the operational ideology of the Five-year plans in the latter half of the 60's. Mao's first move away from the orthodoxy of the CPC had come about much earlier in 1957 with the publication of his article, 'On the correct handling of contradictions among the people.' Mao stated that the contradictions and class struggle still existed under socialism thereby heralding the Great Leap Forward, while viewing critically the resolution of the Eighth party congress of 1956 which claimed that class struggle had ended with the successful establishment of Public ownership. The Maoist philosophical code phrase for this renewed emphasis on class struggle was 'one divides into two' (stressing opposition) , while that of his opponents in the party was 'two combine into one'

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(stressing unity). During the Cultural Revolution, the latter perspective was condemned as revisionism.

Mao was, since the time of the Great Leap Forward aware of the dangers posed by an entrenched Party and bureaucracy and stressed the element of opposition in the Marxist dialectic, thereby challenging the orthodoxy to which the Party had reverted. Mao's attack on Soviet revisionism is also a case in point of the dynamic way in which he conceived and applied Marxism to the post revolutionary society, blending it to Chinese realities, thus forging a unique Chinese path to a socialist society. Mao's unorthodox approach led naturally to the forming of groups and factions within the Party and the debates that followed centred on correctly interpreting Marxism-Leninism, and on China's modernisation and development. This struggle could be also be seen on issues which had no direct bearing to the immediate policies and programmes of the party, like the exchanges that took place during a conference on Confucianism convened by Chou Yang the head of the

9. Chen Erjin, China: Cross Roads Socialism, (London: Verso, 1984) p. 24.

Party propaganda in November, 1962. Stressing the differences between Western and Chinese patterns of history Professor Liu Jie of Sun Yat Sen University contended that Western history was characterised by class struggles, while Chinese history had been influenced by the Confucian notion of 'humaneness' (Ren)- an ethical concept that mollified class struggle through social conciliation.¹⁰

As the theory put forward by Liu Jie emphasised harmony and evolution rather than struggle and revolution, it was seen as criticising the disruptions of the Great Leap Forward, and he was as a consequence labeled 'revisionist' in 1963 October. This was the result of the importance which Mao attached to ideology in the continuing political process of China as can be seen in his renewed call for class struggle at the Tenth Plenum in September 1962 at Lushan, wherein he says, "in order to overthrow a regime we must first of all take

10. Frederic Wakeman (Jr), "The Use And Abuse Of Ideology In The Study Of Contemporary China", China^{SA}Quarterly, No. 61, March 1975, p - 135

control of the superstructure, the ideology, by preparing public opinion.¹¹ "Likewise Yang Hsien Chen, a major Marxist theoretician and a member of the Central Committee was a primary target of the rectification campaign, as his formula 'Two could also combine into one' was seen to espouse an evolutionary¹² theory of the dialectic.

While on the one hand, under the leadership of Liu Shaoqi China in the early 1960's looked towards the Soviet model for modernisation and development, with the ideological debates of 1962-64 rationalising the, intellectual discontent within the 'Three Red Banners' (the General Line, the Great Leap Forward and the People's Communes) of 1958-60; Mao on the other hand, with the demand to impose stricter control upon intellectuals after the liberalisation of discussion, the inconclusive Rectification Campaign of 1964, combined with his criticism of Soviet Revisionism sought to expose the consciously motivated rationalisation of interest. Ideology in China in the post - revolutionary period is used to specify goals, and the contradiction is

11. Stuart Schram (ed) Mao Zedong Unrehearsed, London: Penguin Books, 1974) p - 195

12. Frederic Wakeman (Jr), n. 10, p - 136

primarily between revolutionary aims or ultimate goals and the tactical methods necessary to attain them. The gulf widened between Maoist ideology and Party practice in policy implementation; and according to Mao between mental and manual labour, state and society, Party and the masses, cities and villages, peasant and worker, between agriculture and industry. The Socialist Education Campaign which got under way in 1962 was also a result of a move towards capitalism in the countryside and was approved by the Party. The army, which had got politicalized with the ouster of Peng Dehuai took on an active interest in civilian life under Lin Biao, actively propagating the spirit of the movement which was to counter modern revisionism.

The campaign for the 'living study and living use of Mao Zedong thought' in which the army turned out to be the major protagonist, in 1965-66 led to a deepening of the 'cult of Mao'. The army's involvement in civilian life at this point of time which according to Mao was complementing the Yanan model led to a close association between Lin Biao and Mao. Later in February 1964, learn from the People's Liberation Army'

campaign led to cementing of the relation between Mao and the PLA. With the publication of the document¹³ "On Khrushchev's Phoney Communism and its Historical Lessons for the World" on 14th July, 1964, the Sino - Soviet split became official and paved the way for the Chinese road to socialism. Ideologically, this document drafted as an open letter to the Central Committee of the CPSU, warned against the growth of capitalism and a new strata of capitalists committed to a policy of material incentives, high profits and salary differentials, in the Soviet Union. The Soviet Communist Party was accused of becoming a bourgeois Party, an argument which Mao was to use against the Communist Party of China during the Cultural Revolution.

The Eleventh Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee, in August 1966 was to formally inaugurate the Cultural Revolution as a major mass movement, which resulted in the unprecedented radicalisation of the Chinese society. Mao's theory of 'uninterrupted revolution' together with the theme of 'antagonistic

(13) Bill Brugger, China: Radicalism to Revisionism, 1962-79 (London: Croom Helm, 1981) p - 44

contradictions' were the basic theoretical premises on which the movement was based. The Cultural Revolutionary Groups which were set up in the various cities along with the radicalised PLA under Lin Biao and the Red Guard brigades formed the social basis and the core of the movement. The movement from without directed against the entrenched Party and bureaucracy targeting the leaders and cadres taking the capitalist road, shattered the Party. Although the movement was directed from above by Mao, Lin Biao and the Cultural Revolutionary Group consisting of Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan and Wang Hongwen, later termed the 'Gang of Four' the success it achieved in demolishing the Party apparatus could partly be attributed to the alienation of the Party and the Chinese State from Society.

As Marxism, and specifically Maoism does not accept the dichotomy between the State and society, in China one can find an interpenetration of both blurring the lines. The structure of the Chinese State and that of the CPC, following the hierarchical pyramidal structure had penetrated deep into the society. This

organic character of the Party and also that of the State had been upheld prominently by the CPC. The theories of the 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat' and the vanguard role of the Communist Party in a post-revolutionary society had helped in buttressing this organic concept of the State. But as in Soviet Union, the dilemmas faced in the process of modernisation and development coupled with Party monopoly had led to an increasing bureaucratisation and regimentation of the Party.

It was this process of alienation of the Party from the society, from the masses, that was sought to be reversed by Mao, and which legitimises Maoism as an ideology in its own right. From the period of criticism of Khrushchevian revisionism Mao has emphasised the theme of class struggle, the struggle between the revisionist and revolutionary line to overcome this State-Society dichotomy, which was held to be paradoxical in a post-revolutionary society. Mao's concept of contradiction existing in a socialist society permeates this vision. By mass participation and mass mobilisation in every aspect of nation building, which encompassed both the economy as well as the socio-

political, ideological and juridical superstructure, and which dates back to the early thirties (period of people's War). Mao had fought for an increasing societal involvement in bringing about socialist transformation. As in the earlier mass campaigns, it was this vision of Mao, which impelled him to exhort the masses to rebel against the bureaucratised entrenched Party, in other words to "Bombard the ¹⁴ Headquarters".

But later close on the heels of launching the CR however, Factionalism within the Red Guards, conflicts between the army and these factions on the one hand and with the Party on the other, in due course, gave the movement an overall ~~anarchic~~ anarchic character culminating in a lot of violent clashes in many cities, and set in the process of deradicalisation. The transition to Communism which was predicted at the outset by Mao and the Cultural Revolutionary Group slowly started fading away, when in February 1967, Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan reportedly stated Mao's position regarding the Shanghai

14. Joan Robinson, The Cultural Revolution In China, (Great Britain: Penguin, 1969) p - 80

People's Commune, "the Chairman is of the opinion that Shanghai ought to make a change and transform itself into a Revolutionary Committee or a City Committee or a City People's Committee."¹⁵

For Mao the essence of revolutionary change was restructuring of thought after the capturing of state power, and simultaneously to transform the economy. The post-Cultural Revolution period marks the shift from the ideological dynamism of Mao to the much more pragmatic way in which the Party approached socialism. The Maoist ideology during the Cultural Revolution served as a new source of identity for students and intellectuals who were alienated from the ancient traditions of the society as well as from the Chinese State. On the more negative side the Maoist ideology became a new state religion resulting in 'the Dionysian Cult of Mao'.¹⁶

15. Bill Brugger, n. 13, p. 83.

16. Frederic Wakeman Jr, n.10, p.130.

One of the results of the Cultural Revolution was the growth of 'ultra leftism', which came to be condemned by the Party and by Mao in 1968. Ultra-leftism signified an idealist faith in human capacity regardless of socio-economic constraints and the belief that one's own organisation possessed true virtue and revolutionary commitment. In the first half of the 70's, Lin Biao, Chen Boda and later the 'Gang of Four' were accused of 'ultra-leftism', as China entered a new stage in its modernisation strategy.

POST-CULTURAL REVOLUTION SCENARIO

While the Cultural Revolution apparently extended well into the early 1970's, Mao along with the Cultural Revolutionary Group, the army and the Party were forced to moderate its policies from 1968. The largely urban movement, sidelined the peasantry which formed the bulk of Chinese population, had dissipated largely because of the absence of a central authority, disruption of the economy and the destruction of the Party apparatus. By the time of the 9th Party Congress Mao's opponents in the Party led by Liu Shaoqi had been defeated, and the role of the Party in the political

process was re-emphasised. This brought the Party into conflict with the army who had been involved in the process of restructuring the Party, was the backbone of Cultural Revolution and was instrumental in bringing the movement under control from the anarchy to which it had slipped. This was compounded by the fact that the Constitution of April 1969, gave considerable stress to the role of the military and nominated Lin Biao, the Defense Minister, as Mao's successor. Addressing the First Plenum of the new Central Committee in 1969 April, Mao stressed the need to " be careful and prudent in restructuring the Party, and admonished against what he called the 'previous mistakes'¹⁷". Mao stressed that the rebuilt Party would constitute the vanguard of the Chinese Communist Revolution. Mao's shift in emphasising civilian party control is reflected in the composition of the new Party leadership, elected at the First Plenum immediately after the Ninth Congress, which constituted of a number of groups.

"First there was a group of Cultural Revolution activists headed by Chen Boda, Kang Sheng, Jiang Qing,

17. L.S. Tao, "Politics of Conflict in the Main Land China: The Lin Biao Affair", Issues and Studies, Vol.21, No.2, Feb. 1976, pp. 95-96.

Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyan, Wang Hongwen and Ji Dengkui. A second group consisted of a number of senior Party members concerned with Public security work such as Xie Fuzhi and Wang Dongxing. A third group consisted of central military leadership under Lin Biao, Ye Qun, Huan Yongsheng, Wu Faxian, Li Zuopeng and Qiu Huizuo. Fourth were the representatives of the regional military commanders who had been engaged in restoring order, Xu Shiyu, Chen Xilian and Li Desheng. There was a fifth group of senior administrators of state council headed by Premier Zhou Enlai and Li Xiannian. Sixth came a group of former marshalls of the PLA consisting of people like Zhu De and Lin Bocheng." While half of the new Central Committee had held a military rank, there was a definite attempt at curbing the influence of the army the tremendous power enjoyed by Lin Biao and the military apparatus came under increasing criticism both by Mao and the Party, as the reconstruction of the Party began in earnest. The conflict between the army and the Party became the major issue in 1970 that Mao was to call it the tenth major crisis in the fifty year history of the Chinese

18. Bill Brugger, n. 13, p.123

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Communist Party. The crisis centered on the person of Lin Biao, who first came under serious criticism at the Second Plenum of the Ninth Central Committee in August 1970 and who finally died after an alleged coup attempt in September 1971.¹⁹

The events which led to Mao - Lin Biao confrontation reflected both a power issue with regards to the question of which institution - the Party or the Army - should dominate China's political structure; and a policy issue of whether radicalism, which had characterised the Cultural Revolution should remain or be moderated. The 'Flying Leap' of 1968, modelled on the earlier 'Great Leap' was brought to an end at the Second Plenum in 1970, and can be said to have started the process of deradicalisation.²⁰ Mao eliminated the post of Chairman of the State from the draft of the new Constitution of the PRC, which resulted in antagonising Lin Biao who was widely perceived as Mao's successor.

19. Ibid. p. 143

20. Ibid, p. 120

By an increased involvement of army during the 'Flying Leap' in 'Open Party building'; in building urban communes according to the model of the Daqing oilfield fusing together units of agricultural production, education and administration; in socialist education; Lin Biao attempted to further increase his own political authority.²¹ At the Second Plenum, Chen Boda and his colleagues of the Central Cultural Revolution Group were denounced for 'ultra-leftism, of which later Lin Biao himself was accused.²² Lin Biao's support for the excess of the Cultural Revolution and later the 'Flying Leap', his theory of the 'ideology of individual genius' coupled with his scarce regard for the organisational discipline of the Party led to him being labelled as 'ultra-leftist'.²³

During this period, Mao's ideology had taken a practical turn with the rebuilding of the Party, and a return to civilian Party rule becoming the major concern. The army also came under attack, as a

21. Ibid, pp. 127 - 128

22. Ibid, p. 144.

23. Ibid, pp. 144-145.

movement began instructing the army to study Mao's thought on Party building, with special stress laid on 'Article Five' of the Party constitution, which was the one that stipulated civilian Party leadership over the army.²⁴ There was also attack on army's arrogance and complacency, and the soldiers were urged to engage in self criticism and correct their erroneous working style. The army was charged with not being entirely correct in understanding Mao's thought on 'integration of theory with practice' and that politics was given too much prominence as against Lin Biao's central thrust of putting 'politics in command.'²⁵ Mao thus in his 'Talks on the Lin Biao affair' in 1971, insisted that, "In industry learn from Daqing, in agriculture learn from Dazhai, let the people of the whole country learn from the PLA, this is incomplete, we should add, 'Let the PLA learn from the people of the whole country'.²⁶" The process of Party rebuilding was speeded up to counter the threat of the army.

24. L.S. Tao, n. 17, p. 97

25. Bill Brugger n. 13, p.147

26. Ibid, p. 148

The death of Lin Biao in September 1971 saw a renewed drive for stability in the Chinese society, which gave momentum to the process of deradicalisation started at the Second Plenum. As the Fourth Five Year Plan was to go into effect in 1971, the major concern now was to increase production at all costs which included the prospect of private activities. Slowly but steadily there began a slow decline of revolutionary utopianism and the gradual ritualisation of socialist and communist goals. This deradicalisation can also be seen as a conservative reaction against revolutionary radicalism which marks the death of the original spirit, and in the case of a socialist revolution marks termination of any real striving for socialist goals.

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Planning and Central guidance were deemed a necessity for stabilising the economy. The reemergence of rural craft industries, private plots and market saw the Chinese countryside drifting towards petty Capitalism'.

There was greater economy at provincial level, stress on the decentralisation of decision making

27. Peter F. Cheng (ed), Marxism and Capitalism in the PRC (New York: University Press of America, 1988) p. 24

authorities to geographical areas counteracting the centralising tendencies under planning. A drive to develop local industries was renewed as a consequence of the stress on self reliance. The eclipse of political goals in favour of simply increasing production, in 1970, led to a stress on sound economic management and the slogan 'increase production and practice economy' was interpreted quite strictly. There was also emphasis on electrification, mechanisation and the collectivised private property of the peasants were handed back. This economic necessities as well as the political need for stability forced the Party, inspite of differences within, in 1974 to "grasp revolution and promote production."

Both in industry and agriculture, in the 1970-72 period there was a general retreat from the policies of the Cultural Revolution. In late 1972 the Lin Biao incident was made public, recategorising Lin as an 'ultra-rightist', with a call to continue the struggle against revisionism. The 1973-76 period once again saw the radicalisation of Chinese politics instigated by the 'Gang of Four.'

The Tenth National Congress of the CPC, convened in 1973, set the stage for a new confrontation, between the 'Gang of Four' who favoured the continuation of Cultural Revolutionary policies with prominence given to the theme of Class Struggle, bourgeois representatives within the Party hierarchy who wanted to undermine Socialism; and ~~the~~ Premier Zhou Enlai who favoured the strengthening of the Party leadership and to stabilise the State structure. During this period Zhou Enlai was also able to rehabilitate members who were criticised during the Cultural Revolution like Deng Xiaoping who once had been branded as 'the Number Two Person in Authority taking the Capitalist Road'. Wang Hongwen, one of the 'Gang of Four' was elected the Vice-Chairman of Party and became the spokesman of continued radicalism. The confrontation between these two lines came out in the open during the 'campaign to criticise Lin Biao and Confucius.' Just as the debates on Confucius of the early 1960's turned on the evaluation of the Great Leap Forward, so the debate of 1973 turned on the evaluation of the Cultural Revolution. One can also find in the anti-Confucius

28. Bill Brugger, n. 13, p. 173

movements, a similarity to the 'Socialist Education Movement' of 1963-66, as both were opposed to the old ways of thought.

In the 1973-74 period, the movement focussed on Lin Biao's 'Idealism' as it "reverses the relations between consciousness and matter and between knowledge and practice. Marx and Engels have time and again exposed religion and idealism as 'an inverted world consciousness' and a philosophy which 'turns every thing upside down'²⁹". Similarly the workers at the Peking Art Handicrafts Plant concluded after analysing the ideology of Confucius³⁰ and Lin Biao that, "Lin Biao was truly a faithful disciple of Confucius and his reactionary world outlook was rooted in Confucius' reactionary ideology. Confucius was a spokesman of the declining slave owning aristocracy more than two thousand years ago, and Lin Biao was an agent of the landlord class and the bourgeoisie in contemporary times. Though they both lived in different eras, both represented moribund reactionary classes and both tried to turn back the wheel of history". Most of these

29. Hsin Feng, "Criticising Lin Biao's Bourgeois Idealism", Review, Vol. 17, No. 4, Jan 25, 1974, p.5

30. "Deepening Criticism of Lin Biao through repudiating Confucius", Review, Vol. 17, No.5, Feb. 1, 1974, p.1

discussions had centered around the Qin Emperor who unified China in third Century B.C., who ruthlessly put down a rebellion by the first minister Lu Buwei, who was a Confucian, and was assisted by Li Si, a 'legalist' who upheld the rule of law and promoted modernisation and economic development.³¹ Mao was seen as the Qin Emperor and Lin Biao was the Confucian usurper, in this typical Chinese and unique method of engaging, in political polemics, of 'pointing at the mulberry to criticise the ash' and of relating current events to the remote past.

The theme of class restoration had appeared much earlier in June 1969, when Shih Fan Hsiu had published an article on Confucians and class struggle in Liberation Daily.³² The theme of Confucians against Legalist came together with the intense anti-Lin campaign. By early 1974, the two campaigns had been extended to cover some of the key figures in Chinese intellectual history and indirectly separated the conservative majority from the dissenting minority for

31. Bill Brugger, n. 13, p. 175

32. Wang Gungwu, "Juxtaposing past and present in China", The China Quarterly No. 61, March 1975, p.20

the whole length of Chinese history³³. Suddenly, it was no longer merely a political campaign to clean up Lin Biao's supporters nor to criticise current power holders, nor to advocate centralised power against strong provincial authorities, nor to discourage the return of the old cadres criticised during Cultural Revolution, nor even merely to affirm the results of³⁴ the Cultural Revolution. The joint campaign began to take proportions of the second C.R. The movement had penetrated deeply into every school, university, factory, commune and the army. Along with the general arousal of revolutionary zeal there was also an attempt to transform the accepted views of Chinese past by instilling a more integrated Sino-Marxist interpretation of history.

The campaign demonstrated that major ideological and policy differences existed within the CPC. It raised questions regarding the relationship between the Party and the masses, between consolidating the socialist material base and continuously transforming the Socialist relations of production, between the

33. Ibid, p. 21.

34. Ibid.

Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Socialist democracy. At the 10th Party Congress in August 1973, three general views on socialist transition were put forward. These were the notions of 'continuous revolution' which was formulated by Mao in the mid 1960's and defended by the 'Gang of Four' in 1973-76, Mao's earlier notion of 'uninterrupted revolution' which was reformulated by Hua Guofeng in 1977-78, and finally the early 1960's notion of the 'Advanced Socialist System', whereby rural mechanisation, autonomy of State Corporations, wage reforms and partial development of the markets were emphasised, was to become a salient features of Chinese economy once again in 1979. The most prominent interpreters of Mao Zedong Thought among the 'Gang of Four' were Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan. According to them class struggle was to continue throughout the period of Socialist transition. This was in accordance with Mao's theory of 'Continuous Revolution' developed on the eve of the Cultural Revolution. The class struggle was a consequence of the Chinese historical process and reflected within the Communist Party as a conflict

between opposing ideological and policy positions. The movement to criticise Confucius and Lin Biao, to study the theory of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, and to criticise 'Water Margin' (a revived Chinese classic) after the 10th party Congress, were aimed at wiping out the remnant influence of Liu Shaoqi and Lin Biao and were used as a line to support Mao's theory of 'Continuous Revolution' and 'Struggle between two lines'³⁶

The moderates or the Hua Guofeng 'faction', a concept which has gained currency in the study of Chinese politics in the light of Constant struggles within the politburo and Party over matters of policy concerning China's developmental strategy, professed the theory of 'uninterrupted revolution' whereby social contradictions are progressively resolved. At the 10th Party Congress while both Premier Zhou Enlai and the Vice Chairman Wang Hongwen stressed the need to continue the revolution under the 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat', the implications seemed different as Zhou Enlai favoured unity and stability; whereas Wang

36. Li Tien-Min, "Communist China After Zhou Enlai", Issues and Studies, Vol. 22, No. 2, Feb. 1976, pp. 6-7.

Hongwen on the otherhand stressed deepening the class struggle. Similarly while distinguishing the 'revolutionary line' from the 'revisionist line'. Zhou stressed on all three elements of Mao's slogan, 'Practice Marxism, unite and don't split, be open and above board and don't intrigue and conspire; Wang implied that conspiratorial activities could be carried to promote the 'revolutionary line'.³⁷ Wang affirmed that any party cadre had the right to resist a 'revisionist' policy or directive.

Historical analogy and the play with the Chinese past were made use of to express the ideological differences. The campaign against Lin Biao and Confucius took on a new meaning. Thus when Lin Biao was criticised for his desire to 'restore Capitalism', the actual targets of attack were Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping. Likewise when Lin was attacked for undermining stability or sabotaging production, the target was obviously the 'Gang of Four'. The factional fight touched a new peak, when at the 4th National People's Congress convened in Beijing from January 13

37. Bill Brugger, n. 13, p. 22

to 17, 1975, Zhou Enlai, in his report on the work of the Government proclaimed a new policy for the country, "In this century we must accomplish the all out modernisation of agriculture, industry national defence and science and technology so that our country's national economy proceeds into the front row of the

38 world." This programme came to be widely known as the 'Four Modernisations', and the faction which supported it, including people like Deng Xiaoping, came 39 to be called the 'modernisers'.

During the 1970's as Mao slowly stepped away from the political limelight following the debacle of Cultural Revolution it was the 'Gang of Four' who claimed authority on his behalf. Although the 'Gang' had no objections to the general theory of modernisation, it was in the practice of these policies that major differences arose. The Dengist faction called for the development of productive forces along the lines of Five Year plans of 1953 and 1961. The 'Gang' held the view that during socialist transition

38. Jurgen Domes, The Govt. and Politics of the PRC, (London: Westview Press, 1985) p. 126.

39. Ibid.

the development of productive forces only had meaning if the relations of production were also transformed, and that it was necessary for the 'revolutionary line' to exercise dictatorship over the 'revisionist line'.⁴⁰ A campaign to 'study the theory of Dictatorship of the Proletariat' was also mooted by the 'Gang'. The two key articles that put forward the "Gang's" view on modernisation during this campaign were, Yao Wenyuan's "On the social basis of the Lin Biao's anti-Party clique" and Zhang Chunqiao's "On Exercising All Round Dictatorship over the Bourgeoisie". The 'Gang' argued that the system of ownership, the nature of the distribution of the social product and relations between people in the process of production had to be transformed in such a way as to generate class struggle while keeping in mind the 'three major differences' enunciated by Mao, that between town and country, worker and peasant, mental⁴¹ and manual labour.

Mao in the meanwhile send a directive arguing that money as means of exchange, and in particular eight-

40. Bill Brugger, n.13, p. 24

41. Ibid.

grade wage system in industry were 'capitalist characteristics which survive in the socialist society'. He also called for a campaign for the 'restriction of bourgeois rights'. Hua Guofeng, who was to later become Mao's heir apparent, in 1974-75 promoted the main ideological preoccupations of the 'Gang of Four'. It can be seen that the 'Gang's' economic programme reflected the very essence of Maoist thought, like self-reliance in foreign economic relations, modernisation of the army in the tradition of the 'Peoples War', decentralisation of decision making authority to local areas and within economic enterprises, the establishment of revolutionary committees in production, sending educated youth to the countryside and the participation of cadres in manual labour. Deng's programme for modernisation on the other hand was much more pragmatic, and included the rigid implementation of various programmes of industrial regularisation, responsibility system in the various sectors of the economy, wage differentials, strengthening of vertical controls, the de-emphasis on political activity and importation of technology. Deng

came to be increasingly considered the bourgeois element within the Party, forcing him to call his critics 'metaphysicians': "They emphasise only politics, not economics, only revolution, not production. Upon hearing others talk about grasping production well and pushing economic production forward, they simply label them 'practioners of the 'theory of productive forces' and thus 'revisionists'."⁴²

In 1976, Deng's counter attack was referred as 'the right deviationist wind to reverse previously correct verdicts'. Hua Guofeng who was the other major contender for power had taken a moderate position in this debate with regards to both the 'Gang' and the 'Modernisers'. He recognised the importance of class struggle, endorsed the 'Gang's' views on bourgeois elements, but contended that contradictions existed mainly among people and were not antagonistic. The year 1976 was to prove decisive in China's political history. The death of Zhou Enlai in January, was followed by a spontaneous mass movement paying homage to the departed leader at Tiananmen. The authorities

42. Ibid, p. 164

took it as a show of protest as the movement erupted into violence, and Deng was found to be the chief instigator and subsequently dismissed. Hua Guopeng was elevated as the first Vice-Chairman of the Party. Mao's death in September 1976, was closely followed by the arrest of the 'Gang of Four' in October.

While the factional struggle within the Party continued, 1976 brought a definite end to the political turmoil which had begun with the Cultural Revolution and assured in the post Mao era ascendance of the 'Four Modernisations', which will be dealt with in the second Chapter.

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Maoism was distinguished by its attempt, ultimately unsuccessful, to reconcile the means of modern economic development with the ends of socialism, a historically unique effort to keep the socialist values and institutions of the revolution from being overwhelmed by the imperatives of modern industrialism. Maoism did offer a powerful resistance to the bureaucratic institutionalisation of the post-revolutionary order. The failures of Maoism

43. Peter P. Cheng, n. 27, p. 27.

at the end opened the way for the forces of deradicalisation. The failure of the 'Gang' was a result of their isolation from the rest of the Party and the masses, lack of an organisational mechanism and also because they failed to follow the cardinal principle of 'unite with the majority' pioneered by Mao. As the period of mass mobilisations witnessed during the Maoist period came to an end, the Chinese society afflicted with contradictions geared up for a new kind of spontaneous mass movements, like the gathering witnessed after the death of Zhou Enlai. These movements, instead of being guided by the Party, had emerged from the masses and have since developed in the direction of what has been termed the 'democracy movement'. Since its emergence, these movements have constituted a significant threat to the monopoly of the Chinese State and its guiding light, the CPC. This would be the subject of the next chapter in this study of the State-Society relationship in Post Mao China.

THE REVOLUTION FROM WITHIN : THE POLITICS OF MODERNIZATION

This chapter would attempt to study the process of modernization, officially endorsed in 1978, as also undertake the study of it's impact on Chinese society. The programme called the "Four Modernizations" encompassed the Industry, Agriculture, National Defence and Science and Technology, has been a matter of debate and controversy in Chinese politics. As noted earlier, while the programme for modernization was endorsed by the different factions within the Party and Politbureau, it was in the method and the accomplishment of these goals that the various factions differed, and which in the final analysis led to the downfall of the 'Gang of Four'.

The policies which were ultimately endorsed by the Party beginning with the Third Plenum of 1978 was a radical departure from the policies of the Cultural Revolution which was officially terminated at the 11th Party Congress in August 1977, and marked the end of the Maoist period and the beginning of a new era. The conflicts over modernization policies continued into the 1980's, between the more radical reformers and the moderate ones, leading to the resignation of Hua Guofeng, Mao's successor, in 1982. The dynamic growth of the Chinese economy from 1978 onwards as a result of modernization parallels the phenomenon of political unrest and protest, which crops up periodically, demanding more

freedom and democracy. These mass protests and demonstrations, which questioned the very basis of the Chinese polity and continuing monopoly of the Communist Party of China, can be seen partially as a reaction to the Cultural Revolution decade. It can also be attributed to the emergence of the new social forces and classes as the process of modernization gathered momentum.

Ironically, these new forces were seen by the Party as a necessary component of the developmental strategy.

The protests of 1976, and later the 'Democracy Wall' of 1978, smoothed Deng Xiaoping's ascend to power, while at the same time smothered whatever opposition that remained within the Party against modernization. The de-Maoisation and de-ideologisation of Chinese politics proceeded along with the reforms in the economy creating a liberal atmosphere in the Chinese society and garnering support from the various sections of the populace for the modernization drive. The reforms thus enjoyed popular support, especially in the urban areas, fuelled the modernization drive, but as the reforms progressed, they failed to reconcile the state society dichotomy and engendered serious conflicts in 1980's further alienating the Chinese state from the society. This chapter is devoted to the nature of reforms of 1978, which was to effect the Chinese economy primarily, but in due course unleashed social force and groups which gained relative autonomy and posited a challenge to the Chinese state.

REFORM AND MODERNIZATION

From 1975 the drive for modernization through to the 1980's covers three stages- the learn from Dazhai and Daqing, marking the continuity from the Cultural Revolution decade, the 'Four Modernization of 1978, and the more radical reforms proposed in 1986. These programmes were intermittently followed by retrenchment resulting from social unrest, and a demand for greater autonomy as witnessed in democracy movements, which paved the way for the Party's fight against 'bourgeois liberalisation', 'spiritual pollution' and corruption, and also to mould a 'socialist spiritual civilization'. Politically the modernization programme was an explicit repudiation of the mass line policies based on taking class struggle as the key link. Deng Xiaoping emerged as the supreme leader and the major protagonist of the modernization program, increasingly displacing the utopianism of Mao by a much more pragmatic approach. In his speech at the closing session of the Central Working Committee in December 1978, he emphasised the importance of 'seek truth from facts as the basis of the proletarian world outlook and the ideological basis of Marxism', as also about the need to "emanicipate our minds, proceed from reality in everything and integrate theory with practice, to carry out our socialist modernization programme

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smoothly". This defined the pragmatic approach to the reform and set the tone for the modernization programme. During 1977-78 the need for political stability was underlined, coupled with the criticism of the 'Gang of Four'.

In this context Zhang Chunqiao's article of 1975, "On Exercising All-Round Dictatorship of the bourgeoisie", which sought to renew the attack on bourgeois remnants in society spoke of restricting bourgeois rights, curbing the remaining elements of privilege and inequality of income and opportunity, came under severe attack in the Chinese press. It was criticised for confusing contradictions between the people and the enemy with contradictions among the people and hence distorting the concept of the dictatorship of the Proletariat; for ignoring the importance of protecting, "the people so that they may carry on peaceful labour and build our Country into a socialist state with modern industry, modern agriculture, and modern science and culture"² According to Mark Selden the article was also criticised for "attacking the basic socialist principle 'to each according to one's work' thus ignoring Marx's stricture that; individual

(1) Deng Xiaoping, Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping, (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1983) p.154

(2) Mark Selden (ed.) The PRC - A Documentary History of Revolutionary Change, (New York: Meview Press, 1979) p.652

(3) Ibid.

right can never be higher than the economic structure of the Society and its cultural development conditioned thereby'; for ignoring the decisive differences between bourgeois right which rests on exploitation under capitalism, and its remaining manifestations under socialism, which serve the interest of adjusting relations among State, collective and individuals and between workers and peasants; and finally for putting revolution against production by carrying political struggle to dictatorial extremes of violence⁴ against the people and negating science and technology".

The core of Deng's programme of modernisation was contained in the three documents drafted by the State Council in 1975, and labelled by the 'Gang' as 'three poisonous weeds' and the program for 'capitalist restoration', namely, "On the General Program for All Work of the Whole Party and the Whole Country", "Some Questions on Accelerating the Development of Industry" also known as "The Twenty Articles", and "The Outline of the Summary⁵ Report on the work of the Chinese Academy of Sciences". The new model of socialist development undertaken by the reorganised CPC headed by Deng was based on market oriented principles and institutions which represented a return to a

(4) Ibid.

(5) Jurgen Domes, "The Govt And Politics of The PRC"
(London: Westview Press, 1985) p.128

form of Marxist - Leninist orthodoxy. An article published by V.I. Lenin in Pravda in April 1918 titled "The immediate tasks of the Soviet Government", is frequently cited by the current leadership in support of the reforms, which put forth that, "in every Socialist revolution, after the proletariat has successfully seized power and completed the task of expropriating the expropriators what necessarily comes to the forefront is the fundamental task of creating a social system superior to capitalism which means raising the productivity of labour in this connection, securing better organisation of labour" , forming the core and the defence of modernisation in Leninist terms by the Party. This can be seen as the result of Party's desire to justify in terms of Marxism - Leninism, their continued monopoly of political power and in developing new ideological premises for its Post-Mao Political agenda. This Legitimacy was buttressed with Mao's three directives - "the directive on studying the theory of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, a directive on promoting stability and unity, and a directive on pushing the National economy forward".

Thus a selective reading of Maoist theories helped in legitimising the party's rule and its modernisation drive. The chinese economy in the meanwhile progressed along the lines of the 'three State Council Documents' of 1975,

(6) Charles Burton, Political And Social Change in China since 1978 (Connecticut: Greenwood Press Inc., 1990) p.2

(7) Mark Selden, n.2, p. 663

drafted under the guidance of Deng. The theory of the development of productive forces was given priority above that of revolution and class struggle which characterised the Maoist period. Modernisation was to be achieved with an increasing reliance on foreign technology and capital, and also by placing greater emphasis on exports and deficit financing. The issues debated during this period encompassed not just the critical issues in theory but also of policy priorities which was to have a profound effect in China's future like the nature and financing of foreign technology, the allocation of resources between city and countryside, industry and agriculture; the utilisation of natural resources for domestic or export use and in what proportions; wage and income levels in city and countryside; the role of intellectuals and technical personnel in the developmental process.

The new programme was drawn and presented in accordance with the Marxist spirit of seeking truth from facts. According to the former director of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong thought, Su Shaozhi, the new program conforms to Engels assertion that "Communism is not a doctrine but a movement; it proceeds not from principles but from facts", and the utility of this formulation is that "practice is the sole criterion of truth". The Chinese

(8) Ibid, p. 653

(9) Charles Burton, No. 6, p.3

leadership sought to adapt Mao's thought to the new CPC programme of economic modernisation, a reinterpretation which amounts to repudiation and ritualisation of Maoist ideology in the modernisation era.

Marxism was increasingly interpreted as a science for practical political measures rather than an ideology, and to be socialist in general terms meant, "all that is of benefit to the rising of productivity promoting the development of productive forces; all that is of benefit to the consolidation of the socialist economic base; of benefit to strengthening and consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat; of benefit to socialisms vanquishing of capitalism; to pushing forward the cause of Socialism; ~~to pushing forward the cause of socialism~~; all that accords with the benefit of the masses of the labouring peoples; of benefit to the improvement of the life of the people, to raising the peoples standard living; policies and measures that are welcomed by the masses of the people are good things. They are correct. We must uphold them".

This has been known as "building Socialism with Chinese characteristics", put forward by Deng in September 1982 at the Twelfth National Congress of the Communist Party of China: "in carrying out our modernisation programme we must unite the universal truth of Marxism with the concrete

(10) Cited in, As quoted by Aizhong and Li Huan (ed), Summary of the Philosophical Problems Discussed Since the Establishment of the State, Ibid, pp. 4-5

realities of China, proceed along our own path, and build Socialism with Chinese characteristics". The specific contents of 'Socialism with Chinese Characteristics' comprises of "three high levels", which are in economics, a high level of material civilisation; in politics, a high level of Socialist democracy; and in ideology and culture, level of spiritual civilisation.¹² The concept of "socialist spiritual civilisation" was also put forward by the party, which was defined as both the means to and the end of socialist material civilisation. Socialist spiritual civilisation is "the development of education, science, and cultural knowledge based on ever-increasing ideological, ethical, and political awareness".¹³ This concept was devised to counteract the negative effect of the process of modernisation as well as to form an integral part of Socialist construction.

The concept of socialist spiritual civilisation has been included in both the State and Party constitutions as crucial in maintaining the socialist aspect of modernisation, for the development of a socialist economy, and also from preventing China from taking the capitalist path. The Party's approach to ideology in the Post-Mao period reflects a pragmatism divorced from the earlier Maoist principles and was made to facilitate the process of modernisation of the economy.

(11) Deng Xiaoping, n.1, p.395

(12) Charles Burton, n.6, p.22

(13) Ibid, p.23

For the party the priority since 1978, lay clearly in the faster and quicker development of the productive forces, and it was in the realm of economy that radical changes were initiated. The shift in the economic policies in the decade after 1978, has witnessed the unprecedented growth of the Chinese economy amounting to a second revolution. Its impact on the Chinese Society had multifarious results and has affected the very fabric of which it is composed. Within the Party the modernisation program gave rise to a series of conflicts, both in the range and scope and in its compatibility with the official ideology. The reform coalition within the Party was split between the more moderates comprising of the economic planner Li Xiannian and economist Chen Yun, Hu Diaomu and Deng Liqun and the radicals like Hu Yaobang, Zhao Ziyang and Su Shaoshi. Deng's position within the modernizers was rather ambiguous, radical and moderate at times, and in his continued support for economic reform, in favour of a radical approach. Deng's conservatism regarding politics can be seen in his speech of 1979, made immediately after the government crack down on the 'Democracy Wall' activists, where he underlined the importance of upholding the 'Four Cardinal Principles', "We must keep to the socialist road, we must uphold the dictatorship of the proletariat, we must uphold the leadership of the Communist Party, we must uphold
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Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong thought".

AN OVERVIEW OF ECONOMIC MODERNISATION

The Fifth National Peoples Congress in March 1978, completed the institutional transition to the new era and provided the fullest expression of the leadership's vision for China's modern future. The constitution of 1978, was also explicit in its focus on modernisation including economic development, new technology, education and culture. It also recognised the importance of the role of the scientists and intelligentsia in the ambitious modernisation program endorsed by the Congress. Hua Guofeng in his speech "To Build a Modern Powerful Socialist Country" set the Country's goals as, "400 billion kg of grain and 60 million tons of steel a year, 85 percent mechanisation of farmwork and completion of 120 major construction projects - which requires a substantial acceleration of the pace of development. Annual production in agriculture was to increase at 4 to 5 percent and over 10 percent in industry"¹⁵

Agriculture was designated as the foundation of economy and the industry its leading sector. The Dazhai model in agriculture, Daqing, China's largest oilfield, exemplifying a new type of industry was extolled in theory during the Congress, giving a predominant role to self-reliant rural communities and industrial assistance to agriculture in the form of steel, tractors, fertilizers,

(15) Mark Selden, N.2, P.687

(16) Cited in, Ibid, P.696

electricity and consumer goods. China's largest science conference convened a week after the congress, emphasised the priority commitment to modern science and technology.¹⁷ Unlike during the period of Cultural Revolution, the guidelines for the scientists and intellectuals were designed to protect them from political pressures and devote full attention to the "Four Modernisation". The Central issue for the Party leadership was to pursue the rapid development of the productive forces within the framework of the "Four Modernisations" while continuing the revolution. A major break with the policies of the Cultural Revolution was in the expanded introduction of foreign technology to "catch up with the industrially advanced countries", which has been Deng's motto from 1975. "It is by the adoption of the most advanced technologies that the industrially backward Countries catch up with the industrially advanced Countries of the world. We must also do the same".¹⁸

The industrial strategy with its emphasis on advanced, imported technology which creates foreign exchange constraints was to be offset by the exploitation of oil, coal and other natural resources to fuel domestic industry as well as exports. The Agrarian programme included rapid increase in productivity, particularly of marketable commodities and commercial crops and also to bridge income

(17) Ibid, P.689

(18) Cited in, Ibid, P.138

gaps between poorer and richer brigades and communes. Agricultural mechanisation, electrification and industrialisation were given prominence. The training of revolutionary cadres in the Cultural Revolutionary period was replaced by the training of scientists and specialists. Hua Guofeng attacked the 'Gang of four's' interference and sabotage of higher education and culture, and called for the development of a "vast army" of technical cadres, and of "professors, teachers, scientists, journalists, writers, artists, and Marxist theorists", pledging to "let a hundred flowers blossom and contend; making the past serve the present and things foreign serve China, and weeding through the old to bring forth the new".

Hua Guofeng along with Marshal Ye Jianying and Li Xiannian supported by the cadres belonging to the old generation long march veterans, belonged to the moderate faction within the politbureau and promoted five major policies:

(a) In economic development, a new concerted effort was to be aimed at the transformation of the PRC into a major modernised industrial power by the end of the twentieth century, centering on the expansion of having industry as the first developmental priority.

(19) Robert A. Scalapino, "The Policies of the Post-Mao Era: An examination of the 11th Party Congress", Asian Survey, No. 2 Vol. 17, November 1977, P.1058

(20) Cited in Jurgen Domes, The Govt. and Politics of the PRC: A time of Transition (London: Westview Press, 1985) pp. 154-155

(b) Material incentives and a highly differentiated wage system should be promoted, but under centralised planning and with a strong emphasis on collective ownership and production in the urban economy.

(c) In rural societies, a raising of the levels of collectivisation should remain on the agenda, and strict limits should be put on the individual initiatives of the peasants.

(d) In education, Marxist-Leninist indoctrination should continue and possibly be strengthened, but priority should be given to factual knowledge and classroom performance.

(e) In the realm of culture, the parameters of competition should be cautiously widened, but "Socialist realism" should continue to be intensively promoted, and by no means was any cultural or even less so any political expression of dissidence was to be tolerated.

The strategy of the radicals of the Chinese developmental program, which gained prominence has come to be known as 'market socialism' because of their emphasis on market forces. The central ideas behind 'market socialism' were essentially a 'Socialist version of the broader case for economic liberalisation': that centralised, direct and comprehensive State control over the economy has both impractical and undesirable; that the economic involvement of the Socialist State should be less pervasive and operate less through direct controls over enterprises and more

through indirect regulation, and that markets should be revived and developed to provide flexibility and dynamism²¹ to the overall economy. The main feature then of the radical modernisers was an effort to move away from a centralised economy, based upon direct bureaucratic allocation and distribution and towards market based system in which an increasing share of goods and services is distributed²² according to market forces than command.

The concept of market was an anathema till 1978 to the practice of socialism in China, which has its origins in the teachings of Marx, and in China by Mao. The desire to restrict commerce has been the result of Marx's dictum that a planned organisation of the economy would succeed the proletarian revolution. The mechanisms used over years in ordering the Chinese economy has included plan targets written in large part in units of physical output; direct allocation of supplies in the industrial sector; total purchase of the products of industry by commercial departments and their mandatory procurement by retail shops from fixed wholesale suppliers; a heavy reliance on the State run Peoples Bank for financial transactions; exchange of grain, a principal commodity, forbidden through marketing channels but carried out instead through taxation and compulsory purchase by the State; rural taxation exacted and

(21) Gordon White, Riding The Tiger, (London : Mac Millan, 1993) p.9

(22) Peter p. Cheng (ed.) Marxism And Capitalism in The PRC, (New York : University Press of America, 1988) p.38

part of rural remuneration for labor made in kind; a rationing system for scarce and vital consumer items; and State set prices, alongwith price controls to keep inflation in check. Till 1978, both in industry and agriculture physical targets mattered more than the market and price. According to Dorothy J. Solinger the conflict in the 1978 regarding commercial policy within the Party has its origins in the differential understandings of Marx's design for a post-Capitalist society which revolves around three 'tendencies of articulation'; summed up in ideal-typical fashion as stances focusing respectively on class, state control and maximum productivity, and can be referred to as the radical, bureaucratic and marketeer models. The radicals took the most negative attitude to trade, the bureaucrats favoured the planned approach, and the marketeers, impatient with the inflexibilities in the plan but anxious to find State-sponsored ways to smooth exchange and rectifying scarcity by stimulating productivity. After 1978, as the radicals were purged, the conflict over the modernisation programme was mainly between the moderates and the proponents of a much more market based reforms. The moderate policy of deficit spending promoted by Hua Guofeng

(23) Victor Nee & David Mazingo (ed), State and Society in Contemporary China, (London: Cornell University Press, 1983), p.199

(24) Ibid, p.207

(25) Ibid

and Li Xiannian from 1977, in the Central Work Conference of December 1980, came under the scathing attack of the economist Chen Yun, who modified the slogan of four modernisation with an "Eight point directive": readjustment, reform, correction and improvement".²⁶

Although the consumer goods industries were given priority, in 1980 the policies of austerity and the assertion of Party was given prominence, so that the pace of the reforms did not go out of hand. The reforms in the 1980's followed a pattern of radicalism with regards to economy followed by periods of retrenchment and moderation as witnessed in the criticism of 'bourgeois liberalism' particularly in the arts in 1980-81, the campaign against 'spiritual pollution' in the ideological and cultural spheres in 1983-84, and the crack-down against corruption in 1985-86. The reforms of the 1978-85 period granted greater autonomy to factory managers, created a lively market in the distribution of both industrial and agricultural commodities, decollectivised agricultural production, and allowed greater room for individual entrepreneurship. The political and the economic problems produced by the reform

(26) Cited in, Jurgen Domes, n. 20, p. 177

(27) Harry Harding, China's Second Revolution
(Washington D.C: The Brookings Institute, 1987)
p.100

were used by the moderate faction, who included after 1982, economists like Chen Yun, Peng Zhen, Hu Qiaomu and Deng Liqun, to limit the pace and extend of the reform program.

They identified problems like the increase of crime and corruption, the expression of unorthodox political ideas, the emergence of avant-garde styles in literature and arts, the development of popular culture; and in economy the inflation created by price reform, the decline of central control over investment, the expenditure of foreign exchange, the emergence of inequality in the countryside, the failure of grain production to meet State targets after mandatory planning in that sector had been eliminated, and the sudden outbreak of political dissent during the students movement at the end of 1986. The impact of the reforms in Chinese society has meant for the peasant, transformation of agricultural production from a collective undertaking into a family enterprise; for the State, reduced role in the setting of production targets and the determination of prices; for the enterprises, the managers have been given greater autonomy in making decisions and more control over allocation of profits coupled with responsibility for the outcome of their decision; for the worker, the reforms has slowly changed the system of education, employment, discipline and remuneration.

(28) Ibid, p. 84

(29) Ibid, p. 101

The modernisation drive can be thus seen as a departure from Cultural Revolutionary policies, which has led to the restructuring of the Chinese economy and opened up China to the world economy. China's agriculture was decollectivised, and the system in which peasants labored as individuals in collectivised fields under the command of local cadres was transformed into a system of family farming, with the peasant families~~es~~ dividing up the fields that had been farmed in the commune under the system of 'Household responsibility system'. Likewise, a system in which the brigade and team collectively managed the rural economy, providing funds for a variety of production and non-production expenditures and motivating peasants to work on the collective in return for 'work points' has been replaced by a system in which authorities have to tax families to maintain a reduced set of collective facilities while families are free to organise their own labour power and daily activities, and to spend as they choose any surpluses after they have met the contractual obligations. The peasants under the new system are urged to compete and diversify their activities.

The privatisation of the means of production in rural areas led to the dismantling of People's Commune, as private rural enterprises were encouraged, restoring a rich peasant economy. In the industrial sector the theory of the

development of productive forces has led to the opening of the door to foreign capital, technology and management. Decentralisation has been effected and autonomy has been given to both the private and State sector enterprises. The emphasis on heavy industry as seen in the earlier Soviet-model developmental programme has given way for an emphasis on the small scale and medium sectors producing consumer goods. The reforms made in the economy in 1981 and 1984, set up 'Special Economic Zones' resulting in the liberalisation of trade and foreign investment and the establishment of joint ventures with foreign multinationals as well as the formation in China of fully owned subsidiaries of international corporate Capital. The '30 Points Decision on Industry' issued by the Central Committee in 1978 recommended reducing the authority of the Party Committee and strengthening that of factory director also rehabilitating the role of managers, engineers and technicians according to the system of 'specialised responsibility'

The more radical reformer Zhao Ziyang became Premier in 1980, and along with others was responsible for the October 1984 document "On the Reform of Economic Structure". This document called for a major move away from

(31) Michel Chossudovsky, Towards Capitalist Restoration Chinese Socialism after Mao, (London: Mac Millan, 1985) p.78

(32) Ibid, p.87

(33) Roderick Mac Farquhar & John K. Fairbank (ed), The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 15 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) p. 510

the bureaucratic command system and toward the use of market forces in all sectors of the economy. The five key elements in making the markets are:

(a) Inputs and outputs of industry must be made available for purchase and sale on the market.

(b) Enterprise managers must behave in accordance with the rules of the market towards efficient outcome.

(c) Getting prices to reflect the true relative scarcities in the economy,

(d) A major reason for expanding the role of the market is to promote accelerated productivity growth.

(e) An effectively operating market requires that the government maintain acceptable level of price stability.

The worker was thus effectively transformed into wage labour whereby he can be hired and fired, and the labour costs are kept low to maximise enterprise profit. Piece-rate remuneration, bonuses and penalties become the feature in the State sector proceeding from the Socialist principle of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his work". The wage structure in the State sector was geared to a more complex social hierarchy coupled with the rehabilitation of old managerial hierarchy, eliminated revolutionary committees and workers management. The opening up of the economy has taken various forms from

(34) Ibid, pp. 511-513

(35) Michel Chossudovsky, n.31, pp. 108

imports of western technology, starting joint ventures, providing equity shares, financial incentives and tax relief for enterprises established in the 'special economic zones', which became the pockets of capitalism within the socialist China. Education in China has also gone through a sea change, now as the Chinese State is engaged in producing an entrepreneurial class versed in methods of Western management who are to become the backbone of the reform process.

The prominence given to scientists and intellectuals has raised the stature of this new middle class, who Deng stressed was the part of the proletariat: "Those who labour, whether by hand or by brain, are all working people in a Socialist Society" thus redefining the theory of the 'red and the expert'. The reforms in the economy which unleashed powerful interests who in turn pressurised the Chinese State by demanding greater autonomy, freedom and democracy. From the period of the initiation of the modernisation programme, the Chinese State had emphasised on Socialist democracy Su Shaozhi, the director of Marxism-Leninism and Mao-Zedong thought in China's Academy of Social Sciences and an advocate of democratic reform put it as, "Along with the implementation of the policy of readjustment, restructuring, consolidation and improvement with readjustment as its centre, we have pushed forward

democratisation of enterprise management, of economic management of social and political life. Democratisation in various aspects and economic development help each other forward, thus bringing the superiority of socialist system into full play."³¹

The political reforms initiated by the Chinese State in the late 1970's and the first half of the 80's include promoting a reconciliation between state and society by reducing the scope and arbitrariness of political intervention in daily life; expanding the opportunities for popular participation in political affairs, although with limits on both the form and content of political expression; and redefining the content and role of China's official ideology to create a new basis for authority in contemporary Chinese politics.³⁸ These reforms have greatly relaxed the degree of political control over Chinese society, without fundamentally altering the Leninist character of the Chinese political system.

On May Day 1986, Hu Qili, a radical reformer who served on both the secretariat and the politburo introduced the call for a new set of political reforms.³⁹ Wang Zhao Guo, member of the Party secretariat responsible for drafting of Party's proposal for political reform, and Yan Jiaqi, a

(37) Su Shaozhi, Democratization and Reform (Nottingham: Spokesman, 1988) p. 30

(38) Harry Harding, n. 27, p. 174

(39) Ibid, p. 192

scholar and the Director of the Institute of Political Science of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, called for greater freedom of inquiry and discussion, and proposals for the further development of 'socialist democracy'.⁴⁰ Socialist democracy was apparently meant to include measures to increase the degree of legislative oversight over administrative officials and the establishment of mechanisms to increase the accountability⁴¹ of both legislators and administrators to their constituents. Freedom of inquiry and discussion amounted to the study of concepts like democracy, freedom, equality, and human rights, as many of the Marxist tenets were considered obsolete by the new modernized generation. This was supported^p by the radicals in the Party hierarchy like Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang who proposed continuation of the reforms. The protests of November-December 1986 witnessed in the urban areas supporting the call for greater freedom and democracy, was followed by the tightening of political controls targeting what was described as 'bourgeois liberalization' and the dismissal of Hu Yaobang in early 1987.

What these demonstrations proved, was the tightening of the contradictions between the Chinese state

(40) Ibid

(41) Ibid, p. 193

on the one hand and the society on the other as the modernization progressed. Ironically it was the program for the liberalisation of the Chinese ^{economy} that engendered a new strata of upwardly mobile middle class consisting of students, intellectuals, scientists, scholars, and entrepreneurs, who are the backbone of the modernization programme and benefitted from it, and who provided the social and economic base of this struggle against the entrenched party-State. The evolution and the course of these democracy movements which represent the aspirations of the new generation, is essential for understanding of the State - Society relations in the 1980's and will be the subject matter of the third chapter.

CHAPTER - III

REVOLUTION FROM WITHOUT : DISSENT MOVEMENTS AND

THE EMERGENCE OF A CIVIL SOCIETY

A major characteristic in Chinese politics from 1976 onwards has been the emergence of dissent movements which have also been called democracy movements that have cropped up from time to time in the 1980's. Such movements differed in a major way from the mass movements that characterised the Maoist period like the "Hundred flowers Movements" , the 'Great Leap Forward", the "Socialist Education Campaign" and the "Cultural Revolution", which marked the end of the Maoist phase in Chinese politics. While most of the movements during the Maoist phase had been mooted by the State or by the consent of the top leadership within the party, the dissent movements of the post-Mao period had sprung up organically from the Chinese Society with a relatively autonomy and has challenged concepts and institutions which had hitherto been considered sacred. The factors that have contributed towards this phenomenon which was at once political , social and economical are multilayered and

multidimensional. These have ranged from the traumatic after effects of the Cultural Revolution to the general dissatisfaction with the Maoist programme and ideology. Thus, when after 1978, the Chinese leadership announced the beginning of a new era of modernisation and economic reforms, it was but natural for the Chinese Society to call for reforms in the State structure as well. The last two decades in Chinese politics, have seen an active drive for modernisation of the economy as well as limited reforms in the polity. Since the economic modernisation was of paramount interest to the Chinese Party-State political reforms demanded by different sections in Chinese society which challenged the Party's hegemony were put down ruthlessly as witnessed in the Beijing Spring of 1989, and many of the major protagonists of these movements were either jailed or sent into exile. The Beijing Spring of 1989 was not an isolated event in post-Mao China and its genealogy can be traced back to the 'Democracy Wall' movement of 1978 or the much earlier protests of 1976. There is scarcely any uniformity of opinion regarding the origins and the socio political aspects of these dissent movements and there are diverse and complex interpretations of this phenomenon.

A significant theory in the context of the study of the dissent movements has been that of the emerging civil society in China, as witnessed in the changing State-Society relationship in post-Mao China. The study of the State-Society relationship which has gained increasing importance after 1989 in the wake of Tiananmen student protests, has been characterised by Harry Harding as constituting the third generation of scholarship in the study of Chinese politics.¹ Elizabeth J. Perry in her study of the recent "Trends in the study of the Chinese Politics" has concluded that:

"The beginning of this third wave of analysis was signalled by the simultaneous rejection of the totalitarian model that had guided the first-generation scholarship as well as the various brands of pluralism that had enlivened second generation studies. In place of this Soviet and American inspired approaches, third generat^{ion} scholars turned to the models of State-Society relations drawn from the European tradition. Questions of State-building, Civil-Society and the relationship between market development and democratisation now assumed centre stage. The causes, character and

1. Harry Harding, "The Contemporary Study of Chinese Politics : An Introduction." The China Quarterly, No .139 September 1994 ,p.700.

consequences of political change were interpreted as a product of interactions between the State apparatus and society at large." ² Although Perry is of the opinion that an analysis of the Chinese politics within the framework of State-Society relationship has vastly become redundant; because of its Eurocentric nature, the dichotomous manner in which many scholars construe it, and the general macro-level of analysis; it still retains its critical edge as a paradigm for the analysis of the contemporary Chinese politics. This is mainly because a micro-level analysis of the various features of the Chinese State and Society brings forth contradictory sets of informations which have to be put into a general frame of analysis. Thus one has to refrain from both a mechanical application of a paradigm and also the reductionism or the implied meaning which is an attribute of the micro-level approach.

The use of State-Society paradigm by the Chinese Scholars within China since 1986 is also a

(2) Elizabeth J. Perry, "Trends in The Study of Chinese Politics: State-Society Relations", The China Quarterly ; No 139, September 1994 , pp 704-705

pointer of the relevance of such an approach to the study of contemporary society.³ The major problem lies thus in using this concept which originated in Europe in the 17th and 18th Century, and adapting it to the Chinese conditions. This chapter intends to conceptualise the State -Society paradigm propounded by various theorists and study the democratic movements from the perspective of the emergence of an embryonic civil society in the post -Mao period.

THE DISCOURSE ON STATE, CIVIL SOCIETY AND PUBLIC SPHERE

As can be seen in the recent writings of David Strand, Lawrence R. Sullivan, William Rowe, Andrew Walder and Dorothy Solinger on China the concept of Civil Society had a great impact on scholars both within and outside China.

(3) As can be seen in, Shen Yue's, "Bourgeois Right Should be Translated as Townspeople's Right", Liu Zhiguang And Wang Suli's "From Mass Society to Civil Society," Chen Kuide's "On The Misleading Notion Of Collective Society And The Reconstruction Of civil Society" and Su Xiaokang's, "A Half-Made Civil Society."

This has been the result of the collapse of the Communist regimes in the erstwhile Soviet Union and the eastern Europe. The collapse of these totalitarian regimes has been attributed by some scholars to the emergence of a civil society which challenged the legitimacy of these Socialist regimes . The PRC, which has a similar political system, and which experienced political upheavals in 1980's became the focus of such an approach in the aftermath of the Tiananmen massacre.

To understand the concepts of State and Civil Society, one has to necessarily treat them as historical categories. From the period of Hobbes, Locks and Rousseau the concept of State has been in vogue. The rationalisation of the State as a product of reason continued through Hegel, and found its bitter critics in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. The three basic elements in Marx's and Engels's doctrine of the State, according to Norberto Bobbio are:

" (a) The State as a coercive apparatus or as the 'concentrated and organised violence of Society': an instrumental conception of the State which is the opposite of the ethical or finalistic one

(b) The State as an instrument of Class domination where 'the executive of the modern State is but a Committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie'; a particularistic conception of the State as opposed to the universalistic conception characteristic of all theories of natural law including Hegel's.

(c) The State as a secondary or subordinate phenomenon in relation to civil society where it is not the State which conditions and regulates civil society, but is Civil Society which conditions and regulates the State: a negative conception of the State which is in complete opposition to the positive conception found in⁴ rationalistic thought"

Marx put forward a radical critique of the State which called for the abolition of the State to attain the Communist ideal. In the 20th century, in the post-revolutionary societies in Russia, Eastern Europe and also in China it was the Lenin's concept of State that gained predominance, which does not accept the dichotomy between State and Society. As Civil Society had emerged in the Capitalist world, to conceive of it

(4) Cited in, Norberto Babbio, "Gramsci and the concept of civil Society", John Keane(ed), Civil Society and The State(London:Verso, 1988) pp75-76

in a Socialist-Society amounted to a refutation of the very basis of Socialism .The One -Party system in these Socialist states denied any difference between political and Social power, public and private law, State sanctioned information and propaganda⁵ and freely circulated public opinion.

The centralised Party -State in principle, thwarted the formation of independent centres of power,there by extinguishing a Civil Society which has been absorbed into the structures of the State.John Keane observes that the Civil Society is thus forced to go underground, and becomes confident only when the State rapidly loses its grip because of structural weaknesses, as can be seen in the Solidarity Movement of Poland, the Prague spring⁶ of Czechoslovakia, and the Hungarian uprisings.

The concept of Civil Society in the 20th Century was treated in an elaborate manner by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, who openly

5. John Keane (ed), Civil Society And The State, (London: Verso,1986) p 2

6. Ibid,p.p4-5

acknowledges his indebtedness to Hegel. For Gramsci, Civil Society belonged to the realm of superstructure and as elaborated in his famous Prison Notebooks :

"What we can do for the movement, is to fix two major superstructural 'levels': the one that can be called 'Civil-Society', that is the ensemble of organisms commonly called 'Private', and that of 'Political Society' or the 'State'. These two level correspond on the hand to the function of 'hegemony' which the dominant group exercises throughout Society , and on the other hand to that of 'direct domination' or rule exercised through the State and juridical government".⁷

The Civil Society, to Gramsci was the mediating link between the class structured economy and State institutions based on coercion, and the working class along with the party and the intellectuals has to establish an anti-bourgeois hegemony within Civil Society.⁸ The other important aspect in Gramsci's thought relates to his theory of the 'war of

7. Cited in, Ibid. pp 82-83

8. Ibid, p.22

positions'. This theory advocated trench warfare, as against a direct frontal attack upon the State apparatus. Gramsci elaborates, " The War of Positions demands enormous sacrifices by the infinite masses of people. So an unprecedented concentration of hegemony is necessary, and hence a more 'interventionist' government, which will take the offensive more openly against the oppositionists and organize permanently the 'impossibility' of internal disintegration- with controls of every kind, political, administrative etc, : reinforcement of the hegemonic 'positions' of the dominant group. The concept of 'Hegemony' can be seen to play an important role for Gramsci, as the conquest of hegemony precedes the conquest of power, which according to him was both cultural as well as political leadership. The hegemonic forces includes not just the Party but all other institutions of the Civil Society, and aims not only at the formation of a collective will capable of creating a new state apparatus and transforming society but also at elaborating and propagating a new conception of the world.

9. David Mclellan (ed), Marxism: Essential Writings, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p 72

10. John Keane ,n 3,p 93

The notion of 'Public sphere', similar in essence to the concept of the Gramscian 'Civil Society' but which differs in other aspects, put forward by the Frankfurt School Social theorist Jurgen Habermas has in the recent times challenged the dichotomous conception of the State and Society. Habermas places the public sphere squarely in, "the tension - charged field between the State and Society".¹¹ Habermas's concern in his work, "The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Enquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society" mainly deals with what he calls the emergence of the 'bourgeois public sphere' which with the advent of the welfare State has gone through a structural transformation where by State and Society interpenetrated, blurring the lines between the private and public spheres, "The bourgeois public sphere evolved in the tension - charged field between ^{he} ~~the~~ State and Society. But it did so in such a way that it remained itself a part of the private realm. State intervention in the sphere of society found its counterpart in the transfer of public functions to private corporate bodies. Likewise, the opposite

11. Philip C. Huang, "Public Sphere /Civil Society' in China? The Third Realm Between State And Society", Modern China Vol. 19, No 2, April 1993, p. 219.

process of a substitution of State authority by the power of Society was connected to the extension of public authority over sectors of the private realm. Only this dialectic of a progressive 'Societalisation of the State simultaneously with an increasing 'State-ification' of society gradually destroyed the basis of the bourgeois public sphere - the separation of State¹² and Society."

As in the Gramscian concept of the Civil Society, the public sphere is also a realm of private people coming together as public in various associations, groups, corporate and other private bodies forming public opinion and checking the State power. Public sphere thus refers to the generalised phenomenon of an expanding public realm of life in modern society, which can take on different forms and involve different power relationship between State and Society.¹³ Similarly if the Gramscian notion of Civil Society expresses the existence of autonomous bodies and

12. Cited in Ibid, p. 216.

13. Ibid, p. 217

associations free from State tutelage, in the Habermasian public sphere, " Citizens act as a public when they deal with matters of general interest without being subject to coercion: thus with the guarantee that they may assemble and unite freely, and express and publicize their opinions freely".¹⁴

Richard Madsen has observed that while Civil Society refers to such disparate elements such as economic associations, labour unions, independent economic enterprises, political associations, religious congregations and ethnic communities; the democratic public sphere - sphere of constructive public responsibility - arises from below from the development of an active Civil Society which undermines the rigidly authoritarian regimes in the post socialist world.¹⁵

The concepts of 'Civil Society' and that of the 'public sphere' relates more or less to the

14. Cited in, Frederic Wakeman, Jr, "The Civil Society and public Sphere Debate, Western Reflections on Chinese Political Culture". Modern China, Vol, 19, No. 2, April 1993, p. 111.

15 Richard Madsen, " The Public Sphere, Civil Society and Moral Community", MODERN CHINA, Vol, 19, No. 2, April 1993 ,pp.187-189

institutions and practices of western liberal democracies: private individual, group and property rights : means and places of communication for forming and freely expressing public opinion: institutions and process for individual and group political participation : legal guarantees of all these rights , institutions and activities ; and Constitutional limits on State power.¹⁶ The concept of Civil Society becomes the very anti-thesis of the organic concept of State , propounded by Lenin since the time of the Second International and institutionalised by Stalin.

While the theory itself owes its genesis in western political thought its application to the Societies like that of China where the Capitalist stage of development has been virtually absent poses questions both of theory, application and that of historical analysis for the China scholar. The western perspective on the 'emerging civil society' in China, according to Heath B Chamberlain, falls into three categories; '(a) those

16. Mary Backus Rankin, " Some Observations On A Chinese Public Sphere," Modern China, Vol 19, No 2, April 1993, p 159

that treat civil society as the product of a "revolutionary movement", a sudden forging of a united front among disparate social elements, taking shape essentially "at the barricades; (b) those that see it as a recently emergent "counter-elite structure", restricted mainly to urban-based intellectuals and students, yet firmly established and potentially expandable; and (c) those that view it in longer-range historical perspective as a phenomenon clearly evident decades if not a century ago--and now after years of forcible suppression, reasserting itself. The first approach takes as its exclusive subject the dissent movements but fails to take into account the pluralism inherent in such movements; the second approach concentrates on the emergent "Counter elite structure" composed of intellectuals, scientists and other professionals but does not take into account the complex relation between the State and the intellectual, and relies mainly on the independence and the autonomy of the intellectual; the third approach sees the emerging civil Society from a historical perspective, and draws a historical continuity from the period of Qing and the Ming dynasties while the

17. Heath B. Chamberlain, "On Search for Civil Society in China", Modern China Vol. 19, No. 2, April 1993, p 200

re-emergent Civil Society is seen as stimulated by the economic reforms of Deng Xiaoping.¹⁸

Unlike the Habermasian perspective of the public sphere conceived as it is by the intermingling of State, Society and the Civil Society, all these approaches defines the Civil Society as opposed to State. Chamberlain gives an account of the four features of the Civil Society amalgamating the different perspectives: "(a) Civil Society may be understood as a community bonded and empowered by its collective determination to resist, on the one hand, excessive constraints of the Society and, on the other, excessive regulations of the State. Although Civil Society is a relatively autonomous entity distinct from both State and Society it nevertheless partakes of both and faces and constantly interacts with both: (b) Civil Society is animated and sustained by widely shared beliefs and attitudes - "Shared moral visions" - concerning relations among individual citizens and between this community of citizens and the State: (c) what sustains Civil Society is the determination of its members to achieve some degree of autonomy and self-organisation in their quest for individual freedom and

18. Ibid, pp. 201-204

political democracy . But a well functioning Civil Society cannot be totally autonomous of either Society or State:(d) Civil Society is a community in constant tension, and its members are pulled in several directions simultaneously; towards one another and apart, both toward their individual private worlds and the more public realm of State authority. Tension is a defining feature of Civil Society and a source of its strength and weakness - either toward State or toward Society."¹⁹

The Western discourse on Civil Society arose in the aftermath of the Tiananmen incident of 1989. The Chinese discourse on Civil Society on the otherhand, according to the Chinese scholar Shu-Yun Ma, can be traced back to 1986, when Shen Yue published an article in Tianjin Social Science unearthing the concept of "townspeople's right" (Shimin quanli) from Marx's classical writings.²⁰ Shen Yue, contends that this "right" refers to the right of equal exchange of commodities in a market economy, ~~and that this term~~

19. Ibid, pp. 207-209

20. Shu-Yun Ma, "The Chinese Discourse on Civil Society", The China Quarterly, No. 137, March 1994, p.183.

commodities in a market economy, and that this term which was mistranslated into Chinese as "bourgeois right" (Zichan Jieji Quanli), equated it with the improper privileges of the bourgeoisie and was consequently denied to Chinese townspeople.²¹ The concept included both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat who enjoyed greater autonomy, and to settle disputes among them, a legal system was developed to define individual rights and duties, transforming townspeople into a new social category, "Citizens"²² (qongmin)

Two other theorists, Lin Zhiguang and Wang Suli, established that individualism as the legitimate basis of "Civic Awareness", and contended that in contrast to western states which are build upon civil societies, the Chinese one is based on a "mass society" (qunzhongon Shehui), arguing that the meaningful existence of collectivity is guaranteed only by the recognition of individual rights.²³ The concept of "mass" according to Wang connoted a subordination to the rulers unlike

21. Ibid
22. Ibid
23. Ibid, p. 184

the western concept of "Citizen" which is associated with equality and individual rights, thus the modernisation of China calls for raising peoples "civic awareness", a real guarantee of democracy and freedom, replacing personal rule with governance of law, and establishing a democratic system by which the Chinese "mass" will be transformed into a "Citizenry",. . . By invoking the western concepts of individual rights and freedom the debates and writings within China called for the westernisation of the Chinese Society. The Chinese State responded to these demands in September 1986, when the Party Central Committee issued the "Resolution concerning the Guiding Principles of the Socialist Spiritual Civilization Construction", which stated that the Party should promoted legal knowledge among the people, in order to "Strengthen Socialist Civic awareness".

Later in 1988, guided by the Party, a team of writers from the National People's Congress, the Central Party School, the Beijing High Court, the State Administration of Industry and Commerce published the

24. Ibid

25. Ibid

Handbook for Citizens (Gongmin Shouce), which contained chapters on democracy, rule of law, citizens rights and duties, public ethics, social discipline, public security family and heritage law, rules concerning foreign affairs or foreign nationals, crime and penalty.²⁶ On the other hand, western institutions such as universal suffrage, parliamentarism, multi-party systems, judicial independence and equality of law were said to be Capitalist in nature.²⁷

The Chinese Party-State has thus far remained the major stumbling block to the emergence of a Civil Society, whose demands were articulated in the dissent movements of the late 1970's and the 80's. But the process of economic modernisation in the post-Mao era had laid the economic foundations for an embryonic Civil Society, and this discourse of dissent has become the major indicator of the emergent Chinese Civil Society. The discourse of intellectuals who actively participated in these democracy movements, who were either jailed or exiled provides another dimension to the study of the State-Society relationship in China.

26. Ibid, pp. 185-186

27. Ibid, p. 186

The third part of this chapter therefore analyses the development of these dissent movements in relation to the ideological discourse, which ranged from a variety of concepts such as liberal democracy and socialist democracy to that of the formation of a Civil Society.

DISSENT/DEMOCRACY MOVEMENTS IN PERSPECTIVE

The history of dissent movements in the post-Mao China has its origins in the 'Democracy Wall' movement of 1978, and the earlier student protests of 1976. The 1976 movement was spontaneous one, a characteristic of Chinese ^{democracy movements, as the Chinese} populace gathered at the historical Tiananmen square to mourn the death of Zhou Enlai. This developed into a large scale protest against the rule of 'Gang of Four', who were blamed for the excesses of the Cultural Revolution. The Tiananmen incident of 5th April 1976, turned violent, attacking a public security office, setting vehicles alight, attacking cadres supposed to be the followers of the current radical leaders, and refusing to disperse, and had to be forcibly expelled or arrested by the security forces.

28. David S. G. Goodman, Beijing Street Voices: The Poety and Politics of China's Democracy Movement, (London: Marion Boyars, 1981) p. 13

As this movement died a natural death, another movement was taking shape, and in the latter half of 1978, this movement came to be known as the 'Democracy Movement' and went on till March 1979 when the Beijing authorities clamped down on the movement. At the organisational level there was no single group or organisation which led the movement, rather it consisted of intellectuals, individual activists, groups and associations such as the China Human Rights Alliance (Zhongguo renquan tongmeng), the Enlightenment Society (Qimengshe); and publications, unofficial journals and newspapers such as the April 5th Forum (Siwu Luntan), 'Exploration' (Tansuo), 'Masses Reference News (Qunzhong Cankao Xiaoxi), 'The Peoples Forum (Renmin Luntan), and 'Today' (Jintian).²⁹

Although consensus between these groups did not exist at an ideological level, in a joint statement they pledged "to persevere in carrying out the long term struggle to realise socialist democracy", and formulated a policy of mutual support in defence of their Constitutional rights.³⁰

The 'Democracy Movement' brought forth a wide

29. Ibid, p. 4

30. Cited in Ibid.

range of questions on China's past, present and future with attacks on Mao Zedong, the Communist Party of China, and demands for human rights and democracy. The most radical of the demands was the one for democracy, was spelt out in (dazupao) article posted by wei Jingshang called the 'Fifth modernisation', which pointed out that the officially sponsored 'four modernisations' were unrealistic and meaningless without democracy, which signalled a new development in Chinese political culture, which was to persist.³¹ Wei criticised Mao and the totalitarian system, and described the Chinese economy as: disasters caused by the autocratic rulers, by fascism under a Marxist-Leninist signboard, by totalitarianism, and by those who toyed with hundreds of millions of human lives according to the vagaries of a small number of persons"³² Wei advocated freedom, democracy and human rights defined in terms of maximum individual freedom and a western model multi-party liberal democracy. While this does not represent the predominant thinking, one can find the various hues of democracy ranging from the Socialist democracy, liberal democracy and

31. Fu Zheng Yuan, Autocratic Tradition and Chinese Politics, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) p. 331.

32. Cited in, David S.G. Goodman, n. 27, p.5.

: 88:

capitalism as in Yugoslavia and United States in the protestor's demands. The same can be said about the attitude towards Mao, in outright criticism of the acceptance of Mao as a great leader of China.

The Democracy Movement developed other general issues such as sexual freedom, wage reform, economic and social differentials, privilege and international relations.³³ The other major aspect of the movement has been in its demand for what has been called 'Cultural Democracy' - that is, the attempt to free art and literature from the restrictions in style and content imposed by the official media, and in so doing to provide alternative modes of expression, as one of the leading journals the 'April 5th Forum' put it, "to publish the people's thoughts and words, which for all kinds of reasons are not contained in official publications. To publish popular literature which develop's the spirit of April 5th".³⁴ In a general sense the Democracy Movement represented the right to have options, to discuss opinions, to experiment, and the right to self expression, even though differences

33. Ibid, p. 7

34. Ibid

emerged in theory and practice as to the limits they sought to place on such activities.³⁵ The standard techniques of dissent like wall posters, magazines, newspapers and demonstrations were employed during the movement.

The Chinese intelligentsia during the Democracy Movement of 1978-79 consisted mainly of students, journalists, artists, and urban workers along with the other disenchanting sections of the populace. Gramsci writing on intellectuals has observed that, "every 'essential' social group which emerges into history out of the preceding economic structure, and as an expression of a development of this structure, has found categories of intellectuals already in existence and which seemed indeed to represent an historical continuity uninterrupted even by the most complicated and radical changes in political and social forms".³⁶

The idea of an independent autonomous class of intellectuals according to Gramsci is a myth. In the Chinese case, the core of the Democracy Movement consisted mainly of the students and intellectuals who belonged to the middle and upper-middle strata of the

35. Ibid, p. 9

36. Cited in David McLellan, n. 8, p. 264.

Chinese Society. They were the children of cadres and intellectuals who prior to the Cultural Revolution would have expected to gain some tertiary education, but because of the educational policies of the Cultural Revolution were sent down to the front lines of production instead of enrolling at the institutes of higher learning.

The movement which had occurred during the power struggle within the Party between the Deng' and Hua Guofeng faction ironically consolidated Deng's power and control over the State and Party apparatus. As the demands of the movement grew more radical, the State crackdown began with the arrest of the prominent intellectuals including Wang Xizhe, Wei Jingsheng and Chen Erjin among others. Although the Chinese Party-State came down heavily on the Democracy Movement,¹ the policy orientation of rapid economic growth required the active cooperation of China's intellectuals, scientists and technicians. Political authorities as a result attempted to woo this group by liberalising Party controls over their professional activities, by abandoning the practice of using class labels to curb

37. David S.G. Goodman, n. 27, p. 36

their behaviour and by licensing certain forms of limited participation.³⁸ This upwardly mobile middle class thus since 1978 was able to gain relative autonomy in relation to the State, and was supported by the reform faction within the Party. According to Wang Xizhe, a prominent intellectual and activist of the Democracy Movement, the movement was growing on three fronts. "the first front consists mainly of a reform faction in the Party, and debate is currently taking place within this faction as to the scale of the democratic reform in China; the second front is composed mainly of intellectuals drawn from literary, artistic and theoretical circles; the third front, which this scholars particularly stresses consists mainly of young students and young workers over the past year, this last front has developed vigorously, notably through its participation in election campaigns and related areas of activity"³⁹ This third front, for Wang has "displayed an increasing sense of assertiveness over the question of its own right to exist and be involved in the affairs of the nation".⁴⁰ Summing up

38. John P. Burns and Stanley Rosen (ed), Policy Conflicts in Post-Mao China: A Documentary Survey (New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc. 1986) p.1

39. Wang Xizhe, "Democracy and Chinese Communism", New Left Review, No. 131, Jan-Feb 1982, p.62

40. Ibid, p. 63.

the common objectives of the three fronts "which still lie on the abstract plane of democratic reform - in economics, the devolving of greater power to the enterprises; in the sphere of literature and art, a genuine effort to let 'a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend'; and in the political sphere, the election of Peoples Congress at all levels of the State by the popular masses themselves:.

41

In the early 1980's the reform faction within the Party which consisted of leaders like Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang wanted to carry out a kind of intra-party reform under the dictatorship of the Communist Party on the one hand, while the popular masses specially in urban areas called an opposition to the One-Party monopoly on the other. At the enlarged session of the Politburo in August 1980 Deng pointed out that the reform of the State structure was necessary to reduce bureaucratism, to terminate life tenure for the cadres and to eliminate overlapping responsibilities; the patriarchal style of leadership, and over concentration of power; and to promote~~d~~ democracy and collective

leadership and to strengthen the socialist legal system⁴² The Chinese Party-State felt that it was necessary to make some concessions to smoothen the modernisation programme. Socialist democracy was interpreted by the Party, as guaranteeing democratic rights within the framework of overall Party Control, and relaxation was seen as an indispensable condition for emancipating the mind, and thus for promoting scientific and technological progress.⁴³

Various interpretations of socialist democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat can be found in dissent literature of the 'Democracy Movement' of 1978-79 which gave a different interpretation to the concept. Wang Xizhe, a prominent dissident who belonged to the 'Li Yi Zhe group, so called after the ex-Red Guard leaders Li Zhengtian, Chen Yiyang and Wang Xizhe, for example, wrote an article entitled "struggle for the Class Dictatorship of the Proletariat" in the unofficial journal Voice of the People.⁴⁴ Gregor Benton has summarised its argument as follows: "After

42. As cited in, Burns and Rosen, n. 37, p.10

43. Gregor Benton, "China's Oppositions", New Left Review No. 122, July-Aug 1980, p. 64

44. Ibid, p. 73.

the proletariat has seized power in an economically backward country it is confronted with two choices. Either it can close its doors to the outside world and retreat into a regime of 'feudal Socialism', or it can enter the world system and become a 'large scale co-operative factory' - a 'bourgeois State without the bourgeoisie' - producing goods for a Capitalist dominated world market. Given the huge size of the this 'Co-operative factory' and the worker's low cultural level, the administration of the economy is carried out not by the workers ^{but} by their vanguard, organised in the Communist Party. There are two possible courses along which such a state can subsequently evolve. Either the worker's cultural level will rise so that they can gradually be drawn into the tasks of State administration; or the workers vanguard will become alienated into something opposed to the proletariat' i.e. a dictatorship of the 'Communist bureaucrat'. The social basis for such a dictatorship still exists in China".

In his 1980 article 'Restore Genuine Communism', Wang deals with this problem of alienation in a much

more elaborate manner. "It is possible for the dictatorship of the Communist Party to gradually break loose from control by Society and turn into a domineering force over society. What starts out as the advanced section of the proletariat can become estranged from and turn against the proletariat. What starts out as the dictatorship of the advanced layer can change into a dictatorship of the 'Communist Party bureaucrats' who cloak themselves in the banner of the Communist Party".⁴⁶ Bureaucratism according to Wang, was a phenomenon occurring in a single socialist country when the producers are not yet really united with the means of production and hence the means of production continue to act as an alien, opposing force to the producers.⁴⁷ Socialist democracy thus arises organically out of new economic relations on a new economic foundation, and is the political form that corresponds to those new economic relations.⁴⁸ The Tiananmen incident was, to Wang, "a glimpse of how far the Party had escaped from control by the people and become a domineering force over Society as a whole.

46. Wang Xizhe, "For A Return To Genuine Marxism in China", New Left Review, No. 121, May-June 1980 p. 38.

47. Ibid, p. 39

48. Ibid, p. 40

The demonstrations were a courageous attempt by the people to regain control over a party and a State that had become increasingly alien to them".⁴⁹

Proceeding from the same premise as Wang Xizhe, Chen Erjin, a Marxist theoretician has contented that, "from the bourgeois two - or multi-party system to the proletarian Single -Party System, and then from the latter to a proletarian two - or multi party system - alone constitutes the truly requisite path towards the withering away of political parties".⁵⁰

For Chen, party pluralism, under socialism, would undertake the task of integrating and harmonising the divergent interests of all social strata - a tradition which having now become an inseparable feature of Socialist states, would be sustained under Communist Party pluralism.⁵¹ The principle function of the two parties, in Chen's schema, would not be to represent different social bases, but rather to put forward different strategies and policy proposals towards the

49. Ibid, p. 42

50. Chen Erjin, China: Crossroad Socialism (London: Verso, 1984) p. 34

51. Ibid, pp. 34-35.

consensual attainment of common goals, as prescribed in the 'written Marxist Constitution', thereby providing an institutional safeguard for Communist opposition.⁵²

In the liberalised atmosphere of the reform period, and especially in the wake of the Democracy movement, there appeared in China various groups and other informal associations, comprising of students intellectuals, artists and journalists; started under their initiatives and autonomous from state. The "salon culture" as it came to be known organized study groups and published unofficial journals, organised public opinion all over China on social, political scientific and literary themes. It is in these associations, which were partly autonomous from the Chinese Party-State, the embryonic civil society became visible. The National Association of the People's Press, a nation wide body comprising twenty nine cities across the country and loosely structured, uniting various sources of public opinion across the country into a 'force capable of transforming society', is one such group.⁵³ Another example is the 'Study Group

52. Ibid, p. 35

53. Wang Xizhe, n. 38, p. 64

on Problems of China's Rural Development' of the early 1980's, who ~~was~~ masterminded the rural reforms. ⁵⁴

While this embryonic civil society was taking shape, the Chinese Party-state sought to check its development as seen in the campaign against spiritual pollution in 1983, against bourgeois liberalism in 1987 and finally the Tiananmen crackdown by the military. If the two former movements stressed on the Party's ideological superiority vis a vis the society, the third showed the coercive repressive character of the Communist regime. The anti-'spiritual pollution' campaign of 1983, concentrated on the realm of culture especially literature, and concepts such as humanism (rebdaizgytu), alienation (yihua), modernism (xiandaipai) which influenced the modern literary works, came to be challenged by the Party's official position of realism (xianshizhuyi), which was to be the guiding feature in literature. ⁵⁵ According to the Party critics concepts such as modernism and

54. Michel Bonnin and Yves Chevrier, "The Intellectual and the State: Social Dynamics of Intellectual Autonomy During the Post-Mao Era", The China Quarterly, No. 127, Sept. 1991, p. 575.

55. Wendy Larson, "Realism, Modernism, And The Anti-'Spiritual Pollution', campaign In China, "Modern China Vol. 15, No. 1, Jan. 1989, p. 37.

alienation was an outgrowth of the decadent western societies; and the practitioners of modernism in arts and literature defended it on the ground that such literature is an indication of modernization.⁵⁶ These discussions while asserting the dogmatic attitude of the Party had occurred as a result of the liberalised atmosphere prevailing in China, wherein intellectuals were allowed to discuss matters freely among themselves, in seminars and conferences.

The tradition-modernisation theme which dominated these confrontations in the political, economic and cultural spheres had prompted the Party to mould a 'socialist spiritual civilisation' to keep in check the detrimental effects to the Party's hegemony as the modernization process got underway. In 1986, aided by the reforms faction within the Party when intellectuals such as, Fang Lizhi, Liu Binyan and Wang Ruowang, demanded an overhauling of the Chinese political system, which led to the student demonstrations of 1986, the conservative faction within the Party labelled it as 'spiritual pollution; and the campaign

56. Ibid, pp. 48 - 49

57
against 'bourgeois liberalism' was initiated. The
demands for liberalisation of the political structure
included a multi-party democracy, separation of powers,
strengthening of the legal system and against official
corruption, and more economic and social and political
reforms, and led to the resignation of Hu Yaobang, the
general secretary of Communist Party of China on 16th
58
January 1987, who supported the demonstrations. With
corruption becoming a major issue, and rampant
inflation as a result of economic modernization which
had spiralled making the life of the urban dwellers
more difficult the protests demonstrated^{not} the desire, and at
the same time the inability for the society to control
its own destiny. The dichotomy between the State-
Society became more evident, although the Civil Society
manifested its weakness and its subservient position in
relation to the Party-State.

The erosion of Party legitimacy was the immediate
fall out, with unprecedented cultural and moral decay
and economic polarization as a result of the economic

57. Tony Saich (ed), The Chinese People's Movement: Perspectives on Spring 1989, (London: M.E. Sharpe, Inc, 1990), p. 31

58. Lawrence R. Sullivan, "Assault on the Reforms: Conservative Criticism of Political and Economical Liberalisation", The China Quarterly, No. 114, June 1988, p. 198.

reforms. The Party's attitude towards democracy was unequivocally put by Deng on April 1987 to the Hongkong Basic Law Drafting Committee Delegation, in which he said: "Western democracy consists of parliamentary elections, and of the separation of the three powers and so on. We are not opposed to parliamentary elections in the West. In China we do not practice the separation of powers, or a bicameral system. We have the system of a single National Peoples Congress, which is adapted to China's reality.... because we have a population of one billion, as the peoples cultural quality is also insufficient, conditions are not ripe to practice direct elections,"⁵⁹ While on the one hand as the Chinese State has shown its intransigence regarding political reforms, on the other hand, ironically it has been the economic reforms initiated by the Party that has provided the social and economic base for the emergent Civil Society.

This is true both of urban and rural China, as decentralisation and decollectivisation as well as support for private enterprises, and setting up of

59. Cited in, Stuart R Schram, "China After the 13th Congress The China Quarterly, No. 14, June 1988, p. 182

special economic zones in the coastal areas along capitalist lines with the participation of foreign capital in joint ventures has had the overall effect of setting up of independent bases of power, partially autonomous from the State. The introduction of the market mechanism has also strengthened these bases, which pressurise the State from without for more guarantees and continued reforms. Although the State still controls the economy as seen in the enlarged public sector, there has been a constant erosion of power. The reform policies in the rural areas have gradually expanded the scope for private capital accumulation, at individual, household, and corporate/associational levels; it has increased the scope for capital mobility through joint enterprises of various kinds, and the beginnings of joint stock companies, and private credit institutions. The structure and dynamics of the rural economic system are undergoing rapid and potentially fundamental changes, which point in the direction of private Capitalism.

This had led to the decline in the ability of the

60. Gordon White, "The Impact of Economic Reforms in The Chinese Countryside," Modern China, Vol. 13, No. 4, October 1987, p. 421.

61. Ibid, p. 422.

Party-State to control and regulate grassroots rural life, which has facilitated a resurgence of traditional communalist politics based on locality, kinship, religion and even secret societies, and constitutes a potentially powerful basis for communal political organisation and for the cooperation or penetration of official institutions.⁶²

In the urban areas the economic reforms have given rise to a new class, comprising of scientists, intellectuals and entrepreneurs as a result of the rising economic power, who have and has become the backbone of the protest movements, some more articulate than others. Many of the research organisations and associations demanding democracy were funded by private enterprises and individuals, or independently a network which played an important role during protest and dissent. The first of these that claimed public existence was the one established by Fang Lizhi, an advocate of multi-party democracy, in May 1988 with his wife LiShuxian and students in the University campus at Beida.⁶³ The Beijing Institute for Sociology and

62. Ibid, pp. 427-428.

63. Michel Bonnin and Yves Chevrier, n. 53, p. 575.

Economics, Chinese University of Public Administration, the Chinese Federation of Economic Associations were organisations that were partially or fully autonomous.⁶⁴

Thus the movement towards social autonomy unfolded in the changing framework created by institutional decentralisation and economic reforms, as more autonomous bodies were carved within or outside of state structures and new avenues were opened for employment, careers, business ventures of a semi official or private nature, that no longer depended on Party-state structures.⁶⁵

According to Bonnin and Chevrier, " a sphere of economic and social pluralism emerged between the official sphere of the State and the private sphere of the individual, but no independent political sphere was associated with it; an unbalanced situation which led to the radicalisation of the demands"⁶⁶

Following the death of Hu Yaobang on April 15th 1989, massive student demonstration took place at the Tianamen square to mourn his passing away.⁶⁷

Evoking 'collective memories' that make a group, according to Rubie Watson

64. Ibid, p. 585

65. Ibid, pp. 576-577.

66. Ibid, p. 578

67. Tony Saich (ed), n. 58, p. 164.

has been an unique feature of Chinese political culture, thus the Monument to the Revolutionary Heroes in Tiananmen square, public ceremonies like funerals become powerful symbolic carriers of memory with officially approved surface meanings capable of evoking ⁶⁸ subversive hidden meanings.

The Beijing spring of 1989, which continued upto June, showed the capacity of the demonstrators in evoking collective memory, which in the post-Mao period can be traced to the protests of 1976. The hidden agenda of the demonstrators in the days following the mourning of Mu Yaobang came in to full view of the Party-State. This was also facilitated by the intra-party conflict, between Zhao Ziyang and Li Peng over ⁶⁹ the management of economic reforms. The two major characteristics that differentiate this movement from the earlier ones, for Corrina Barbara Francis were: "(a) the first protest ^{me} _^ movement in the Peoples Republic of China to be driven by the idea that society has the right to an identity independent of the State and the

68. Cited in, Richard Madsen, n. 14, p. 192-193

69. Michel Bonnin and Yves Chevrier, n. 53, p. 589.

right to organise and represent itself autonomously, (b) Its adoption of the institutional features and strategic methods of democratic protest: independent and representative organisation, a public and legal framework of operation, non-violent activity, and broad mass appeal."⁷⁰

Although the movement which called for democratic reforms ended in State repression in early June, and was not able to implement a multi-party system or direct election nor redefine the role of the Communist Party; in principle it achieved society's right to organise independently and to represent through autonomous associations, embodying the essential principle of democratic society which undermined the Communal political order.⁷¹ The organisations that played the key role in movement were the student organisations like 'Autonomous Student Union of Beijing Universities and colleges', the 'Beijing University Students Group for Dialogue', the intellectuals in Beijing with the 'Intellectuals

70. Corrina-Barbara Francis, "The Progress of Protest in China: The Spring of 1989", Asian Survey, Vol. 29, No. 9, Sept. 1989, pp. 898-899.

71. Ibid, p. 899

Federation', the workers with the 'Capital Workers Autonomous Federation' and the common 'Consultative Joint Committee of All Groups' established on August 72
9th. The themes of the movement ranged from democracy, freedom of the press, rule of law, better treatment of intellectuals and the affirmation of the reformist policies of Hu Yaobang. Taking advantage of the States obvious weakness and near paralysis, the urban society was organising as a self conscious and politically motivated whole at the level of an activist vanguard, and clearly towards the institutionalisation of the Civil Society, but failed in retrospective in relation to the strength of the Chinese State apparatus.
73

In the Post-Tiananmen phase, Su Xiaoking, has contended that the Chinese Civil Society is characterised by three major features, "the filling of social 'Crevices' caused by State decay by traditional clan, religious and underground forces; the decline of political participation to an all time low level; and
"74
the fundamental collapse of social ethics. Chen

72. Michel Bonnin and Yves Chevrier, n. 53, p. 589

73. Ibid

74. Shu-Yun Ma, n. 19, p. 189

Kuide, China's exiled dissident has stressed the need for the construction of China's Civil Society which provides the third alternative to the seemingly inevitable dilemma between Communist authoritarianism on the one hand and anarchism on the other", and has suggested "the further decentralisation of power to local authorities, the stabilization and routinisation of grassroots economic organisations, and to create a 'substitutive political force' as the vanguards of the construction of Civil Society"⁷⁵ Still others like Liu Binyan hopes that "China will find her own path to a credible socialism. The past failures and successes have prepared the ground for, rather than destroyed, such a future"⁷⁶. Although the hegemony of the Party has continued in the post-Tiananmen phase, there has been a considerable erosion in its legitimacy, and the Party-State has consecutively become weaker, devolving certain concessions like the Litigation Law of October 1990, which specifies how citizens can sue officials

75. Ibid, p. 187-188

76. Liu Binyan, "The Future of China", New Left Review No. 194., July-Aug 1992, p. 16

who have wrongfully treated them.

As the reforms continue on the economic front, the demands for a legitimate Civil Society will gather momentum, as alternative structures of power emerge. The success or the failure of the Chinese State in coopting these autonomous centres of power, controlling the ill-effects of Market Socialism like inflation and the growing disparities, combating corruption and bureaucratism will ultimately decide the fate of the awakening political consciousness all over China, and crystallised in the concept of Civil Society.

77. Lucian W. Pye, "The State and the Individual: An Overview Interpretation", The China Quarterly, No. 127, Sept 1991, p. 460

CONCLUSION

On the threshold of the year 2000, China, as the dissident intellectual Chen Erjin put it aptly seems to be at crossroads socialism. Unlike Chen's optimistic predictions of a true socialist democracy, what characterises China's State now, is neo-authoritarianism. Most of the Chinese observers are unanimous on one point, that the road China has chosen, that of economic modernisation, along capitalist lines, is irreversible. Although the state sector is still the largest in China, there now seems to be two distinct mode of productions, the capitalist as well as the socialist, existing in tandem.

According to a recent observer Lin Chun, in the post - Tiananmen phase, the focus of attention for almost the entire population is neither class struggle nor serving the people but money and wealth. The introduction of the ever expanding market mechanism, which has caught on faster than socialism has resulted in 'commodity fetishism'. This has loosened the grip of the state over the economy and market forces hold sway in China now. Since Tianamen there has been a considerable erosion in the Party state's legitimacy, and the populace has reacted with apathy and cynicism. That the state would not tolerate demands for democracy has been made clear by sending Wei Jingsheng, the proponent of liberal democracy during the 'Democracy

Wall' of 1978, back to jail after serving a sixteen year sentence. The values that were held sacred during the Maoist era in the political, moral, social and personal sphere have been dramatically transformed. The capitalist transformation of the economy has also engendered inequalities, disparities between various sections of the populace, as well as geographical areas as a result of the setting up of 'Special Economic Zones'. Western consumerism and its values thrive like never before, as political stability gaurenteed by the state increases the flow of foreign capital to China.

The economic prosperity while giving rise to many of the chronic problems which are seen in capitalist societies like unemployment and inequality ,has also guarenteed ,ironically support for the state. This is partly also because of the fallout of 'shock treatment' as it has been called , of the introduction of the market reforms and liberalisation overnight , and its failure in Eastern European countries and Russia. Thus state regulated capitalism, with Party monopoly is seen as a middle path that avoids both the fallouts of a 'shock treatment' of the economy and the anarchy of a society like China's might fall into which has a long history of authoritarian rule, if democratic pluralism was introduced overnight. In the meanwhile the fate of the Chinese civil society is seemingly poised to go underground as official

status has been denied to any group or association which holds views opposite to that of the Party state. Its revival as a legitimate body may occur only when there is a serious political crisis within the Party. The much touted change in leadership has taken place smoothly, with the conservatives in control of the Party and state machinery. The Tiananmen incident although led to an erosion of Party prestige, the Party has united in the face of confrontation with society, as the old fear of Cultural Revolution still lingers on.

While the civil society /Public sphere paradigm in the light of renewed Party hegemony seems limited and will have to be redefined, the continuation of economic reforms will vastly help the growth of autonomous centres of power whose demands would also rise proportionately, from sharing the economic fruits to that of political freedom, which may chart the future course of an incipient Chinese civil society. That the East European countries and even Russia which had embraced capitalism less than a decade back has returned Social democrats to power is a pointer to the continued existence of civil society which can create its own destiny rather than depending on a parochial Communist Party elite whose interests does not exceed the continued hegemony over society.

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