

A China Reader

Socialist Education Project

**Published by the
Committees of Correspondence
for Democracy and Socialism**

Changemaker Publications

A China Reader is published by the CCDS Socialist Education Project and the Online University of the Left

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ISBN# 978-1-6780-6605-5

Order online direct at:

<http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/changemaker>

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Introduction to the China Reader

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF CHINA AND THE PURPOSE OF THE CHINA READER

Welcome to the first edition of *A China Reader*, published by the CCDS Socialist Education Project. China's rise in the 21st century is of great significance for the world, socialism and communism and the US Left, as well as the Chinese people. Because of its huge size and ancient culture, China has great potential impact on the world.

Yet understanding of China, even basic facts of Chinese history, is not good in the US including the Left. Knowing some history is necessary for understanding current China-related political and economic issues.

Our purpose is to provide historical background and political education by reprinting valuable articles on important themes published through the years, and as well as publishing new material. We base ourselves in the struggle and oppose imperialism, hegemonism and a new cold war on China. Our contributors include activists, organic intellectuals and academics. We regard it necessary to consider both Chinese perspectives and US and Western views for balanced understanding.

The Chinese Revolution

The Chinese Revolution and its victory in 1949 is one of the great steps forward in humanity's transition from capitalism to socialism. We want to preserve the precious revolutionary history which the ruling class is eager to suppress. We want to pass on the story to young people and remind the older comrades. We want to track China's great contribution to human progress and appreciate its connection to the international working-class struggle and the implications today.

In the history of socialism, Marxism and communism, understanding the origins and course of the Chinese revolution is of great strategic significance. The Chinese revolution is so vast it exerts major influence, both direct and indirect on the situation of the US Left and people. It creates an international context and balance of forces which impact our own struggle for liberation from the bonds and oppression of a dying capitalist order.



'China has stood up! Mao in 1949

In 2017 US imperialism identified China and Russia as the greatest obstacles to advancing its program of global hegemony. The US wants to block China's rise and has aggressive strategies to do so. We should unite to oppose US imperialist pressure on China's independent path, oppose US dominance and hegemonism and support the trend towards a multi-polar world. There needs to be more democratic international relations and governance, more mutual support and solidarity among the countries and peoples, and a greater role for the Global South.

US Media Bias and our method

US mainstream media has an important role in the anti-China campaign of the ruling class. One-sided and biased anti-China news stories are constant in both the liberal and conservative press. This permeates the culture, changes public opinion to prepare for conflict and has influence on the Left including Marxists. As stated by the Qiao Collective: "Misinformation, chauvinism, and false equivalence have weakened the US left's ability to understand aggression on China in the larger context of Western political, military and economic imperialism in the Global South." (qiaocollective.com)

Our method of understanding is to apply historical and dialectical materialism: first seeking truth from facts, holistic and looking from all sides, starting from the beginning and tracing development, focusing on the dynamics and contradictions. We draw from Western, Chinese and independent sources. The topic of China is vast and changing. We do this work for peace and justice, global health and well-being and harmonizing with nature. We publicize our findings when we can.

II. 2020: AN EXTRAORDINARY YEAR IN HISTORY

US-China relations in 2020 began with rising tensions due to the intensifying trade war launched by the Trump administration against China. Anti-China hawks such as Peter Navarro had gained ascendancy in White House policy making. China-bashing was seen as a good issue for the re-election campaign. Tariffs were raised on Chinese imports again and again. Advances by Chinese high-tech companies were seen by US imperialism as an alarming challenge to US technological preeminence.

The US government had singled out China's Huawei, one of the world's leading technology companies and a large manufacturer of telecommunications equipment and consumer electronics. US actions tried to cripple Huawei's growth and, if possible, destroy the company. Because of US pressure, Huawei's chief financial officer was arrested in Canada on spurious charges. The US pressured allies to not install Huawei's new 5G networks and blocked sales of critical computer chips.

However, trade negotiations also continued, off and on through 2019, in an effort to reach a deal. Tensions increased with greater US pressure but agreement was reached for the first stage of resolving the dispute, which was announced on Jan. 15, 2020. China would buy large amounts of US agricultural products which could narrow the trade deficit. The US would eliminate or reduce some tariffs.

The Pandemic

The trade problems became entangled with the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, which emerged in Wuhan in December 2019. Despite some early problems, the Chinese local public

health system soon reported the outbreak to authorities in Beijing, the WHO and the US. Chinese scientists in Shanghai published online the coronavirus genome on Jan. 11, 2020 sharing the crucial information with scientists worldwide. The Chinese government declared an emergency and strict lockdown in Wuhan city and Hubei province by the end of the month. US mainstream media became filled with stories of the stringent quarantine, often painting it with police state images. However, as the virus spread globally, there grew a greater appreciation for the strong measures taken by China. The Tricontinental Institute for Social Research posted on its website several valuable articles about China's handling of the Coronavirus.

Leveraging the nationwide organization and leadership made possible by the socialist system, China succeeded in containing and stopping the virus. With a program of international solidarity, the Chinese sent medical aid and equipment to many countries such as Italy, Serbia and Venezuela and participated in medical research and exchange with Cuba. Xi Jinping pledged to make future vaccines available globally as a public good, that citizens of all countries can use and afford. Along with the Organization of African Unity, China co-hosted the June online forum called the Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity against Covid-19, which was attended by Xi Jinping and many African heads-of-state. China pledged to give priority access to Chinese Covid-19 vaccines to African and some Southeast Asian countries.

Trump initially dismissed the significance of the virus but on January 31, 2020 the administration suspended entry of people from China into the US. After the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic on March 12 and Covid-19 began to spread rapidly in the US, Trump began to refer to the "China virus" and "Kung Flu." This was a convenient if racist way to blame his administration's failings on China but it also contributed to the rise in anti-Asian and anti-Chinese racist incidents.

As the year progressed, increasing Trump administration anti-China measures caused an overall deterioration of relations. The government repeated without evidence charges of Chinese spy rings among visiting scholars and students, allegedly connected to the Chinese military. The Houston consulate of the PRC was abruptly shut down with no consultation, with allegations that it

served as a cover for spying and intellectual property theft. The Chinese denied the charges and responded by closing the US consulate in Chengdu, Sichuan Province. The US officially sanctioned some Chinese officials for implementing policies in Xinjiang and Hong Kong, alleging human rights violations.

Actions were taken against more and more Chinese companies such as WeChat and Tik Tok, whose popular online services were labelled national security threats. Charges were raised alleging industrial espionage. The US repeatedly conducted aggressive and dangerous military exercises in the South China Sea.

New Cold War?

Early in the Trump administration, US imperialist global strategy shifted to targeting China and Russia as the two most dangerous adversaries to the US in its quest for global dominance. They were accused of being “revisionist” powers wanting to change the international system to their unfair advantage. Mainstream media both liberal and rightwing constantly reinforced this message. Talk of a “new cold war” became common.

The presidential election campaigns of Biden and Trump exchanged barbs about who was really “soft on China.” In July, Secretary of State Pompeo made a major foreign policy address with apocalyptic tone in which he outlined his anti-communist, anti-China agenda saying the very American way of life was at stake. The Democratic Party Platform also gave a hegemonic, anti-China frame on the issue but acknowledged the need for cooperation on global warming, pandemics and non-proliferation.

As China’s strict measures to control Covid-19 worked, its economy started to rebound. This further alarmed US imperialism as now an economic growth gap favorable to China began to once again open up. US imperialism wants regime change, sooner or later, to a US-friendly government in Beijing. By the end of 2020 there was a consensus in the US foreign policy elite to pursue an anti-China policy although the Biden administration might be less belligerent and seek cooperation on some issues.

Oppose the anti-China policy, seek cooperation

The anti-China and new cold war policy would be disastrous for urgently needed global collaboration on environmental and health issues; it is a threat to peace and could lead to a major new war. It will lead to more racism and political repression at home in the US. Socialists, communists, progressives and the Left need to identify US aggression as the principal source of the rise in tensions and unite to oppose imperialism. The view that China is equally responsible is not in accord with the facts and should be rejected. Several new movement groups emerged during the year to oppose a cold war on China, such as No Cold War from the UK, the Pivot to Peace in the US and the “China Is Not Our Enemy” campaign of Code Pink. Dongsheng weekly news report and Qiao Collective are making valuable contributions. We should support this movement.

The October Central Committee meeting and the 14th Five Year Plan

The Communist Party of China (CPC) held a major meeting in October, the fifth plenum of the central committee. The agenda focused on the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025). A decision was made to shift economic policy analysis towards “dual circulation,” one part of the economy being where circulation goes through both domestic and international channels, and the second part of the economy is domestic circulation. This emphasized the importance and independence of the domestic economy, along with the international economy. The two circulations interact but the domestic is primary and a focus of development at this time.

Innovation and technological self-reliance are basic to development. Raising the living standards and social services for the people continues to be a priority. The goal of eliminating basic poverty is to be achieved and consolidated for the centennial year of 2021. Much of China in the rural areas of the interior and border areas is still undeveloped, and the international environment is more unstable with the US continuing pressures on China and countries of the Global South.

Looking forward to 2021 – with Joe Biden elected president, what are the hopes for better US-China relations in 2021? The US ruling

class consensus is to keep the anti-China framework in place; the Trump administration enacted a new wave of measures against China before leaving office. But there are some signs for reduction of tensions, as seen before the Jan. 2021 inauguration of the new president. A Biden administration may return to the Obama policy towards China of both competition and cooperation, with more emphasis on competition and working with US allies to contain China's rise. However, Xi Jinping congratulated Biden's election by saying he hopes that China and the US will "uphold the spirit of non-conflict, non-confrontation, mutual respect and win-win cooperation" in order to advance the "healthy and stable development of China and US ties."

The centrist leadership of the Democratic Party may be more attuned to corporate interests and less risking of military incidents in the South China Sea and other flashpoints. Some level of US-China discussion and cooperation on global problems such as the pandemic and global warming could start again if the US rejoins the Paris Climate Accord and the World Health Organization. China is a major presence in both and the two countries will need to work together on some level. Trade and economic decisions and measures are likely to be less abrupt and capricious, and more businesslike. A full decoupling of the economies is unlikely, with competition focused in the high-tech sector. The danger of sharp military confrontation is lessened as there is a greater preference for soft power. Discussions could resume on Korea and other international issues. People-to-people connections may pick up with the resumption of educational and cultural exchanges, with more visas for students and scholars.

However, as indicated, the concern and antipathy of US imperialism over a rising China remains, especially as China continues to grow and get stronger. There is undoubtedly some historic basis for the "Thucydides Trap" of friction and conflict between rising and declining powers. However, China is a self-described socialist country, which is new in history. War is not inevitable. There are openings for cooperation in environment, health and peace which are popular both in the US, the West and the Global South, and can be pursued. In the long term, will US-China relations improve and be of benefit for the two countries and the rest of the world? Will things get better or will there be a march towards conflict?

This depends in part in what we do; US activists have a special role and obligation to oppose US imperialism.

III. HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND CHINA IN A GOOD WAY?

Given the situation of the US Left, we need to adopt a self-critical attitude. Our understanding of Chinese politics and Chinese civilization is not very great. Therefore, we should be open-minded and not dogmatic. To understand a current issue, establish the basic facts up front with a materialist investigation. Look at all sides of an issue. Examine the history, this will help in understanding a Chinese perspective. The scholar Zhang Weiwei refers to China as a “civilizational state.” The country may be smaller than the land area of all the Western countries added together, but China is bigger in population than Europe, US and Canada, Australia and New Zealand combined. Its civilization is much older than Western civilization. Understanding such a huge thing is difficult, it requires an expansive approach avoiding premature judgements.

We must understand our position and role as activists in the US, the imperialist superpower. It is the US that is primarily responsible for threat of war today. On many occasions, the best act of international solidarity for US activists is to oppose and strive to contain US imperialism. This is particularly important in regards to China given US interventions. The US intervened in the Chinese civil war by sending the Seventh Fleet into the Taiwan Straits in 1950 to protect Chiang Kaishek. This created a major problem in US-China relations that continues to this day. The US also continues to oppose and obstruct China’s rise -- economically, in high tech and in political influence. We must keep this in mind when we think about and write about China. It is not our primary job to judge what the Chinese are doing but rather help engage the fight against US imperialism.

Study and communication

The US Left, including socialists and communists, would benefit from study of basic Chinese history and culture for better understanding of Chinese socialism, and connect with those who can help that learning. The CPC once again is reaching out to the Left

and the international working class. For example, the CPC posts documents on SolidNet.org, an information bulletin which reports on the activity of the Communist and Workers' Parties internationally. Prior to the global Covid-19 pandemic, there were more frequent Chinese-hosted international academic Marxist conferences, travel of Chinese delegations to conferences in other countries, and more publication of international Marxist journals. The 200th anniversary of the birth of Marx in 2018 was celebrated with major conferences in Beijing and Shenzhen. However, the Covid-19 crisis has led to a temporary rescheduling or cancelling of many programs and exchanges. Responding to this outreach favorably is important; we hope the exchanges will commence as soon as practical.

IV. CONTENTS OF THE ISSUE

The first edition of the China Reader starts with an examination of current US-China relations, with background on Chinese foreign and military policy, and history. The next section presents different viewpoints on the socialism/capitalism debate. The historical role of women in establishing people-to-people friendship among the Chinese and Americans is explored, essential to building a strong movement against a new cold war. Finally, aspects of the struggle for a democratic and socialist way of life are presented, which will be expanded in the second edition of the China Reader. This edition will include material about China, global warming and preservation of the environment.

A Note on Spelling Names

Transliteration of Chinese names into English was long based on the British Wade-Giles system. More recently, the People's Republic of China introduced the mandarin pinyin system. Consequently, there are two spellings for many Chinese names in the 20th century, which are interchangeable in this book. Examples: Mao Tse-tung (Wade-Giles) /Mao Zedong (pinyin); Chou En-lai/Zhou Enlai; Chiang Kai-shek/Jiang Kaishek; Kuomintang/Guomindang.

Section I: China' Foreign Policy and US-China Relations:

Opposing hegemony and a new cold war; supporting a democratic and multi-polar global system

Introduction

China's foreign policy has taken many twists and turns since the founding of the PRC in 1949 and has changed and matured. However, as a former victim of colonial and imperialist attacks, China has always maintained close ties with former colonies and the developing world. During the 1950s, China formed an alliance with the Soviet Union and also pursued cooperation with the Third World and Nonaligned Movement. During the 1960s, the Sino-Soviet split and the Cultural Revolution led to growing international isolation. This was followed by reaching out for UN recognition and detente with the US. At the same time, China shifted to an anti-Soviet policy in 1970s, the "Three Worlds Theory," where China opposed Soviet "social imperialism" as the greater danger. This led on occasion to acting in parallel with the US such as during the anti-colonial war in Angola, where the liberation forces fought with Soviet and Cuban assistance.



The Crouching Tiger

Deng Xiaoping in the 1980s ended the Three Worlds strategy in favor of a "crouching tiger" foreign policy, which meant China would bide

its time, increase its own strength and remain cautious on international issues. Deng's international policy was to promote peace and development, and equal relations. The focus was on building the economy and expanding exports and trade, which led to bettering relations with the important markets of Japan and the West. By the 1990s, China's foreign trade began to rapidly expand. China joined the World Trade Organization in 2001 with US support.

General Secretary Hu Jintao (2003-2012) pursued a new policy, "China Rising," or China's peaceful rise. The country's greater economic strength now had inevitable impact on world affairs. China once again began to reach out to the international working class, this time on the basis of the equality of all communist parties. The 2008-2009 global economic crisis led to China shifting its trade and external relations towards Central and Southeast Asia, and Africa, as exemplified in the Belt and Road initiative. This coupled with China's more rapid recovery, independent decision-making and self-described socialism led US imperialism to become alarmed that China was drawing equal to the US in certain strategic sectors such as high tech, with military applications. US imperialism increased military pressure, as with the Obama-era pivot to Asia, and also initiated an economic attack with Trump's trade war. China's economy emerged from the Covid-19 crisis before the economies of the West, gaining ground, further alarming US imperialism.

US aggression in 2020 has led to increased tension and the potential for direct conflict. It is incumbent for US progressives, Leftists and socialists to unite to oppose a new cold war on China. Different views on China are understandable but all should oppose US aggression. In 2021 a Biden administration looks set to continue the anti-China policy, but with softer rhetoric and some channels for cooperation on the pandemic and global warming. Hopefully, this section of *A China Reader* will provide helpful historical and factual background for understanding of current problems and issues.

Contents

Jude Woodward's book clearly describes the anti-China strategy of US hegemony and imperialism. She provides much needed historical and factual background. Prof. Harry Targ describes the origins the US strategy to dominate the Pacific Region, both around 1900 and the present. Fred Goldstein's article presents the different facets of the rising new cold war. Carl Davidson traces basics of PRC foreign policy back to Soviet practices in the 1920s and the Five Principles of



Shared future for humanity

Peaceful Coexistence adopted at the Bandung Conference in 1955. Al Sargis analyzes the evolving military doctrine of the Peoples Liberation Army and the possibility of war with the US. The section concludes with a series of historical notes as a basic understanding of Chinese history is necessary to understand Chinese positions on current issues. The Shanghai Communiqué of 1972 is reprinted in full; it spells out the “one China” policy and that Taiwan is part of China. It was the agreed upon basis for the US and the PRC to establish diplomatic ties in 1979 and conduct state to state relations. US peace and solidarity activists on Asian and global issues should be familiar with this document which is fundamental to normal US-China relations.

Book Review: The US vs. China: Asia's New Cold War?

In her book *The US vs. China*, (Manchester University Press, 2017) Jude Woodward examines the roots and prospects of a new cold war launched by the US against China. This book was published in 2017, thus Woodward could only begin to assess the policies of the new Trump presidency. But events, after the book was published, show that Woodward clearly understood the historical trend. The cold war she saw coming was pushed by Secretary of State Pompeo and the Trump administration. Woodward gives a comprehensive look at this conflict.

The author states: “Politically, the US and the West have always more or less openly demanded ‘regime change’ in China: replacing the Communist Party with a reliably pro-Western government, euphemistically described as ‘political reform’ or the ‘transition to democracy.’” (p.16). The author is clear on this basic point, that US political elites (capitalist-imperialists) want a friendly and pliable government in Beijing, which collaborates with US hegemony instead of charting an independent course.

At the same time, US capitalism is divided on China; there is a group with a confrontational approach in power in 2020. But there are also major business interests profiting greatly from their China ties. This group advocates normal relations and a non-confrontational “color revolution” strategy. Their vision is that Western bourgeois culture would influence Chinese youth, business relations would spread ideas of Western democracy, and this would eventually lead to the downfall of the communist government.

After the Communist Party took power in China in 1949, the US immediately launched an anti-China campaign that included a diplomatic and economic boycott as well as the Korean War and threats to use nuclear weapons. This was part of the anti-Soviet, anti-communist global strategy. However, the 1970s brought a policy of cooperating with China diplomatically, and this extended into the 1980s. This

was a period of major US capital investment and profits in China's rapidly growing economy. Those wanting normal relations prevailed. The mainstream media portrayed many positive aspects of China, a US friend at that time. The media honeymoon came to an end with Tiananmen Square in 1989.

Around the year 2000, Chinese increasing economic strength had to result in growing influence, and "rising China" became a concern of US elites, as a potential challenger and rival to US hegemony. According to Woodward, the 2008 financial crisis made this particularly urgent. The US had been tied down too long on the Middle East and oil; east and southeast Asia had become the center of global economic expansion, and the US needed to shift or "pivot" its resources to Asia.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton published a major policy paper in 2011 describing "America's Pacific Century." The US pivot began the political shift away from emphasizing collaboration and normal relations with China towards a more hard-line approach. Military resources were redeployed to Asia, naval bases beefed up, anti-ballistic missile systems installed, and pro-imperialist factions supported, such as Prime Minister Abe in Japan. The Pentagon designed an elaborate plan for fighting a war with China, called Air-Sea Battle. The US might block the Straits of Malacca, choking off China's supply of oil. Overall, Woodward's book "examines the military, economic and diplomatic means that the US has deployed in its 'pivot' to Asia, and assess its successes and failures in building an encircling ring of pro-Western alliances around China." (p.18)

Woodward says, "the only way the US can guarantee the preservation of its global primacy is to polarize the rest of the world against China, with the aim that it is slowed by trade and military pressures, squeezed by international and especially regional isolation, and eventually turned inward by domestic divisions created by these stresses... The only parallel for such an attempt is the Cold War, which mobilized much of the world against the former USSR... to isolate, delegitimize, surround, economically exclude and militarily pressure China until this provokes an internal crisis, forcing it into the camp of the US or face its own destruction." (p. 248)

Woodward cites some reasons for many points of tension along China's borders, "...the US's de facto support for a range of separatist movements related to China. These include the US' ongoing arming of Taiwan and support for political parties that demand it is recognized

as an independent state within the UN, given greater prominence by Trump's initial threat to break with the 'one China' policy on Taiwan; promoting the Dalai Lama and those advocating separatism in Tibet; US opposition to China's efforts against al-Qaeda-affiliated terrorist groups in Xinjiang, and its succor to external organizations calling for secession of Chinese Mongolia that have not the slightest echo in China. The West would also insist of Hong Kong being allowed to act as a de facto independent city state. Externally, elements of such a design for China include a new settlement on the Korean peninsula absorbing North Korea into South Korea and allowing the advance of the US army to China's land frontier. And a surrounding 'missile defense shield' giving the West a potential first-strike capacity, through the expansion of the Terminal High Altitude Defense (THAD) missile defense system to Japan and South Korea." (p.17-18)

Nonetheless, President Obama pursued a policy of cooperation and competition in some equal measure, still expanding trade and maintaining some balance and normal relations. With the Trump administration, hard-line rightwing anti-China policymakers came to prominence. In a White House paper published in Dec. 2017, ruling elites gave their latest thinking and formalized the shift towards a more confrontational approach to China. The paper identified a new era of great power competition and identified China and Russia as the two great obstacles and adversaries for continued US dominance and hegemony in the name of democracy. This analysis was backed up by the consensus testimony before Congress of the leaders of the different government intelligence agencies.

The US launched a unilateral trade war against China, had the vice president of Huawei arrested in Canada on charges of violating US sanctions on Iran, and blamed the pandemic on the "Chinese virus" and communist deception. There was a continued campaign to pressure Europe and other countries not to connect to China's 5G equipment or network as part of a campaign against Chinese advanced technology. Charges of Chinese military hacking and de facto spy rings was promoted. Incidents became more frequent of anti-Asian and anti-Chinese racism. The mainstream media became dominated by anti-China messages and propaganda. The anti-China strategy became part of both the Trump and Biden presidential campaigns. Polls showed that distrust of China had rapidly grown among the American people. Groundwork for a new cold war had been done in US public opinion.

The author considers prospects for the new cold war from both a US and Chinese perspective. She states that the US is in many ways is a

declining power economically, more reliant on its still-dominant military. China is increasing its economic strength and influence, particularly in the Global South. The US seeks to maintain the position of dominance and hegemony it seized after World War II. The ideological justification is “American exceptionalism,” the supposed unique role of the USA to maintain global prosperity and order. This is used to justify intervention. It is the US that is mostly responsible for initiating the new cold war; China wants peace, and its national development plans work best in a peaceful international environment.

Woodward sums up, “rather than a triumphal reassertion of its indispensable position the US’s efforts have drawn attention to the gradual, continuing eclipse of its “leading” role in Asia as it failed to galvanize partners and allies behind a project to contain China. And instead, it has been China that is increasingly drawing up the road-map for the continent’s own ‘common destiny.’ “ (p. 246)

The situation on China’s borders

The next section of the book examines the situation on the borders with many countries, along the entire periphery of China, a very big place. If a hot war breaks out between China and US-backed forces, it is likely to occur somewhere on the borders. She begins by examining Russia and the shift in Russian policy, particularly after the Ukraine crisis of 2014, away from an orientation to the West towards closer ties with China. Woodward considers this result a major failure of US strategy, which wants to divide Russia and China.

“If rather than exploiting Sino-Soviet divisions, the US had faced them united, the outcome of the Cold War might have been quite different. Today a newly arisen China and a resource-rich and militarily powerful Russia acting in concert could offer each other critical mutual economic and military support, and exercise a formidable geopolitical influence... Hence it is well understood across the US foreign policy spectrum that success in containing China requires preventing Russia and China coming together, and instead redeploying the old Cold War triangulation strategies for today’s circumstances.” (p. 83)

Turning to Japan, she says that the rise of Japanese nationalism has encouraged Japan to challenge China, but its overly belligerent tone has made problems for the US in pulling together a North-East Asian “anti-China” bloc, comprised of the US, Japan, and South Korea.” (p.104)

The US's strongest ally has always been the Philippines. Under Duterte, the Philippine government seems to make moves both towards China and the US. The author says that many countries around the periphery would like both Chinese economic ties and US military guarantees. Regarding Vietnam, the author writes, "Overall, Vietnam has strong economic interests in avoiding conflict with either the US or China. Vietnam needs stable international relations for its own 'peaceful rise.' This means weaving a careful path between the US's growing military presence in the region, collaboration with China, and its conflicts with China over the Paracel and Spratly islands."

The author examines the island disputes in the East and South China (Eastern) seas, both the Chinese and US role. She documents that the US has worked to increase tensions in the South China Sea since the return of US forces 2010-11. There are chapters on Tibet, Central Asia, and Taiwan, Vietnam, Southeast Asia as well as India and Central Asia. The author provides useful historical information in every case.

Conclusion

Woodward critiques US policy, confronted with a rising China, "Rather than ...seek a basis for common development with China, the US remains unreconciled to China's rise, it is caught between its desire to respond more forcefully and its declining economic position, which restricts its capacity to do so. The result is that stability and peace in the region and worldwide are threatened as the US vainly seeks its implausible 'Pacific Century' through militarizing political relations in Asia, threatening a trade war, and fomenting what looks extremely like a new cold war, with China as the target." (p.20)

Woodward gives a clear focus to US-China relations and how they have evolved towards a new cold war with mostly US aggression to blame for tension and conflict. She conveys information about all the border situations and issues from a well-researched perspective that appreciates the Chinese viewpoint. Understanding the Chinese perspective as well as the US and Western, is badly needed to grasp what is going on. People in the US, including the Left, would largely benefit from studying this approach, well presented by Woodward. The book is an excellent and informative resource, especially about the roots of the new cold war against China in 2008-2017.

The new cold war of the US against China could continue for decades or a very long time. There may be periods of greater cooperation,

alternating with periods of more confrontation, as the strategy and tactics of the US ruling class shift back and forth. The author considers whether war is inevitable, as some claim. Perhaps Woodward could also have devoted more to considering the history and basis that US capitalism might cooperate with China. However, the contradiction between capitalism and socialism is not easy reconciled. Perhaps there could have been more attention to the ideological differences between the US and Chinese systems. Overall, however, this book will remain an important source of information on a range of issues as long as competition, hostility, and opposition are the main US strategy towards China.



Jude Woodward (1953-2020) was a writer and lecturer in China. Until 2012 she was a visiting professor in the Antai School of Business, Shanghai Jiao Tong University. She often visited and lectured in China and was active in many international and solidarity movements. A founder in 2020 of the activist group No Cold War, she died later that year.

The Centrality of US-China Relations in Building a US Global Empire and Playing the China Card Differently Today

By Harry Targ

United States/China Relations in the 21st Century

In a speech on July 23, 2020, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo declared that the Nixon opening to China in 1972 was a mistake. "We must admit a hard truth that should guide us in the years and decades to come: that if we want to have a free 21st century and not the Chinese century of which Xi Jinping dreams, the old paradigm of blind engagement with China simply won't get it done. We must not continue it, and we must not return to it." (Edward Wong, Steven Lee Myers, "Officials Push U.S.-China Relations Toward Point of No Return," *The New York Times*, July 25, 2020). If it is true that the Nixon/Kissinger foreign policy toward China did, in fact, facilitate the weakening of socialism as a world force, why is the Secretary of State now calling "playing the China card" a mistake?



The Long Troubled United States Relations with China: US Globalism, the Open Door Notes, and the Centrality of China for Building a Global Empire

The developing United States obsession with China (leaving aside the super-exploitation of Chinese labor and profound anti-Chinese racism in the United States) has its roots in the rise of the US as a great power. As historians such as William Appleman Williams have pointed

out, the United States emerged as an industrial power on the world stage between the end of the Civil War and the 1890s. Not only was the US economy experiencing industrialization, but private entrepreneurs were building a transcontinental railroad, with Chinese labor, to create a vast continental empire. Coupled with industrialization and a vast transportation network, there were agricultural surpluses well beyond the consumer needs of persons in the United States. Williams concluded that by the 1880s, the United States, because of increased agricultural productivity, began to seek world markets for its goods.

Increasingly the industrial and agricultural revolutions in the United States were leading to increased competition with European imperial powers and the rising Japanese empire. A sector of the United States political class, exemplified by former Secretary of the Navy and soon-to-be president Theodore Roosevelt, argued for the United States to develop a global vision and a naval military capability to facilitate becoming a global empire, particularly to challenge Europe. After diplomatic skirmishes with Great Britain over who should have a dominant influence in Latin America, the United States entered the Cuban anti-colonial war against the Spanish empire in 1898. (Over the subsequent years until 1959, the United States replaced Spain as the colonial overseer of Cuba). In addition, the United States took Puerto Rico, reaffirmed its dominance over the Hawaiian Islands, and seized control of the Philippines. To further the globalization of the US empire, President Roosevelt was able to get Congressional support for a "two-ocean" navy. The United States was on the road to becoming a world power.

But the lack of control of the political economy of China remained an obstacle to the completion of the imperial project. The 4,000-year-old Chinese empire, with vast lands and people, and neighboring tributary countries, had begun to deconstruct in the nineteenth century. The Opium Wars of 1839-42 and 1856 were carried out by Great Britain and later France; Germany and Russia joined in to force China to open its domestic markets to foreign capitalist penetration. The imperial powers carved out concessions and spheres of influence in China. Japan defeated China in the war of 1894-95 and annexed Taiwan.

The devolution of the Qing Dynasty and expanding foreign presence led to movements within China of reform and resistance. A secret martial arts society known as the Boxers rose up in 1899 to attack foreigners and foreign culture. The Boxers were at first supported by the imperial court but eventually were defeated by an international

army which marched to Beijing. The US sent troops along with European powers and Japan. The defeat of the Boxer Rebellion and its nationalist program solidified growing European and Japanese control over the vast Chinese empire.

Fearful of being frozen out of the vast potential Chinese market, President William McKinley's Secretary of State, John Hay, issued two "notes" to European powers in 1899 and 1900 indicating that the United States would insist upon equal access to Chinese markets, even in areas of the country that had been seen as part of the "spheres of influence" of the colonial powers. Traditional interpreters of United States foreign policy, such as George Kennan, regarded John Hay's Open Door Notes as examples of typical US diplomatic bluster; empty threats that could not be backed up by economic or military power.

Williams, in his classic, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, argues that the Notes were emblematic of the development of the United States' global imperial power. What had been the nineteenth-century vision of US domination of Latin America, the Monroe Doctrine, was being applied to Asia as well. The defeat of the Spanish, the occupation of the Philippines, the development of a two-ocean navy, burgeoning agricultural products, a vision of American exceptionalism often articulated by Theodore Roosevelt and spokespersons of both political parties all made it clear that domination of China was to be a key global project of the twentieth century.

Revolution and Civil War, the Missionary Spirit, World War II, and the Victory of Communism in China

The Chinese state continued its steady decline after the Boxer Rebellion. A democratic revolutionary movement led by Dr. Sun Yatsen emerged to overthrow the Qing Dynasty in the uprising of 1911. The goal of the Kuomintang (KMT) was to establish a modern democratic republic and secure independence from the imperial powers. The Qing dynasty collapsed, but China soon fell into disunity and conflict among competing feudal warlords.

At the same time, the presence of Christian missionaries, many from the United States, continued to grow. Several of these missionaries and their descendants would later influence US foreign policy toward China. Pearl Buck, a popular American novelist, who wrote *The Good Earth*, would bring Chinese culture to a US audience. Henry Luce,

later the founder of the *Time, Life, Fortune* magazine empire, was raised by a missionary family in China. As an adult in the post-World War Two period, he would use his influence to shape US public opinion in support of Chinese nationalist forces against the Chinese communist movement. In addition, Walter Judd, a powerful Republican congressman from Minnesota, who was influenced by his experience growing up in a missionary family in China, strongly advocated the emerging anti-communist US approach to China.

The Russian revolution of 1917 helped spread Marxism in China. In 1921, Chinese Marxists organized the Communist Party of China (CPC), which became affiliated with the Comintern, the "center" of international Communism in Moscow. The early CPC leadership included Li Dazhao, Chen Duxiu, as well as Mao Zedong. The Comintern urged the young CPC to enter into a coalition with the much larger KMT to advance the democratic revolution.

After the death of Sun Yatsen in 1925, one of his deputies, Chiang Kaishek, gained control of the KMT. He was a military man who transformed the nationalist party to serve the interests of Chinese landowners and capitalists. He sought to solidify control of the growing nationalist movement into a political and fighting force that would defend the interests of wealthy Chinese. He also wanted to secure the support of friends of China from missionary and political circles in the United States.

Chiang, aware of the rising popularity of communism and the party's increasing membership among youth and urban intellectuals, launched a massive terror campaign in 1927 to exterminate Chinese communism. The terror campaign was vividly portrayed in Andre Malraux's novel *Man's Fate*. Those communists who survived the urban arrests and massacres fled to the countryside to establish a base area. In the course of fighting over years, the CPC built a strong guerrilla army, now largely peasant-based, to defeat the forces of Chiang. Since the Kuomintang defended the interests of the landowners, the Communist movement and its democratic reform program increasingly resonated with the rural population.

Japan invaded northeast China in 1931 and established the puppet state of Manchukuo. In 1937 Japan launched an all-out war on China and attacked the whole country. Millions of Chinese civilians were killed in the course of this long, brutal war. Arrested by his own troops, Chiang Kaishek was forced by the CPC to establish a nationwide united front against the Japanese invasion.

During World War Two, US military forces arrived on the Chinese mainland as part of the alliance to fight the Japanese empire. Despite the KMT/CPC truce, many observers reported that the KMT used the cease fire in the civil war to solidify their military position rather than to fight the Japanese. General Joseph Stillwell, a representative of President Roosevelt, warned the President that the Kuomintang was unpopular and that the US after the war should refrain from taking sides on any return to civil war. This view was confirmed by reports sent back to Washington by State Department Asia experts stationed in China. Later these experts would be castigated by Congress for being "soft on communism."

After the Japanese were defeated in Asia, the United States resumed active support for the Kuomintang, including leaving troops in parts of China. In 1946 the US allotted one billion dollars in assistance to Chiang's forces. Secretary of State George Marshall participated in a year's negotiation in 1946 between the KMT and CPC to end the civil war. Ultimately these negotiations failed, and full-scale civil war resumed. After three years of fighting, the civil war ended in October 1949 with the victory of the communist forces and the establishment of the People's Republic of China. Thus, there would dawn a new era of US/Chinese relations because of "the fall of China."

US China Relations: From Korea to Playing the China Card Today

1949 was an apocryphal year for the United States. The Soviet Union detonated its first atomic bomb in August, and Chinese communist armies marched into Beijing, ending the thirty-year civil war in that country. The leader of the CPC, Mao Zedong, visited Moscow and signed a treaty of peace and friendship with the Soviet Union. From the vantage point of the historical vision of the US empire, the fact that at least a quarter of humanity and one-third of the landmass of the globe was "communist" stimulated fear and generated a campaign of anti-communist hysteria at home and advocacy for an escalated arms race internationally.

Truman's advisors prepared a policy document, National Security Document 68 (NSC 68), which called for a dramatic increase in military spending. NSC 68 also recommended each President, while preparing an annual federal budget, give the Department of Defense all its requests before allotting any federal dollars for non-defense programs. (As analysts would compellingly argue in subsequent years,

the US economy was stimulated to a significant degree by military spending, creating what Andrew Bacevich would call "a permanent war economy").

There was resistance to adopting the recommendations of NSC 68 from fiscal conservatives in the Truman Administration until war broke out in Korea and North Korean troops advanced south, thus launching



Zhou Enlai with Kim Il Sung

the three-year Korean War (a status of war that exists until this day). Six months after the onset of the Korean War, the United States/United Nations troops successfully pushed North Korean troops deep into the north. Chinese troops then entered the war on the side of North Korea. Chinese entrance into the Korean War was prompted by US military advances all the way to the Yalu River on the Chinese border, which China perceived as a prelude to the invasion of China proper. Many influential US policymakers, particularly General Douglas MacArthur, had been calling for a direct war with China to end communist rule with the goal of establishing China as a Christian nation.

US policy toward China continued to be hostile even after a cease fire was achieved in Korea in 1953. Senator Joseph McCarthy campaigned loudly on the premise that "China fell to communism" because of traitors in the US State Department. These state department personnel, the so-called "China hands," had warned of the corruption of the KMT in reports to Washington during and after the world war; they were fired. And Vice President Nixon and leaders of both political parties launched a campaign to "keep China out of the United Nations." President Truman and his successors refused to diplomatically recognize the new Chinese state, the People's Republic of China. (The United States had not recognized the Soviet Union until 1933, and it would not officially recognize the PRC until 1979).

It is important to add that China participated with countries of the Global South, many of which have recently achieved their indepen-

dence from colonial occupiers, in establishing a Nonaligned Movement. NAM was committed, not to East or West, but equity between North and South, particularly economic development. China, India, Ghana, Yugoslavia, and other countries met at Bandung in 1955 and formally established NAM in the early 1960s. Their call was for peaceful coexistence, and their program would include the adoption of a New International Economic Order. China, therefore, was allied with the Soviet Union and the countries of the Global South.

Turmoil erupted elsewhere in Asia as well. The French sought to re-establish their colonial rule in Vietnam. And when that failed, the United States stepped in to create and support an unpopular regime in South Vietnam, very much like the forces the US had supported in China and Korea. As the Vietnam War escalated in the 1950s and 1960s, the Chinese provided substantial military assistance and reconstruction projects to the North Vietnamese who were supporting their allies in the liberation struggle in the South. The Soviet Union also provided massive assistance to North Vietnam. Despite this, some analysts and policymakers who became opponents of the Vietnam War, such as Arkansas Senator J. William Fulbright, claimed that the Vietnam policy was erroneously driven by opposition to China.

So, in the context of a continued arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union, an escalating war in Vietnam that was destroying the fabric of US society, liberation movements spreading in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and the Sino/Soviet split, Richard Nixon, a preeminent advocate for isolating China, was elected President of the United States in 1968. He had pledged to end the war in Vietnam. While most observers of US politics did not trust Nixon, it seemed clear that the US war on Vietnam, given the ruptures in US society and the declining relative power of the US on the world stage, had to end.

Nixon and Kissinger ‘Play the China Card’

Beginning in 1969, President Richard Nixon, guided by his national security advisor, Henry Kissinger, fashioned a new policy toward China, what became known as "playing the China card." It was motivated by a desire to push back and ultimately create regime change in the Soviet Union. Cognizant of growing hostilities between the two large communist states, Nixon and Kissinger developed this plan to play one off against the other. Central to this policy was launching a diplomatic process that led to the 1979 US formal diplomatic recognition of China. During the 1970s, the United States and China supported

the same political allies in various parts of the world, Southern Africa and Southeast Asia, for example. The split in the socialist world between the Soviet Union and China contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the weakening of socialism, for a time, on the world stage. Thus, from a US imperial point of view, "playing the China card" worked.

So Why Is the US Playing the China Card Differently and Returning to a Renewed Cold War?

The answer to this question, or more broadly, why is United States foreign policy returning to a policy hostile to China, perhaps creating a "New Cold War," has several parts. First, as Alfred McCoy has described (In *The Shadows of the American Century: The Rise and Decline of US Global Power*, Haymarket Books, 2017), the United States, relatively speaking, is a declining power. As to economic growth, scientific and technological developments, productivity, and trade, the US, compared to China, particularly, is experiencing stagnation or decline. China has engaged in massive global projects in transportation, trade, and scientific advances, and by 2030 based on many measures, will advance beyond the US.

According to McCoy, the United States has embarked on a path to overcome its declining relative economic hegemony by increasingly investing in military advances: a space force, a new generation of nuclear weapons, cybersecurity, biometrics, and maintaining or enhancing a global military presence, particularly in the Pacific (what Obama spokespersons called "the Asian pivot"). In other words, rather than accommodating to a new multipolar world in the 21st century, the United States is seeking to reestablish its global hegemony through military means.

Second, the United States is desperately seeking to overcome the ending of its monopoly on technological advances. In computerization, transportation, pharmaceuticals, the US is challenging the legitimacy of Chinese innovations, claiming that China's advances are derived not from its domestic creativity but from "pirating" from United States companies. For example, the prestigious and influential mainstream Council on Foreign Relations issued a report last year entitled "Innovation and National Security: Keeping Our Edge." The report warned that "...the United States risks falling behind its competitors, principally China." China is investing significantly in new technologies, the Council claims, which they predict will make China the big-

gest inventor by 2030. Also, to achieve this goal, they are "exploiting" the openness of the US by violating intellectual property rights and spying. Therefore, the Council on Foreign Relations concluded, since technological innovation is linked to economic and military advantage and since US leadership in technology and science is at risk, the nation must recommit to rebuilding its scientific prowess.

Third, while the United States is engaged in efforts at regime change around the world and is using brutal economic sanctions to starve people into submission (such as in Venezuela, Cuba, Iran, and 36 other countries victimized by economic sanctions), China is increasing its economic ties to these countries through investments, trade, and assistance. China also opposes US policies in international organizations. In broad terms, Chinese policy stands with the majority of countries in the Global South while the United States seeks to control developments there.

Fourth, although Trump's foreign policy is designed to recreate a cold war, with China as the target, a policy also embraced by most Democrats, there is at the same time counter-pressure from sectors of the capitalist class who have ties to the Chinese economy: investment, global supply chains, and financial speculation. Moreover, China has substantial foreign investments, and the government controls over \$1 trillion of US debt. For these sectors of US capital, economic ties with China remain economically critical as they do for transnational capital, such as pointed to by writers such as Jerry Harris (*Global Capitalism and the Crisis of Democracy*, Clarity Press, 2016).

Consequently, while the trajectory of US policy is toward a return to a cold war, there is some push back by economic and political elites as well. As the New York Times article above put it, "In the United States, tycoons and business executives, who exercise enormous sway among politicians of both parties, will continue to push for a more moderate approach, as members of Mr. Trump's cabinet who represent Wall Street interests have done."

Fifth, American domestic politics provide the immediate cause of the transformation of US/China policy. President Donald Trump's popularity is declining dramatically because of the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, its impact on the US economy, and the rise of racial tensions in the country. A classic antidote for politicians experiencing declining popularity is to construct an external enemy, an "other," which can redirect the attention of the public from their personal troubles. President Trump has sought to deflect the cause of the

spreading pandemic onto the Chinese. It is this external enemy that is the source of our domestic problems. In this context, the President is talking tough with the "enemy" of the United States, and, as Secretary of State Pompeo suggests, it is about time that the US government gives up illusions about working with China. Only a Trump administration, he suggested, would be capable of doing this (forget President Obama's "Asian pivot").

Finally, the ideological package of racism, white supremacy, and American Exceptionalism so prevalent in United States history has resurfaced in dramatic ways as the Trump administration and its allies have opposed nationwide protests against police violence and structural racism. White supremacy at home is inextricably connected with American Exceptionalism abroad. For example, President Theodore Roosevelt in 1910 claimed that the white race has been critical to civilization. Years later, Madeleine Albright, the Secretary of State in the Clinton Administration (and more recently President Barack Obama) spoke about the United States as the "indispensable nation," a model of economics and politics for the world. Pompeo continues this tradition claiming that the United States stands for a "free 21st century." This sense of omniscience has been basic to the ideological justification of United States imperial rule.

Each of these elements, from the changing shape of economic and military capabilities to political exigencies, to the pathologies of culture, require a peace and justice movement that stands for peaceful coexistence, demilitarization, building a world of economic justice, and the rights of people to determine their own destiny, and inalterable opposition to racism, white supremacy, and exceptionalism of any kind.

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The New Cold War against China

By Fred Goldstein

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During the Cold War and the struggle that put the USSR and China on one side and imperialism headed by Washington on the other side, revolutionaries used to characterize the conflict as a class war between two irreconcilable social systems.

There was the socialist camp, based upon socialized property, economic planning for human need, and the government monopoly of foreign trade on the USSR-China side, and capitalism, a system of production for profit, on the other.

That the two systems were irreconcilable was at the bottom of the conflict dubbed the Cold War. In light of the current sharpening economic, diplomatic, political, and military conflict between US imperialism and the People's Republic of China (PRC), it is time to revive the concepts that were applied during the height of the Cold War.

Of course, it is necessary to make modifications in these formulations with respect to socialism in China, with its mix of controlled capitalism and guided socialism.

Nevertheless, the conflict between imperialist capitalism, headed by Washington, Wall Street, and the Pentagon, and the Chinese socialist economic system, which has state-owned industry at its core and planned economic guidance, is becoming much sharper, and imperialism is growing more openly hostile.

US imperialism's long-standing effort to overthrow socialism in China, Chinese capitalism notwithstanding, has been concealed beneath sugary bourgeois phrases about so-called "common interests" and "economic collaboration." But this kind of talk is coming to an end.

Washington's first campaign to overthrow China was from 1949-1975

This struggle has been ongoing since 1949, when the Chinese Red Army drove US puppet Chiang Kaishek and his nationalist army from the mainland as it retreated to Taiwan under the protection of the Pentagon.

The conflict continued through the Korean War, when Gen. Douglas MacArthur and the US high command drove the US troops to the Chinese border and threatened an atomic war. Only the defeat of the US military by the heroic Korean people under the leadership of Kim Il Sung, with the aid of the Chinese Red Army, stopped the US invasion of China.

The struggle further continued with the US war against Vietnam. The war's strategic goal was to overthrow the socialist government of Vietnam in the north and drive to the border of China to complete the military encirclement of the PRC. Only the world-historic efforts of the Vietnamese people under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh stopped the Pentagon in its tracks.

The Pentagon's plans for military conquest failed

With the rise of Deng Xiaoping and the opening up of China to foreign investment beginning in December 1978, Wall Street began to reevaluate its strategy. The US ruling class began to take advantage of the opening up of China to foreign investment and the permission for private capitalism to function, which could both enrich US corporations in the massive Chinese market and at the same time penetrate the Chinese economy with a long-range view to overturning socialism.

US multinational corporations set up operations in China, hiring millions of low-wage Chinese workers, who flocked to the coastal cities from the rural areas. These operations were part of a broader effort by the US capitalists to set up low-wage global supply chains that integrated the Chinese economy into the world capitalist market. The US's recent sharp turn aimed at breaking up this economic integration with the Chinese economy, including the witch hunt against Chinese scientists and the US Navy's aggressive behavior in the South China Sea (called the Eastern Sea by Vietnam), is an admission that the economic phase of the US attempt to bring counterrevolution to China has failed.

China is now a growing counterweight to Washington in international economics, high technology, diplomacy, and regional military might in the Pacific, which the Pentagon has always considered to be a “US lake” ruled by the Seventh Fleet.

The attack on Huawei

A dramatic illustration of the developing antagonisms is the way the US had Meng Wanzhou, the deputy chairwoman and chief financial officer of Huawei, arrested in Canada for supposed violations of US sanctions against Iran — an outrageous example of imperialism exercising extraterritoriality. The Trump administration has also leveled sanctions against Huawei electronics, the world’s largest supplier of high-tech operating systems in the world. Huawei employs 180,000 workers and is the second-largest cell phone manufacturer in the world after the South Korean-based Samsung.

The sanctions are part of the US campaign to stifle China’s development of the latest version of data-transmission technology known as Fifth Generation or 5G.

The Trump administration has barred US companies from selling supplies to Huawei, which has been using Google’s Android operating system for its equipment, and Microsoft for its laptop products — both US-based companies. Huawei is contesting the US ban in court. Meanwhile, as a backup plan in case Washington bans all access to Android and Microsoft, Huawei has quietly spent years building up an operating system of its own. Huawei developed its alternative operating system after a 2012 finding by Washington that Huawei and ZTE, another Chinese giant cell phone maker, were in criminal violation of US “national security.” ZTE was forced to shut down for four months. (South China Morning Post, March 24, 2019)

But the conflict is about more than just Huawei and ZTE

The new ‘red scare’ in Washington

The New York Times of July 20, 2019, carried a front-page article entitled, “The New Red Scare in Washington.” A few excerpts give the flavor:

“In a ballroom across from the Capitol building, an unlikely group of military hawks, populist crusaders, Chinese Muslim freedom fighters

and followers of the Falun Gong has been meeting to warn anyone who will listen that China poses an existential threat to the United States that will not end until the Communist Party is overthrown.

“If the warnings sound straight out of the Cold War, they are. The Committee on the Present Danger, a long-defunct group that campaigned against the dangers of the Soviet Union in the 1970s and 1980s, has recently been revived with the help of Stephen K. Bannon, the president’s former chief strategist, to warn against the dangers of China.

“Once dismissed as xenophobes and fringe elements, the group’s members are finding their views increasingly embraced in President Trump’s Washington, where skepticism and mistrust of China have taken hold. Fear of China has spread across the government, from the White House to Congress to federal agencies.”

The Trump administration has opened up a tariff war against the PRC, imposing a 25-percent tariff on \$250 billion worth of Chinese exports and threatening tariffs on another \$300 billion. But there is much more to Washington’s campaign than just tariffs.

The FBI and officials from the NSC (National Security Council) have been conducting a witch hunt, continues the Times article, “particularly at universities and research institutions. Officials from the FBI and the National Security Council have been dispatched to Ivy League universities to warn administrators to be vigilant against Chinese students.”

And according to the Times, there are concerns that this witch hunt “is stoking a new red scare, fueling discrimination against students, scientists and companies with ties to China and risking the collapse of a fraught but deeply enmeshed trade relationship between the world’s two largest economies.” (New York Times, July 20, 2019)
FBI criminalizes cancer research

According to a major article in the June 13, 2019, Bloomberg News, “Ways of working that have long been encouraged by the NIH [National Institutes of Health] and many research institutions, particularly MD Anderson [a major cancer treatment center and research institute in Houston], are now quasi-criminalized, with FBI agents reading private emails, stopping Chinese scientists at airports, and visiting people’s homes to ask about their loyalty.

“Xifeng Wu, who has been investigated by the FBI, joined MD Anderson while in graduate school and gained renown for creating several

so-called study cohorts with data amassed from hundreds of thousands of patients in Asia and the US. The cohorts, which combine patient histories with personal biomarkers such as DNA characteristics and treatment descriptions, outcomes, and even lifestyle habits, are a gold mine for researchers.

‘She was branded an oncological double agent.’

The underlying accusation against Chinese scientists in the US is that their research can lead to patentable medicines or cures, which in turn can be sold at enormous profits.

The Bloomberg article continues, “In recent decades, cancer research has become increasingly globalized, with scientists around the world pooling data and ideas to jointly study a disease that kills almost 10 million people a year. International collaborations are an intrinsic part of the US National Cancer Institute’s Moonshot program, the government’s \$1 billion blitz to double the pace of treatment discoveries by 2022. One of the program’s tag lines is: ‘Cancer knows no borders.’

“Except, it turns out, the borders around China. In January, Wu, an award-winning epidemiologist and naturalized American citizen, quietly stepped down as director of the Center for Public Health and Translational Genomics at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center after a three-month investigation into her professional ties in China. Wu’s resignation, and the departures in recent months of three other top Chinese-American scientists from Houston-based MD Anderson, stem from a Trump administration drive to counter Chinese influence at US research institutions. ... The collateral effect, however, is to stymie basic science, the foundational research that underlies new medical treatments. Everything is commodified in the economic cold war with China, including the struggle to find a cure for cancer.”

Big surprise. A world-famous Chinese epidemiologist, trying to find a cure for cancer, collaborates with scientists in China!

Looking for the ‘reformers’ and the counterrevolution

For decades, the Chinese Communist Party has had changes in leadership every five years. These changes have been stable and managed peacefully. With each changeover, so-called “China experts” in the State Department in Washington think-tanks and US universities have predicted the coming to power of a new “reformist” wing that

will deepen capitalist reforms and lay the basis for an eventual full-scale capitalist counterrevolution.

To be sure, there has been a steady erosion of China's socialist institutions. The "iron rice bowl," which guaranteed a living to Chinese workers, has been eliminated in private enterprises. Numerous state factories and enterprises have been sold off to the detriment of the workers, and in the rural areas, land was decollectivized.

One of the biggest setbacks for socialism in China and one which truly gladdened the hearts of the prophets of counterrevolution was the decision by the Jiang Zemin CPC leadership to allow capitalists into the Chinese Communist Party in 2001.

As the New York Times wrote at the time, "This decision raises the possibility of Communists co-opting capitalists — or of capitalists co-opting the party." (*New York Times*, Aug. 13, 2001) It was the latter part that the capitalist class has been looking forward to and striving for with fervent anticipation for almost four decades.

But on balance, this capitalist takeover has not materialized. Chinese socialism, despite the capitalist inroads into the economy, has proved far more durable than Washington ever imagined.

And, under the Xi Jinping leadership, the counterrevolution seems to be getting further and further away. It is not that Xi Jinping has become a revolutionary internationalist and a champion of proletarian control. But it has become apparent that China's status in the world is completely connected to its social and economic planning.

China's planning and state enterprises overcame 2007-2009 world capitalist crisis

Without state planning in the economy, China might have been dragged down by the 2007-2009 economic crisis. In June 2013, this author wrote an article entitled, "Marxism and the Social Character of China." Here are some excerpts:

"More than 20 million Chinese workers lost their jobs in a very short time. So what did the Chinese government do?"

The article quoted Nicholas Lardy, a bourgeois China expert from the prestigious Peterson Institute for International Economics and no

friend of China. (The full article by Lardy can be found in “Sustaining China’s Economic Growth after the Global Financial Crisis,” Kindle Locations 664-666, Peterson Institute for International Economics.) Lardy described how “consumption in China actually grew during the crisis of 2008-09, wages went up, and the government created enough jobs to compensate for the layoffs caused by the global crisis,” this author’s emphasis.

Lardy continued: “In a year in which GDP expansion [in China] was the slowest in almost a decade, how could consumption growth in 2009 have been so strong in relative terms? How could this happen at a time when employment in export-oriented industries was collapsing, with a survey conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture reporting the loss of 20 million jobs in export manufacturing centers along the southeast coast, notably in Guangdong Province? The relatively strong growth of consumption in 2009 is explained by several factors.

“First, the boom in investment, particularly in construction activities, appears to have generated additional employment sufficient to offset a very large portion of the job losses in the export sector. For the year as a whole, the Chinese economy created 11.02 million jobs in urban areas, very nearly matching the 11.13 million urban jobs created in 2008.

“Second, while the growth of employment slowed slightly, wages continued to rise. In nominal terms, wages in the formal sector rose 12 percent, a few percentage points below the average of the previous five years (National Bureau of Statistics of China 2010f, 131). In real terms, the increase was almost 13 percent.

“Third, the government continued its programs of increasing payments to those drawing pensions and raising transfer payments to China’s lowest-income residents. Monthly pension payments for enterprise retirees increased by RMB120, or 10 percent, in January 2009, substantially more than the 5.9 percent increase in consumer prices in 2008. This raised the total payments to retirees by about RMB75 billion. The Ministry of Civil Affairs raised transfer payments to about 70 million of China’s lowest-income citizens by a third, for an increase of RMB20 billion in 2009 (Ministry of Civil Affairs 2010).”

Lardy further explained that the Ministry of Railroads introduced eight specific plans, to be completed in 2020, to be implemented in the crisis.

According to Lardy, the World Bank called it “perhaps the biggest single planned program of passenger rail investment there has ever been in one country.” In addition, ultrahigh-voltage grid projects were undertaken, among other advances.

Socialist structures reversed collapse

So income went up, consumption went up, and unemployment was overcome in China — all while the capitalist world was still mired in mass unemployment, austerity, recession, stagnation, slow growth, and increasing poverty, and still is to a large extent.

The reversal of the effects of the crisis in China is the direct result of national planning, state-owned enterprises, state-owned banking, and the policy decisions of the Chinese Communist Party.

There was a crisis in China, and it was caused by the world capitalist crisis. The question was which principle would prevail in the face of mass unemployment — the rational, humane principle of planning or the ruthless capitalist market. In China, the planning principle, the conscious element, took precedence over the anarchy of production brought about by the laws of the market and the law of labor value in the capitalist countries.

Socialism and China’s standing in the world

China has lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. According to a United Nations report, China alone is responsible for the global decline in poverty. China’s universities have graduated millions of engineers, scientists, technicians and have allowed millions of peasants to enter the modern world.

Made in China 2025

In 2015, Xi Jinping and the Chinese Communist Party leadership laid out the equivalent of a ten-year plan to take China to a higher level of technology and productivity in the struggle to modernize the country.

Xi announced a long-range industrial policy backed by hundreds of billions of dollars in both state and private investment to revitalize China. It is named “Made in China 2025” or “MIC25.” It is an ambitious project requiring local, regional, and national coordination and participation.

The Mercator Institute for Economics (MERICS) is one of Germany's most authoritative think tanks on China. It wrote a major report on MIC25 on Feb. 7, 2019. According to MERICS, "The MIC25 program is here to stay and, just like the GDP targets of the past, represents the CCP's official marching orders for an ambitious industrial upgrading. Capitalist economies around the globe will have to face this strategic offensive.

"The tables have already started to turn: Today, China is setting the pace in many emerging technologies — and watches as the world tries to keep pace."

The MERICS report continues, "China has forged ahead in fields such as next-generation IT (companies like Huawei and ZTE are set to gain global dominance in the rollout of 5G networks), high-speed railways and ultra-high voltage electricity transmissions. More than 530 smart manufacturing industrial parks have popped up in China. Many focus on big data (21 percent), new materials (17 percent), and cloud computing (13 percent). Recently, green manufacturing and the creation of an "Industrial Internet" were given special emphasis in policy documents, underpinning President Xi Jinping's vision of creating an 'ecological civilization' that thrives on sustainable development.

"China has also secured a strong position in areas such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), new energy, and intelligent connected vehicles. ...

"Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs) continue to play a critical role in the development of strategic industries and high-tech equipment associated with MIC25. In so-called key industries like telecommunications, ship building, aviation, and high-speed railways, SOEs still have a revenue share of around 83 percent. In what the Chinese government has identified as pillar industries (for instance electronics, equipment manufacturing, or automotive) it amounts to 45 percent."

Breakup of US-China relationship inevitable

The tariff war between the US and China has been going back and forth. It may or may not be resolved for now or may end up in a compromise. The Pentagon's provocations in the South China Sea and the Pacific are unlikely to subside. The witch hunt against Chinese scientists is gaining momentum.

The US has just appropriated \$2.2 billion for arms to Taiwan. National Security Adviser and war hawk John Bolton recently made a

trip to Taiwan. The president of Taiwan, Tsai Ing-wen, made a recent stopover in the US on the way to the Caribbean and is scheduled to make another one on the way back.

All these measures indicate the end of the rapprochement between Beijing and Washington. This breakup between the two powers is not just the doing of Donald Trump. It flows from the growing fear of the predominant sections of the US ruling class that the gamble they took in trying to overthrow Chinese socialism from within has failed, just as the previous military aggression from 1949 to 1975 also failed.

High technology is the key to the future

Since as far back as the end of the 18th century, the US capitalist class has always coveted the Chinese market. The giant capitalist monopolies went charging in to get joint agreements, low wages, cheap exports, and big superprofits when China “opened up” at the end of the 1970s.

But the stronger the socialist core of the PRC becomes, the more weight it carries in the world and, above all, the stronger China becomes technologically, the more Wall Street fears for its economic dominance and the more the Pentagon fears for its military dominance.

The example of the stifling of international collaboration on cancer research is a demonstration of how global cooperation is essential not only to curing disease, but also to the development of society as a whole. International cooperation is needed to reverse the climate disaster wrought by private property — none of this can be carried out within the framework of private property and the profit system. Only the destruction of capitalism can bring about the liberation of humanity.

Marxism asserts that society advances through the development of the productive forces from primary communism, to slavery, feudalism, and capitalism. Marx wrote: “The hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill society with the industrial capitalist.” (*“The Poverty of Philosophy,”* 1847) And now, the revolution in high technology lays the basis for international socialism.

The bourgeoisie knows that the society that can advance technology to the highest degree will be triumphant in shaping the future.



This is why imperialism, headed by the US, imposed the strictest blockade of the flow of technology to the Soviet Union, as well as the Eastern Bloc and China. This was done by COCOM, an informal organization of all the imperialist countries, which was created in 1949 and headquartered in Paris.

The main targets were the USSR and the more industrialized socialist countries, such as the German Democratic Republic, the Czech Republic, etc. Detailed lists were drawn up of some 1,500 technological items that were forbidden to export to these countries.

Marx explained that developed socialist relations depend upon a high degree of the productivity of labor and the resulting abundance available to the population (*"Critique of the Gotha Program,"* 1875). However, as Lenin noted, the chain of imperialism broke at its weakest link in Russia — that is, the revolution was successful in the poorest, most backward capitalist country. The result was that an advanced social system was established on an insufficient material foundation. This gave rise to many, many contradictions. The countries that revolutionaries correctly called socialist, were in fact, really aspiring to socialism. Their revolutions laid the foundations for socialism. But imperialist blockade, war and subversion never allowed them to develop their social systems freely.

The great leap forward in technology in China today has the potential of raising the productivity of labor and strengthening the socialist foundations. It is this great leap forward that is fueling the "new cold war" with China and the real threat of hot war.

Roots of Chinese Foreign Policy and the 5 Principles of Peaceful Coexistence

By Carl Davidson

Preface

SINCE THE YEAR 2000, China has emerged as a rising power with global reach. Moreover, since the middle of the Trump administration, with its ensuing wreckage of old alliances and retreat from global institutions, China's rise takes on new meaning. It may well be that the 21st Century will be seen as a Chinese century, a displacement of the US. We may even see a replacement of the rule of hegemons altogether by a multipolar world with a very modern China as a leading force among equals in that world.



How did this happen? There are many factors—history, economics, the political collapse of the USSR, even climate and pandemics. Here we will focus on one item, the role of international policy, in particular one central to China's rise, the 'Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.' And in doing so, we will also try to draw out ideas for all political parties and campaigns seeking a progressive foreign policy for their countries, including our own.

The narrative is not simple and straightforward. Like history itself, it is full of twists and turns, ruptures, and key turning points. We will make a brief account here, with an understanding that there is always more to the story.

Marxism, Internationalism and Foreign Policy

Working-class and socialist movements, as well as socialist countries, have long been conflicted in expressing a consistent and coherent

international policy. Marx and Engels gave us the slogan 'Workers of all countries, unite!' and provided some leadership to the English cotton workers who sided with the Union against the Confederacy in the US Civil War. At the same time, they pilloried the English workers who would not side with the Irish and their fight for independence from British rule.

In the time of the Second International and the leadup to the first imperialist world war, socialist and working-class parties gained some strength in many countries, especially Germany. On the one hand, they rendered mutual support in strikes and other battles. On the other, they were confused and found wanting in regard to the 'colonial question' of their respective empires, and whether they should be 'civilizers' of the 'natives.' They all pledged to oppose capitalist wars, at least until the practical test of August 1914. Then, in short order, they were all nationalists, save for a few, like Vladimir Lenin and Eugene Debs, both of whom stood steadfast and worked to turn the imperialist war into a civil war. Having thus gone to war within itself, the Second International was hopelessly split and immobilized.

Bolshevik victory in 1917 and the Soviet Union

Debs was jailed, but Lenin rode the 'revolutionary defeatist' stand, along with slogans for bread and land, to victory in October 1917. A new socialist state emerged along with a huge upsurge in the colonial world. In forming a new Third International in 1919, Lenin thus modified Marx's dictum to become 'Workers of all countries, and oppressed nations and peoples, unite!' The new Comintern, headquartered in Moscow, thus set up schools to train revolutionary cadres from every corner of the world, and helped the new parties growing out of the earlier splits with financial aid as well. There was still hope that it would quickly be paid back by socialist revolutions in Germany and other countries in Europe.

The new Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) survived the Civil War but saw the hope of concurrent revolutions in Europe recede, at least for the foreseeable future. Lenin now had a new problem. On the one hand, he had to maintain party-to-party Comintern (Communist International) relationships with socialist and national liberation groups around the world. On the other, he had to try to form new state-to-state relationships with the governments of all the capitalist countries encircling the USSR and elsewhere as well. One set of relations would be on the old basis of proletarian internationalism. But what about the other set, the state-to-state relations?

Lenin proceeded realistically. He noted the basic conflict between capitalism and socialism and the hostility of nearly all capitalists to the new Soviet government. In fact, depending on what you count, some 17 countries, including the US, invaded Russia to back the 'White' counter-revolution. But Lenin understood that it was hardly in the interest of his government, nor the workers of the world, to be at war with all of their adversaries at once. Hence for the USSR's part, it would advocate and implement a policy of peace wherever possible, while neither letting down its guard nor ceasing to build its strength. To the degree possible, the USSR also sought trade agreements based on mutual benefit, since many materials were needed and much work needed to be done to restore a war-torn economy. The approach was called 'peaceful coexistence' even if its expected duration was short.

The Comintern, China, and Collective Security

After Lenin's death, Stalin and the CPSU continued using the Comintern to organize and render training and support to party-building around the world. But one factor soon became problematic. Local parties naturally had differences within them, and when taken up within the Comintern, the views of the Soviets often held greater weight than others. Moreover, when differences developed within the CPSU, these also got translated into other parties around the world, where local factions saw fit to line up with the Left Opposition or Right Opposition in Moscow. Obviously, undue weight went to the party or faction handing out the paychecks. And in some cases, like China, two parties were represented in the Comintern, the communists (CPC or Communist Party of China) and the nationalists (KMT or Kuomintang), with both vying for attention.

Comintern assistance undoubtedly helped in China. It should be noted, however, that the CPC under Mao took the Comintern's money and guns, greeted Stalin on his birthday, but usually assigned Comintern 'advice' on strategy and tactics to the circular file. Stalin, for example, wanted far greater CPC cooperation with the KMT, even merger into it. While Mao would unite with the KMT when it fought Japan, the CPC under his leadership always kept its 'independence and initiative.'

Stalin also continued, for the most part, to follow Lenin's 'peaceful coexistence' policy toward the European countries, making considerable efforts to gain official state recognition. With the rise of fascism in Italy and then Germany, Stalin pushed for 'collective security'

against fascism, but grew more wary of Great Britain. He suspected, with some evidence, that the British were interested in pushing the fascists to move eastward toward war with the USSR as part of the Nazi fanaticism against 'Judeo-Bolshevism.' Despite the 6th Comintern's ultraleft policies on 'social-fascism' aimed at European Social-Democrats, Stalin still continued assigning Maxim Litvinov, his foreign minister, to pursue proposals of 'collective security' with all the non-fascist countries. Nonetheless, they all stalled or refused, which made Stalin even more dubious.

USSR, Spain, and Germany

Then a crisis emerged in Spain. The fascist attempt to overthrow the popular front Spanish Republic became both an effort at expansion and a testing ground for new methods of war. For the Comintern, it had to support the Spanish Communist Party and its allies and assisted with the International Brigades. The USSR helped the Spanish Republic with the sale of much-needed arms and worked to get other non-fascist European powers to drop their 'neutrality' that was serving the Franco fascists. But the massive intervention of Italy and Germany on the side of the 'Generals' proved decisive.

Stalin now had to reconsider everything. All Litvinov's efforts had secured was official recognition by FDR and the US (not a small matter, but much reduced from collective security). Stalin came to see a British-led effort to push Germany to attack the USSR, where Churchill would then watch Nazism and Bolshevism bleed each other dry. Meanwhile, Britain saw to the maintenance of its empire.

So Stalin played his ace-in-the-hole, a 'peaceful coexistence' non-aggression pact with Hitler's Germany. It redirected German aggression westward temporarily and brought him two year's time to prepare for a larger war that was all but certain.

It made sense as USSR foreign policy. But it was a disaster for all the parties of the Comintern, which had to turn on a dime from 'popular front against fascism' to 'stop the inter-imperialist war' as the slogan of the day. In the US, it put the CPUSA in a brief common front with Lindbergh's fascist-minded 'America Firsters.' Only China largely ignored it and continued 'people's war' against both Japan and the Kuomintang collaborators with Japan.

World War Two

Once World War Two was in full force, Stalin dissolved the Comintern as a gesture of 'unity' with his Western allies. Everything was now for the 'United Nations,' meaning the US, Britain, France, and the USSR took over all the lands where their troops dominated, and set up 'New Democratic' governments loyal to their respective camps. In the US, Browder, leader of the Communist Party, even changed the party into an 'educational group,' the Communist Political Association,' that would work within FDR's Democratic Party. The 'Four Powers' also divided Berlin, with the western three of them (US, UK, France) coalescing into the Federal Republic of Germany and the Soviet sector into the German Democratic Republic. As for the remaining communist parties not in power, they were all expected to make the defense of the Soviet Union, the Soviet bloc, and the ruling CPSU's line of international affairs into their own, whatever the twists and turns. If someone had other ideas, new leaders would replace them.

There were several important exceptions. China continued its revolution and largely ignored 'advice' from the USSR. The same was true for Tito in Yugoslavia, and to a lesser degree, Vietnam, Albania, and Kim Il Sung in Korea. The key factor was they had their own armies and were thus not dependent on the Red Army of the USSR.

The result of these changes wrought by war was a globe faced with several conflicting organizing principles. One was FDR's vision of a United Nations. He had laid the groundwork for it in agreements with Stalin. Churchill and others in the course of the war. But FDR died just as he was resting up for its first meeting in San Francisco scheduled for April 25, 1945. The second was the formation in 1947 of the Cominform, made up of the USSR and the Communists parties in Europe, especially those newly in power in Eastern Europe. The third was the Asian Conference held in 1947, as India was achieving its independence. Jawaharlal Nehru there got the idea for a broader Asia-Africa conference bringing together the new countries emerging as the colonial empires of the old Great Powers were collapsing.

The victory of the Chinese Communist Party and the Founding of the People's Republic of China

All these served as the conjuncture for an event that changed everything: the victory of the Chinese revolution in October 1949. The protracted people's war was led by Mao Zedong. He had taken con-

trol of the CPC in Zunyi in 1935 while on the Long March. After 14 years of guerilla warfare and regular main force battles, the CPC and its People's Liberation Army had finally triumphed against Chiang Kaishek, who retreated to Taiwan. China was poor but very large and full of resources. And now, one-fourth of humanity had stood up and embarked on the socialist path. The balance of forces in the world was changing radically.

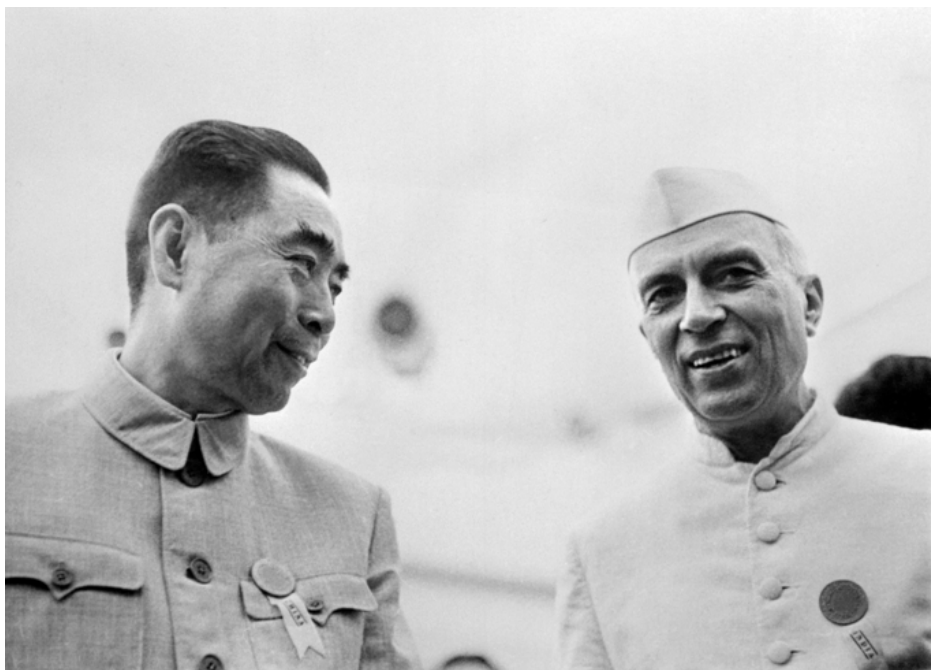
Soon after taking power, however, China was faced with the Korean War breaking out on its doorstep. Allied with Korean leader Kim Il Sung during the anti-Japanese war, China felt a need to come to his aid. The Chinese warned General Douglas MacArthur not to approach the Yalu River border zone, or China 'would not stand idly by.'

MacArthur ignored the warning and was faced with a massive onslaught of Chinese 'Volunteers' driving him back to the 38th parallel. Truman fired MacArthur, and it was left to Dwight Eisenhower, elected in 1952, to arrive at an armistice. The Korean War has never officially been ended. A larger lesson was also learned: Don't mess with China or ignore its warnings.

As the lessons of Korea were settling in, China faced a variety of minor conflicts securing its borders. These included tensions with the US over Taiwan, efforts by the UK and India to break away Tibet, and negotiations with the USSR over northern and western border regions, and a few others. China also gave support to the Vietnamese fighting French colonialism and the US imperialists that came to replace them.

China and the Nonaligned Movement

But the main international event that interested China in its early years was the conference of Asian and African states. Initiated by Indonesia, it was held in Bandung. Indonesia and included thirty countries from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. The US shunned the meeting, and the USSR was excluded, largely because of Muslim complaints about its treatment of Islam in the USSR's western and southern republics. Mao and the Chinese Communist Party, having just been victorious in a semi-colonial country, had the strategic vision to see these governments and peoples as global allies. Mao sent Zhou Enlai, China's premier, to take part and to open up China's wide range of 'state-to-state' relations with all the countries of what would soon be called 'the Third World.'



Zhou Enlai and Nehru at Bandung.

China now was in a position somewhat similar to the USSR. It had party-to-party relations with a number of revolutionary forces in nearby countries. While it rendered some material support, it was not near the scale of the CPSU and its relations with parties around the world. At the same time, China now had 'state-to-state' relations with a growing number of countries, most of whom, however, also had conflicts with US and European imperialism and, to a lesser degree, with the USSR. One of the main debates at Bandung, in fact, was whether to explicitly name the USSR as an adversary. In the end, the conference decided not to do so, only referring to the Soviets indirectly without naming them. Thus began what was later called the 'nonaligned movement,' meaning not being under the direct control of the Soviet or US-European geopolitical power blocs.

In the beginning, Sukarno of Indonesia hoped to be seen as the main leader at Bandung. But it soon became clear that both China's Zhou and India's Nehru were not to be eclipsed. There were two main concerns motivating the gathering. One was that the West was waging a Cold War over their heads while expecting them to tail behind, causing much resentment. The other was the emergence of China,

which they all understood as historic. They pondered their relationship with a new global revolutionary power with both respect and worries. Zhou Enlai was indeed a striking figure at the meeting, but he managed to set everyone at ease with a moderate and diplomatic style, refusing to play the overlord. This was in contrast to India's Nehru, who often treated other delegates arrogantly.

The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence

It was interesting that Zhou and Nehru, then, managed to strike an agreement, in what came to be called 'The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.' Just prior to Bandung, there was tension and conflict between India and China on the Tibet border region. It was settled in Beijing with a statement including:

1. Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty,
2. Mutual non-aggression,
3. Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs,
4. Equality and mutual benefit, and
5. Peaceful coexistence.

These had roots going back to Lenin and the need for the new USSR to 'normalize' relations with the capitalist countries encircling it. But they were also rooted in the anti-great power chauvinism of the anti-colonial movement that also emerged from both world wars. Thus, both Zhou and Nehru could claim a hand in shaping them, and they became the core of a more comprehensive 10-point platform affirmed at the end of the Bandung conference.

For its part, China was quite serious about the Five Principles. In the years going forward, it made constant reference to them in how it would deal with all the new nations recognizing it as the legitimate government of China and as the basis for 'normalization' and other bilateral agreements. After Bandung, there was a period of border clashes between India and China, where India has set the agreement aside. Once these differences were settled, from the 1970s onward, China stressed them widely as the ongoing basis for its relations with all governments.

The Sino-Soviet Split and Three Worlds Theory

The Chinese Communist Party, however, still faced the matter of its 'party-to-party' relations in the international communist movement.

With Khrushchev's rise after the death of Stalin, he opened polemics with Stalin and Stalinism at the CPSU's 20 Congress in 1956. In the same year, the Soviets saw fit to invade Hungary to put down a popular uprising. Both of these events concerned Mao, especially the idea that the Soviet Union could invade another country over internal political events. Would the USSR do something similar in China?

What followed was two decades of the 'Sino-Soviet Split' as a world event. It was ostensibly over who upheld 'orthodox' Marxism-Leninism and was thus in a position to lead the international movement. There were many twists and turns in this debate beyond the scope of this article. These included CPC support for rival 'Marxist-Leninist' parties and groups in all countries, an opening to the US in the face of clashes with the USSR in border regions, and Mao's 'Theory of the Three Worlds' -- where China would unite the Third World, win over the Second World (much of Europe), and divide the two superpowers to defeat them both.

The 'Three Worlds' theory was a more-or-less accurate snapshot of the world for a time. But in the end, there was to be no Maoist Comintern, and the USSR collapsed. In China itself, the upheaval of the 'cultural revolution' was ebbing after the death of Lin Biao following an attempted coup against Mao. As a result, Mao brought Deng Xiaoping back to power to assist Zhou Enlai, who, along with Mao, was in poor health. Zhou died first, in January 1976, followed by Mao nine months later in September 1976. Deng quickly emerged as the top leader and arrested the ultraleft 'Gang of Four,' setting China on its new path.

Internationalism Today

Today China maintains relations with socialist, communist, social-democratic, and nationalist parties, in and out of power. It invites them to conferences in China on various topics but makes no efforts to replicate any of the old CPSU and Comintern practices of domination. 'Proletarian internationalism' remains an ideal to be celebrated and patiently pursued, but not with any worldwide structures of organization and discipline. Others on the left in Europe and elsewhere may make small efforts along these lines, but China is not a player.

The Five Principles

Since China's development has taken off in the post-Mao era, however, the Five Principles have moved center-stage in its dealings with

the world. China holds firm to them, especially in state-to-state relations. Nor do the Five Principles belong to China alone. Their substance is contained in the UN Charter, and many other countries do well in practicing them. Here is a brief look:

Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty. China insists on this in several ways. It generally opposes the changing of borders or separatist breakups by anything other than mutual negotiations. For itself, it insists that any country seeking normal relations must acknowledge that Taiwan is part of China and downgrade any relations with Taiwan or sever them altogether. China also insists the Hong Kong, Tibet, and Xinjiang are part of China and opposes any efforts to break them away.

In one case, China stumbled into some difficulty. It had recognized Prince Sihanouk's government in Kampuchea as legitimate. Vietnam, however, invaded and drove Sihanouk out of power and the Khmer Rouge to the Thai border. Vietnam then set up a new government in Phnom Penh. Deng opposed the invasion and attacked Vietnam militarily in a brief incursion, 'to teach them a lesson.' The conflict ended quickly but still served as a bad example of two socialist countries engaged in a military conflict with each other. The USSR's invasions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia were only met with irregular forces and popular demonstrations. China continues to have minor skirmishes with India in remote areas where its borders remain ill-defined. Still, there have been no repetitions of larger or smaller conflicts like Korea and Vietnam.

Mutual non-aggression. Apart from the few exceptions noted, this is included in what China considers 'normal' relations between states. But if one state drops the 'mutual' part, all bets are off. China insists that its interests are best served by not going to war with anyone. Nor does it benefit from other states waging war, which leads to a global instability harmful to prosperity and development.

Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs. This point is often controversial. The default mode of Great Power politics is considerable interference to the internal affairs of other countries—the US is famous for making coups and rigging elections, the old USSR for declarations that nations in its orbit had 'limited sovereignty,' and so on. Under the Obama administration, the project of 'humanitarian intervention' was advocated to deal with various crises and hotspots. China took a consistently hard line. It wanted zero interference in its internal affairs, having suffered a century of

humiliation. So with the countries where it had normalized relations, it opposed external intervention even where rebel areas or other minorities were suffering human right abuses.

At most, China urged questions to be taken up for discussion at the UN, or among the parties themselves. It was better to find solutions by talking, even if for a very long time, than imposing an external solution by force. China might lean one way or another within the context of the UN debates and votes. It would even supply some of its soldiers as UN peacekeepers. But it was no longer in the business of giving military or financial support to insurgent forces trying to change or overthrow a regime within any other country. An earlier effort in the liberation effort in Angola, where China had given aid to all three groups fighting the Portuguese, including the anti-Soviet and anti-Cuban UNITA, caused it to receive some ostracism. China is now on friendly terms with a much different government in Angola, but it has learned a lesson from the earlier entanglements.

Equality and mutual benefit. Equality means China wants no ‘big brother, little brother’ relationships. They didn’t work well in the Comintern. Nor did they work well with old imperial relations left over from history, whether between China and Vietnam or France and Algeria. Most important here, however, is mutual benefit. China needs to trade with many countries for many resources. At the same time, it produces many things needed by other countries, especially in the less developed Global South. So China makes all sorts of bilateral trade agreements, nearly always on far more generous terms than the Western imperialists. It is also working on an immense multilateral project, the Belt and Road Initiative, which will change the whole structure and flow of world trade, largely to the benefit of the less developed world, but to some European countries as well. Its eventual success will provide the infrastructure that makes a truly multipolar and non-hegemonic world possible.

Peaceful coexistence. This last of the five principles, which gives them their overall title, goes back to Lenin’s original intention. He believed that as long as capitalism existed, war-making would persist. But he also wanted to assert a nuance: that his government had no inevitable need to start wars and was ready to negotiate peaceful relations and observe them with any capitalist government willing to do so. Socialist revolutions might take place in one or many countries, but with normalized relations, it wouldn’t be a Soviet invasion that started revolutions or saved them in the countries concerned. Peaceful coexistence between capitalism and socialism would be dif-

ficult and require both wisdom and political struggles and mobilizations, but it was possible and desirable.

Current Day Peace and Solidarity Campaigns

Therein lies the opening for our current-day peace and solidarity campaigns, coalitions, and movements. Since the 1960s, at least, they have been hamstrung by an ad-hoc, single-issue ‘independence’ from electoral politics opposing this or that war or working in separate silos for this or that Third World insurgency. General campaigns regarding militarism and defense spending have been sustained largely by church-based NGOs. The result has been a series of ‘pressure efforts,’ with large scale ‘street heat’ or effective lobbying (and sometimes both). Rarely have we seen any systemic alternative international policy posed as a platform for independent politicians or political grouping inside or outside the Democratic party.

One objection from the Left is that any principled or Marxist international platform would have to be anti-imperialist or socialist internationalist (more or less the same thing). One could field candidates on such a platform, but it would be for the education of a minority, and not likely to unite a majority of voters. Or, to argue it from the other side, promoting a ‘democratic foreign policy’ under an imperialist order would only be a way of sowing illusions in the nature of the system.

But if pushed, these objections fall apart. The left and progressive movements campaign for all sorts of things—an end to white and male supremacy, or a fully green economy—that we are not likely to see fully come into their own this side of socialism. But we fight for them anyway, and not just as slogans, but as detailed platforms and programs. Why? Because they are fruitful organizing principles.

International platform for peace and solidarity campaigns

The construction and advocacy of an international platform for our peace and solidarity campaigns, based on the Five Principles and the UN Charter, could serve exactly that organizing purpose. It would serve as an all-sided platform for candidates like Bernie Sanders, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and ‘the Squad’ to run on and advocate in the halls of Congress. Rather than fighting issue by issue—such as the piecemeal demanding all troops out of Afghanistan (or any other country), or cutting the Pentagon budget of this or that weapon system—an effort based on the UN Charter and the Five Principles could



Fourth International Conference on Women, Beijing 1995

Credit UN/DPI 051620 by Chen Kai Xing

unite many campaigns in a way that might unite a progressive majority. It would also serve as a way to draw progressive politics outside of narrow national boundaries and to formulate a perspective taking into account a common framework with other nations and peoples.

Such a thing is not possible under imperialism?

In a way, that's the key point, to draw out this contradiction to a transformational crisis and then try to move to higher ground. It would present us with a new terrain of struggle and a tangle of new problems we should love to have.

Carl Davidson serves on the CCDS national coordinating committee and is a past co-chair. Carl is a Left Roots compa and a member of Local 3657 of the United Steelworkers. In the 1960s, he was a leader of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and of the New Left, and a writer for the Guardian.

Communist Party of China Political Themes and People's Liberation Army Policy, 1976-2050

By Al Sargis

The Communist Party (CPC or Communist Party of China), the State (PRC or People's Republic of China), and the Military (PLA or People's Liberation Army) are China's fundamental social institutions. The first two are dependent on the third, yet in most US Left media the PLA gets the least detailed attention.



This paper will look at CPC's political themes beginning in Mao's period through the administrations of subsequent leaders up to the present. How the most relevant CPC themes relate to PLA policy and practice are the focus. The question of a China-US war will round out the analysis.

Mao Zedong Period (1949-1976): Class Struggle, Relations of Production, War, Revolution, People's Army

After Liberation, there were prolonged bouts of class struggle-internally, against "bourgeois elements" taking over; externally, against capitalist and revisionist countries. The focus was on relations of production, with the working class as the motive force.

Externally, the struggle with the USSR for leadership of the world communist movement, especially in Third World countries, became prominent. Additionally, this approach saw wars against imperialism and social-imperialism and wars for national liberation in the Third World as necessary parts of this process.

Wars were viewed as protracted, lasting many years. An attack on China by imperialist or social imperialist countries would begin with a nuclear attack, after which a land invasion would commence from its borders. Industries and capitals would be re-located into the vast interior. The PLA would retreat inland, luring the invaders into the countryside where millions of PLA militia would harass and deplete them. The PLA main army would then cut off the invader's long communication and supply lines, surrounding, isolating, and chopping up enemy units piece by piece.

The PLA was viewed not only as a fighting force but equally as an economic productive force, a "swimmer" in the sea of people's social activities and an ideological educator. It was internally organized on a democratic basis and overwhelming composed of illiterate and semi-literate peasants. The "guerilla ethos" permeated, and there were periodic struggles over its class character. This "people's army" struggle was greatest during the Cultural Revolution over the question of a proletarian (democratic, guerilla ethos) vs. bourgeois (modernized, Soviet-model) army.

Deng Xiaoping Period (1978-1992): Primary Stage of Socialism, Peace, and Development, Beginning of PLA Modernization

In the late 1970s, there was a reassessment of China's stage of development. What came to be known as the Primary/Initial Stage of Socialism (PSS) was evolved based on examination of the PRC's level of economic development. Contradicting Mao's view that China was already in the socialist stage, the primary stage of socialism said the PRC is a quasi-socialist formation. China still had semi-capitalist and semi-colonial vestiges and was under-developed, with the vast majority being poor. PSS elevated productive forces (economic development) over productive relations (class struggle). Its corollary was the construction of a mixed socialist market economy under state guidance, with the public sector presiding over the commanding heights. The specific focus was on growing the Four Modernizations (agriculture, industry, science-technology, and defense), with the first three pre-requisites to the fourth.

The task was to lay the economic, political and social foundations for socialism, a process ending about 2050. This was divided into steps, with each having specific tasks and goals, culminating in an economically prosperous, more democratic, and internationally and

militarily strong society. At that point, the PRC would be ready to begin building the socialist stage itself.

The Four Cardinal Principles (socialist economic path, people's democratic dictatorship, Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought, and CPC leadership) were the parameters to keep China on this path. All PRC administrations since then have adhered to the PSS.

PSS theory was also a pre-requisite to the policy of Peace and Development, which posited no major war--especially nuclear--for the foreseeable future. Only local, limited wars were the norm. This gave China a breathing space to focus on economic production--especially with class struggle now a secondary contradiction—and to create a modern PLA suited to limited, local wars on China's borders or even in neighboring foreign countries.

Meanwhile, the PRC should keep a low profile, bide its time and build its strength of Four Modernizations. The PLA would be downsized to allow more money to build its military industry.

In 1975 Deng began a series of talks on the PLA, which he described as bloated, senior officers leading extravagant lifestyles with poorly trained and educated soldiers. Too much emphasis was placed on the PLA governing various regions, economic production, supporting people's activities, ideological education, and aligning with different factions in internal CPC disagreements. The PLA needed to refocus away from its guerrilla ethos and create a modern army organized and trained to fight relatively short, local, conventional wars under contemporary conditions.

Tough Lesson in Vietnam

The 1979 Chinese invasion of Vietnam against an experienced Vietnamese army that had defeated the French and US armies indicated PLA inadequacies. For example, command and control, communications, and supply lines were stretched too far, with too many gaps in them. High casualties and retreat back into China resulted.

But the real jolt came with the 1990 Persian Gulf war. Compared with the US and its allies, the PLA was shocked in comparison with its insufficient organization, doctrine, and weapons. In the mid-1990s, the PLA began to intensively study how to revamp itself to become capable of countering the US military. A revolution in military af-

fairs consumed the PLA, which only began to bear fruit, in practice, around 2005.

Jiang Zemin Period (1993-2003): Peaceful Rise/Ascendancy, Two Transformations

A peaceful, stable international environment was necessary for China to smooth out its rise and make it easier to translate its economic successes into benefits, including for other countries. The PRC had to show it was no threat, but rather an opportunity for the US. This was especially so since its rise--later labeled "ascendancy," supposedly a "softer" term--was called a "threat" by the US.

Additionally, integration with the global economy and world political order had the goal of replacing US hegemony with multilateralism/multi-polarization (i.e., making the US one of the players, not The Player or Hegemon). This was especially so in East Asia, where the goals were to check US power and, at the same time, become a partner with countries in the "neighborhood."

On the military side, China began to more actively assert its sovereignty over the South and East China Seas and its right to monitor and patrol both adjacent sea lanes and air space.

The PLA also concentrated on catching up with US hi-tech, informational warfare. Examples were concentration on cyberwar, space satellites for command and control (e.g., surveillance and communications), space weapons, nuclear submarines, and precision-guided missiles.

This was reflected in Jiang's "Two Transformations": (1) from a large, ground force army to a smaller, better educated, specialized force (e.g., more emphasis on naval, air and strategic missile forces; increase of highly mobile "Fist" units of Special Forces, Marines and Airborne troops for a short duration, local wars); (2) from a dominant Industrial Age mechanized army to a dominant Information Age hi-tech, digitalized one. In other words, quality over quantity.

As part of this process, Deng's Local War under Modern Conditions was changed to Jiang's Local War under Hi-Tech Conditions. Additionally, the Revolution in Military Affairs started under Deng after the Persian Gulf war was redesignated by Jiang as Military Transformation. These were not just word changes, but significant policy al-

terations necessitating more scientific-technological input, structural reorganization, fundamental strategic and doctrinal changes, and a whole new class of weapons.

Hu Jintao Period (2004-2012): New Historical Missions, Long Distance Warfare

Hu's pace-setting talk on "New Historical Missions" on Christmas eve 2004 began by ensuring China's continued economic development by defending its sovereignty and territorial integrity (i.e., Tibet, Xinjiang, South China Sea and its islands, adjacent and extended shipping lanes and airspace). This mission was a repeat, but Hu added a new dimension: ensuring China's "core interests" wherever they may be across the globe.

The PLA's chief related component was the strategy of "Long Distance Warfare." This especially included the realms of maritime, outer space, and cyberspace. The PLA would not only provide security against traditional threats to PRC geographical boundaries and periphery but also to its "core interests" in other countries. For example, it would provide security against pirates preying on China's ships in the Gulf of Aden off Somalia, for Chinese civilian and military facilities and their personnel in other countries, and for anti-terrorism activities along what became known as the "Belt and Road" across Asia to Europe. There would be UN Peacekeeping missions (mostly medical and engineering troops) and humanitarian assistance during disasters abroad.

This strategy recently resulted in opening a PLA Navy refueling, supply, and maintenance base in Djibouti in East Africa, guarded by a more than sufficient-sized battalion of PLA Marines. This facility is literally "just down the road" from the largest US Special Operations base in Africa! Also, the PLA provides training to various African countries, the same ones in which US Special Operations forces do similar military training.

Sometimes this involves combat. For instance, there is a PLA infantry battalion (mixed gender) in South Sudan which guards refugee camps and Chinese oil facilities. Both have been attacked by local militants, and the PLA has suffered deaths and wounded in these encounters.

All these expeditions give the PLA practice in combat or near-combat situations. This is designed to compensate for their lack of recent

battle experience. The US military, on the other hand, does not have such drawbacks because they are constantly combat-tested in recent endless wars.

Xi Jinping Period (2013-?): The Common Dream of Rejuvenating China, Strong Country, and Strong Army

Essentially this is the continuation of restoring China's greatness as it was historically before the Opium wars (1839-42, 1856-60) and imperialist takeover of significant sectors of China. Completion of this task is set for 2050 when China will be an advanced country with high living standards, more democratic, and a world-class military. In Xi's words, "A strong country with a strong army."

This requires some fundamental reforms, both internally and internationally. One of Xi's initial tasks was weeding out corruption, including in the PLA. A few examples should suffice: some officers were promoted by bribing senior officers; farmers paid draft boards to have their sons conscripted to remove them from poverty; top brass became millionaires by taking bribes to allocate more resources to certain bases; maneuvers were pre-planned dress rehearsals to impress senior officers rather than serious preparation for combat. The list is endless.

As one retired PLA major told me: "Corruption at the top, poor conditions at the bottom."

Xi clamped down on PLA corruption and not just in words. Senior officers engaged in illicit practices were removed from the PLA and CPC, and some went to jail. He initiated a program whereby top brass would periodically serve as privates for a few weeks to experience inadequate conditions in the ranks--and then act to remedy them. He scrapped showpiece maneuvers replacing them with conditions so "realistic" that serious injuries sometimes occurred. While reducing corruption, it's an ongoing process because it is systemic and needs constant, vigorous measures.

Another issue Xi tackled was close civil-military integration: To rapidly construct an information age defense required civilian industry to innovate and build hi-tech equipment suitable for both civilian and military use. Thus, an overlap is needed between the two relatively separate civilian and defense industrial sectors.



US air-sea battle force in South China Sea.

A third task was to increase the pace of PLA's modernization. This involved two simultaneous components for war under informational conditions: (1) mechanization of the conventional force. This means upgrading its equipment (e.g., tanks, ships, aircraft, ground force weaponry, etc.) and reorganizing its structure and tasks; (2) rapidly innovating a hi-tech, information-age military component that uses cyberwar, digitalized, robotic and electromagnetic weapons, outer space capabilities and similar measures.

The first component is slated for completion by 2025 and the second by 2050. (Note that all this is within the framework of the endpoint of the primary stage of socialism.) Xi is now in the process of reorganizing the entire command and control so that there will be a totally unified PLA capable of simultaneous, integrated operations across land, sea, undersea, air, space, and outer space domains.

Upon completion, the PLA will be on an overall equal footing with the US military.

Contending with Direct US Threats

Meanwhile, the PLA has to contend with direct US threats. PLA strategy was to create an impermeable Anti-Access, Area Denial Zone. This

sea and air defense was to be created not just to the South China Sea, but beyond to the "Three Island Chain." The first chain covers the South and East China seas and begins at the Kuril Islands off Russia, and ends towards Borneo and the Philippines, covering Taiwan, the Korean peninsula, and Vietnam. The second is located further out in the Pacific and goes from north of Japan through the US Mariana Islands to Australia. The third, in the heart of "the US lake," begins at the Aleutian Islands and runs through the Central Pacific to Oceania, significantly covering the US base in Guam, a launching point for US nuclear air attacks.

These chains are sea and air defense walls to oppose the two main US strategies against China:

(1) Air-Sea Battle: the use of aircraft, naval and missile attacks on PRC economic and military targets;

(2) Sea-Air Blockade: prevent sea and air access to and from China by any country.

Note that US strategies have no ground war component on China's mainland.

China's Belt & Road Initiative across Asia and through the Indian Ocean to Europe and Africa must be seen as a response to the US Pivot to Asia-Pacific. But even more significant is the recent Trump administration's Indo-Pacific strategy, which extends US economic, political, and military reach beyond seas adjacent to China to South-east and South Asia. In these countries, the US contemplates extending "military assistance if requested by allied countries." Among the US missions would be border disputes, attacks by foreign powers, and terrorism.

US-China War

Finally, a word about a US-China war. Asymmetrical means are the PLA's focus until the 2050 catch-up is achieved.

Deterrence is China's main military strategy to prevent such a war. Since China, by its own admission, is in no position to defeat the US in a major head-to-head war, it relies on nuclear and, increasingly, sophisticated cyberwar deterrence. While having a "no first use" nuclear policy, it is capable of delivering an intercontinental attack both from China and via nuclear missile-armed submarines. Its Anti-Ac-

cess/Area Denial wall (of air, land, and sea area) and cyberwar capabilities will be increasingly able to block US naval, air, space, missile, and satellite strikes. Future hypersonic missiles and electromagnetic weapons (e.g., lasers) will add to this capability.

If war breaks out, both the PRC and the US agree it will be the result of an "accident" or "incident" that rapidly grows in unexpected directions. Both countries have mutual lines of communications at the Presidential and top military levels to interdict such eventualities. Whether such mechanisms succeed in war prevention is another matter.

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From the Editor: Some Basic Points of Chinese History to Help Understand Current Events

Introduction

China's civilization is 5000-years old and has great continuity; the country was united in 221 BCE by Qin Shi Huangdi. China has a long history as one of the world's great civilizations in social and economic development, wealth, and science and technology. It is impossible to understand China today without knowing a few basic facts of Chinese history. Some of this history is familiar in the West, other parts not as well known.

Historical records have been preserved since the Han Dynasty 2200 years ago; even more ancient is the notation of the I Ching, which the German philosopher Leibnitz identified as the notation for binary mathematics, basic to today's digital revolution. In addition, the Chinese invented paper, porcelain, silk textiles, and gunpowder, as well as a national bureaucracy based on the examination system. Adam Smith, in his classic book *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), cited China and parts of West Europe as the wealthiest and most developed nations in the world.

China's Qing Dynasty entered a period of decline in the 19th century; the period from 1839-1949 was a century of wars and humiliation. The British attacked China in 1839 to start the Opium War. This was followed by multiple interventions and invasions by foreign powers, loss of territory, the collapse of the Qing, Japanese occupation, and two major civil wars in the more than one hundred years up to 1949.

The "century of humiliation" brought on numerous successive Chinese movements for reform and revolution, from the self-strengthening movement and Qing revival of the 19th century to the Taiping and Boxer rebellions and revolutions of 1911, 1919, and 1949. This difficult, turbulent history is one reason today why unity and stability

are important for the Chinese people and very significant in government policies.

With the victory of the communist-led revolution and establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, China set upon a successful long-term program of industrial development and modernization. The overall accomplishments of the People's Republic of China in rapid economic development are world-historic; the GDP growth rate is comparable to or surpasses previous rapidly industrializing countries such as Great Britain, Germany, the US, or the Soviet Union.

The foreign policy of the PRC has gone through many changes; at first, China was allied with the Soviet Union, but then occurred the Sino-Soviet split. Mao's Three Worlds Theory of the 1970s opposed Soviet "social imperialism." With Deng Xiaoping assuming power, the international policy became more cautious as the emphasis was on building economic strength at home. With Hu Jintao (general secretary of CPC 2002-2012) the policy shifted to "rising China" or China's peaceful rise.

Today, China supports peace and development, opposes hegemony, and works for a multipolar world, with international cooperation on pandemics and global health, climate change, and global warming, and preventing war. There has also been continuity throughout in emphasizing relations with the Third World and Global South. Today in many ways, a stronger China feels like it is simply resuming its traditional place in the forefront of nations, yet often it is blocked by the United States, which seeks to contain a rising China as a perceived challenge to the US program of global dominance and hegemony.

Moments of Chinese History

First Opium War (1839-1842) – Great Britain carried on a growing trade with China in the 18th and early 19th century. However, while there was a great deal of demand for Chinese products in Europe, such as porcelain, silk, and tea, there was much less demand for Western products in China. Consequently, an imbalance of trade developed with much British coin flowing into China. The British responded with a system of growing opium in colonial India and exporting it into China. The drug was addictive, users grew in large numbers, and profits were high. This helped balance the trade; however, the Chinese officials eventually banned the import of opium as a menace to public health. This was unacceptable to the British.

British naval forces attacked and defeated the Chinese. While Chinese forces successfully defended the country in the south, British naval forces moved north, and the Qing court capitulated. In the Treaty of Nanjing signed in 1842, China agreed to open up several cities to foreign trade and establish the system of concessions along the eastern seacoast, including Shanghai. In a foreign concession, the laws were mostly set by the occupying power giving its own citizens privileges, although China did retain certain rights. The treaty also specified that the British annexed Hong Kong island and made it a direct colony.



Great Powers carving up China

The Opium War was a historical turning point. For the rest of its existence until 1911, the Qing Dynasty was continuously confronted with foreign invasions and imposition of unequal treaties (For example, the Second Opium War, Sino-Japanese War, imperialist intervention to suppress the Boxer Rebellion, the British invasion of Tibet, Russian annexations.) After the fall of the Qing in 1911, there was political division and civil war, full-scale Japanese invasion and World War II, and another civil war. The loss of the Opium War and subsequent military defeats had a tremendous impact in China with multiple attempts for reform or revolution.

Taiping Rebellion (1851-1864) – The Taiping “heavenly kingdom” was a powerful movement combining Chinese nationalism against the crumbling and oppressive Qing (Manchu) Dynasty, as well as grassroots peasant protest movements and Christian egalitarian millennialism in the leadership. It became a major rebellion in southern and eastern China, with the rebel capital established at Nanjing. This led to a long and bloody civil war with an estimated 20 million deaths, many by disease and famine, mostly civilians.

The Qing, backed by the colonial powers, eventually suppressed the rebellion.

Sino-Japanese War (1894-95) – Historically, for many centuries, China had been the dominant power in East Asia, while Japan was a smaller island chain. A dispute over influence in Korea led to war; it was a shock to the whole region when the forces of rapidly modernizing Japan defeated the Qing and annexed Taiwan and other islands.

Boxer Rebellion (1898-1901) – The “boxers” were members of secret self-defense societies in the north, who were opposed to growing Western, Christian, and foreign influence and provocations. Attacks on foreigners and Christians were supported by the Qing at one point; an international imperialist force of 20,000 troops (including US troops) eventually landed in North China, marched to Beijing, and suppressed the rebellion.

Sun Yatsen – the revolution of 1911 – Three People’s Principles – Dr. Sun Yatsen was a democratic revolutionary from the southern Province of Guangdong. Founder of the revolutionary democratic Guomindang GMD or KMT (old spelling used at the time), he was a leader of the revolution that toppled the teetering feudal Qing Dynasty in 1911. The GMD won parliamentary elections, however, the republic floundered, and China fell into strife and fighting among rival warlords. The central government in Beijing was weak; to reunite China, Dr. Sun proposed the popular Three People’s Principles: nationalism and self-determination, democracy, and people’s livelihood. His early death in 1925 was a blow to national unity.

World War I and May 4th Movement – China supported the Western allies during World War I; over 100,000 Chinese workers performed critical and dangerous tasks in France at the front lines. The Versailles Treaty, however, awarded the former German concession in Shandong Province to Japan instead of returning it to China. The resulting student protests at the insult and blow to China’s sovereignty grew into a major political and cultural movement, criticizing feudal cultural and weakness along with imperialism and calling for modernization and “Mr. Science and Mr. Democracy.” The May 4th Movement profoundly challenged the culture of the old society and gave impetus to the revolution as necessary to preserving China’s independence.

The Russian Revolution and Founding of the CPC (1921) – the Russian Bolshevik revolution of October 1917 had huge impact globally.

Comintern representatives visited China in 1920. The Communist International, which was established by Lenin, had its headquarters in Moscow. The Comintern was helpful to the emerging Marxist-Leninist movement, which organized the Communist Party of China in Shanghai in 1921. The CCP affiliated with the Comintern, which for years had considerable influence on the CPC leadership. The new Communist Party of China in the 1920s implemented the Comintern program by organizing factory workers in China's industrial areas.

United Front with the Kuomintang and betrayal: In 1923, the CPC and the Comintern entered into an alliance with the much larger KMT (GMD) led by Sun Yatsen to advance the democratic revolution. This broad alliance launched the successful Northern Expedition to win victory for the democratic revolution and reunite the country. But Sun's successor Chiang Kaishek seized power in 1927 and betrayed the CPC by launching a surprise massacre of communists, labor leaders, and Leftists in Shanghai that decimated the party and generated a civil war. The Soviet Union then broke relations with the KMT, which were later restored in the united front period against Japanese aggression. When CPC retreated to the countryside to establish base areas, relations between the Comintern and the CPC became more distant. The Soviet Union broke with the KMT when the USSR recognized the People's Republic of China on Oct. 2, 1949.

The Long March: Mao had long advocated basing the revolution in China on the powerful peasant movements in the countryside. After the Shanghai massacre, the CPC retreated to rural bases or Soviets, but the communists were again nearly wiped out by massive encirclement and annihilation campaigns mounted with German military assistance. In 1934 the CPC then embarked on the legendary Long March covering vast territories in China's interior provinces; the CPC transferred its main base to the northwest in the deep interior and elected Mao Zedong as party leader.

Yanan way — Now established in its strong northwest base area at Yanan, the CPC came to govern a tract in the northwest almost as big as a Chinese province. The party now governed according to the "people's mass line," – democratic, participatory and creative. The party's "new democracy" was broad in class composition. Party practice included education and learning from criticism and self-criticism. "From the people to the people" and "serve the people" were important slogans. There were high spirits in the democratic Red Army, which was key to its eventual victory. This spirit inspired many people on the outside, including open-minded American reporters

and Chinese youth, intellectuals and leftists and progressives. Also inspired by Yanan's democratic revolutionary spirit was a section of the US New Left of the 1960s, which studied the history of the Chinese revolution and cultural revolution.

US friends in China – The YWCA was active in China in the 1920s and had programs for social justice and uplifting the status of women. US reporters began to travel to China to investigate and write about the momentous events: Agnes Smedley, Edgar Snow, Helen Foster, Anna Louise Strong, and others. They visited communist areas and interviewed top leaders such as Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai (later the premier), and Zhu De (head of the red army). Snow's book *Red Star Over China* was a classic account of the communist-led revolution and received much attention in the West. International medical workers came to care for the wounded from the fighting with the KMT. US military and state department personnel worked with the communists resisting the Japanese invasion during World War II. However, many of these friends of China, who had deep understanding because of their experiences in the country, were removed from their State Department positions in the "who lost China?" smear campaign during the McCarthy period. Some of these "old China hands" participated in the founding of the US-China Peoples Friendship Association in 1974. Continuity of unofficial, people-to-people ties is especially important in a time of difficulty in official relations.

Japanese invasion – united front – Japanese imperialism launched a full-scale invasion of China in 1937, starting World War II in the Pacific. There was large scale fighting for many years. The communist party initiated a national united front with the KMT to cooperate to defeat the Japanese invasion. Learning from the KMT treachery in 1927 during the first united front, the party adopted the principle of "independence and initiative" in the united front, protecting itself from another betrayal.

The CPC led guerrilla military forces from the base areas, which along with the KMT forces, mostly contained the Japanese to the north and east and southern coast of China. China tied down a large number of Japanese troops throughout the war. CPC leadership in the national campaign to oppose Japanese aggression and consistent fighting on the front greatly increased party influence and size. The KMT was ambivalent, fighting the Japanese on the one hand but also maneuvering to oppose CPC on the other.

World War II and Civil War – China and the US were allies during the Second World War, fighting the Japanese imperialists. US policy during this period was to work with both the KMT and CPC in fighting the war, having a position of neutrality in Chinese affairs. However, attempts to form a coalition government after the war failed and led to another large-scale civil war between the armed forces of the KMT and the CPC, in which millions of soldiers fought. The US, as part of its cold war anti-communist strategy, sided with the capitalist KMT and supplied Chiang Kaishek with much money and weapons. But the Red Army, with support from the people, prevailed in the fighting.

Chiang Kaishek and the KMT leadership fled to Taiwan, protected by the US Navy, which sent the Seventh Fleet into the Taiwan Straits in 1950. US intervention in the Chinese civil has never been accepted by China, and the issue has not been fully resolved. The US accepted the “one-China” principle when diplomatic relations with the PRC were established in 1979.

1949 and the founding of the Peoples Republic of China: With the Red Army controlling most of the country, Mao Zedong spoke at Beijing’s Tiananmen Square on October 01, 1949, and declared, “The Chinese people have stood up.” He announced the establishment of a Chinese democratic and socialist republic, the Peoples Republic of China. At this time, the country was exhausted by over 100 years of war and destruction; it was mostly poor, illiterate, and economically backward. The state of the old society in 1949 and the living conditions of the people is a major benchmark from which Chinese people measure considerable progress today.

The new PRC government adopted a program of reconstruction after decades of war. In the vast countryside, there was redistribution of the land from the landlords to the peasants. The Soviet Union provided assistance in rebuilding and accelerating the pace of national industrialization.

Korean War – The Korean War has usually been presented in the US as a sudden, unprovoked, large-scale North Korean attack on the south in 1950. The actual genesis of this war is complex, with responsibility on both sides, as described by I.F. Stone in his book *The Hidden History of the Korean War*. The effort to reunite Korea after World War II by holding national elections was stopped by the US. The Korean Worker’s Party and guerrilla leader Kim Il Sung might have won the popular vote and defeated the US-backed Syngman Rhee, who spent the war in Hawaii. The fighting in the peninsula reached a

stalemate and armistice; however, a final peace treaty has never been signed. The new Chinese state engaged and fought the world's most powerful military to a draw; this was seen as a victory in many parts of the Third World.

Great Leap Forward – how can the CPC begin to build socialism in a country in which the peasantry, the largest portion of the population, had an agenda of owning their own land, taking it from the landlords? That is a petit-bourgeois, small owner agenda. Mao first implemented a step-by-step rural construction policy of building cooperatives and collectives, a variation of the Soviet model. But abruptly, Mao launched the Great Leap Forward in 1958 in an attempt to rapidly accelerate the pace of transforming the largely agricultural economy to one of modern industry, large-scale rural communes, and advanced communistic relations of production. The Great Leap had certain accomplishments in building infrastructure, but there were major economic dislocations that turned into the “three bad years” (1959-1961) and a major famine in the south.

Sino-Soviet split – There were tensions at the beginning of the PRC relationship with the Soviet Union. Mao traveled to Moscow in 1949 seeking mutual assistance but was kept waiting for weeks by Stalin. However, the Soviet Union did agree to a mutual aid treaty and supplied substantial aid for economic development projects, helping build China's industry during the 1950s. But with Khrushchev taking power, major differences in ideology, fraternal relations, and foreign policy opened up. Khrushchev's “secret speech” denouncing Stalin was poorly received in Beijing as damaging the unity and strength of world communism. Mao denounced US imperialism as a paper tiger while Khrushchev pursued closer relations with the US. There were disputes over China's desire for possession of nuclear weapons. Major disagreements over the Great Leap Forward and economic policy led to an abrupt withdrawal of Soviet technicians and experts in 1959, a blow to China.

Disagreements on international communist policy led to a split by the 1960s. Mao's Three Worlds Theory foreign policy in the 1970s sought to unite the third world countries (with leadership from China), work with the smaller developed countries of the second world, and target the two first-world superpowers, USA and USSR. In addition, “Soviet social-imperialism” was regarded as the prime danger. This strategy often led China to be in effect siding with the US against the Soviet Union, such as in the national liberation war in Angola.

There are different views in the international Left on these issues; one view is that Mao's split with the Soviet Union was a major mistake as it divided and weakened the international communist movement. Certainly, the Chinese had many legitimate gripes about the "big brother" USSR but could have maintained a united front against US imperialism, especially in opposition to the US war against Vietnam. Another perspective would focus responsibility on Soviet policy. Relations were normalized in the 1980s after Deng Xiaoping took power.

Cultural Revolution – Mainstream US media pictured the Chinese cultural revolution of the 1960s as a kind of social madness and chaos in a still mysterious and unknown China. But for that part of the New Left, which evolved into the new communist movement, the Cultural Revolution was exciting and worthy of great praise, especially for the leadership of Chairman Mao, the brilliant and intrepid revolutionary. This revolution in the Third World contrasted with the staid, bureaucratic, and revisionist Soviet Union. The "reversal of the verdict" on the cultural revolution in 1980 led by Deng depicted the movement as mostly negative, degenerating into persecution and violence and people unjustly attacked. This reversal threw much of the new communist movement, and the US Left into confusion. This assessment remains today while also stressing the great accomplishments of Mao's leadership in the revolution as well as his later mistakes.

Chinese foreign policy: Chinese foreign policy of the PRC has gone through several distinct periods. After 1949, China adopted a policy of "leaning to one side" – siding with the socialist bloc led by the Soviet Union but also welcoming friendly relations with all countries, especially in the Third World. With the Sino-Soviet split and the cultural revolution, China became more isolated internationally, recalling many of its ambassadors. In a dramatic move in 1971, Mao initiated a détente with the US, as he viewed the "social-imperialist" USSR as a greater danger than even US imperialism. China began to pursue an activist policy in Third World liberation movements with little success.

In the 1980s, Deng adopted a "crouching tiger" policy. China would build up its strength internally and take a cautious approach to foreign affairs, focusing on economic development. In 20 years, China achieved large-scale industrialization and expansion of foreign trade. General Secretary Hu Jintao (2003-12) began talking about "China's peaceful rise."

Especially under Xi Jinping, China began taking a stronger international role with major commitments in UN peacekeeping, international conferences such as the Paris Conference on climate change and global warming in 2015, and a major international solidarity effort assisting other countries in containing Covid-19. China promotes a multipolar world and opposes hegemony. Xi advocates “win/win” great power relations and a global vision of a shared future for humanity.

Vietnam and China – This relationship is complicated with both good and not good. Vietnam emerged as a nation in the first millennium BCE around the Red River valley. The Han Dynasty conquered the area around 100 BCE. Despite numerous revolts, Vietnam remained part of China for about a thousand years until independence was again attained at the end of the Tang Dynasty in the 10th century AD. Since then, Chinese dynasties invaded several times, and a war was fought on the border in 1978. Today, there are tensions over conflicting territorial claims in the South China or East Sea; however, there is also much trade and cooperation. Historically, Vietnam was greatly enriched by Chinese culture and supported during the American (Vietnam) War.

The December 1978 reform and opening-up program - after Mao died in 1976, his designated successor was Hua Guofeng. Hua was replaced by Deng Xiaoping, whose focus on economic and industrial development was a major shift from Mao’s approach emphasizing class struggle. Deng’s program brought in major foreign investment for the capitalist, export-oriented enterprises. Special economic zones to attract international capital were set up. China could offer productive labor at low wages. Normal diplomatic relations were re-established with the US. The 1980s was a time of economic growth, modernization, and cultural exploration.

The economy diversified with an expanding capitalist sector deriving profits from the exploitation of labor, leading some on the US Left to conclude that Deng had led China into capitalism. However, Deng’s program also included the Four Cardinal Principles of Marxism-Leninism as applied to China (the people’s democratic dictatorship, the socialist road, leadership of the communist party, and Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought.) Furthermore, the Chinese government always retained control of the strategic sectors of the economy, even when there was extensive privatization.

The 1980s brought not only capitalist economic expansion and Western cultural influences but also a revival of some old corrupt prac-

tices. The CPC launched an anti-bourgeois liberalization campaign in 1983 and a campaign against anti-government dissidents in 1986. These led to the replacement of Hu Yaobang, the popular general secretary of the CPC.

Tiananmen Square (1989) Student protesters rallied at Tiananmen Square on April 15, 1989, to commemorate the death of the popular Hu Yaobang, who had been removed from office in 1987, in part for mishandling protests. Huge street demonstrations followed. The student movement demand was for more democracy and more say in decision-making for young people in the country's politics. Opportunist forces, some with foreign contacts, sought to take advantage of the genuine movement for democracy.

The CPC itself was split at the highest level over handling the crisis, with general secretary Zhao Ziyang often siding with opposition demands while the majority at the top of the party supported Deng Xiaoping. The Chinese government alleged that forces opposed to the communist party as a ruling party was attempting to use the situation to overthrow the communist power and establish a European style bourgeois democracy. The impasse and crisis situation gained tremendous media and international attention. Finally, Deng Xiaoping stepped in decisively and sent People's Liberation Army troops with tanks to retake Tiananmen Square. Many people were killed.

The debate over these events continues and is sometimes bitter; the Qiao Collective, a grassroots media collective of the Chinese diaspora, published an article in 2020 called "A Note on the Tiananmen Protests." Qiao observed:

"Many in the Chinese diaspora have spent our lives hearing stories of the Tiananmen protests, filtered both through our own families' experiences and the West's distorted representation of the protests. This moment occupies a painful scar in our families and in the psyche of many Chinese people. This note is a short reflection on the pain that they represent for many Chinese people, pain which is twisted and co-opted by the West's exploitation of this painful moment for its own agenda.

"The complexities of Tiananmen and its contradictory elements – anti-corruption protesters, bourgeois neoliberals, student reformers, disillusioned workers – all get erased by the simplistic Western fairy tale of the Chinese masses calling out for regime change.

“The protests included competing agendas... working-class consciousness was subsumed to elite factions, some of whom sought allegiances with Western operatives.”

Deng Xiaoping’s Southern Tour and 1990s: After the Tiananmen incident, China’s economic reform and expansion stalled. Deng’s 1992 tour of Guangdong Province and Shenzhen Special Economic Zone was a turning point in relaunching the rapid growth economic strategy; the private sector continued to expand during the 1990s, foreign trade grew rapidly, and China joined the World Trade organization in 2001.

Hu Jintao – Scientific Development. At the 16th party congress in Nov. 2002, Hu Jintao was named general secretary of the CPC. Hu emphasized a return to the basic principles of the CPC established at Yanan of people-centered socialism. “GDP worship” was criticized. Serious problems had emerged along with the economic and industrial boom: damage to the environment, large differences in income and access to services, mistreatment of workers, more corruption among some officials. Hu advanced the theory of “scientific development,” balancing economic growth with care for the environment and good social services. A policy shift began to re-emphasize macroeconomic government control and social justice; for example, extensive legislation was adopted strengthening workers’ rights. This shift became more pronounced after the Great Recession of 2008 showed the problems and limitations of the export-oriented, GDP focused strategy.

The problems of governance -- General Secretary Hu led a campaign for “good governance.” That is, many practices that isolate the government and party from the people are old problems such as bureaucratic behavior, high handed and uncaring treatment by officials, love of perks, or passivity and unresponsiveness towards the public. One historically imposed difficulty is that China has a very long history of being governed by imperial decree and an extensive feudal bureaucracy; many of the administrative habits of the dynasties die hard. Ongoing training, education, and criticism/self-criticism are essential.

2012: Xi Jinping, the anti-corruption campaign and the economic “new normal.” At the 18th party congress in Fall 2012, Hu Jintao delivered his final political report as general secretary, in which he identified corruption within the CPC itself as a major problem. The people deeply resent official corruption, and if not addressed, this

could lead to the party losing respect, power, and its leadership position. New general secretary Xi Jinping soon followed up with a vigorous anti-corruption campaign, targeting both “tigers” and “flies,” that is, both high-level and lower-level officials.

The 18th congress adopted a new model for Chinese economic development, referred to as the “new normal.” The rate of growth would be lower to ensure attention to quality, social welfare and justice, and the environment. Chinese products would rise in the value-added chain, and China would strive to a leader internationally in quality, innovation, and technology. There would be a shift from the export-oriented factories on the East Coast as drivers of the economy and more emphasis on domestic demand, social services, and consumption.

There will be more emphasis on popularizing socialism, Marxist education, and academic and party contact with the international movement. In foreign trade, China will increase activity with countries of the Global South and rely less on the US market. In 2020, Xi’s vision of a “shared future” for humanity was expressed in China’s call for international cooperation to manage the coronavirus crisis and medical assistance sent to dozens of countries worldwide.

The Shanghai Communiqué: Joint Statement Following Discussions with Leaders of the US and the People's Republic of China (Shanghai, February 27, 1972)

President Richard Nixon of the United States of America visited the People's Republic of China at the invitation of Premier Chou Enlai of the People's Republic of China from February 21 to February 28, 1972. Accompanying the President were Mrs. Nixon, US Secretary of State William Rogers, Assistant to the President Dr. Henry Kissinger, and other American officials.

President Nixon met with Chairman Mao Tse-tung of the Communist Party of China on February 21. The two leaders had a serious and frank exchange of views on Sino-US relations and world affairs. During the visit, extensive, earnest, and frank discussions were held between President Nixon and Premier Chou En-lai on the normalization of relations between the United States of America and the People's Republic of China, as well as on other matters of interest to both sides. In addition, Secretary of State William Rogers and Foreign Minister Chi P'eng-fei held talks in the same spirit.

President Nixon and his party visited Peking and viewed cultural, industrial and agricultural sites, and they also toured Hangchow and Shanghai where, continuing discussions with Chinese leaders, they viewed similar places of interest.

The leaders of the People's Republic of China and the United States of America found it beneficial to have this opportunity, after so many years without contact, to present candidly to one another their views on a variety of issues. They reviewed the international situation in which important changes and great upheavals are taking place and expounded their respective positions and attitudes.

The US side stated: Peace in Asia and peace in the world requires efforts both to reduce immediate tensions and to eliminate the basic causes of conflict. The United States will work for a just and secure

peace: just, because it fulfills the aspirations of peoples and nations for freedom and progress; secure, because it removes the danger of foreign aggression. The United States supports individual freedom and social progress for all the peoples of the world, free of outside pressure or intervention. The United States believes that the effort to reduce tensions is served by improving communication between countries that have different ideologies so as to lessen the risks of confrontation through accident, miscalculation or misunderstanding. Countries should treat each other with mutual respect and be willing to compete peacefully, letting performance be the ultimate judge. No country should claim infallibility and each country should be prepared to re-examine its own attitudes for the common good.

The United States stressed that the peoples of Indochina should be allowed to determine their destiny without outside intervention; its constant primary objective has been a negotiated solution; the eight-point proposal put forward by the Republic of Vietnam and the United States on January 27, 1972 represents a basis for the attainment of that objective; in the absence of a negotiated settlement the United States envisages the ultimate withdrawal of all US forces from the region consistent with the aim of self-determination for each country of Indochina. The United States will maintain its close ties with and support for the Republic of Korea; the United States will support efforts of the Republic of Korea to seek a relaxation of tension and increased communication in the Korean peninsula. The United States places the highest value on its friendly relations with Japan; it will continue to develop the existing close bonds. Consistent with the United Nations Security Council Resolution of December 21, 1971, the United States favors the continuation of the ceasefire between India and Pakistan and the withdrawal of all military forces to within their own territories and to their own sides of the ceasefire line in Jammu and Kashmir; the United States supports the right of the peoples of South Asia to shape their own future in peace, free of military threat, and without having the area become the subject of great power rivalry.

The Chinese side stated: Wherever there is oppression, there is resistance. Countries want independence, nations want liberation and the people want revolution—this has become the irresistible trend of history. All nations, big or small, should be equal; big nations should not bully the small and strong nations should not bully the weak. China will never be a superpower and it opposes hegemony and power politics of any kind. The Chinese side stated that it firmly supports the struggles of all the oppressed people and nations for

freedom and liberation and that the people of all countries have the right to choose their social systems according to their own wishes and the right to safeguard the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of their own countries and oppose foreign aggression, interference, control and subversion. All foreign troops should be withdrawn to their own countries.

The Chinese side expressed its firm support to the peoples of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia in their efforts for the attainment of their goal and its firm support to the seven-point proposal of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam and the elaboration of February this year on the two key problems in the proposal, and to the Joint Declaration of the Summit Conference of the Indochinese Peoples. It firmly supports the eight-point program for the peaceful unification of Korea put forward by the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on April 12, 1971, and the stand for the abolition of the "UN Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea." It firmly opposes the revival and outward expansion of Japanese militarism and firmly supports the Japanese people's desire to build an independent, democratic, peaceful and neutral Japan. It firmly maintains that India and Pakistan should, in accordance with the United Nations resolutions on the India-Pakistan question, immediately withdraw all their forces to their respective territories and to their own sides of the ceasefire line in Jammu and Kashmir and firmly supports the Pakistan Government and people in their struggle to preserve their independence and sovereignty and the people of Jammu and Kashmir in their struggle for the right of self-determination.

There are essential differences between China and the United States in their social systems and foreign policies. However, the two sides agreed that countries, regardless of their social systems, should conduct their relations on the principles of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states, nonaggression against other states, noninterference in the internal affairs of other states, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence. International disputes should be settled on this basis, without resorting to the use or threat of force. The United States and the People's Republic of China are prepared to apply these principles to their mutual relations. With these principles of international relations in mind the two sides stated that:

- —progress toward the normalization of relations between China and the United States is in the interests of all countries;

- —both wish to reduce the danger of international military conflict;
- —neither should seek hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region and each is opposed to efforts by any other country or group of countries to establish such hegemony; and
- —neither is prepared to negotiate on behalf of any third party or to enter into agreements or understandings with the other directed at other states.

Both sides are of the view that it would be against the interests of the peoples of the world for any major country to collude with another against other countries, or for major countries to divide up the world into spheres of interest.

The two sides reviewed the long-standing serious disputes between China and the United States. The Chinese side reaffirmed its position: The Taiwan question is the crucial question obstructing the normalization of relations between China and the United States; the Government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legal government of China; Taiwan is a province of China which has long been returned to the motherland; the liberation of Taiwan is China's internal affair in which no other country has the right to interfere; and all US forces and military installations must be withdrawn from Taiwan. The Chinese Government firmly opposes any activities which aim at the creation of "one China, one Taiwan," "one China, two governments," "two Chinas," and "independent Taiwan" or advocate that "the status of Taiwan remains to be determined."

The U.S. side declared: The United States acknowledges that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China. The United States Government does not challenge that position. It reaffirms its interest in a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question by the Chinese themselves. With this prospect in mind, it affirms the ultimate objective of the withdrawal of all U.S. forces and military installations from Taiwan. In the meantime, it will progressively reduce its forces and military installations on Taiwan as the tension in the area diminishes.

The two sides agreed that it is desirable to broaden the understanding between the two peoples. To this end, they discussed specific areas in such fields as science, technology, culture, sports and journalism, in which people-to-people contacts and exchanges would be mutually beneficial. Each side undertakes to facilitate the further development of such contacts and exchanges.



Both sides view bilateral trade as another area from which mutual benefit can be derived, and agreed that economic relations based on equality and mutual benefit are in the interest of the people of the two countries. They agree to facilitate the progressive development of trade between their two countries.

The two sides agreed that they will stay in contact through various channels, including the sending of a senior US representative to Peking from time to time for concrete consultations to further the normalization of relations between the two countries and continue to exchange views on issues of common interest.

The two sides expressed the hope that the gains achieved during this visit would open up new prospects for the relations between the two countries. They believe that the normalization of relations between the two countries is not only in the interest of the Chinese and American peoples but also contributes to the relaxation of tension in Asia and the world.

President Nixon, Mrs. Nixon and the American party expressed their appreciation for the gracious hospitality shown them by the Government and people of the People's Republic of China.

Reference: Wikipedia and US government official publications

Section II: China's Economy and Society

Introduction

This section presents issues of fundamental importance concerning the fate of the Chinese revolution after its victory in 1949, establishing the People's Republic of China. Is China pursuing its own path of socialist construction, or has there been a restoration of capitalism?

This question has been extensively debated in the US Left since it is of great theoretical and strategic importance. Given the huge size of the country, understanding China's political makeup is critical to as-



Deng (left) with Zhou and Mao

sessing today's balance of forces in the world, including the position of the international working class. A capitalist China would bode ill for humanity's future; a socialist China is a major force supporting peace and global cooperation on common problems such as pandemics, global warming, and poverty.

In this section, several 21st-century perspectives are presented. The philosopher and socialist economist David Schweickart, with research begun in 2002, concludes from the standpoint of the economy that China is a socialist country, citing the dominance of state-owned enterprises, state control of investment funds, and state planning mechanisms. Schweickart regards market mechanisms and a capitalist sector as legitimate parts of a socialist economy if not domi-

nant; he also cites numerous serious problems that China faces. He recognizes both the new capitalist class and the strong forces for “socialism from below.” He cites the importance of China having a communist ideology and leadership.

A high point of the “socialism vs. capitalism” debate occurred in 2004 with the publication of a special *Monthly Review* issue arguing that China was restoring capitalism. David Ewing, a leader in the US-China Peoples Friendship Association of San Francisco, engaged the debate by arguing that China remains on the socialist path, albeit one with risks. Ewing’s critique captures the spirit of the times and identifies many basic issues.

Writing in 2013, the Egyptian Marxist economist Samir Amin argues that continued state ownership of the land prevents the characterizing of China as simply capitalist. He considers the remarkable achievements of Chinese state capitalism or socialism with the market. Amin emphasizes the accomplishments of the New China period led by Mao. He gives strong emphasis to China’s independent path and important role in the Global South.

Seven ‘Schools of Thought’

There is a stereotype and caricature in US media and political circles of China as devoid of debate or criticism; actually, there are vigorous discussions both within and outside the communist party and the press. “Seven Currents of Social Thought in People’s China” from a researcher and leader at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences surveys the very broad range of opinion in China itself, from neo-liberalism to Maoism.

Xi Jinping himself noted the debates about China in the West in his speech to the Central Committee soon after being named general secretary. He emphasized that China is continuing to pursue the socialist path, one of the Four Cardinal Principles articulated by Deng Xiaoping. Xi discussed the Marxist method, historical materialism, and seeking truth through facts and practice. A review of Xi’s three-volume work published in English illuminates what might be regarded as the “eighth current” of social thought.

Opinion published in *Qiushi Magazine* from the CPC central committee challenges the US view that China’s “socialist market economy” is not real socialism but a veil for state capitalism. Some mainstream US thinkers regard American free-enterprise capitalism as the true



version and that China is seeking to take advantage with its “state capitalism.” Thus, these thinkers try to discredit China and join in with anti-China propaganda. This opinion piece refutes Western distortions.

Finally, Vijay Prashad, interviewed in 2020, looks at China’s performance in the coronavirus crisis in light of harsh US criticism from both the Trump administration and US corporate media. In most ways, China’s performance was strong and effective; for example, genome data were published promptly. Prashad considers issues of socialism, imperialism, and the Global South. He says that from a Marxist perspective, asking whether China is either socialist or capitalist is the wrong question. China should be seen as a dialectical unity of opposites.

Conclusion: Is there a way to monitor whether China is actually moving towards the goal of a modern socialist country by 2050? One can follow statistics such as income, health and nutrition, education, and training. Does the living standard of the people continue to improve, including the migrant workers? Does ownership and control of the banks and financial sector remain in state hands or privatized? Is there an expansion of democracy, justice and quality, and environmental protection? Are the Four Cardinal Principles upheld? Is there a foreign policy that works for a more democratic international system? The answers to these kinds of questions will be of considerable strategic importance for both China and 21st-century global affairs. It is hoped this section illuminates issues and contradictions to contribute to a discussion.

China: Socialist or Capitalist?

Paper presented at the Global Studies Association Conference, Loyola University, Chicago, June 6, 2014. This version published in *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology* 14 (2015)

By David Schweickart

I. Introduction

The Chinese economy has become the second largest in the world. China recently surpassed the United States as the leading producer of carbon dioxide on the planet. We are flooded these days with books, articles, and news commentaries about "the rise of China," mostly aimed at provoking anxiety and fear. A Gallup poll last



February found that more than 50 percent of Americans see China as "mostly unfavorable."¹ In a recent episode of the popular, satirical television show, "South Park," Cartman's mother asks her son, "Sweetie, are you having nightmares about China again?"²

It is rarely noted, however, how remarkably different China's rise has been from that of other dominant powers: Unlike the major European states, it has not tried to colonize areas of world poorer or weaker than itself. Unlike pre-World-War II Japan, it has not waged ruthless warfare against its neighbors to enhance its economic "sphere of influence." Unlike the United States, it has not set up military bases all over the world, toppled governments deemed "unfriendly," sent in troops whenever "security interests" seemed threatened. Unlike the Soviet Union, it has not engaged in a massive arms race with the

world's other "superpower," nor has it installed client governments in nations on its border.³ China's rise has been what it has proclaimed it to be: a peaceful rise. (It is interesting that those predicting a military confrontation between the United States and China often point to "resource wars." These resources, of course, are not the resources within our own borders, but those resources in other parts of the world to which we feel entitled.)

This is not to say that there is nothing wrong with China. There's plenty wrong with China: the income gap is large and widening; there are lots of sweatshops providing the Wal-Marts of the world with cheap manufactured goods; corruption is rampant; dissent is often suppressed; environmental degradation is severe.

Consider the comments of Pan Yue, at the time China's Deputy Environmental Minister:

Our raw materials are scarce, we don't have enough land and our population is constantly growing. . . . Cities are growing, but desert areas are expanding. . . . Five of the most polluted cities in the world are in China; acid rain is falling on one third of our territory; half of the water in China's seven largest rivers is completely useless, a quarter of our citizens lack access to clean drinking water.⁴

These facts present a grim picture. And yet--there are these "optimism" reports: A Pew Research Center survey in 2005 found China to be "the world leader in hope for the future"--the most optimistic of the 17 nations surveyed. In 2011 Gallup found China to have the fourth highest "optimism index" among the 53 nations it surveyed. (The US and Europe were in negative territory.)⁵ Another Pew survey, this only last year, reports:

The Chinese public has high expectations for the country's economy. In the short term, 80% said they expect the national economic situation to improve in next 12 months, the highest percentage among 39 countries polled. . . . And in the long run, 82% believe that when Chinese children grow up, they will be better off than their parents -- again, the highest percentage registered in the survey.⁶

What is going on in China? Is China simply Capitalism with Chinese Characteristics (title of the Economist's "Book of the Year" in 2008), or is it something different?⁷ That China has "gone capitalist" is certainly the dominant view across the political spectrum, left, right, and center—but is this true?

II. Theses on Marxism and the Transition to Socialism

Let me step back in time a bit. In the summer of 2002, I visited China for the first time. I'd been invited to attend a conference, held at Hangzhou University, put together by Tianyu Cao, professor of philosophy at Boston University, and his wife, Lin Chun, a professor in the Department of Government at the London School of Economics. It was a relatively small gathering—but quite a conference. It was designed to bring together some non-Chinese Marxists, some members of the Chinese New Left, and a number of major figures—all retired—of the Chinese Communist Party. The focus was China's future. Among those attending were Samir Amin, Perry Anderson and Robin Blackburn, Wang Hui and Wen Tiejun (prominent members of the Chinese New Left), and Du Runsheng, Former Director of the Research Institute of Central Agricultural Reform (and chief architect of the hugely successful agricultural reform begun in 1978). There were about twenty of us in all, including the President of Hangzhou University, who chaired all the sessions—and monitored them closely. (I learned later from Tianyu that the President, after reading the papers, threatened to cancel the conference and give us all a tour instead. But to avoid the embarrassment, he allowed it to proceed, on condition that none of the Chinese presenters make any reference to June 4, i.e., Tiananmen Square.) My presentation was entitled, "Ten Theses on Marxism and the Transition to Socialism." Among the theses I elaborated and defended were these:

The basic principles of historical materialism are correct.

Marx's basic insights into the nature and dynamic of capitalism are correct.

We can now discern, more clearly than Marx possibly could, the institutional shape of the socialist "successor system" to capitalism, at least as an ideal type. It will be a form of market socialism with worker self-management of enterprises and social control of investment, a form that I call "Economic Democracy."

There are two serious challenges that a society that has moved beyond capitalism to Economic Democracy would have to confront: 1) providing full employment and 2) motivating adequate "entrepreneurial" activity.

Entrepreneurial capitalists may play a role in resolving these employment and entrepreneurial difficulties. Allowing capitalists to play

such a role does not necessarily compromise the socialist character of a society.

I concluded my paper with these words:

If the twentieth century was America's century, the twenty-first might well be China's. But not for the same reasons. The twenty-first century will be China's if its audacious experiment in "market socialism with Chinese characteristics" is successful. Such a future is possible, but it may not come to pass. A very different future is also imaginable. "Market socialism with Chinese characteristics" might evolve into "capitalism with Chinese characteristics." Such a development would be tragic for China. It would be tragic for humanity.

I then asked those assembled, "What do you think will be China's future?" The responses were interesting. One of the Chinese participants said, "Most likely capitalism." Another argued for markets, democracy, and social justice—which, he said, would be a form of socialism. A third said he could see no real difference between such socialism as I describe and social democracy (of the European sort). A fourth said that the issue wasn't capitalism or socialism, but good socialism vs. bad socialism, good capitalism vs. bad capitalism. (He'd argued at dinner the night before that China suffered the worst of both worlds.) Samir Amin said that he would choose market socialism, but he thinks the dominant forces in China are pushing for capitalism. Perry Anderson noted that many of the respondents expressed what they hoped would happen, not what they thought would happen.

Well, a dozen years later, what can we say?

III. China from the Perspective of Economic Democracy

First, a brief sketch of Economic Democracy: The contrast between the basic model of Economic Democracy and basic model of capitalism can be articulated as follows: A capitalist "free-market" economy is composed of three distinct kinds of markets: markets for goods and services, labor markets and capital markets. Building on Marx's insight that capitalism emerges when labor markets emerge (i.e., when labor-power becomes a commodity), and that this development soon gives rise to capital markets, Economic Democracy retains the first set of markets—for goods and services, but replaces the com-

modification of labor with workplace democracy and those private financial markets with a public banking system. The basic model is supplemented by having the government serve as an employer-of-last-resort and allowing for an entrepreneurial capitalist sector of mostly small businesses but some large firms as well.

From the perspective of Economic Democracy, two double-negatives come into focus regarding China,

The fact that China has given a large scope to the market in its economy does not mean that China is not a socialist society. A complex modern socialist economy requires a suitably regulated market mechanism to allocate most goods and services.

The fact that there are some very rich capitalists in China does not mean that China is not a socialist society. A viable, desirable socialism may well include a capitalist sector--certainly a sector of small businesses, but perhaps even a sector of large, entrepreneurial capitalists. Entrepreneurial capitalists could play useful, honorable role in fostering innovation and providing employment. It should not be presumed that such a sector will inevitably become the dominant sector.

Successor-system theory urges us to look for positive signs as well. What about workplace democracy in China?

We observe that formal institutions are in place in many enterprises, backed by official rhetoric. The language of "democratic management" is widely used in China. The Chinese *Constitution* proclaims that "state-owned enterprises practice democratic management through congresses of workers," which are empowered to "decide matters concerning the well-being and benefits of the workers," and even to "elect the factory director or manager according to the arrangement of the competent governmental department."⁸

China's current premier, Li Keqiang noted in his speech to the All-China-Federation-of-Trade-Unions Congress last November, "We should promote democratic management in companies, and fully exploit the role of workers' congresses."⁹

Of course, Chinese trade unions have scarcely been at the forefront of the struggle for worker rights in China. Indeed, a major struggle taking place right now concerns democratizing the trade unions themselves, specifically, giving workers the right to "freely select and

elect candidates for the trade union committees without interference from management or the higher-level unions."

This quote is from a long *China Labour Bulletin* article, July 2012, entitled, "A Prescription for Workplace Democracy in China," which describes the debates that have arisen among labor scholars in China, following a strike by workers at a Japanese-owned electronics factory in Shenzhen demanding such a right. The struggle was successful. One consequence, according to the Vice-Chairman of the Shenzhen Municipal Federation of Trade Unions, is that there will henceforth be direct elections of trade union representatives at all enterprises in Shenzhen with more than 1000 workers.

The article further points out that the document, Regulations on the Democratic Management of Enterprises, which has been endorsed by "six government authorities, including the All-China-Federation-of-Trade-Unions," calls for "electing worker representatives to serve on the company's board of directors, who have the right to be informed about the company's overall development and to participate in decision-making power."¹⁰

China.org.cn reporter Heiko Khoo has written:

Since May 2011, a revolutionary legal framework for the universal democratic management of enterprises has been in effect in the Shanghai municipality. . . Under the regulations, all enterprises . . . are obliged to operate under the "Workers' Congress system." The system provides for democratic management of enterprises, and stipulates that workers have the right to elect, supervise, and recall their managers."¹¹

Now, even if such rules and regulations are not yet effectively enforced—which they are not-- the fact that formal rules are in place and supported by the prevailing ideology is not insignificant. A revitalized labor movement, democratically accountable to its membership, could well make use of them.

What about the social control of investment in China? Again, formally, the situation is promising. Financial institutions in China are overwhelmingly public institutions. The Chinese government has control over its investment funds in ways that governments in capitalist countries do not. This means that the invisible hand of the market does not dictate the future. China still plans. It sets out goals, and it commits resources to realize them.

For example, in 2007, China had planned to lay 8000 miles of high-speed railway by 2020, but then came the Global Financial Crisis. So the target date was forwarded eight years to 2012 to provide countervailing stimulus to the economy. The World Bank described the project as “the biggest single planned program of passenger rail investment there has ever been in one country.”¹² These and similar large-scale government investment projects allowed the Chinese economy, despite its vulnerability to the reduced demand for its exports, to avoid the “Great Recession” that engulfed the United States and Europe.

And of course, there is much long-term planning and investment being made to realize the expressed goals of creating an environmentally sustainable economy and of accommodating the massive migrations of people from the countryside to the cities.

IV: China: Capitalist or Socialist?

China is officially self-described as a “socialist market economy with Chinese characteristics.” Are the references to socialism by China’s ruling class merely verbal ploys, or do they reflect the fact that China is not a capitalist country?

What exactly do we mean by “capitalism”? Two definitions come to mind, one economic, one political. The former defines “capitalism” as a market economy in which the bulk of the means of production are in private hands, and the bulk of the workforce are wage laborers. The latter would define a country as “capitalist” if the “capitalist class,” i.e., the class comprised of those private individuals whose income and wealth derive principally from their ownership of those means of production, has effective control over the political system. If we go with the economic definition, China is not capitalist—at least not yet. For in China, nearly half of the population lives in the countryside, and agricultural land has not been privatized. Moreover, although the share of the output of private enterprises in the economy has increased dramatically over the past several decades, the commanding heights remain dominated by state-owned enterprises: banking, insurance, petroleum, telecommunications, engineering and construction, iron and steel making, electric power, railroads, maritime shipping, etc. To cite a few statistics:¹³

Of the 69 mainland enterprises in the Global Top 500, only five are private. The remaining 64 are either locally or centrally state-owned. Of the top 500 enterprises in China, 90% of the assets are held by SOEs.

Of the gross profits of the top 500 enterprises in China, five state-owned banks account for 23%, 3 state-owned oil companies account for 10%, other SOEs account for 45%. The large private enterprises bring in only 18%.

What about the political definition? There is certainly a capitalist class in China. In *Forbes* magazine's latest "annual guide to the world's richest people," it lists 152 billionaires in China—a large figure, to be sure, although less than a third of 492 in the US, in a country with four times the population in the US.¹⁴ But consider the analysis of Heiko Khoo:

In recent years the main source of enrichment for capitalists was the property market, large-scale property speculation based on access to those with the power of disposal. Those private developers, who were intimately connected with corrupt officialdom at all levels, acquired colossal profits. Coercive plundering of lands for speculative activity provoked resentment and riots all over China. . . [The fact of the matter is] the new rich in China are not a secure and confident ruling class, firmly established in their throne as masters of the state; rather, they constantly fear that elements of the party and state, impelled by discontent within the masses, will threaten their position. . . The new bourgeoisie can be said to have emerged from within the bureaucracy, but it is dependent upon it, fearful of it, and dominated by it.¹⁵

V. Why China Will Not “Go Capitalist.”

It seems clear that the capitalist class in China, although influential, is far from dominant. Let me offer three reasons for thinking that they will remain subordinate, i.e., three reasons for thinking that capitalism is not China's future.

1. Capitalism cannot solve China's fundamental problems--and its ruling class knows this. China's political class is not stupid. (I wish I could say the same for our political class.) Singapore's long-time ambassador to the UN, Kishore Mahbubani, has remarked that "after more than a hundred years of anarchy and misrule, China has amassed the best governing class it has seen in generations." (He adds, "Their success is evident. . . To see the most populous society in the world experiencing the most rapid economic growth is like seeing the fattest boy in the class winning the 100-meter hurdles¹ race.")¹⁶ None of the China problems widely cited--widening

income inequality, environmental destruction, etc.--is news to the Chinese. These are discussed incessantly in the press and debated at the highest levels of government. The Chinese ruling class is well aware that unbridled capitalism will exacerbate inequalities, create more unemployment, and wreak ecological havoc. This was clear to most even before the Great Recession of 2008. It is even more obvious now.

2. There is considerable pressure from below opposing the capitalist trajectory, pressure from workers and peasants, who have ideology on their side. Protestors often appeal to socialist values, and are supported by significant party officials and intellectuals. Chinese workers and peasants are far from passive. (A new law was passed in 2008, the Labor Dispute Conciliation and Arbitration Law, in response to skyrocketing numbers—some 317,000 disputes in 2006, of which 14,000 involved demonstrations or strikes, sometimes even violence.)¹⁷ Although workers and peasants appear to hold the central government in relatively high regard, there is deep discontent with local officials, who are often (correctly) perceived as corrupt, and bent on appropriating for themselves and their allies public lands and state assets.

3. This pressure generates deep concern about instability on the part of the political class, which, given recent history, are particularly sensitive to this issue. China has experienced massive upheavals during the century just past: anti-colonial struggles, civil war, Japanese occupation, a Communist revolution, the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution, Tiananmen Square. The leadership knows that things can spin out of control. The Chinese ruling class is haunted by the specter of instability in ways that Western ruling classes are not. Our ruling classes do not have to pay attention to the poor. They've been wholly marginalized. Chinese workers and peasants are by no means marginal—and they have ideology on their side.

How seriously the possibility of chaotic collapse is taken by the Chinese leadership is reflected in remarks, only recently come to light, made by Deng Xiaoping, in the immediate aftermath of the Tiananmen tragedy:

"Imagine for a moment what could happen if China falls into turmoil. If it happens now, it'd be far worse than the Cultural Revolution. . . . If the turmoil keeps going, it could continue until Party and state authority are worn away. Then there would be a civil war, one faction controlling parts of the army and another faction con-

trolling others. If the so-called democracy fighters were in power, they'd fight among themselves. Once civil war got started, blood would flow like a river, and where would human rights be then?"¹⁸

This concern on the part of China's rulers is wholly understandable. Members of the political class want to preserve their own place in society. Such is the concern of every political class. But there is a second factor that is far from irrelevant. They want to preserve the collective accomplishments of China—and their own place in history. Astonishing successes have been recorded, accomplished by the Chinese themselves without significant external aid or advice. China's rulers do not want to see these successes unravel, as could happen if popular grievances and environmental issues are not addressed.

We should be clear about the magnitude of these successes. For example, according to World Bank figures, China had nearly a billion of its citizens living on less than \$2/day in 1981, more than 80% of its population. By 2010 the number had dropped to less than 400 million. In fact, the entire decline in world poverty during that period, some 68 million people in all, was due to China. Without China, global poverty would have increased during that period by 500 million.¹⁹

We might also recall the figures presented by Amartya Sen in his 2011 New York Review of Books article, comparing China with India, China being significantly poorer than India in 1949:²⁰

- Life expectancy in China is more than 9 years longer now than in India (and only 6 years less than that of the US);
- Infant mortality rate is only a third of India's;
- Maternal mortality rate is six times higher in India than in China;
- Female literacy (ages 15-24) is 99% in China, but only 80% in India...

VI. Conclusion

It is by no means clear that China will succeed in dealing with the immense problems the country faces, above all on the environmental front. If it does, it will have invented a new kind of socialism. In any event, we should wish them well—workers, peasants, and also those honest entrepreneurs, New Left intellectuals, social critics, and non-corrupt Party members, who are currently engaged in one of the mo-

mentous projects of our species: an attempt to creating moderately well-off, sustainable, harmonious society for a fifth of the world's population, a fifth that had been, barely a half-century ago, among the poorest on earth. The stakes are very high. World-systems theorist Giovanni Arrighi's summation of his detailed, careful 2007 study of China remains valid:

If China's reorientation [away from the energy-consuming Western path, toward a more balanced and ecologically-sustainable development] succeeds in reviving and consolidating China's traditions of self-centered market-based development, accumulation without dispossession, mobilization of human rather than non-human resources, and government through mass participation . . . China will be in a position to contribute decisively to the emergence of a commonwealth of civilizations truly respectful of cultural differences.

But if the reorientation fails, China may well turn into a new epicenter of social and political chaos that will facilitate Northern attempts to re-establish crumbling global dominance, or . . . help humanity burn up in the horrors of the escalating violence that has accompanied the liquidation of the Cold War world order.²¹

Endnotes

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	China	India
Life Expectancy	73.5	64.4
Infant Mortality Rate	17	50 (per thousand)
66% Mortality Rate, Children under 5	19	65
Maternal Morality Rate	38	230 (per 100,000)
6x Mean Years of Schooling	7.5	4.4

Adult Literacy Rate	94%	74%
Female Literacy (ages 15-24)	99%	80%
Triple Vaccine Immunization	97%	66%

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Socialism in Four Countries: A Reply to Martin Hart-Landsberg and Paul Burkett's 'China and Socialism,' *Monthly Review*, July/August 2004

By David W. Ewing

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In 2004 the highly regarded US Left journal Monthly Review published a special issue that China was becoming capitalist as socialism was disappearing. It was entitled "China & Socialism: market reforms and class struggle." This was a high point of US capitalist restoration theory about China. David Ewing's rejoinder and critique of Monthly Review captures much of the spirit of the times and basic issues of the debate.

Sixteen years later, Monthly Review published another special issue on China entitled "China 2020: China, the US, and the New Cold War," which referred to China is "neither entirely capitalist nor entirely socialist," and showed an evolving and clearer understanding of China. Ewing in 2020 feels that socialism in China has stabilized due to a decade of enormous economic progress; he is confident about the future.

Introduction

China is a socialist country. Vietnam, North Korea, and Cuba are socialist too. An analysis that proceeds from orthodox, albeit unfashionable, Marxist-Leninist principles must, I think, reach this conclusion. But although I believe China remains socialist, I do not think socialism there is untroubled or even very stable. I remain sympathetic to China because I recognize the magnitude of the problems the Chinese Communist Party confronts, and most of all, the staggering setback for the cause of humanity if socialism should fail there, as it did in Russia.

Communist ideology is in crisis. In the world outside of China, the crisis of Marxism is linked primarily to the historic defeat of Soviet Socialism—a decisive setback for the economic, social, and military struggle against imperialism. Every movement for human liberation has suffered from this loss. We now live in a much darker world where international class struggles are often subsumed in the jumbled ideologies of reactionary bourgeois nationalist and religious movements contending with imperialism for the control of their “own” peoples.

Inside China, and the Communist Party of China (CPC), there is another component to the ideological crisis. It is centered on the failure of the pseudo-revolutionary ideology of Maoism. The philosophical idealism of Maoism, which decoupled ideology from Marxist materialism, crippled the party’s ideological development. Subjectivism ruled in all matters of ideology and politics. The Maoists sought out hidden traitors in the Party who secretly wanted to restore capitalism. Nearly every party leader (and every mass leader too) was eventually condemned as a carrier of the bourgeois virus. It seemed that anyone could suddenly be discovered to have been a long-term “black” agent bent on restoring capitalism.

And there is still one more component to the ideological crisis in China. There remains the protracted military contradiction with American and Japanese imperialism over Taiwan today and the mainland before 1949. So there is a strong nationalist element to Chinese Communism expressed in a *realpolitik* drive to modernize the country for self-defense.

The pragmatism of Deng Xiaoping came as a welcome relief after the tyranny of the “left” Maoists. The new party leadership began their reforms with massive public support and a sense of relief that the tyrants had been toppled. The path the party took after 1978 was market socialism. It was a reaction to the idealism of Maoism and a rejection of the egalitarian “barefoot socialism” of the past.

Market socialism has created a much wealthier China. To achieve these gains, and to do it in a short time, the Communist Party of China employed risky capitalist incentives and permitted the private exploitation of an ever-growing segment of the working class. The party has attempted to ameliorate the evils of market socialism by controlling investment through the licensing and control of private property and income redistribution to the poorest peasants and workers. Anyone who has done business in China can attest to the “nightmare” of bureaucratic red tape and layers of government

approval needed to win a business license or lease land. The party has taken measures to protect workers and peasants, frets about the inequality the development is producing, and has achieved steadily rising mass incomes all through the reform period. No capitalist country has achieved such results.

The growth of capitalist relations of production and the accompanying corruption is indeed a danger. I think the Chinese Communist Party (CPC) risks losing its bearings. And it risks losing its political base if the privatization extends into the essential collectivized property of the state. The rising trend of peasant rage and workers strikes is rightly seen by the CPC as a warning and a growing threat to the social base that permits it to rule.

Despite market socialism, the party still controls the vast collectivized property of the state in the form of state factories, land, raw materials, natural resources, and the state portion of the banking and financial sector that dominates the economy. The CPC exercises effective control over private property by its willingness to employ its administrative power against capitalists and their property. The existence of the collectivized state property is the objective basis, the class basis, for the CPC's political rule. For this objective reason, the Communist Party of China is moved by pressure from the working and peasant masses. With the exception of the other three socialist countries, no other country (at any comparable level of development) is nearly so responsive to the mass demands and the needs of the poor.

1978 and After

For statistical purposes, 1978 is the pivotal year for comparing the pre-reform and post-reform periods. It was at the December 18-22, 1978, Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee that the CPC made its decisive turn toward rural decollectivization and started on the path of "reform" that led to market socialism. I happened to be in China three months before the Third Plenary, and I visited the major cities and the industrial Northeast that fall. In September 1978, I visited the model commune, called Dazhai, which was specifically criticized at the Third Plenary and soon decollectivized. Since the 1978 trip, I have returned to China about twelve more times. I have relatives living there, and I can speak conversational Mandarin. In addition to what I have learned through study and analysis, I think I have a reasonable first-hand view of the changes that have taken place over the whole span of time since 1978.

The *Monthly Review* article focuses on the relative inequality of incomes, the growth of unemployment, and the exploitation of the working class since 1978. (See, for example, the various measures of state employment, unemployment, inflation, and the other problems highlighted in the Appendix at Tables 3, 4, 7, 8, and 9). But there is no table to show the absolute increase in incomes that has lifted the mass of the working class to income levels undreamed of in the China in 1978.

Using the latest figures available (April 2004, see *China Statistical Data* at www.china.org.cn) for the 36 largest cities in China, it seems that for China as a whole, mass working-class urban incomes are nearly ten times higher in real terms than they were in 1978. They are still growing at about seven percent a year. I have worked and lived among ordinary people in Chinese cities. The incomes of ordinary workers really are several orders of magnitude higher than they were in 1978. These gains are the basis for the mass support the Communist Party of China enjoys today.

The rising incomes in China are real, and they are not limited to “entrepreneurs,” as China now prefers to identify its new capitalists. In addition to substantially higher salaries, China’s working class has benefited from the addition of new socialized resources such as cheap and, in many cases, free public transport on local buses. There are also new subways, trains, and airports, improved roads and schools, new national parks, a remarkable beautification of our industrial cities, access to new libraries, much better quality television programming than in the United States, sports facilities of all kinds, new cultural organizations, and the internet. There are new public spaces and free access to beaches at inland lakes and the sea-side on every point along the Chinese coast. The diet of the masses has improved, and the undeniable proof of this is in the remarkable increase in the average height of the young people of China, who invariably tower over their parents’ generation.

Socialist Markets, Capitalist Markets

Under fully developed capitalism, like in the USA, it is the class of capitalists that exploits the class of workers. The political power of the capitalist ruling state assures the legal and repressive features of capitalist relations of production. Workers under monopoly capitalism are not simply exploited individually by particular capitalists in a neutral democratic state, but through a system of capitalist production in which the factory owner, the banker, the insurer, the landlord,

the tax collector, and the policeman all play their coordinated roles in a system of social repression. Class oppression makes possible the individual private expropriations of labor power and distributes the extracted surplus value through a market system (and taxation) to the exploiters and their agents of repression.

China does not have these necessary features of a capitalist state. Chinese market socialism has just one of the important hallmarks of capitalism—the private exploitation of a significant section of the working class (but not all of the class) by individual foreign and domestic capitalists.

The peasants are not exploited by capitalists. Peasants labor in a hybrid system of agricultural production as small, largely self-sufficient private producers, but they sell their grain at prices guaranteed by the socialist state planners at a level above the cost of production. The recently noted migrant labor shortage (August 2004) in coastal cities is caused by the higher grain prices the state has just begun paying farmers. Enough peasants are now choosing to stay on the land that it is appreciably limiting migration and competition for urban jobs. These higher wage levels are a product of state intervention reshaping the labor market.

The Chinese government has announced its determination to allow the market soon to set grain prices. We shall see if they are able to do this without subsidies. If they move to a free market in grain, I think prices will fall, risking a collapse of grain supplies as farmers switch into truck farming and other more profitable lines of production or just revert to subsistence agriculture. I think the subsidies will remain in one form or another.

In China today, political power—the economic ministries, government administration, the courts, the army, and the police—is in the hands of a workers' state governed by a workers' party. So, while there is private exploitation, overall control of the economy is not in the hands of a capitalist class. China does not have a capitalist economic system, and it is not ruled by a party that represents the capitalist class.

The party and state bureaucracy in China is itself an important brake on capitalist development because the bureaucracy has a material interest in protecting the collectivized state property from being privatized. The state bureaucrats' livelihoods, and their petty privileges, are utterly dependent on this collective property. The CPC would be

swept from power in a capitalist restoration—as the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was swept away in Russia.

The Slow-Motion Capitalist Restoration Theory

The *Monthly Review* analysis presents a “slow motion” theory of capitalist restoration. The authors say that the final victory of capitalism was driven by the logic of the reforms. It was largely the unintentional outcome of a misguided and perhaps well-meaning development policy pursued by the CPC. As the authors say:

As we shall see, while it may have been a party decision to begin marketization, market imperatives quickly proved uncontrollable. Each stage in the reform process generated new tensions and contradictions that were resolved only through a further expansion of market power, leading to the growing consolidation of a capitalist political economy.” (p. 31)

The authors point to a quantitative erosion of the conditions of working-class life since 1978. The authors then conclude, based on examining this evidence, that the dreaded qualitative change--a capitalist restoration--has taken place. That’s their theory. And this quantitative analysis—the slow-motion unintentional introduction of capitalism--is their entire theory of capitalist restoration.

Actually, the quantitative record is somewhat mixed. As I noted in an earlier section, many of the quantitative losses the MR book catalogs are offset by quantitative gains--like much higher and still rising working-class incomes after 1978. The peasants have gained too. And although peasant incomes have lagged urban incomes lately, the mass of the peasants have enjoyed similar across the board material gains. Nominal rural per capita income was \$42 in 1986 and had grown seven-fold by 2003. Peasant incomes are increasing at about 5% per year now.

The economic gains that workers and peasants have made under the reforms have occurred because the CPC protected the workers’ and peasants’ class interests even as they introduced markets and privatization. The party has limited the economic power of capitalists and has repeatedly demonstrated its power over them by arresting and sometimes shooting them for economic crimes—like the theft of state property. The property, the freedom, and even the lives of Chinese capitalists are subject to the political control of the workers’

government. Does it seem likely that any bourgeois state would exercise such repression against its own ruling class?

The weakest part of the slow-motion capitalist restoration thesis is the problem of explaining how a new capitalist class came to rule China and how that rule is carried out -- either through the Communist Party of China itself, or perhaps in a power-sharing arrangement between the CPC and capitalist class representatives. The authors do not explain how the new capitalist dictatorship operates, but simply deduce the gradual consolidation of a new ruling class from within socialism. A convincing theory of capitalist restoration must, at the very least, explain how—and when—working-class power was overthrown and how the bourgeoisie came to rule China through apparently socialist institutions.

Another explanation: Maoist theory of revolution and counter revolution

I think the editors of *Monthly Review*, Harry Magdoff and John Bellamy Foster saw the flaw in the “slow motion” restoration thesis and attempted to correct it. The Forward they wrote for the book presents an altogether different version of capitalist restoration in China—one that is at odds with the “slow motion” restoration thesis of Hart-Landsberg and Burkett (HB). In the Forward, Mr. Magdoff and Mr. Foster propose a Maoist theory of revolution and counter-revolution. As they put it,

A bureaucratic elite and other privileged groups sustain a competing ideology—one that justifies their privileges, which are at odds with the needs of the mass of people. Members of the elite are commonly concerned with passing their advantages to their children, typical of class society. The clash of class interests continues from generation to generation. In this way, the class struggle persists, though in different forms from the past. At heart, as Mao pointed out, even some in high Communist Party positions wanted to take the “capitalist road.” Forward at pp. 3-4

Maoism is all about people’s hearts. That’s because, for Maoists, ideology can be independent of material class interests. In this revealing passage, Magdoff and Foster equate the petty privileges enjoyed by the worker’s party with a hostile class ideology. This is where they depart from Marx. Marxists believe that only classes have class ideologies and that class ideologies are rooted in relations of production—not in petty privileges or corrupted hearts.

A thoroughgoing criticism of Maoism is beyond the scope of my comments here. Perhaps it will suffice as a criticism if I remind the reader of the suffering the CPC imposed on the Chinese masses during the Cultural Revolution as they attempted to read the hearts of wrong thinkers and subjected millions of innocent people to humiliations and punishments to remold them from a bourgeois ideology they didn't subscribe to.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution did more to discredit Marxism among the Party and masses of China than the capitalist incentives pursued by the CPC since 1978. I think that the fatigue and ideological cynicism that crept into the party under Mao made the "anti-ideological" pragmatism of the reformers seem like a rational alternative to Maoist idealism.

Values Socialism

Returning to the main text and thesis of authors Hart-Landesberg and Burkett, their conclusion that China has restored capitalism rests, in the final analysis, on their conclusion that the social system there violates the essential values of socialism. What these values are, however, are rarely explicitly stated, but the authors' "vision of socialism," as they put it, appears throughout their analysis.

I was struck by their descriptions of socialism as I read the analysis. Here are three representative quotations from their ideas about what a socialist society must be like:

"For those interested in radical change toward a worker-community-centered economy, however, analytical disagreements are likely to involve different perceptions of collective values, vision, and strategy, i.e., matters that are not simply reversible without great political costs. After all, for progressives, movement building anchored by clear and consistent values, visions, and strategy is a necessity, whereas quite the opposite is true for defenders of the status quo." (p. 24)

"...each step in China's transition ... moved the system further away from any meaningful progress toward socialism in the sense of a system centered on grassroots worker-community needs and capabilities." (pp. 10-11)

The Chinese development model is creating a race to the bottom in other countries "...that has nothing to do with any progressive development of productive forces holistically considered. This cannot be the basis for building socialism or forwarding socialist values of sustainability, equality, solidarity, and democracy." (p. 112)

These comments about the author's vision of socialism would be acceptable to almost any gathering of Green activists, anti-globalist anarchists, or liberal progressive students. But they profoundly conflict with Marxism. Indeed, Karl Marx spent much of his life combating voluntarist notions about a "worker-community-centered economy" (Proudhon), "grassroots" production schemes like cooperatives (Bakunin), and the "holistic" (Lassalleian) development of productive forces.

How Will Socialism Defeat Capitalism?

The victory of socialism, if it happens before capitalism ruins our world, is now, to be sure, some distance away. But if socialism is ever to win, it will not win primarily because of its superior social values.

Socialism will not replace capitalism if socialism is "anchored by clear and consistent values, visions, and strategies." Socialism will not replace capitalism if "it is driven by use values that are socially agreed upon." Socialism will not defeat capitalism by establishing "a system centered on grassroots worker-community needs and capabilities." Marx angrily dismissed such anarchist conceptions as utopian and reactionary.

Socialism will only defeat capitalism--in a long hostile struggle--if it can establish a radical new economic system that is at least an order of magnitude more productive than capitalism. The really essential feature that such a system must have is that socialism must raise labor productivity to a level unachievable by capitalism. Socialist relations of production must eventually out produce and "out compete" capitalism. And socialism will wreck and supplant the economies of all the countries of the world that do not embrace it. If socialism cannot achieve a level of productivity greater than capitalism, then it is doomed, and Marx would be the first to denounce it as utopian.

A socialist system that can out-produce capitalism will be more centralized than capitalism. It will employ labor in immense modern production networks that employ every advantage of science, concentrated productive assets, and worker initiative. Scientists and

other highly-trained specialists from among the workers will direct production according to a centralized plan that mobilizes material and human resource to produce a level of material abundance unlike anything under capitalism. Distribution of the social product will be according to need.

The freedom, material wealth, democracy, equality, and human happiness that socialism will produce are a product of the relations of production that such an advanced economic system must rely on. These values cannot be wished into being, and they will not be realized until socialism can be established on the advanced economic base described above.

China, of course, is a poor country, with a barely developed industrial system that lags behind the capitalist states in all but a few areas of production. It has to survive against imperialism as it struggles to modernize. And rightly or wrongly, the CPC has chosen the path of market socialism to get there.

Capitalist Restoration and Class Struggle

Since 1978, mass incomes in China and the quality of life for workers and peasants have steadily risen. Does it seem logical that the restoration of capitalism in China could lead to all these improvements for the masses of that Third World country? The greatest defect in the case presented by HB is the “un-Marxist” core of their theory—the idea that the restoration of capitalism in China (a counter-revolution in Marxist terminology) could take place without a qualitative decline in the living standard of the laboring masses after their class lost power.

Another, no less puzzling feature of the slow-motion theory of capitalist restoration is the suggestion that a counter-revolution could have taken place in China without the rest of the world noticing it. Was there no class struggle signaling this momentous event?

In Russia and Eastern Europe, the counter-revolutions of the early 1990s were violent affairs and involved the great powers. There were military clashes and coups and crowds in the streets. Tanks roared through Moscow as the “white house” burned. Workers mounted political strikes to save the socialist system.

After the counter-revolution in Russia, the incomes of the workers and peasants did NOT rise. Incomes fell. They fell to a level beneath mini-



Women's world chess champion, Ju Wenjun credit: Xinhua

mum subsistence. Even now, over a decade later, Russian GDP has still not recovered. The national product of the once-mighty Soviet Russia is today roughly equivalent to that of the tiny Netherlands.

How did the much poorer China manage to restore capitalism without suffering these effects and without anyone noticing until recently? To imagine that capitalism could have been restored in backward China without causing at least as much harm as it did in advanced Russia suggests, I think, a sort of negative defense of capitalism. Perhaps capitalism can do some good things—like economically improving former socialist countries and in-

creasing mass living standards? To the extent that this observation about the negative defense of capitalism is correct, it refutes the central premise of the HB book, which was written to prove the opposite principle—that neoliberal capitalism has no redeeming qualities as a development model.

China's Risky Future

The Communist Party of China is still a subjectively revolutionary party. It is trying to develop China into a modern socialist country. The strategy it has embraced, market socialism, is fraught with dangers and the risk of failure.

China does not have unlimited time to develop. It suffers ideological, political, and military pressure from the United States—just as Cuba, the DPRK, and Vietnam do. The US, Japan, and the other imperialist countries support and fund the anti-China nationalist movements. The goal is to split China into smaller, more manageable, weaker states. Taiwan is a strategic platform for military aggression

and espionage against China. Hong Kong is utilized as a base for ideological subversion in the ideological battle between socialism and capitalism. Resources and propaganda are devoted to split Tibet and the western Islamic provinces into new capitalist states. The US funds and provides political support to every anti-communist trend willing to fight the PRC--everything from the attempts in Beijing and Shanghai to organize a bourgeois opposition party, to charismatic Christian sects in Szechuan, to the bizarre Falun Gong cult and every other manifestation of discontent that could harm the workers' state.

There are many challenges China will have to overcome before it can hope to establish the socialist future that Karl Marx envisioned. Socialism can fail in China, and capitalism may be restored. That day is not yet. Socialists have a duty to exert what little influence we have to protect China and encourage the success of socialism in the world's most populous country. To reject China, and fail to support her, crosses a class line that inevitably conciliates coercive imperialist measures to "democratize" China, protect American jobs from "unfair" socialist (state-subsidized) competition, or militarily protect "democratic Taiwan" from Communist aggression by building new weapons systems to confront the PRC. Following the defeat of the USSR, the cause of socialism has been passing through some of its darkest hours. A socialist victory in China, if it can be consolidated, is the best current hope of socialism in the 21st Century.

China 2013

By Samir Amin

Monthly Review (March 2013)

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The debates concerning the present and future of China—an “emerging” power—always leave me unconvinced. Some argue that China has chosen, once and for all, the “capitalist road” and intends even to accelerate its integration into contemporary capitalist globalization. They are quite pleased with this and hope only that this “return to normality” (capitalism being the “end of history”) is accompanied by development towards Western-style democracy (multiple parties, elections, human rights). They believe—or need to believe—in the possibility that China shall by this means “catch up” in terms of per capita income to the opulent societies of the West, even if gradually, which I do not believe is possible.

The Chinese right shares this point of view. Others deplore this in the name of the values of a “betrayed socialism.” Some associate themselves with the dominant expressions of the practice of China bashing(1) in the West. Still others—those in power in Beijing—describe the chosen path as “Chinese-style socialism,” without being more precise. However, one can discern its characteristics by reading official texts closely, particularly the Five-Year Plans, which are precise and taken quite seriously.

In fact, the question, “Is China capitalist or socialist?” is badly posed, too general and abstract for any response to make sense in terms of this absolute alternative. In fact, China has actually been following an original path since 1950, and perhaps even since the Taiping Revolution in the nineteenth century. I shall attempt to clarify the nature of this original path at each of the stages of its development from 1950 to today—2013.

The Agrarian Question

Mao described the nature of the revolution carried out in China by its Communist Party as an anti-imperialist/anti-feudal revolution looking toward socialism. Mao never assumed that, after having dealt with imperialism and feudalism, the Chinese people had “constructed” a socialist society. He always characterized this construction as the first phase of the long path to socialism.

I must emphasize the quite specific nature of the response given to the agrarian question by the Chinese Revolution. The distributed (agricultural) land was not privatized; it remained the property of the nation represented by village communes, and only the use was given to rural families. That had not been the case in Russia, where Lenin, faced with the *fait accompli* of the peasant insurrection in 1917, recognized the private property of the beneficiaries of land distribution. Why was the implementation of the principle that agricultural land is not a commodity possible in China (and Vietnam)? It is constantly repeated that peasants around the world long for property and that alone. If such had been the case in China, the decision to nationalize the land would have led to an endless peasant war, as was the case when Stalin began forced collectivization in the Soviet Union.

The attitude of the peasants of China and Vietnam (and nowhere else) cannot be explained by a supposed “tradition” in which they are unaware of property. It is the product of an intelligent and exceptional political line implemented by the Communist Parties of these two countries.

The Second International took for granted the inevitable aspiration of peasants for property, real enough in nineteenth-century Europe. Over the long European transition from feudalism to capitalism (1500–1800), the earlier institutionalized feudal forms of access to the land through rights shared among the king, lords, and peasant serfs had gradually been dissolved and replaced by modern bourgeois private property, which treats the land as a commodity—a

good that the owner can freely dispose of (buy and sell). The socialists of the Second International accepted this *fait accompli* of the “bourgeois revolution,” even if they deplored it.

They also thought that small peasant property had no future, which belonged to large mechanized agricultural enterprise modeled on industry. They thought that capitalist development by itself would lead to such a concentration of property and to the most effective forms of its exploitation (see Kautsky’s writings on this subject). History proved them wrong. Peasant agriculture gave way to capitalist family agriculture in a double sense; one that produces for the market (farm consumption having become insignificant) and one that makes use of modern equipment, industrial inputs, and bank credit. What is more, this capitalist family agriculture has turned out to be quite efficient in comparison with large farms, in terms of volume of production per hectare per worker/year.

This observation does not exclude the fact that the modern capitalist farmer is exploited by generalized monopoly capital, which controls the upstream supply of inputs and credit and the downstream marketing of the products. These farmers have been transformed into subcontractors for dominant capital.

Thus (wrongly) persuaded that large enterprise is always more efficient than small in every area—industry, services, and agriculture—the radical socialists of the Second International assumed that the abolition of landed property (nationalization of the land) would allow the creation of large socialist farms (analogous to the future Soviet *sovkhozes* and *kolkhozes*). However, they were unable to put such measures to the test since revolution was not on the agenda in their countries (the imperialist centers).

The Bolsheviks accepted these theses until 1917. They contemplated the nationalization of the large estates of the Russian aristocracy while leaving property in communal lands to the peasants. However, they were subsequently caught unawares by the peasant insurrection, which seized the large estates.

Mao drew the lessons from this history and developed a completely different line of political action. Beginning in the 1930s in southern China, during the long civil war of liberation, Mao based the increasing presence of the communist party on a solid alliance with the poor and landless peasants (the majority), maintained friendly relations with the middle peasants, and isolated the rich peasants at all stages

of the war, without necessarily antagonizing them. The success of this line prepared the large majority of rural inhabitants to consider and accept a solution to their problems that did not require private property in plots of land acquired through distribution. I think that Mao's ideas, and their successful implementation, have their historical roots in the nineteenth-century Taiping Revolution. Mao thus succeeded where the Bolshevik Party had failed: in establishing a solid alliance with the large rural majority. In Russia, the fait accompli of summer 1917 eliminated later opportunities for an alliance with the poor and middle peasants against the rich ones (the kulaks) because the former were anxious to defend their acquired private property and, consequently, preferred to follow the kulaks rather than the Bolsheviks.

This "Chinese specificity"—whose consequences are of major importance—absolutely prevents us from characterizing contemporary China (even in 2013) as "capitalist" because the capitalist road is based on the transformation of land into a commodity.

Present and Future of Petty Production

However, once this principle is accepted, the forms of using this common good (the land of the village communities) can be quite diverse. In order to understand this, we must be able to distinguish petty production from small property.

Petty production—peasant and artisanal—dominated production in all past societies. It has retained an important place in modern capitalism, now linked with small property—in agriculture, services, and even certain segments of industry. Certainly, in the dominant triad of the contemporary world (the United States, Europe, and Japan), it is receding. An example of that is the disappearance of small businesses and their replacement by large commercial operations. Yet this is not to say that this change is "progress," even in terms of efficiency, and all the more so if the social, cultural, and civilizational dimensions are taken into account. In fact, this is an example of the distortion produced by the domination of generalized rent-seeking monopolies. Hence, perhaps in a future socialism, the place of petty production will be called upon to resume its importance.

In contemporary China, in any case, petty production—which is not necessarily linked with small property—retains an important place in national production, not only in agriculture but also in large segments of urban life.

China has experienced quite diverse and even contrasting forms of the use of land as a common good. We need to discuss, on the one hand, efficiency (volume of production from a hectare per worker/year) and, on the other, the dynamics of the transformations set in motion. These forms can strengthen tendencies towards capitalist development, which would end up calling into question the non-commodity status of the land, or can be part of development in a socialist direction. These questions can be answered only through a concrete examination of the forms at issue, as they were implemented in successive moments of Chinese development from 1950 to the present. At the beginning, in the 1950s, the form adopted was petty family production combined with simpler forms of cooperation for managing irrigation, work requiring coordination, and the use of certain kinds of equipment. This was associated with the insertion of such petty family production into a state economy that maintained a monopoly over purchases of produce destined for the market and the supply of credit and inputs, all on the basis of planned prices (decided by the center).

The experience of the communes that followed the establishment of production cooperatives in the 1970s is full of lessons. It was not necessarily a question of passing from small production to large farms, even if the idea of the superiority of the latter inspired some of its supporters. The essentials of this initiative originated in the aspiration for decentralized socialist construction. The communes not only had responsibility for managing the agricultural production of a large village or a collective of villages and hamlets (this organization itself was a mixture of forms of small family production and more ambitious specialized production), they also provided a larger framework: (1) attaching industrial activities that employed peasants available in certain seasons; (2) articulating productive economic activities together with the management of social services (education, health, housing); and (3) commencing the decentralization of the political administration of the society. Just as the Paris Commune had intended, the socialist state was to become, at least partially, a federation of socialist communes.

Undoubtedly, in many respects, the communes were in advance of their time, and the dialectic between the decentralization of decision-making powers and the centralization assumed by the omnipresence of the Chinese Communist Party did not always operate smoothly. Yet the recorded results are far from having been disastrous, as the right would have us believe. A commune in the Beijing region, which resisted the order to dissolve the system, continues to record ex-

cellent economic results linked with the persistence of high-quality political debates, which disappeared elsewhere. Current projects of “rural reconstruction,” implemented by rural communities in several regions of China, appear to be inspired by the experience of the communes.

The decision to dissolve the communes made by Deng Xiaoping in 1980 strengthened small family production, which remained the dominant form during the three decades following this decision. However, the range of users’ rights (for village communes and family units) has expanded considerably. It has become possible for the holders of these land-use rights to “rent” that land out (but never “sell” it), either to other small producers—thus facilitating emigration to the cities, particularly of educated young people who do not want to remain rural residents—or to firms organizing a much larger, modernized farm (never a latifundia, which does not exist in China, but nevertheless considerably larger than family farms). This form is the means used to encourage specialized production (such as good wine, for which China has called on the assistance of experts from Burgundy) or test new scientific methods (GMOs and others).

To “approve” or “reject” the diversity of these systems a priori makes no sense, in my opinion. Once again, the concrete analysis of each of them, both in design and the reality of its implementation, is imperative. The fact remains that the inventive diversity of forms of using commonly held land has led to phenomenal results. First of all, in terms of economic efficiency, although the urban population has grown from 20 to 50 percent of the total population, China has succeeded in increasing agricultural production to keep pace with the gigantic needs of urbanization. This is a remarkable and exceptional result, unparalleled in the countries of the “capitalist” South. It has preserved and strengthened its food sovereignty, even though it suffers from a major handicap: its agriculture feeds 22 percent of the world’s population reasonably well while it has only 6 percent of the world’s arable land. In addition, in terms of the way (and level) of life of rural populations, Chinese villages no longer have anything in common with what is still dominant elsewhere in the capitalist third world. Comfortable and well-equipped permanent structures form a striking contrast, not only with the former China of hunger and extreme poverty, but also with the extreme forms of poverty that still dominate the countryside of India or Africa.

The principles and policies implemented (land held in common, support for petty production without small property) are responsible

for these unequalled results. They have made possible a relatively controlled rural-to-urban migration. Compare that with the capitalist road, in Brazil, for example. Private property in agricultural land has emptied the countryside of Brazil—today, only 11 percent of the country's population. But at least 50 percent of urban residents live in slums (the favelas) and survive only thanks to the “informal economy” (including organized crime). There is nothing similar in China, where the urban population is, as a whole, adequately employed and housed, even in comparison with many “developed countries,” without even mentioning those where the GDP per capita is at the Chinese level!

The population transfer from the extremely densely populated Chinese countryside (only Vietnam, Bangladesh, and Egypt are similar) was essential. It improved conditions for rural petty production, making more land available. This transfer, although relatively controlled (once again, nothing is perfect in the history of humanity, neither in China nor elsewhere), is perhaps threatening to become too rapid. This is being discussed in China.

Chinese State Capitalism and Socialism with the Market

The first label that comes to mind to describe Chinese reality is state capitalism. Very well, but this label remains vague and superficial so long as the specific content is not analyzed.

It is indeed capitalism in the sense that the relation to which the workers are subjected by the authorities who organize production is similar to the one that characterizes capitalism: submissive and alienated labor, extraction of surplus labor. Brutal forms of extreme exploitation of workers exist in China, e.g., in the coal mines or in the furious pace of the workshops that employ women. This is scandalous for a country that claims to want to move forward on the road to socialism. Nevertheless, the establishment of a state capitalist regime is unavoidable and will remain so everywhere. The developed capitalist countries themselves will not be able to enter a socialist path (which is not on the visible agenda today) without passing through this first stage. It is the preliminary phase in the potential commitment of any society to liberating itself from historical capitalism on the long route to socialism/communism. Socialization and reorganization of the economic system at all levels, from the firm (the elementary unit) to the nation and the world, require a lengthy struggle during an historical time period that cannot be foreshortened.

Beyond this preliminary reflection, we must concretely describe the state capitalism in question by bringing out the nature and the project of the state concerned, because there is not just one type of state capitalism, but many different ones. The state capitalism of France of the Fifth Republic from 1958 to 1975 was designed to serve and strengthen private French monopolies, not to commit the country to a socialist path.

Chinese state capitalism was built to achieve three objectives: (i) construct an integrated and sovereign modern industrial system; (ii) manage the relation of this system with rural petty production; and (iii) control China's integration into the world system, dominated by the generalized monopolies of the imperialist triad (United States, Europe, Japan). The pursuit of these three priority objectives is unavoidable. As a result, it permits a possible advance on the long route to socialism, but at the same time, it strengthens tendencies to abandon that possibility in favor of pursuing capitalist development pure and simple. It must be accepted that this conflict is both inevitable and always present. The question then is this: Do China's concrete choices favor one of the two paths?

Chinese state capitalism required, in its first phase (1954–1980), the nationalization of all companies (combined with the nationalization of agricultural lands), both large and small alike. Then followed an opening to private enterprise, national and/or foreign, and liberalized rural and urban petty production (small companies, trade, services). However, large basic industries and the credit system established during the Maoist period were not denationalized, even if the organizational forms of their integration into a “market” economy were modified. This choice went hand in hand with the establishment of means of control over private initiative and potential partnership with foreign capital. It remains to be seen to what extent these means fulfill their assigned functions or, on the contrary, if they have not become empty shells, collusion with private capital (through “corruption” of management) having gained the upper hand.

Still, what Chinese state capitalism has achieved between 1950 and 2012 is quite simply amazing. It has, in fact, succeeded in building a sovereign and integrated modern productive system to the scale of this gigantic country, which can only be compared with that of the United States. It has succeeded in leaving behind the tight technological dependence of its origins (importation of Soviet, then Western models) through the development of its own capacity to produce technological inventions. However, it has not (yet?) begun the reor-

ganization of labor from the perspective of socialization of economic management. The Plan—and not the “opening”—has remained the central means for implementing this systematic construction.

In the Maoist phase of this development planning, the Plan remained imperative in all details: the nature and location of new establishments, production objectives, and prices. At that stage, no reasonable alternative was possible. I will mention here, without pursuing it further, the interesting debate about the nature of the law of value that underpinned planning in this period. The very success—and not the failure—of this first phase required an alteration of the means for pursuing an accelerated development project. The “opening” to private initiative—beginning in 1980, but above all from 1990—was necessary in order to avoid the stagnation that was fatal to the USSR. Despite the fact that this opening coincided with the globalized triumph of neo-liberalism—with all the negative effects of this coincidence, to which I shall return—the choice of a “socialism of the market,” or better yet, a “socialism with the market,” as fundamental for this second phase of accelerated development is largely justified, in my opinion.

The results of this choice are, once again, simply amazing. In a few decades, China has built a productive, industrial urbanization that brings together 600 million human beings, two-thirds of whom were urbanized over the last two decades (almost equal to Europe’s population!). This is due to the Plan and not to the market. China now has a truly sovereign productive system. No other country in the South (except for Korea and Taiwan) has succeeded in doing this. In India and Brazil, there are only a few disparate elements of a sovereign project of the same kind, nothing more.

The methods for designing and implementing the Plan have been transformed in these new conditions. The Plan remains imperative for the huge infrastructure investments required by the project: to house 400 million new urban inhabitants in adequate conditions, and to build an unparalleled network of highways, roads, railways, dams, and electric power plants; to open up all or almost all of the Chinese countryside; and to transfer the center of gravity of development from the coastal regions to the continental west. The Plan also remains imperative—at least in part—for the objectives and financial resources of publicly owned enterprises (state, provinces, municipalities). As for the rest, it points to possible and probable objectives for the expansion of small urban commodity production as well as industrial and other private activities. These objectives are taken se-

riously, and the political-economic resources required for their realization are specified. On the whole, the results are not too different from the “planned” predictions.

Chinese state capitalism has integrated into its development project visible social (I am not saying “socialist”) dimensions. These objectives were already present in the Maoist era: the eradication of illiteracy, basic health care for everyone, etc. In the first part of the post-Maoist phase (the 1990s), the tendency was undoubtedly to neglect the pursuit of these efforts. However, it should be noted that the social dimension of the project has since won back its place and, in response to active and powerful social movements, is expected to make more headway. The new urbanization has no parallel in any other country of the South. There are certainly “chic” quarters and others that are not at all opulent; but there are no slums, which have continued to expand everywhere else in the cities of the third world.

The Integration of China into Capitalist Globalization

We cannot pursue the analysis of Chinese state capitalism (called “market socialism” by the government) without taking into consideration its integration into globalization.

The Soviet world had envisioned a delinking from the world capitalist system, complementing that delinking by building an integrated socialist system encompassing the USSR and Eastern Europe. The USSR achieved this delinking to a great extent, imposed moreover by the West’s hostility, even blaming the blockade for its isolation. However, the project of integrating Eastern Europe never advanced very far, despite the initiatives of Comecom. The nations of Eastern Europe remained in uncertain and vulnerable positions, partially delinked—but on a strictly national basis—and partially open to Western Europe beginning in 1970. There was never a question of a USSR–China integration, not only because Chinese nationalism would not have accepted it, but even more because China’s priority tasks did not require it. Maoist China practiced delinking in its own way. Should we say that, by reintegrating itself into globalization beginning in the 1990s, it has fully and permanently renounced delinking?

China entered globalization in the 1990s by the path of the accelerated development of manufactured exports as possible for its productive system, giving first priority to exports whose rates of growth then surpassed those of the growth in GDP. The triumph of neoliberalism favored the success of this choice for fifteen years (from 1990

to 2005). The pursuit of this choice is questionable not only because of its political and social effects but also because it is threatened by the implosion of neoliberal globalized capitalism, which began in 2007. The Chinese government appears to be aware of this and very early began to attempt a correction by giving greater importance to the internal market and development of western China.

To say, as one hears ad nauseam, that China's success should be attributed to the abandonment of Maoism (whose "failure" was obvious), the opening to the outside, and the entry of foreign capital is quite simply idiotic. The Maoist construction put in place the foundations without which the opening would not have achieved its well-known success. A comparison with India, which has not made a comparable revolution, demonstrates this. To say that China's success is mainly (even "completely") attributable to the initiatives of foreign capital is no less idiotic. It is not multinational capital that built the Chinese industrial system and achieved the objectives of urbanization and the construction of infrastructure. The success is 90 percent attributable to the sovereign Chinese project. Certainly, the opening to foreign capital has fulfilled useful functions: it has increased the import of modern technologies. However, because of its partnership methods, China absorbed these technologies and has now mastered their development. There is nothing similar elsewhere, even in India or Brazil, *a fortiori* in Thailand, Malaysia, South Africa, and other places.

China's integration into globalization has remained, moreover, partial and controlled (or at least controllable, if one wants to put it that way). China has remained outside of financial globalization. Its banking system is completely national and focused on the country's internal credit market. Management of the yuan is still a matter for China's sovereign decision making. The yuan is not subject to the vagaries of the flexible exchanges that financial globalization imposes. Beijing can say to Washington, "the yuan is our money and your problem," just like Washington said to the Europeans in 1971, "the dollar is our money and your problem." Moreover, China retains a large reserve for deployment in its public credit system. The public debt is negligible compared with the rates of indebtedness (considered intolerable) in the United States, Europe, Japan, and many of the countries in the South. China can thus increase the expansion of its public expenditures without serious danger of inflation.

The attraction of foreign capital to China, from which it has benefited, is not behind the success of its project. On the contrary, it is the

success of the project that has made investment in China attractive for Western transnationals. The countries of the South that opened their doors much wider than China and unconditionally accepted their submission to financial globalization have not become attractive to the same degree. Transnational capital is not attracted to China to pillage the natural resources of the country, nor, without any transfer of technology, to outsource and benefit from low wages for labor; nor to seize the benefits from training and integration of offshored units unrelated to nonexistent national productive systems, as in Morocco and Tunisia; nor even to carry out a financial raid and allow the imperialist banks to dispossess the national savings, as was the case in Mexico, Argentina, and Southeast Asia. In China, by contrast, foreign investments can certainly benefit from low wages and make good profits, on the condition that their plans fit into China's and allow technology transfer. In sum, these are "normal" profits, but more can be made if collusion with Chinese authorities permits!

China, Emerging Power

No one doubts that China is an emerging power. One current idea is that China is only attempting to recover the place it had occupied for centuries and lost only in the nineteenth century. However, this idea—certainly correct and flattering, moreover—does not help us much in understanding the nature of this emergence and its real prospects in the contemporary world. Incidentally, those who propagate this general and vague idea have no interest in considering whether China will emerge by rallying to the general principles of capitalism (which they think is probably necessary) or whether it will take seriously its project of "socialism with Chinese characteristics." For my part, I argue that if China is indeed an emerging power, this is precisely because it has not chosen the capitalist path of development pure and simple; and that, as a consequence, if it decided to follow that capitalist path, the project of emergence itself would be in serious danger of failing.

The thesis that I support implies rejecting the idea that peoples cannot leap over the necessary sequence of stages and that China must go through a capitalist development before the question of its possible socialist future is considered. The debate on this question between the different currents of historical Marxism was never concluded. Marx remained hesitant on this question. We know that right after the first European attacks (the Opium Wars), he wrote: the next time that you send your armies to China, they will be welcomed by a banner, "Attention, you are at the frontiers of the bourgeois Republic

of China.” This is a magnificent intuition and shows confidence in the capacity of the Chinese people to respond to the challenge, but at the same time an error because, in fact, the banner read: “You are at the frontiers of the People’s Republic of China.” Yet we know that, concerning Russia, Marx did not reject the idea of skipping the capitalist stage (see his correspondence with Vera Zasulich). Today, one might believe that the first Marx was right and that China is indeed on the route to capitalist development.

But Mao understood—better than Lenin—that the capitalist path would lead to nothing and that the resurrection of China could only be the work of communists. The Qing Emperors at the end of the nineteenth century, followed by Sun Yatsen and the Guomindang, had already planned a Chinese resurrection in response to the challenge from the West. However, they imagined no other way than that of capitalism and did not have the intellectual wherewithal to understand what capitalism really is and why this path was closed to China, and to all the peripheries of the world capitalist system for that matter. Mao, an independent Marxist spirit, understood this. More than that, Mao understood that this battle was not won in advance—by the 1949 victory—and that the conflict between commitment to the long route to socialism, the condition for China’s renaissance, and return to the capitalist fold would occupy the entire visible future.

Personally, I have always shared Mao’s analysis, and I shall return to this subject in some of my thoughts concerning the role of the Taiping Revolution (which I consider to be the distant origin of Maoism), the 1911 revolution in China, and other revolutions in the South at the beginning of the twentieth century, the debates at the beginning of the Bandung period and the analysis of the impasses in which the so-called emergent countries of the South committed to the capitalist path are stuck. All these considerations are corollaries of my central thesis concerning the polarization (i.e., construction of the center/periphery contrast) immanent to the world development of historical capitalism. This polarization eliminates the possibility for a country from the periphery to “catch up” within the context of capitalism. We must draw the conclusion: if “catching up” with the opulent countries is impossible, something else must be done—it is called following the socialist path.

China has not followed a particular path just since 1980, but since 1950, although this path has passed through phases that are different in many respects. China has developed a coherent, sovereign project that is appropriate for its own needs. This is certainly not

capitalism, whose logic requires that agricultural land be treated as a commodity. This project remains sovereign insofar as China remains outside of contemporary financial globalization. The fact that the Chinese project is not capitalist does not mean that it “is” socialist, only that it makes it possible to advance on the long road to socialism. Nevertheless, it is also still threatened with a drift that moves it off that road and ends up with a return, pure and simple, to capitalism.

China’s successful emergence is completely the result of this sovereign project. In this sense, China is the only authentically emergent country (along with Korea and Taiwan, about which we will say more later). None of the many other countries to which the World Bank has awarded a certificate of emergence is really emergent because none of these countries is persistently pursuing a coherent sovereign project. All subscribe to the fundamental principles of capitalism pure and simple, even in potential sectors of their state capitalism. All have accepted submission to contemporary globalization in all its dimensions, including financial. Russia and India are partial exceptions to this last point, but not Brazil, South Africa, and others. Sometimes there are pieces of a “national industry policy,” but nothing comparable with the systematic Chinese project of constructing a complete, integrated, and sovereign industrial system (notably in the area of technological expertise).

For these reasons, all these other countries, too quickly characterized as emergent, remain vulnerable in varying degrees, but always much more than China. For all these reasons, the appearances of emergence—respectable rates of growth, capacities to export manufactured products—are always linked with the processes of pauperization that impact the majority of their populations (particularly the peasantry), which is not the case with China. Certainly, the growth of inequality is obvious everywhere, including China; but this observation remains superficial and deceptive. Inequality in the distribution of benefits from a model of growth that nevertheless excludes no one (and is even accompanied with a reduction in pockets of poverty—this is the case in China) is one thing; the inequality connected with a growth that benefits only a minority (from 5 percent to 30 percent of the population, depending on the case) while the fate of the others remains desperate is another thing. The practitioners of China bashing are unaware—or pretend to be unaware—of this decisive difference.

The inequality that is apparent from the existence of quarters with luxurious villas, on the one hand, and quarters with comfortable

housing for the middle and working classes, on the other, is not the same as the inequality apparent from the juxtaposition of wealthy quarters, middle-class housing, and slums for the majority. The Gini coefficients are valuable for measuring the changes from one year to another in a system with a fixed structure. However, in international comparisons between systems with different structures, they lose their meaning, like all other measures of macroeconomic magnitudes in national accounts. The emergent countries (other than China) are indeed “emergent markets,” open to penetration by the monopolies of the imperialist triad. These markets allow the latter to extract, to their benefit, a considerable part of the surplus value produced in the country in question. China is different: it is an emergent nation in which the system makes possible the retention of the majority of the surplus value produced there.

Great Successes, New Challenges

China has not just arrived at the crossroads; it has been there every day since 1950. Social and political forces from the right and left, active in society and the party, have constantly clashed.

Where does the Chinese right come from? Certainly, the former comprador and bureaucratic bourgeoisies of the Guomintang were excluded from power. However, over the course of the war of liberation, entire segments of the middle classes, professionals, functionaries, and industrialists, disappointed by the ineffectiveness of the Guomintang in the face of Japanese aggression, drew closer to the Communist Party, even joining it. Many of them—but certainly not all—remained nationalists, and nothing more. Subsequently, beginning in 1990 with the opening to private initiative, a new, more powerful right made its appearance. It should not be reduced simply to “businessmen” who have succeeded and made (sometimes colossal) fortunes, strengthened by their clientele—including state and party officials, who mix control with collusion and even corruption. This success, as always, encourages support for rightist ideas in the expanding educated middle classes. It is in this sense that the growing inequality—even if it has nothing in common with inequality characteristic of other countries in the South—is a major political danger, the vehicle for the spread of rightist ideas, depoliticization, and naive illusions.

Here I shall make an additional observation that I believe is important: petty production, particularly peasant, is not motivated by

rightist ideas like Lenin thought (that was accurate in Russian conditions). China's situation contrasts here with that of the ex-USSR. The Chinese peasantry, as a whole, is not reactionary because it is not defending the principle of private property, in contrast with the Soviet peasantry, whom the communists never succeeded in turning away from supporting the kulaks in defense of private property. On the contrary, the Chinese peasantry of petty producers (without being small property owners) is today a class that does not offer rightist solutions, but is part of the camp of forces agitating for the adoption of the most courageous social and ecological policies. The powerful movement of "renovating rural society" testifies to this. The Chinese peasantry largely stands in the leftist camp, with the working class. The left has its organic intellectuals, and it exercises some influence on the state and party apparatuses.

To understand the nature of challenges facing China today, it is essential to understand that the conflict between China's sovereign project, such as it is, and North American imperialism and its subaltern European and Japanese allies will increase in intensity to the extent that China continues its success. There are several areas of conflict: China's command of modern technologies, access to the planet's resources, the strengthening of China's military capacities, and pursuit of the objective of reconstructing international politics on the basis of the sovereign rights of peoples to choose their own political and economic system. Each of these objectives enters into direct conflict with the objectives pursued by the imperialist triad.

The objective of US political strategy is military control of the planet; the only way that Washington can retain the advantages that give it hegemony. This objective is being pursued by means of the preventive wars in the Middle East, and in this sense, these wars are the preliminary to the preventive (nuclear) war against China, cold-bloodedly envisaged by the North American establishment as possibly necessary "before it is too late." Fomenting hostility to China is inseparable from this global strategy, which is manifest in the support shown for the slaveowners of Tibet and Sinkiang, the reinforcement of the US naval presence in the China Sea, and the unstinting encouragement to Japan to build its military forces. The practitioners of China bashing contribute to keeping this hostility alive.

The only possible effective response to this strategy must proceed on two levels: (i) strengthen China's military forces and equip them with the potential for a deterrent response, and (ii) tenaciously pursue the objective of reconstructing a polycentric international political



New Metro in Addis Abba built with China's help

system, respectful of all national sovereignties, and, to this effect, act to rehabilitate the United Nations, now marginalized by NATO. I emphasize the decisive importance of the latter objective, which entails the priority of reconstructing a “front of the South” (Bandung 2?) capable of supporting the independent initiatives of the peoples and states of the South. It implies, in turn, that China becomes aware that it does not have the means for the absurd possibility of aligning with the predatory practices of imperialism (pillaging the natural resources of the planet) since it lacks a military power similar to that of the United States, which in the last resort is the guarantee of success for imperialist projects. China, in contrast, has much to gain by developing its offer of support for the industrialization of the countries of the South, which the club of imperialist “donors” is trying to make impossible.

The language used by Chinese authorities concerning international questions, restrained in the extreme (which is understandable), makes it difficult to know to what extent the leaders of the country are aware of the challenges analyzed above. More seriously, this choice of words reinforces naive illusions and depoliticization in public opinion.

The other part of the challenge concerns the question of democratizing the political and social management of the country.

Mao formulated and implemented a general principle for the political management of the new China that he summarized in these terms:

rally the left, neutralize (I add: and not eliminate) the right, govern from the center-left. In my opinion, this is the best way to conceive of an effective manner for moving through successive advances, understood and supported by the great majority. In this way, Mao gave a positive content to the concept of democratization of society combined with social progress on the long road to socialism. He formulated the method for implementing this: “the mass line” (go down into the masses, learn their struggles, go back to the summits of power). Lin Chun has analyzed with precision the method and the results that it makes possible. (see sources at end of the article)

The question of democratization connected with social progress—in contrast with a “democracy” disconnected from social progress (and even frequently connected with social regression)—does not concern China alone, but all the world’s peoples. The methods that should be implemented for success cannot be summarized in a single formula, valid in all times and places. In any case, the formula offered by Western media propaganda—multiple parties and elections—should quite simply be rejected. Moreover, this sort of “democracy” turns into farce, even in the West, more so elsewhere. The “mass line” was the means for producing consensus on successive, constantly progressing, strategic objectives. This is in contrast with the “consensus” obtained in Western countries through media manipulation and the electoral farce, which is nothing more than alignment with the requirements of capital.

The government in China is not insensitive to the social question, not only because of the tradition of a discourse founded on Marxism, but also because the Chinese people, who learned how to fight and continue to do so, force the government’s hand. If in the 1990s, this social dimension had declined before the immediate priorities of speeding up growth, today the tendency is reversed. At the very moment when the social-democratic conquests of social security are being eroded in the opulent West, poor China is implementing the expansion of social security in three dimensions—health, housing, and pensions. China’s popular housing policy, vilified by the China bashing of the European right and left, would be envied, not only in India or Brazil, but equally in the distressed areas of Paris, London, or Chicago!

However, the acquisition of social benefits is insufficient if it is not combined with democratization of the political management of society, with its re-politicization by methods that strengthen the creative invention of forms for the socialist/communist future.



Planting rice: old terracing, new equipment

Following the principles of a multi-party electoral system as advocated ad nauseam by Western media and the practitioners of China bashing, and defended by “dissidents” presented as authentic “democrats,” does not meet the challenge. On the contrary, the implementation of these principles could only produce in China, as all the experiences of the contemporary world demonstrate (in Russia, Eastern Europe, the Arab world), the self-destruction of the project of emergence and social renaissance, which is, in fact, the actual objective of advocating these principles, masked by an empty rhetoric (“there is no other solution than multi-party elections”!). Yet, it is not sufficient to counter this bad solution with a fallback to the rigid position of defending the privilege of the “party,” itself sclerotic and transformed into an institution devoted to the recruitment of officials for state administration. Something new must be invented.

The objectives of re-politicization and creation of conditions favorable to the invention of new responses cannot be obtained through “propaganda” campaigns. They can only be promoted through social, political, and ideological struggles. That implies the preliminary recognition of the legitimacy of these struggles and legislation based on the collective rights of organization, expression, and proposing legislative initiatives. That implies, in turn, that the party itself is involved in these struggles; in other words, reinvents the Maoist for-

mula of the mass line. Re-politicization makes no sense if it is not combined with procedures that encourage the gradual conquest of responsibility by workers in the management of their society at all levels—company, local, and national. A program of this sort does not exclude recognition of the rights of the individual person. On the contrary, it supposes their institutionalization. Its implementation would make it possible to reinvent new ways of using elections to choose leaders.

Acknowledgements

This paper owes much to the debates organized in China (November–December 2012) by Lau Kin Chi (Linjang University, Hong Kong), in association with the South West University of Chongqing (Wen Tiejun), Renmin and Xinhua Universities of Beijing (Dai Jinhua, Wang Hui), the CASS (Huang Ping) and to meetings with groups of activists from the rural movement in the provinces of Shanxi, Shaanxi, Hubei, Hunan, and Chongqing. I extend to all of them my thanks and hope that this paper will be useful for their ongoing discussions. It also owes much to my reading of the writings of Wen Tiejun and Wang Hui.

Notes

(1) China bashing refers to the favored sport of Western media of all tendencies—including the left, unfortunately—that consists of systematically denigrating, even criminalizing, everything done in China. China exports cheap junk to the poor markets of the third world (this is true), a horrible crime. However, it also produces high-speed trains, airplanes, satellites, whose marvelous technological quality is praised in the West, but to which China should have no right! They seem to think that the mass construction of housing for the working class is nothing but the abandonment of workers to slums and liken “inequality” in China (working-class houses are not opulent villas) to that in India (opulent villas side-by-side with slums), etc. China bashing panders to the infantile opinion found in some currents of the powerless Western “left”: if it is not the communism of the twenty-third century, it is a betrayal! China bashing participates in the systematic campaign of maintaining hostility towards China, in view of a possible military attack. This is nothing less than a question of destroying the opportunities for an authentic emergence of a great people from the South.



Samir Amin meets with Thomas Sankara of Burkina Faso

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Seven Currents of Social Thought and their Development in Contemporary China, with a Focus on Innovative Marxism

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Nowadays, the political and economic development in Socialist China cannot be separated from ideological and theoretical development and is reflected by or contained in the following seven currents of social theories:



1. **Neo-liberalism**
2. **Democratic socialism**
3. **New leftism**
4. **Revivalism**
5. **Eclectic Marxism**
6. **Traditional Marxism**
7. **Innovative Marxism**

Here the phrase “social currents” is a neutral term, of which Marxism is one type.

1. Neo-liberalism

Chinese neo-liberalism has three policy suggestions:

First, it insists on deregulating and liberalizing the economy, including finance, trade, and investment, which means that private monopolies and oligarchs have the freedom to control the economy, media, education, and politics both at home and abroad. If possible, public actions should be replaced with private ones without government in-

terference. Neo-liberalists also suggest the government be small and weak in order to prevent its interference. While agreeing with the notion of small government, I argue here that the small one should be strong on governing functions, with support from a strong People's Congress. For instance, the high number of government and Party ministries should be reduced into several larger ministries, which I have argued for two decades. The neo-liberalists maintain that government should have a small number of staff, a simple structure, and little role, only in order to have the monopolies play a greater part.

Secondly, neo-liberalism insists on privatization. It calls for privatizing reform of the existing public sectors on the basis that privatization is the foundation for a good functioning of the market system and that private enterprises are the most efficient ones. The representative of this notion, Professor Zhang Weiying, former dean of Guanghua School of Administration at Beijing University, argues that land, enterprises, schools, postal services, mines, public facilities, and transportation should all be privatized.

Thirdly, the neo-liberalists insist on the individualization of the welfare system. They oppose the establishment of the welfare state and the increase of people's welfare. This is the common feature of neo-liberalism both at home and abroad, but has not been clearly summarized by academics in both contexts. In China, neo-liberalism is also against such laws as the minimum wage and employment contracts. Those who subscribe to neo-liberalism and the "Washington Consensus" are few in number but are gaining more and more influence.

2. Democratic Socialism

"Democratic socialism" in China contains the following assertions:

First, it denies Marxism as the only guiding theory. It supports the diversity of worldviews and guiding theories, i.e., the diversity of socialism in terms of its constitution and theoretical sources. It regards Bernstein's revisionism and Keynes' economics as its sources and components. Numerous currents and ideas are combined into one in the name of diversification and democracy of thinking, which in fact only constitute a kind of vegetable stew.

Secondly, in terms of the political system, it defends multi-party competition and government rotation. It claims that, as an interest group, the Communist Party of China (CPC) has its own special inter-

ests and is unable to avoid corruption as the only possible party in power.

Thirdly, in terms of the economic system, “democratic socialism” argues that socialism can be realized without transforming capitalist private ownership of the means of production because the ownership structure of the means of production is not the measurement of social essence. It suggests a mixed economic system combining state-owned, private, and other enterprises, and a distribution system based on capital within the framework of private ownership. In terms of the ultimate goal, it considers communism as utopian. In China, the representatives of democratic socialism include Professor Xin Ziling and Professor Xie Tao, with *Yanhuangchunqiu* (*China Digital Times*) as their journal.

3. New Leftism

New leftism is composed of a loose group of intellectuals who have attracted public attention through publishing articles on journals or websites so as to influence the Chinese political process. Most of them have the experience of studying abroad. Some of them still live overseas. *Wuyouzhixiang* (www.wyzxsx.com) is their major theoretical platform. Its founder, Han Deqiang, holds a Ph.D. in Marxism, but is not a Marxist, for he is opposed to the labor theory of value and historical materialism, even though he supports public ownership and critiques neo-liberalism.

In contrast with neo-liberalism, new leftism has the following three characteristics:

First, it calls for a powerful government which dominates during market reforms. This idea was reflected in *The Report of Chinese State Power* written by Wang Shaoguang and Hu Angang in 1993. The report triggered the tax reform of January 1994, which separated local taxes from state taxes. The reform has had a far-reaching influence over Chinese society since then. In this respect, neo-liberalists argue that the state must release its power in order to promote the market economy.

Secondly, new-leftists criticize capitalist globalization and argue that it has resulted in the wide extension of capitalism in China. Social problems in China have their root outside China, i.e., globalization, international capital, and market economy. Neo-liberalists would insist on the internal cause in this respect and that the solution to

the social problems should be further marketization, especially neo-liberalist reforms in both political and economic terms.

Thirdly, new-leftism argues that marketization reforms have resulted in the widening gap between the rich and the poor. It emphasizes economic equality, not economic growth at any cost. It considers the total rejection of the Marxist and communist ideas of redistribution as ruthless and immoral. In the view of neo-liberalists, income inequality does not result from markets but from corruption and trade-offs between power and money — fundamentally, it is the result of a dictatorship.

Although new-leftists try their best to stand on the side of the workers, their criticism and policy suggestions cannot be realized in reality. However, some of their discussions did have a positive influence on Chinese society. For instance, Professor Cui Zhiyuan, who received his Ph.D. in political science in the USA, has employed game theory and mathematical method of economics to demonstrate, through the case study of Nanjie Village, why collectively-owned enterprises are more efficient.

4. Revivalism

Revivalism, the current of antiquity worship, considers ancient kings and sages to be the paramount ideal of personality, and ancient society as the ideal one. It has almost penetrated every type of ideology in China and become a flourishing current. Revivalists worship political thoughts and philosophical ideas from ancient sages, commending – from Confucius — the idea of benevolent governing and prioritizing the common people, and advocating the natural, unchained, and free spirit of Taoism. They also worship ancient ethics and think highly of benevolence, justice, rituals, wisdom, and the notion of serving the public. They suggest that the perfectly scientific socialist ethics is the development of the essence of Confucianism, which is suitable for a socialist society and is the crystallization of the most progressive thoughts of mankind possibly developed in both the East and the West. The birth and applications of Confucianism, they say, not only guarantee the rapid and healthy advance of Chinese socialism but also revolutionizes Marxist theories, constituting the lighthouse that will usher the world into a communist society.

The major representatives of revivalism are Deng Xiaojun and Jiang Qing. Deng Xiaojun is the author of *The Logical Combination of Confucianism and Democratic Ideas*, published by Sichuan People's Pub-

lishing House in 1995, in which he concludes that Confucianism, in essence, is consistent with the democratic ideas in its theoretical orientation and core logic; therefore, he considers, Confucianism and democratic ideas can and should be logically integrated.

The latter, Jiang Qing, known as the most eloquent spokesmen of Neo-Confucianism in mainland China, argues in his book *Political Confucianism*, published by SDX Joint Publishing Company in 2003, that in addition to Confucianist theories about mind-nature, there is a Confucianist political tradition in Chinese Confucianism; and this political tradition of Confucianism is such a great resource that it can replace the Western political tradition and meet China's current political needs. This point is contextualized by Jiang Qing refutation of Deng Xiaojun's theory. Jiang Qing believes that the question concerning the integration of Confucianism and democratic ideas is a question of "necessity" and "possibility". His answer is that there is neither "necessity" nor "possibility".

Some revivalist businessmen even raised the absurd idea that we should emigrate hundreds of millions of people abroad to take over international markets. In fact, Confucianism cannot and should not be revived at the political (or state) level, but only can and should be revived at the social and personal level. The study of a national legacy is appreciable, but revivalism certainly can hardly work.

5. Eclectic Marxism

Eclectic Marxism is the theory and method which interpolates the two sides of contradiction without priority and mechanically mixes opposing ideas and theories with no consistent principle. The representative figures of eclectic Marxism are Wang Dongjing, Dong Degang, and Wang Changjiang, who are all professors of the Central Party School criticized by the central leadership of the CPC.

Wang Dongjing, former director of the Economics Department of the Central Party School, praises the superiority of private ownership in a lecture to the provincial and ministerial leaders. He views selfishness as human nature and agrees with the completely self-serving homo economicus postulate [1] and the idea of "man dies for money as birds die for food." He puts emphasis on efficiency and completely ignores equity while only recognizing that human selfishness is what leads to increased social collaboration and public welfare [2]. He speaks fully on behalf of property owners without any consideration of the exploitation of workers.

I wrote an article in the first issue of *Social Sciences in China* in 2007 to critique Wang's argument and elaborated on the four theoretical hypotheses that an innovative modern Marxist political economy should have, namely, "the new hypothesis of value created by new living labor," and "the hypothesis of both egoistic and altruistic economic man," "the hypothesis of dual constraints of resources and needs," and "the hypothesis of the mutual reinforcement and proportional relationship between equity and efficiency." [3]

In fact, there has been a growing literature in the West exploring altruistic economic hypotheses and theoretical models, which could have a positive effect on institutional arrangements, building integrity, the education of ethics, and could further lead to the increase of social collaboration and public welfare.

Wang Dongjing did not oppose Marxism when advocating that modern economics could guide the development of China's economic reform and opening up. He actually added in the concluding part of his article that he would hold high the Deng Xiaoping Theory and the important thought of Jiang Zemin. Thus he could be classified as Eclectic Marxist.

In his article titled "We Should Further Emancipate Our Minds Concerning the Question of Ownership," Dong Degang, the former deputy director of the Philosophy Department of the Central Party School, emphasized that the purpose of socialism and the adjustment and changes meant to achieve socialism, should be important guiding principles for building socialism. He stressed that we should not be overly concerned about the proportion of public ownership and non-public economy but should pay more attention to making the fruits of economic development to be shared by the vast majority of people on the premise of the development of productive forces. The concept of sharing by the vast majority of people is equal to common prosperity, but it is an abstract notion of common prosperity without the dominant position of public ownership and the distribution according to each one's labor.

Is it possible that the decreased proportion of public ownership will not really weaken the Party's ruling foundation? Frankly speaking, the proportion of the state economy in China's national economy has dropped to less than one-third, while the private economy and foreign economies have risen to two-thirds. This situation is bound to make social wealth gradually concentrate on a few people. Deng Xiaoping warned us in his older age that "in China only socialism,

rather than polarization could work" [4]. The idea that the decreased proportion of public ownership is unable to really weaken the Party's ruling foundation is corrosive to the socialist economic base. It seems that many of Dong Degang's articles are trying to explain socialism with Chinese characteristics and to emancipate the mind. In essence, they entail the revisionism that Lenin mentioned, which could be described by a new term, i.e., eclectic Marxism. Under the name of the emancipation of the mind, it distorts the development of Marxist theory in Chinese circumstances.

Wang Changjiang, the director of Party Building Department of the Central Party School, published an article titled "It is an Objective Reality that the Party has its Own Interests" in issue no. 534 of *Study Times* sponsored by the Central Party School. From his point of view, only when we practically and realistically recognize the existence of the Party's interests could we objectively study the relationship between the various interests, especially the relationship between the interests of the people and that of the Party as their representative, and place the interests of the Party in a appropriate position.[5]

His argument is clearly contrary to the "*Communist Manifesto*" and the Chinese Communist Party's constitution. According to the *Communist Manifesto*, the Communist Party does not have any interests different from the interests of the proletariat as a whole, while according to Chinese Communist Party's constitution, the party should insist on serving the people wholeheartedly. Besides the interests of the working class and the overwhelming majority of the people, the Chinese Communist Party should not have any special interests.

In the process of economic and political development, eclectic Marxism is one of our main targets of our critique. It is important to criticize eclectic Marxist thought in order to find out what Marxism is and what constitutes real socialism with Chinese characteristics.

6. Traditional Marxism

The representative medium of traditional Marxist thought is Mao's Flag, a website with the declaration "Make Mao Zedong's flag rise high." It has many cadres from inside and outside the Party as its contributors, as well as old scholars. The major representatives of traditional Marxism include Li Chengrui, former director of the National Bureau of Statistics of China, Bai Yang, etc. "*Defend Mao Zedong's Flag*" by Bai Yang can be seen as the manifesto of the traditional Marxist thought.

Its core ideas are: First, the guiding status of Mao Zedong Thought should be re-established. Its core is defending the Constitution and the Party's Constitution for the people. Among the Four Cardinal Principles of the Party, the most important one is to adhere to Mao Zedong Thought, which is the foundation for the existence of the Chinese Communist Party and People's Republic of China, the basis of governing and rejuvenating the country, and the source of innovation and development.

Secondly, Mao Zedong's later years should be fairly evaluated. Chairman Mao's later years were the most glorious period of time when a great Marxist dedicated all his life to serve the people and to fight for communism. The fundamental problem of a fair evaluation of Mao Zedong in his later year is to practically, realistically, objectively, and impartially evaluate the Cultural Revolution initiated and led by Chairman Mao. This is a major political task of our Party which could not and should not be avoided. Due to various extremely complex reasons, the Cultural Revolution has committed a serious error of "overthrowing everything" and "full-scale civil war." However, the general orientation, principles, and spirit of the Cultural Revolution are completely correct.

Thirdly, Chairman Mao and Mao Zedong Thought should be vigorously studied and advocated. Deng Xiaoping particularly emphasized that there could be no new China without Chairman Mao. And Mao Zedong Thought has educated several generations. We must hold high the great flag of Mao Zedong Thought from generation to generation forever. However, since the 1990s, the publicity of Chairman Mao and Mao Zedong Thought has been weaker and weaker.

Fourthly, the demonization of Mao Zedong should be severely critiqued. The people are the God in the mind of Chairman Mao, while Chairman Mao is the red sun in the hearts of the people. In the past 30 years, despite the complete denial of his later years, in civil society, the people spontaneously produced wave after wave of "Mao fever," carrying out the activities to commemorate Chairman Mao in various ways. However, some so-called elites have repeatedly fought against the public opinion and reacted with wave after wave of the demonization of Chairman Mao. Li Rui and Yuan Tengfei are representatives of such demonization. [6]

The positive significance of the traditional Marxist thought is its fierce criticism of some erroneous ideas, especially neo-liberalism,

democratic socialism, and eclectic Marxism. However, some criticism, particularly those defending the Cultural Revolution, tends to go too far. They prefer mass criticism and name-calling as their basic approach. And elderly scholars are not good at reviewing domestic and foreign literature. Thus there has been an excess of criticism and inadequate innovation in their writing.

7. Innovative Marxism

The representative scholar in the field of innovative Marxism is the famous economist Liu Guoguang, who used to be the Vice President of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) and now serves as a CASS special adviser. I am also recognized as one of the major representative scholars in this field. Innovative Marxism conforms to the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in terms of the fundamental direction and theory.

First, in terms of the guiding principle, innovative Marxism insists on the guiding position of Marxism in China. Of course, the formulation of the guiding ideology varies across socialist countries, where it is Ho Chi Minh Thought in Vietnam, Jose Marti Thought in Cuba, and the Juche Idea of Kim Il Sung in North Korea. In my opinion, the formulation of the guiding ideology of China should be unified into one sentence – the guidance of Marxism-Leninism and its localized theory in China, instead of some never-ending list that is ridiculed by the academia.

Secondly, in terms of the political system, innovative Marxism adheres to the leadership of the political party of the working class in China. China must adhere to the Communist Party as the vanguard of the working class in nature, the principle of democratic centralism, and the leadership of the Communist Party in the socialist cause. The multi-party cooperation and political consultation system under the leadership of the Communist Party at the current stage is a form of democratic centralism, which is the fundamental organizational principle and institution for the Communist Party and the country under its governance, as well as the political criteria to handle the relationship inside and outside the Party correctly.

Thirdly, in terms of the economic system, innovative Marxism insists on the dominant position of public ownership of the means of production in China. The essential difference between socialism and capitalism with respect to the basic economic system lies in the social ownership structure of production. The dominance of public

ownership with both qualitative and quantitative advantage, in the form of a strong state-owned economy, plays a pivotal role in building a strong country and socialism and in getting its people better off. Therefore, it is the economic base of a socialist nature for the superstructure of the governance by the Communist Party.

Fourthly, in terms of its ultimate goal, innovative Marxism believes that China must adhere to the socialist nature and principle, aiming at emancipating and developing productive forces while eliminating exploitation and polarization so as to achieve common prosperity, and ultimately realizing communism based on socialism with immense progress in productive forces. This is a long process of historical evolution and system innovation.

Studies in Marxism and *Marxism Digests* are representative journals on innovative Marxism, especially the latter one, which concentrates on publishing the theoretical perspectives of innovative Marxism. The website of Marxism Research Network also reflects the theoretical dynamics of innovative Marxism in a timely manner.

In my opinion, theoretical innovation and research or the policymaking in China should be ultimately based on the situation in China while taking into consideration "the circumstances of the world." The correct sequence of policymaking – whether it is to execute the opening up and reform or other major policies relating to China's development – would be first to understand the domestic and the world situation, and then to create a certain specification, and then to test or implement the policy. If this order is reversed, for example, the tests of policies are conducted just in the mind, or the officials undertake the so-called trials in an affirmative way in accordance to their own will, then such policy-making without referring to the law and regulation will often leave a lot of drawbacks in the subsequent implementation. In short, the innovation of Marxism in China should be a "comprehensive innovation," which adheres to the fundamental principles of "Marxism at the base, national legacy at the root, and Western thoughts as the tool," while taking into consideration of the world situation and social reality, and prioritizing the status of CPC. Now, to clarify further the view of innovative Marxism and the places where it can play an important role, we emphasize that the direction of socialism and its scientific development in the 21st century must focus on developing and perfecting "the system of institutions."

First, in terms of building the economic system, socialism with Chinese characteristics means to improve the basic economic system

in a way that will keep public ownership in a dominant position and have diverse forms of ownership by its side. The essential difference between socialism and capitalism with respect to the basic economic system lies in the social ownership structure of means of production, to paraphrase Deng Xiaoping. The dominance of public ownership with both qualitative and quantitative advantage, in the form of a strong state-owned economy and the active collective and cooperative economy, plays a pivotal role in building a strong country and socialism and in getting its people better off. Therefore, it constitutes the economic base of socialism for the superstructure of the ruling of the Communist Party of China, as Jiang Zemin suggested.

Although China cannot achieve the full public ownership of means of production due to underdeveloped productive forces right now, it must adhere to the dominant position of public ownership while developing a variety of private economy at the same time. Only by adhering to the dominant position of public ownership under the conditions of the market economy can the wealth and income distribution system be truly improved in a way dominated by distribution according to each one's labor, common prosperity, equity, and justice be achieved, and the people-centered scientific concept of development be implemented, all of which will provide the economic basis for participatory democracy and for achieving the sound and rapid economic and social development.

Secondly, in terms of the political system, socialism with Chinese characteristics will improve a "three-element and four-layer system". That is to insist on the organic unification of the three elements, i.e.,

the leadership of CPC, the people's position as the master and the rule of law in handling state affairs. It also means to uphold and improve the People's Congress system, multi-party cooperation and the political consultation system under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party,

the regional autonomy system for ethnic minorities, the policy of "two systems within one country," and autonomy at the grassroots level, so as to continue to promote self-improvement and development of the socialist political system, to consolidate the people's democratic dictatorship, in which participatory democracy is the extremely important content and style.

China must adhere to a Communist Party whose nature is the vanguard of the working class, the principle of democratic centralism,

and the leadership of the Communist Party in the socialist cause. In front of the new scientific and technological revolution, the working class is still the representative of advanced productive forces and the embodiment of advanced relations of production, is still the group of people committing to the historical mission to overthrow capitalism and construct socialism and communism. Under the new pattern of the emergence and coexistence of a variety of social classes and strata, the Communist Party still must maintain its nature as the vanguard of the working class and rely on the working class wholeheartedly. The multi-party cooperation and political consultation system under the leadership of the Communist Party at the current stage is a form of democratic centralism which is the fundamental organizational principle and institution for the Communist Party and the country under its governance, and the political criteria to correctly handling the relationship inside and outside the Party.

Thirdly, in terms of the cultural system, socialism with Chinese characteristics will improve the socialist core value system with Marxism as its soul, and let it better lead a variety of social thoughts and social practices, and promote cultural development and prosperity. As a scientific world outlook and methodology, Marxism is the theoretical basis of the socialist movement, which should serve as the guide in the practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics. To treat it as the guide is to combine the universal principles of Marxism with China's reality at the current stage to study new situations, sum up new experiences, and solve new problems. Marxism is a scientific system that opens itself to other thoughts and moves forward with the development of science and practice, with the strong and lasting academic vitality and practical guiding force.

Fourthly, in terms of building the social system, socialism with Chinese characteristics will improve the system of "one structure, three interactions, and four mechanisms." First of all, building a harmonious socialist society requires the improvement of the social management structure featuring leadership of party committees, government responsibility, nongovernmental support, and public participation. [7]

Secondly, we must innovate the public administration system under the leadership of the party, and actively promote the connection between government control and the social coordination, and the complementary relationship between the government administration and social autonomy, in order to form scientific and effective mecha-

nisms for the coordination of interests, expression of demands, conflict mediation, and rights protection.

It should be pointed out that since the socialist democratic system is not yet perfect, some people without the understanding of socialism would equate capitalism with democracy and socialism with autocracy. If we only criticize the hypocrisy of neoliberalism, social democracy, and democratic socialism without improving the system of socialist democracy, then it's impossible to eradicate the soil nurturing Western democracy. One of the means to surpass the Western democracies is for socialist countries to continually make a greater achievement than any other country in aspects of participatory democracy, social justice, and economic development, and to give full play to the superiority of socialism to capitalism. Under the background of the adoption and implementation of the scientific concept of development, building a harmonious socialist society, and the sound and fast economic development of the national economy, we are fully capable of doing this.

If we follow the footsteps of Gorbachev's democratic socialist reform, it is bound to bring misery to the country and the people. China must not repeat that same mistake. It should also be noted that the direction and destiny of socialism in China will be determined by whether the innovative school of Marxism can become the mainstream thought among the Chinese academics and politicians.

The image shows the Chinese characters for Confucius, 孔子, written in seal script. The top part shows the individual strokes for the characters, and the bottom part shows the complete characters joined together.

*Confucius (seal script)*es, and contemporaneously president of the credit Wikipedia

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*This article was reproduced in **Communist Review**, the theoretical journal of the CP Britain, with permission from the Communist Par-*

ty of India (Marxist) CPI(M) Journal, The Marxist, Vol. XXVII, No. 4, 2012. It was presented on Dec. 12, 2012, as a paper at the EMS Academy, Thiruvananthapuram, an educational institution established by the Kerala State Committee of CPI (M) in memory of a veteran Indian communist leader EMS Nampoothiripad. The present version was lightly edited by Communist Review for style and clarity.

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Uphold and Develop Socialism with Chinese Characteristics

By Xi Jinping

*This is an edited version of a speech given by Xi Jinping to the CPC Central Committee in Jan. 2013, shortly after being named general secretary at the 18th Party Congress. A shorter version appeared in **The Governance of China** by Xi Jinping, published by the Foreign Languages Press, Beijing. 2014.*



First of all: Socialism with Chinese Characteristics is socialism. It is not any other sort of “ism.” The foundational, scientific principles of socialism cannot be abandoned; only if they are abandoned would our system no longer be socialist. From first to the last our Party has emphasized that “Socialism with Chinese Characteristics” adheres to the basic principles of scientific socialism and is imbued with characteristically Chinese features bestowed by the conditions of the times. Socialism with Chinese characteristics is socialism, not any other “ism.”

Which ideological system a country implements depends on one crucial issue: can this ideology resolve the historical problems facing the country? In the days when the Chinese people were poor, weak, and at the mercy of others, all sorts of ideologies and theories were attempted. The capitalist road was tried and found wanting. Reformism, liberalism, social Darwinism, anarchism, pragmatism, populism, syndicalism—they all were given their moment on the stage. They all failed to solve the problems of China’s future destiny. It is Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought that guided the Chinese people out of the darkness of that long night and established a New China (1); it is through socialism with Chinese characteristics that China has developed so quickly.

Now from the moment China's opening up and reform began—and especially after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the tremendous changes in Eastern Europe—international public opinion has continuously railed against China. There has been no end to the different flavors of “China collapse” theory. Yet China has not collapsed. To the contrary, our comprehensive national strength increases day by day. The living standards of the people are constantly improving. “The scene before us is unique in its beauty.”

Both history and our present reality tell us that only socialism can save China—and only socialism with Chinese characteristics can develop China. This is the conclusion of history, the choice of our people.

In recent years there have been a few commentators—both at home and abroad—that have asked if what modern China is doing can really be called socialism. Some have said we have engaged in a sort of “capital socialism,” others have been more straightforward, calling it “state capitalism” or “bureaucratic capitalism.” These labels are completely wrong. We say that socialism with Chinese characteristics is socialism. No matter how we reform and open up, we should always adhere to the socialist road with Chinese characteristics, the theoretical systems of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the structure of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and the basic requirements put forward by the Eighteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China for a new victory of socialism.

These include: the absolute leadership of the Communist Party of China, grounding policy in national conditions, putting economic construction at the center, adhering to the “Four Cardinal Principles” (2), and to the program of reform and opening up, liberating and developing productive social forces, building a socialist market economy, socialist democratic politics, an advanced socialist culture, a harmonious socialist society, and an ecological socialist civilization. It includes promoting the comprehensive development of the people, gradually realizing the common prosperity of all the people, and building a modern, prosperous, strong, democratic, civilized and harmonious socialist country—including adhering to the fundamental political system of the National People's Congress, a Communist Party-led system of multi-party cooperation and political consultation, a system of regional ethnic autonomy, a system of grassroots self-government, a legal system with Chinese characteristics, and an economic system in which publicly owned enterprises are the principal part, which develop side by side with diverse forms of ownership.

These features embody the basic principles of scientific socialism under our new historical conditions. If we lose these, we lose socialism. Comrade Deng Xiaoping once made a profound observation: “Our modernization must flow from Chinese realities. No matter if it is revolution or construction, we should pay attention to, learn from, and borrow from foreign experience. However, copying other countries’ experiences and models has never been successful. We have learned a lot in this respect.”

In the past it was impossible to import the Soviet system full-scale; today it is just as impossible for us to import the Western system full-scale. After the conclusion of the Cold War many developing countries were forced to adopt the Western model. The consequence of this has been party feuds, social unrest, and peoples left homeless and wandering—all of which have, to this day, been difficult to stabilize.

I recall the story written in Zhuangzi’s *‘Autumn Floods:’*

“Perhaps you’ve never heard about the young boy of Shouling who went to learn the Handan Walk? He hadn’t mastered what the Handan people had to teach him when he forgot his old way of walking, so he had to crawl all the way back home.”

We must not ever “go to Handan to learn to walk and forget our native stride.” Instead, we have taken Marxism and sinicized it. That is socialism with Chinese characteristics.

In recent years, with the rise of China’s comprehensive national strength and international status, there has been much international discussion and study of the “Beijing Consensus,” “China Model,” and the “China Road.” Among these studies there is no shortage of praise. Some foreign academics believe that the rapid pace of China’s development has called Western theories into question. A new form of Marxist theory is overturning the traditional theories of the West!

Yet from beginning to end, we have maintained that every country’s road to development should be decided by the people of that country. The so-called “China model,” the road of socialism with Chinese characteristics, was created through the Chinese people’s own struggles. We firmly believe that as socialism with Chinese characteristics develops further, our system will inevitably mature; it is likewise inevitable that the superiority of our socialist system will be increasingly apparent. Inevitably, our road will become wider; inevitably, our country’s

road of development will have increasingly greater influence on the world. We need just this sort of confidence—confidence in our theories, confidence in our system, and confidence in our road. We will truly be what the poets called “like cliffside bamboo, standing strong despite countless hardships, beaten about by gales on every side.”

Secondly: Our party has led the people during two historical periods of building socialism: before the “reform and opening-up” and afterwards. These two periods are interrelated. They also had significant differences, but in essence they were both practical explorations made by our party in leading the people in socialist construction. Socialism with Chinese characteristics was first initiated in the period of reform and opening up. However, it was during the New China era that the basic socialist system was built, and socialism with Chinese characteristics could only have been initiated on this twenty-year foundation of socialist construction.

To correctly understand this issue, we must grasp three points. First, if our party did not decisively decide to implement reform and opening up in 1978, unswervingly promote reform and opening up, and staunchly grasp the correct direction of reform and opening up, socialist China might not be in the favorable situation it is today. It may be facing serious crises—perhaps even the sort of crises faced by the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe, crises which brought about the death of their parties and their states. Yet if New China was never established in 1949 and we did not pursue socialist revolution and construction at that time, then the prerequisite ideological, material, and institutional wherewithal needed to smoothly implement reform and opening up would never have accumulated. We needed those experiences—both the positive and the negative ones.

Second, even though the guidance, policy, and actual work of building socialism in these two historical eras had large differences, they are by no means cut off from each other, much less inherently antithetical to each other. In the midst of building practical socialism, our party put forward many correct propositions. But at that time these propositions were not implemented. Only after the reform and opening up were they fully carried out. In the future these concepts will need to be both adhered to and further developed. Like Marx said long ago: “Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past.”

Third, we must correctly evaluate the historical period that came before reform and opening up. We cannot use the post-reform period to repudiate the pre-reform period. Nor can we repudiate the post-reform period with the history of the pre-reform era. The exploration of socialist practice before reform and opening-up created the necessary conditions for the exploration of socialist practice after reform and opening-up. Our explorations of socialist practice in the post-reform era are a continuation and development of what came before. Thus, in regard to the exploration of socialist practice before reform and opening up, we should adhere to the ideological line of seeking truth from facts, clearly distinguish the essential from the nonessential, adhere to truth, correct errors, develop our experience and draw lessons from it. On this foundation we can continue to push forward the cause of the party and the people.

The reason why I emphasize this problem is because it is a major political issue. If it is not handled well, it will have serious political consequences. As one ancient said: “To destroy a people, you must first destroy their history.” Hostile forces at home and abroad often write essays on the history of the Chinese revolution or of New China, doing all in their power to smear and vilify that era. Their fundamental purpose is to confuse the hearts of the people. They aim to incite them into overthrowing both the Communist Party of China’s leadership and the socialist system of our country.

Why did the Soviet Union disintegrate? Why did the Communist Party of the Soviet Union fall to pieces? An important reason is that in the ideological domain, competition is fierce! To completely repudiate the historical experience of the Soviet Union, to repudiate the history of the CPSU, to repudiate Lenin, to repudiate Stalin was to wreck chaos in Soviet ideology and engage in historical nihilism. It caused Party organizations at all levels to have barely any function whatsoever. It robbed the Party of its leadership of the military. In the end the CPSU—as great a Party as it was—scattered like a flock of frightened beasts! The Soviet Union—as great a country as it was—shattered into a dozen pieces. This is a lesson from the past!

Comrade Deng Xiaoping pointed out: “The banner of Mao Zedong Thought cannot be discarded. Throwing this banner out negates the glorious history of our party. Generally speaking, our party’s history is still a glorious one. Although our party has made some large mistakes in its history, including in the 30 years since the founding of the People’s Republic, even mistakes as large as the Cultural Revolution, in the end it was our party that made the revolution success-

ful. China's status in the world was significantly improved after the founding of the People's Republic of China. Only the founding of the People's Republic of China enabled us, a big country with a population of nearly one fourth of the earth's total, to stand up and stand strong in the world."

He also emphasized, "The appraisal of Comrade Mao and the exegesis of Mao Zedong Thought does not solely touch upon the personal issues of Comrade Mao. These things cannot be cut away from the entire history of our Party and our country. To grasp this is to grasp everything. This is not just an intellectual issue—it is a political issue. It is a great political issue, both here and at home."

This is the vision of a great Marxist politician. Just think: if at the time of reform Comrade Mao had been completely repudiated, would our Party still be standing? Would our country's system of socialism still be standing? And if it was not still standing, what would we have? A world of chaos.

Therefore, correctly handling the relationship between socialist practice and exploration both before reform and opening-up and after cannot be seen as a mere historical issue. It is a political one. To better understand this, I recommend you all take the time to read the "Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of our Party since the Founding of the People's Republic of China." (3)

My third point: Marxism always develops along with the social realities and technology of the times. Marxism cannot stagnate. After the start of opening-up, socialism has only continued to advance. Upholding the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics is much like a great book. To establish foundational principles and ideas, Comrade Deng Xiaoping etched his part in. The party central committee's third generation, with Comrade Jiang Zemin as its core and Comrade Hu Jintao as general secretary, added their own brilliant chapters to this book. The responsibility of this generation of communist party members is to write the next chapter of this great work.

More than 30 years have passed since socialism with Chinese characteristics began; in that time, it has succeeded in many a grand endeavor. This is besides the accomplishments made in the founding of New China, a foundation that has allowed China to stand tall and stride far. Our understanding of socialism, and our grasp of the laws that govern socialism with Chinese characteristics, have reached un-

precedented heights. This is unquestionably true. Yet at the same time, we should also recognize that the socialism of our country is still in its infancy. We still face many problems that we have not grasped clearly and dilemmas that have not been resolved. It is also unquestionably true that our understanding and handling of many significant issues is still deepening. Understanding anything requires a process. We have only engaged in socialism for a few decades. Our grasp on these things is still very limited; in practice, we must constantly develop further.

To uphold Marxism and socialism, we must take the perspective of development. We must take the practical problems of China's modernization and reform and put these things we are doing at the center of our vision. Then we must focus our view of them through the perspective of Marxist theory, the sort of theoretical thinking that addresses practical problems, and through the new practices and forms of development that result from this. We have said that there is no one-size-fits-all path of development for the entire world. There also is no path of development that does not require change. Our past achievements in theory and practice will help us better face the problems of our forward march. However, we cannot let them become an excuse for arrogance and complacency, or even worse, a weight that drags this march down. As our cause advances and develops, the situations we encounter will be less familiar, the challenges and risks we face will grow greater, and we will meet with a growing number of events that cannot now be foreseen. We must become more alert to potential misfortune. We must prepare for danger in a time of peace. Liberate your mind. Seek truth from facts. Keep pace with the times.

This is the living soul of Marxism. These are the fundamental ideological weapons for adapting to new terrain, understanding new things, and accomplishing new tasks. Yet first and foremost, all CPC cadres at all levels must adhere to the Marxist viewpoint of development, insist that practice is the only criterion for testing truth, bring into play historical initiative and creativity, and clearly perceive both continuity and change in the party, the country, and the broader world. We must always have the spirit of "opening roads where we find mountains and building bridges where we meet rivers." We should be enterprising, bold, and daring as we analyze and answer the pressing questions of real life and issues of mass ideology. We will continue to deepen reform and opening up, continue to discover, create, and advance, and continue to promote institutional, theoretical, and practical innovations.

Fourth: From beginning to end our party has always adhered to the lofty ideals of communism. Party members, especially leading cadres, should be firm believers and faithful practitioners of the lofty ideal of communism and the common ideals of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Faith in Marxism, a socialist and communist conviction, is the political soul of the communist party member. They are the spiritual pillar that give him the strength to undergo any test. The party constitution clearly stipulates that the party's highest ideal and ultimate goal is to achieve communism. At the same time, the party constitution also clearly stipulates that the high ideal of communism can only be realized by a highly developed socialist society. To pause for a moment or two and then suddenly enter communism—that isn't realistic.

We must recognize that our labors today and the unceasing work of so many generations in the future are paired together, all moving towards the ultimate goal of achieving communism. If we throw away our communist party's lofty ideals, we will lose our direction and become coldly utilitarian. At the same time, we must recognize that the realization of communism is a very long historical process. We must ground ourselves in the struggles of the present moment and keep our work down to earth.

Socialism with Chinese characteristics is our party's most fundamental, unifying program. The program of socialism with Chinese characteristics is, in a nutshell, to build a prosperous, strong, democratic, civilized, modernized and harmonious socialist country. Not only is this program based on the basic national conditions in which our country is now in, and the primary stage of socialism in which it must remain in for a long time—it also does not depart from the highest ideals of the Party.

Revolutionary ideals reach higher than the heavens. Without lofty ideals, you do not reach the standards of a communist party member. Yet those who abandon their work in the real world to vainly preach such ideals also do not reach this standard. In our Party's ninety years of history, one generation of communists after another did not hesitate to shed their blood and lay down their lives for the independence and liberation of the people. They did this by relying on their faith and ideals. Even though they knew that their ideals would not be realized by their own hands, they firmly believed that as long as the generations to come continued laboring, as long as the generations to come sacrificed for this goal, then their sublime ideals would be realized.

Today, there are objective criteria to measure whether a communist party member or a leading cadre aspires to the lofty ideals of communism. Will he devote his whole heart and purpose to the service of the people? Will he suffer hardship first and postpone enjoyment until later? Will he work diligently and perform his duties honestly? Is he willing to dash ahead regardless of danger, fight, and consecrate his entire spirit, his entire life, for these ideals? Every hesitant, undecided conviction, every hedonistic way of thinking, every self-interested behavior, and every style of inaction is incompatible with these ideals.

Facts have repeatedly told us that Marx and Engels' analysis of the basic contradictions in capitalist society is not outdated, nor is the historical materialist view that capitalism is bound to die out and socialism is bound to win. This is an inevitable trend in social and historical development. But the road is tortuous. The eventual demise of capitalism and the ultimate victory of socialism will require a long historical process to reach completion. In the meantime, we must have a deep appreciation for capitalism's ability to self-correct, and a full, objective assessment of the real long-term advantages that the developed Western nations have in the economic, technological, and military spheres. Then we must diligently prepare for a long period of cooperation and of conflict between these two social systems in each of these domains.

For a fairly long time yet, socialism in its primary stage will exist alongside a more productive and developed capitalist system. In this long period of cooperation and conflict, socialism must learn from the boons that capitalism has brought to civilization. We must face the reality that people will use the strengths of developed, Western countries to denounce our country's socialist development. Here we must have a great strategic determination, resolutely rejecting all false arguments that we should abandon socialism. We must consciously correct the various ideas that do not accord with our current stage.

The ideological road we choose to follow is the central problem that will determine the victory or defeat of our party's work, the very fate of the communist party itself. As Comrade Mao Zedong once said: "A revolutionary party is the guide of the masses. In revolutions, there has never been a revolutionary party that led its people onto the wrong road whose revolution did not fail."

Our party, in the time of revolution, construction, and reform, has adhered to the national conditions of our country, explored and formed

a new democratic revolutionary road, a road of socialist transformation and construction. This is the road of socialism with Chinese characteristics. This spirit of exploration, this resolution to stick to our own road, is the true reason this party has always been able to reawaken itself after setbacks and spring from triumph to triumph.

The great writer Lu Xun coined a famous saying: “Even if there is no road, when enough people walk through, a road will be made.” Socialism with Chinese characteristics is the dialectical unity of the theoretical logic of scientific socialism and the historical logic of China’s social development. It is a scientific socialism rooted in China’s soil, one that reflects the aspirations of the Chinese people, and one that is adapted to the conditions of progress in our times. It is the only way to comprehensively build a prosperous society, accelerate socialist modernization and realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. As long as we stick to our own path and unswervingly adhere to and develop socialism with Chinese characteristics, we will surely be able to comprehensively build a moderately prosperous society by the centennial anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China, and a prosperous, democratic, civilized, modernized, and harmonious socialist country by the centennial anniversary of the founding of New China.

Notes:

(1) New China Era – The period after the victory of the revolution in 1949 when Mao Zedong was chairman of the party (1949-1976).

(2) Four Cardinal Principles – introduced by Deng Xiaoping in the 1980s along with the economic reforms, these were the basic ideological and political principles of his program: 1) maintain the socialist path, 2) uphold the people’s democratic dictatorship, 3) strengthen the central role of the communist party, 4) Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought

(3) “Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of our Party since the founding of the People’s Republic of China” – The CPC adopted this resolution in 1981; it summarizes PRC history including an assessment of the Cultural Revolution and the role of Mao Zedong. Affirms past accomplishments and identifies errors.

Reviewing Xi Jinping's Three Volumes on Governance

Xi Jinping: The Governance of China (Vol 1). Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 2014. 515p.

Xi Jinping: The Governance of China (Vol 2). Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 2017. 619p.

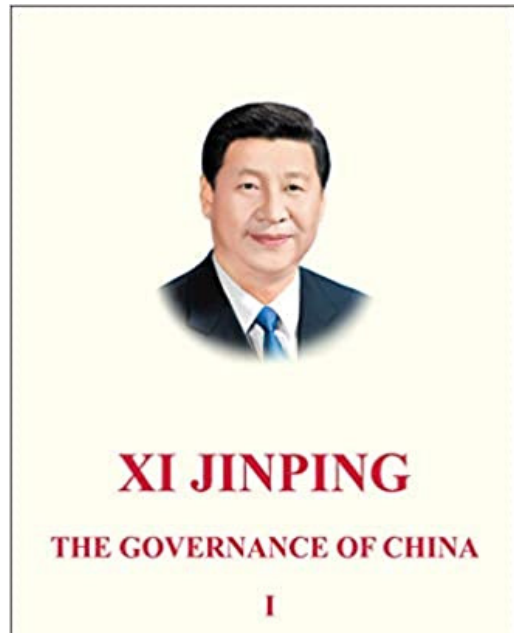
Xi Jinping: The Governance of China (Vol 3). Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 2020, 650 p.

*Reviewed by Duncan
McFarland*

Xi Jinping: "turn China into a prosperous, democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious modern socialist country by the centenary of the People's Republic of China in 2049" (Vol. 1, p. 47)

"The principal challenge facing Chinese society is the gap between unbalanced and inadequate development and the people's growing expectation for a better life." (Vol. 3, p. 152)

Xi's program includes: 1) PRC historical continuity 1949-2020, 2) the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation, 3) two centenary goals and poverty alleviation, 4) importance of Marxist-Leninist theory and leadership of the CPC, 5) socialist public education, 6) people-centered development, 7) "new normal" in the economy, 8) anti-corruption



campaign, 9) institutions of socialist democracy in China, 10) eco-civilization and the Paris Climate Accord, 11) Belt and Road Initiative, 12) China 2025, 13) foreign policy: oppose hegemony and build a win/win, democratic, multi-polar world, 14) military modernization 15) shared future for humanity.

I. Xi Jinping is named general secretary in 2012

Xi Jinping was named general secretary of the Communist Party of China at the 18th Party Congress in the Fall of 2012; he was not then well known in the US, either in the mainstream or the Left. Xi was later named president of the People's Republic of China and chairman of the Central Military Commission. These are the same three powerful positions held by his predecessors Jiang Zemin (1989-2002) and Hu Jintao (2003-2012). Consequently, Xi's articles and papers have considerable significance. There is no better way to learn about Xi's politics and work than by studying his own words and speeches.

The Three-Volume Set

The official three-volume edition of Xi's works published by Foreign Languages Press in Beijing supplies much-needed background information on Xi's life and a large selection of Xi's speeches and writings after he took office. *Volume One* covers Xi's papers, articles, and speeches starting in 2012 when he was appointed CPC general secretary through 2014. *Volume Two* starts in 2015 and ends in spring 2017, and the 19th Party Congress later that year is covered in *Volume Three* which ends right before the global pandemic in 2020. This is a substantial selection; there are about 600 pages in each volume. The topics are organized chronologically in sections, so readers can pick out what interests them rather than reading the whole book from start to finish.

The scope of Xi's work is very large and requires a comprehensive examination to understand well, and therefore, the length of these volumes. Too often, US politicians, media and even the Left have a one-sided approach. They read and interpret Xi's speeches and articles according to their own agendas and political bias. They pick out certain things to highlight or criticize while ignoring other elements or facts. The lengthy three-volume work gives an all-sided and fairer picture. Of course, it is also essential to study the very complex process of the actual implementation of the official policies, which is often difficult in a global environment of imperialism, nu-

clear weapons, environmental damage, and pandemics. Also, within China, there are strong provincial and local interests as well as high-level political debates.

II. Biographical sketch

Xi Jinping was born in 1953, after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Xi's father was Xi Zhongxun, a communist revolutionary leader active in the base areas in the 1930s and former vice premier who had an important role implementing Deng's economic reforms in Guangdong Province. His mother, Qi Xin, was a veteran revolutionary and Party member. Beginning in 1962, when his father was wronged and disgraced, Xi faced tough times. During the Cultural Revolution, he suffered public humiliation and hunger, experienced homelessness, and was even held in custody on one occasion.

At the age of 16, Jinping volunteered to live and work in a small village named Liangjiahe in Yanchuan County in northwest China's Shaanxi Province as an "educated youth." He worked on the farm doing hard physical labor and earned the villagers' trust, and was eventually elected village Party chief. After seven years, he returned to Beijing to enter highly-regarded Qinghua University. After graduating, Xi worked in the office of the Central Military Commission and then transferred as a party official to a poor county in north China. Later he held leading positions in several provinces and Shanghai before being promoted to the central leadership. Xi served as CPC First Secretary of the Secretariat in 2007 and Vice President of the PRC in 2008.

"Beginning in 2008, he served as the head of the leading group in charge of the nationwide study and implementation of the Scientific Outlook on Development within the CPC. This 18-month program helped build consensus behind the Scientific Outlook... and (made) the concept a driving force for economic and social development." (Vol. 1, p. 478).

"The Scientific Outlook on Development gives top priority to development, puts people first and seeks all-round, balanced and sustainable development with a holistic approach." (Vol. 3, p. 78).

During his decades-long service with the CPC and as an official in provincial China, Xi became known for promoting the living standards of the people, innovation, and modernization in economic development, environmental preservation and ecological balance, and



Xi on return visit to Rick Kimberley and his Iowa farm

strict discipline in the leadership. Xi also showed a good knowledge of classical Chinese literature; he frequently quotes ancient historians, writers, and philosophers. China has an unsurpassed cultural heritage.

In 1985, Xi visited Iowa in the US as part of an agricultural research delegation. He returned 25 years later to happily visit his host family in Iowa as part of a trip hosted by President Barack Obama. Based in part on this experience, Xi wrote, “China needs to learn more about the rest of the world, and the outside world needs to learn more about China.”`

In 1987, Xi married the popular singer Peng Liyuan, well-known on her own as an entertainer, folk singer, and tv star. The family has one daughter, Xi Mingze, who graduated from Harvard University in 2014.

III. Some themes of the three volumes: Xi Jinping thought on socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era

What does Xi Jinping stand for? When named general secretary by the 18th CPC Congress in 2012, Xi affirmed the basic accomplishments of both the New China period (1949-76) led by Mao Zedong and also the reform period led by Deng Xiaoping. “The process by which the people build socialism under the leadership of the Party can be divided into two historical phases – one that preceded the launch of reform and opening up in 1978, and a second that followed on from that event. The two phases – at once related to and distinct from each other – are both pragmatic explorations in building social-

ism... “ (Vol. 1, p. 24). It is necessary to learn from both the positive and negative experiences in both phases.

Xi roots himself in Marxism-Leninism and has re-emphasized the importance of studying communist history and theory. Much of Xi's program continues previous policies and programs, including those of the former general secretary Hu Jintao. Xi has also worked to create and apply an innovative contemporary application of Marxism-Leninism to China's changing and unprecedented historical situation. He continues to emphasize the importance of the leadership position of the communist party. At the 19th Party Congress in 2017, his body of work was called “*Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era*.”

Some of the important ideas in the three-volume set

- **“Chinese dream” of “national rejuvenation.”** Xi called for the fulfillment of “the Chinese dream, the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation... to realize the greatness and prosperity of China and to ensure the happiness of the Chinese people.” (Vol. 1, p. 264)

That is rejuvenation from the “century of humiliation,” the period starting with the decline in the 19th century of the Qing Dynasty, which deteriorated rapidly with the British attack in 1839 to start the Opium War. Other wars were fought with colonial and imperialist powers. Many foreign countries took advantage of a weaker China, which became a semi-colony. There was a breakdown of order, and bloody civil wars were fought. Japan launched a full-scale invasion in the 1930s.

Xi said about this period regarding China, “its sufferings and sacrifices and modern times were rarely seen in the history of the world.” and “backwardness left us vulnerable to attack, whereas only development makes us strong.” (Vol. 1, p.37)

This national humiliation only ended with the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. During many periods during the past 2000 years, China was one of the most nations globally; today, China is again assuming its place among the world's leading nations both economically and culturally, this time led by a communist party and the working class and people.

- **“Two Centenary Goals” and poverty alleviation.** Xi emphasized achieving the plan for China to become a “moderately prosperous nation” in the year 2021, the 100th anniversary year of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party. Eliminating harsh poverty is a requirement to do this; this means providing basic food, shelter, and medical care to all Chinese. China, in recent decades, has had great success in poverty alleviation and reduction campaigns. The PRC has lifted several hundreds of millions of people out of poverty, as measured by Chinese, UN, or other international standards. Reaching the goal of basic poverty alleviation throughout China by 2021 will be a historic achievement of building socialism.

The second ambitious goal is to build a “modern socialist country” by 2050, one hundred years after the founding of the People’s Republic of China. China would have cyberpower and cultural soft power and social harmony. There will be a strong social security system, with education, employment, medical and old-age care, and housing -- all guaranteed. Xi emphasizes that the work must be done with urgency to achieve these two goals, and leadership of the Communist Party is essential.

- **“The working class is our main force.** The working class in China’s leading class; it represents China’s advanced productive forces and relations of production; it is our Party’s most steadfast and reliable class foundation.” (Vol. 1, p.47)

- **Historical materialism and political education.** Seeking truth from facts; practice is the sole criterion of truth. Xi says: “The CPC is a political party armed with Marxism; Marxism is the soul of the ideas and convictions of Chinese Communists.” (Vol. 3, p. 96) Xi has consistently emphasized the importance of studying Marxist theory and method and its practical application in China. He has conducted Marxist-Leninist and Mao Zedong Thought education classes for leading CPC bodies. Xi’s administration has supported Marxist research units, university programs, journals, conferences, international delegations, and socialist education in schools. He concludes, “The era is the mother of thought, practice is the fount of theory.” (Vol. 3, p. 28)

- **“Core Socialist Values.”** Xi has promoted socialist concepts for the people’s way of life with public education. Posters and videos are

seen in many public places, which illustrate and publicize the core socialist values. Popular graphics show values such as cooperation, common prosperity, justice, patriotism, and friendship. These are to counter Western bourgeois values of individualism and materialism, which grew during the expansion of the capitalist sector.

- **Anti-corruption campaign:** Another major initiative at the 18th Congress and a signature program of Xi Jinping is the anti-corruption campaign. In 2012 outgoing general secretary Hu Jintao clearly identified corruption in the CPC itself to be a major problem, alienating the party from the people and the working class. If not dealt with, this weakness could jeopardize the communist party's ruling status. "The biggest danger for a ruling party is for it to become divorced from the people." (vol 1, p. 30) Hu Jintao had previously launched "good governance" campaigns that targeted not only illegal corruption but also bureaucratism, incompetence, official arrogance, or lack of concern towards the people.

At first well publicized in the Western press, the campaign launched for Xi to uphold integrity and against "tigers and flies" did indeed target corrupt activity and behavior at all levels, including theft, bribery, and nepotism. There were immediate cutbacks in official perks and lavish spending, such as dinners, presents, and travel. There have been numerous indictments and convictions of high-level Party and military officials. This campaign is highly regarded by popular opinion.

- **Socialist democracy.** Developing socialist democracy is an important part of the centenary goals. Xi Jinping has continued Hu Jintao's policy that democratization in China will be according to its own socialist democratic institutions, not based on Western models. The Communist Party of China itself plays a leading role; it has more than 90 million members and is organized according to the principle of democratic centralism. The local people's congresses serve as the basis for the National People's Congress, China's legislature, which meets regularly in Beijing. The capital city is also home to many national patriotic political parties, which have a voice in the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. Neighborhood committees address local issues; in Wuhan, they were important in fighting the Covid-19 outbreak. A national consultation with online participation is held on major policies, such as the 14th Five Year Plan, for which there were a million suggestions.

“China is a socialist country of people’s democratic dictatorship under the leadership of the working class based on an alliance of workers and farmers; it is a country where all power of the state belongs to the people.” (Vol. 3, p. 37)

- **People-centered development:** According to Xi, “The People are the creators of history, the fundamental force determining the future of the Party and the country” and “the principal challenge facing Chinese society is the gap between unbalanced and inadequate development and the people’s growing expectation for a better life.” (Vol. 3, pp. 161, 152) With rhetoric reminiscent of the democratic people’s mass line of Yanan in the 1930s, Xi sets the central task as people-centered, all-round development. The mission of the CPC fundamentally is to serve and improve the lives of the people. Thus, PRC government policies have helped to consistently raise the standard of living for most Chinese, both economically and culturally, and in education. The PRC is committed to fairness in the long term of sharing of national prosperity

- **“New normal” in the economy.** China’s economic growth for two decades was driven in large part by capital accumulated from products produced by low-wage, export-oriented factories, many located in southern Guangdong Province. Public ownership played the dominant role while developing together with the nonpublic/private sector and other forms of ownership. The 18th Party Congress in 2012 shifted the economic model to emphasize higher quality products, innovation, cutting edge information technology, more domestic consumption, increasing imports, and expansion of the service economy as economic drivers. This would reduce the dependence on low-wage export manufacturing. The Belt and Road Initiative launched in 2013 would increase economic connections with countries of the Global South with less reliance on exports to the West.

Government planners would seek a lower GDP growth rate to implement further the more balanced “scientific development” strategy, which was introduced around 2005 by General Secretary Hu Jintao. There would be more care for the environment and expansion of social services such as public health and medical care. There would be more investment in China’s less-developed interior provinces and expansion of projects in Central Asia, Russia, and Africa. This meant that foreign policy considerations would tend to concentrate more on relationships in the Global South.

The new model would expand imports for growing domestic consumption. Chinese products would move up the value and quality scale and more and more rely on information technology, media integration, and innovation than on large amounts of factory labor. Chinese socialist planning and state resources support research and development on a large scale. China is drawing even and even surpassing the West in a number of cutting-edge technologies.



Poverty alleviation work online

• **“China, 2025.”** China’s

exports are increasingly value-added and upscale, and some like 5G technology are at the world’s leading edge. They are attractive, especially in the Global South, being of good quality at a lower price. There has been increasing emphasis on an innovation-led economy;

science and engineering education is supported by the government, and China now graduates more engineers than any other country.

In 2015 China’s government made a list of advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence, quantum computing, semiconductors, biotechnology, medical technology, robotic cars, and the internet of things. The Chinese government is resourcing the development of these technologies, guided by the China 2025 plan. The 2025 plan is strongly opposed by the US, which fears losing its edge in technology, since the Chinese are moving ahead rapidly in a number of fields. The US military, in particular, regards a high-tech China as a threat.

• **“Eco-civilization” and the Paris climate accord.** While serving in the provinces, Xi became known for promoting environmental regulations and a “beautiful China.” Today, he says that China “must pursue the harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature. Xi advocates green energy, a sustainable circular economy, and international cooperation to deal with global warming; China has much grassroots activism for the environment. In 2014, Premier Li Keqiang launched a War on Pollution; there have been substantial successes such as improving the air quality in Beijing.

China has consistently reduced energy intensity, the amount of energy expended per unit GDP. China has considerably reduced coal dependency, but coal is still the largest single source of energy; coal plants and automobiles are major emitters of greenhouse gases. China releases more total greenhouse gas emissions than any other country, although not on a per capita basis; but China is also a world leader in the production of equipment and installed capacity in renewables such as solar, hydroelectric, and wind. Thus, its record is still mixed and contradictory but improving.

China's goals are peak carbon emissions by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2060. At the Paris Peace accords in 2015, China supported the Group of 77 from the Global South in its position of strong and mandatory controls; this proposal was, however opposed by the US.

- **“The Belt and Road” and Trade relations.** The Belt and Road

initiative, launched in 2013, is one of Xi's signature programs. This is an ambitious plan to build infrastructure across Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, as well as many projects in Africa and Latin America. The Maritime Silk Road is to connect ports in Southeast Asia with the Indian, Arabian, and adjacent oceans. The Belt and Road will increase China's focus on the Global South. China's Silk Road Bank will be one source of the large-scale total funding.

China conducts foreign trade with no strings attached, unlike Western institutions like the IMF and World Bank, which push neoliberal economics. This has facilitated the great expansion of Chinese foreign trade in the Global South, where most countries are ex-colonies who guard their independence and dislike pressure from the West. China has become the world's largest trading nation, surpassing the US.

Xi spoke in 2020 at the annual China International Import Expo in Shanghai and also celebrated later that year the signing of the RECP trade agreement (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership) for East and Southeast Asia. Xi also spoke on effective global economic governance at the 2018 meeting of the APEC CEO summit. Xi has supported the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation as well as the China-Latin America Investment and Cooperation Forum.

- **Foreign Policy: Oppose hegemony and support the trend to a multi-polar world.** China supports democracy in international relations and global governance. Xi proposes “win/win diplomacy,”

based on mutual benefit, a new type of major power relationship instead of the old dynamic of winners and losers. People in China and the world want peace and development. This means emphasizing global cooperation and not competition. Countries should cooperate to prevent war, further trade, and cultural exchanges, and work together to tackle problems like pandemics and global warming.

Relations among countries should be conducted as equals and not subject to bullying or aggression. The founding principles of the United Nations should be affirmed. China still stands on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, adopted in the 1950s in conjunction with India and the nonaligned movement; they emphasize the independence and equality of all countries. There should be no interference in the affairs of others; every country has the right to choose its own path of development.

Xi has, in effect, been continuing to build an alternative pole to the US-centered capitalist power bloc of the West and Japan. China initiated the creation of international financial institutions, like the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. China is one of the founders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which works for security, especially in Central Asia. BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) held its 11th head of state and government summit in Brazil in 2019.

National security and military modernization. US imperialism does not want an independent government in Beijing and supports anti-government and separatist activities. Xi comments:

“We must rigorously protect against and take resolute measures to combat all acts of infiltration, subversion, and sabotage, as well as violent and terrorist activities, ethnic separatist activities, and religious extremist activities.” (Vol. 3, p. 119)

China, led by Xi, is transforming the peasant-based land army of the Mao Zedong era and moving towards a modern, high-tech military with advanced IT and joint command and control systems. China has steadily strengthened its air and naval forces to defend its territory and national independence, especially under US imperialist pressure. China will defend its territorial waters, such as the East and South China seas and the Taiwan Straits.

China has closed the military gap with the US but still has a long way to go to reach equivalence. Xi wants the military to maintain cy-

bersecurity and prepare to fight local IT wars and win; this could be interpreted to mean repelling the US or proxy aggression. China has nuclear weapons but has also made a no-first-use pledge and stands for long-term disarmament.

A shared future for humanity. The world is becoming more interconnected, and our fates are linked; global cooperation is necessary to effectively respond to problems and threats such as global warming and environmental damage, pandemics, poverty, and nuclear war. It is in the interest of all peoples and countries to work together as equals to meet these urgent and growing challenges.

Conclusion

The scope of Xi's work is vast, but China, the civilization state, is even vaster. There are many topics not covered in this review or even in the three-volume set. The Western reader may seek Xi's opinions on some issues which are current here in the US and not find them. Keep in mind that the intended audience for these books is the US and world mainstream society as well as the Left, and care is necessary since US imperialism will exploit any opening. The reader will be greatly aided in his own researches in contemporary China by studying these works.

Xi discusses problems: While the Foreign Language Press edition understandably promotes a positive message about China, Xi describes many problems along the way, for example, in the CPC itself, "formalism, bureaucratism, hedonism and extravagance," and the need for streamlining meetings, documents, and briefings. There is a lack of credibility in the judicial system; some people and officials bend the law and exploit loopholes – more supervision is needed.

In general, policies of the central government may be sound, while governance and implementation can be weak. Agricultural and rural development has lagged behind industrialization and urbanization. There cannot be all-around modernization without the modernization of agriculture and rural areas. It is time to break new ground for integrated urban-rural development and modernization by revitalizing the countryside.

The three-volume set gives a comprehensive view of key aspects of Chinese policy during this period, as seen through Xi Jinping's speeches and writings. This set is a reference and guide to Xi's position and papers on a large number of issues. Studying Xi Jinping's

writings during this period will illuminate China's policies and actions and give a more insightful and balanced perspective on many global issues. Understanding better the increasingly important Chinese viewpoint is especially valuable for those who have a mostly US-based perspective.

The book includes a Chinese look to the future, with ambitious plans: for example, the second centenary goal of 2050, to build China into a modern and developed socialist country. China sees the creation of a more democratic world with global solidarity in dealing with common problems. Increasingly China is providing global leadership by creating a pole independent of US imperialism, thus making room for others, especially in the Global South.

It is necessary to fight hegemonism and bullying in the time of an aggressive but declining US imperialism. The people of the world must work together for a shared future of peace, health, a beautiful environment, and common prosperity, and the long-term but the eventual transition to a global socialism.

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State Capitalism? Or Socialist Market Economy? Which Shoe Fits Whom?

**An abridged version of opinion published in Qiushi, magazine of the CPC Central Committee (Fall 2018).
Source: Online University of the Left.**

The United States equates China's economy with "state capitalism," saying a socialist market economy is not a real market economy but a state-led protectionist and mercantilist economy, which, it claims justifies the imposition of high tariffs on Chinese goods.



This is not the first time a Western country has labeled China's economic model as "state capitalism." Some people are re-circulating the term in the West now to hide the real reason why the US has resorted to trade protectionism and imposed high tariffs on Chinese imports, namely, their concern over China's development road and economic system.

The US is a self-proclaimed representative of a free-market economy and free-market capitalism, but the government's role has been particularly important in its economic development. Let us not forget, the US has resorted to protectionism from its founding to the end of World War II.

Using the free market as a ploy to make profits

In the postwar period, too, the US administration has intervened in the economy to fulfill its self-interests even while promoting trade liberalization, as Keynesianism came to play the dominant role in US economic policymaking. For example, the US' total government spending increased from 26.8 percent of GDP in 1960 to 41.3 percent in 2010, and the number of its government employees increased

from more than 4 million in 1940 to more than 22 million in 2010. Some experts on innovation say, despite advocating “small government” and “free market,” the US has been running massive public investment programs in technology and innovation for decades, which have brought the US great economic benefits. In fact, the US government has always been a central driver of innovation-led growth, from internet to biotechnology and even shale gas development. After the outbreak of the 2008 global financial crisis, the US once again resorted to state interventionism and introduced huge financial rescue and fiscal stimulus packages to stabilize its economy.

Since taking office, President Donald Trump and his administration have been using interventionist policies, such as protectionism and immigration control measures, to realize their “America first” goal at the cost of the interests of people around the world. This shows the “pure” free market economy and “true” laissez-faire that the US bandies about have never existed. Instead, capitalism, as we see it today, is closely related to “state capitalism.” So to label China’s socialist market economy as “state capitalism” is to confuse one thing with another.

‘State capitalism’ theory a result of ill intentions

After the global financial crisis, some developed economies, such as the US and some European countries, faced severe economic difficulties while China and many other emerging economies maintained relatively strong growth. The resultant rise and fall in the relative strengths of China and the US made the contradictions among the developed economies, and those between the developed world and emerging economies, such as China, increasingly prominent.

Some politicians cannot accept China’s rapid but peaceful rise under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, so they use terms such as “state capitalism” to criticize it. The intention of such people is clear: to defend capitalism by pitting “state capitalism” against “liberal capitalism” and to create an atmosphere that would curb the development of emerging market economies, especially China.

On the one hand, such observers try to divert and cover up people’s discontent with the profound defects of the capitalist system and claim free-market capitalism is facing a crisis because of the threat posed by “state capitalism.” On the other hand, they try to find faults with socialism with Chinese characteristics so as to distort the attributes of a socialist market economy with the aim of shaking people’s

confidence in the socialist market system and forcing China to abandon its development path. Their ultimate aim is to contain China's rise.

Such people always use double standards when it comes to describing the attributes of "state capitalism." When Western economies need state support for capital accumulation, these people advocate protectionism and state intervention. But when Western economies enjoy a competitive advantage, they forcibly promote free trade and require other countries to open up their markets unconditionally, so as to benefit from it. And when the Western economies' competitive advantages fade out due to competition from other economies, including latecomers such as China, they go back to practicing protectionism.

A pretext for not accepting reality

Many observers and politicians have attempted to include China into the capitalist spectrum or assumed that by adhering to the rules of a market economy, China would automatically embrace the capitalist system. But when they realize socialism with Chinese characteristics, compared with capitalism, is yielding better results, some of them start identifying China's socialist market economy with "state capitalism," instead of admitting that socialism with Chinese characteristics and the socialist market economy have achieved success beyond their wildest dreams. This is the essence of their "state capitalism" argument.

Western countries have always regarded the market economy as their exclusive economic system, as is evidenced by Western economic theories. But the market economy and capitalism are two different things, the former being a means to allocate resources, which can be combined either with the capitalist or socialist system.

Capitalist market economy and socialist market economy share common features in terms of resource allocation and commodity relations. For example, both have clear property rights relations and require market players to maintain equal and fair competition. And both allow the market to play a decisive role in resource allocation. The macro-regulatory policies implemented by China conform to the laws of the market economy and the rules of the World Trade Organization. Yet the market economy is a social and historical concept with different characteristics under different social systems and

stages of development. A Socialist market economy is a new type of market economy, which, despite having the general characteristics of a market economy, is fundamentally different from a capitalist market economy in terms of ownership structure, the distribution system, and institutional mechanism. So it is erroneous to identify the Chinese economy as “state capitalism” just because China has state-owned enterprises, and its government plays a role in some economic activities.

The argument on SOEs untenable, baseless

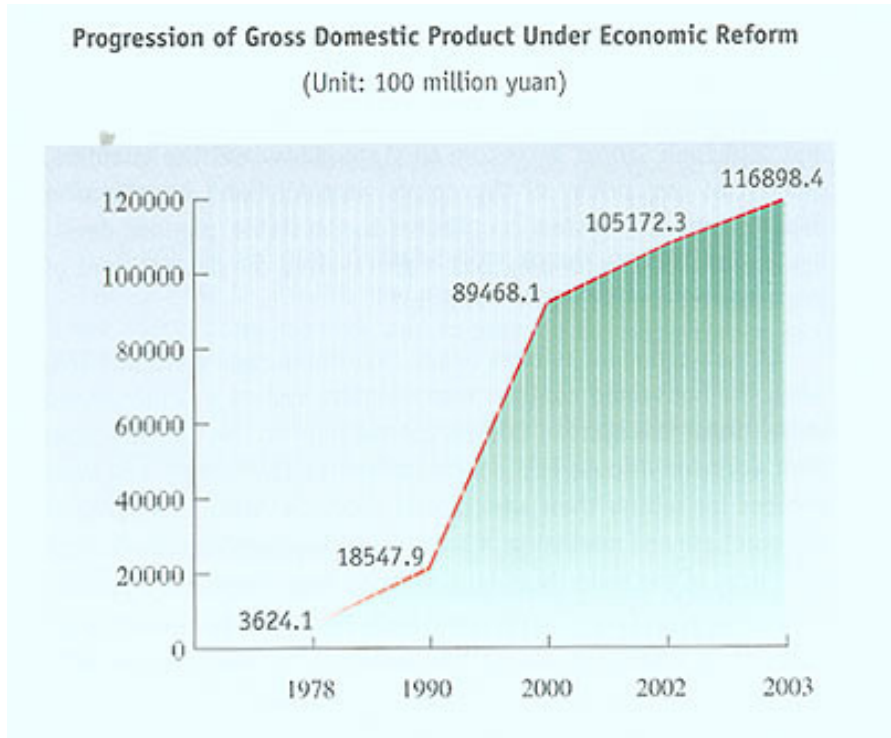
Moreover, it is grossly erroneous to equate state-owned enterprises with “state capitalism,” as SOEs are just a means to ensure large-scale production through modern methods. In fact, state-owned enterprises first appeared in Western capitalist countries.

In the postwar period, some capitalist countries nationalized enterprises on a large scale and established a large number of SOEs in many sectors. Even when the wave of privatization was at its peak, many Western countries retained a sizable number of state-owned enterprises. In fact, even after the outbreak of the 2008 global financial crisis, some Western countries took measures to nationalize a number of enterprises to offset the effects of the economic slowdown, which shows the West also uses state-owned enterprises as a means to resolve the basic contradictions of capitalism.

However, it should also be noted that the natures and functions of state-owned enterprises vary in different social systems. In Western economies, state-owned enterprises are essentially controlled by a few big capitalists backed by governments and operate to make more and more profits. In a socialist market economy, however, SOEs are owned by the people, and serve as an important tool for promoting modernization and safeguarding the common interests of the people. They shoulder multiple responsibilities, from providing public services, developing strategically important industries, and protecting the environment to promoting science and technology, safeguarding national security, facilitating fair resource distribution, and realizing common prosperity. These traits distinguish them from their counterparts in capitalist market economies.

Is this Western envy or jealousy?

The fundamental reason why some Western politicians target China’s SOEs for criticism is that these enterprises have become bigger and



stronger than Western politicians' expectations and are helping China to develop into a comprehensive modern socialist power to realize the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation.

Yet, there is no inherent logic in using the role of the government to identify the Chinese economy with "state capitalism." The relationship between the government and the market depends on the evolution of the economic system, with the two being mutually complementary and indivisible. This is the development law of market economy.

Capitalist market economy and socialist market economy both need effective market regulations — which only the government can provide — for the supply of public goods, maintenance of macroeconomic stability, improvement of the social security system, and strengthening of economic security.

In a capitalist market economy, which is based on private ownership, the government is not only the spokesperson for capital but also serves the interests of capital. As a result, it is difficult for the government to ensure economic and social development serves the interests of the entire society so as to resolve the basic contradic-

tions between the socialization of production and private ownership. Government represents the people in the socialist market economy. In contrast, a capitalist market economy is dominated by private ownership, in which the government represents the people and serves their interests. This makes it possible for the government to implement regulations for social and economic development in order to meet the people's increasing needs for a better life and achieve prosperity for all.

The difference between a socialist market economy and a capitalist market economy, as such, is not whether the market or the government plays a decisive role in the allocation of resources or whether state-owned enterprises exist. Instead, it depends on whether the government and market are serving capital or the people.

Those that equate the Chinese economy with "state capitalism" claim that an economy in which the government intervenes to serve the interests of capital and private ownership will be seen as following the "free market system" irrespective of the extent of its intervention. In contrast, a socialist market economy for them is equivalent to "state capitalism" regardless of the aim and magnitude of the government intervention.

This shows such observers identify Western countries with the "free market system" even if their governments support enterprises with policies and financing. But if an emerging market economy does the same, it is labeled "state capitalism." This is a typical example of economic hegemony.

Since launching reform and opening-up four decades ago, China has developed the socialist development road, theory, system, and culture with Chinese characteristics, fulfilled the basic economic requirements to build the primary stage of socialism, allowed public ownership to develop along with private and other forms of ownership, and transformed from a planned economy to a dynamic socialist market economy.

Fostering development of high quality

Moreover, since the 18th National Congress of the CPC, China, under the strong leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Xi Jinping at the core, has more vigorously helped the market to play a decisive role in resource allocation. Simultaneously, the government has taken concrete measures to improve the property rights system, fur-

ther deepen economic reform, and improve the socialist economic system with Chinese characteristics in order to promote high-quality economic development.

China is committed to building a community with a shared future for mankind and improving global economic governance by safeguarding and promoting economic globalization and free trade. In this regard, it has taken a series of measures to greatly ease access to its huge market, build a more attractive investment environment, strengthen intellectual property rights protection, and expand imports.

A socialist market economy gives full play to the advantages of market economy and the socialist system, and helps build an organic bond between the government and the market. It also ensures sustainable development and market stability, which have benefited the Chinese people and contributed to human development and progress across the world.

These are the great achievements of the socialist market economy and socialism with Chinese characteristics, and have nothing to do with “state capitalism.”

The socialist economic system with Chinese characteristics is the result of Chinese wisdom, the communist party’s leadership, and the Chinese people’s efforts to build a prosperous but sustainable social and economic system, and thus a great innovation in economic development history. Chinese people, led by the party, have embarked on the road of socialism with Chinese characteristics. And they most certainly will achieve success after greater success.

Qiao Collective Interviews Vijay Prashad on China and the Coronavirus, Socialism, and the Global South

QIAO COLLECTIVE:

Tricontinental has recently released a wonderful report titled "China and CoronaShock," which details China's timeline of pandemic response and corrects many misleading American news reports about China's supposed "botched response" and its silencing of "whistleblowers." Why did you feel it was important to offer this correction, and why do you think the US. government and mainstream media are doubling down on this narrative of Chinese mismanagement?



VIJAY PRASHAD: It's a very good question. I'd like to start by saying that I've personally had a long interest in epidemics and pandemics. In fact, the first published piece I ever had was on the cholera epidemic of 1832. It's interesting because the cholera epidemic starts in Bengal, near where I was born, in 1817 and travels overland through Russia, parts of the Middle East, and then eventually comes to France, Britain, and the United States. And it goes on for 100 years. You have the epidemic of 1832, the epidemic of 1848, and so on.

It's literally a hundred-year journey of cholera. When it was in Russia, in the Baltic ports, the French said, "It's never going to come here because this is Asiatic cholera. Lesser humans suffer from this stuff. It doesn't impact us. We are not going to get it. Plus, we're a democracy. Not only are we Caucasians, but we're a democracy." Of course, that damn cholera came and devastated Europe, and it devastated Britain.

So I had a long interest in how these epidemics, pandemics, and diseases are racialized. The moment Trump used the phrase "Chinese virus," I said, look, come on. You know, Mr. Trump, this is a joke because you're returning us to a 19th century imperial narrative about a pandemic disease. You are just part of an old discourse of Asia "sending diseases." When in fact, we know that some of the worst epidemics originate in the West. The avian influenza of 1918, the so-called Spanish flu, had nothing to do with Spain. You know, poor Spain—Spain was the only country that reported the flu, and therefore it became called Spanish flu. But that flu starts in Kansas. It starts on a military chicken farm. These epidemics stem from industrial farming, the encroachment of forests, and it's a problem of modernity. It has nothing to do with the Chinese or Asians, this offensive way to understand this. That was the first motivation. I thought this has got to be said.

Secondly, in China, there is a debate, an understandable debate: When did you first find out about it? Was it December 26? Was it December 5th? The government itself is investigating what happened. Was there a flaw in the system, and so on? That's important. When people say, "China suppressed, China did this," they see China as a monolithic entity. There is no such thing called China, friends. There is a government in which there are competing people arguing with each other. There are provincial governments. There are doctors who disagree with other doctors. I mean, it's a human society. It's not a China. You know, like the Borg, where they all think alike.

What was the timeline for discovery of the danger?

So with my colleagues [Du Xiajun and Zhu Weiyan], we decided, let's first try to establish the timeline. When did the first doctors in Hubei say, look, there's a problem here? There's an unknown influenza. What's going on? Opacity in the lungs and C.T. scans. This is unusual, et cetera, et cetera. Let's look at the timeline.

When did doctors inform the hospital administration? When did the hospital inform China's Center for Disease Control? Eventually. When did they inform the World Health Organization? That was important just as an exercise.

The second question to raise is, was there a debate inside the Chinese institutions? Yes, there was a debate. It's important to register that, you know. And so that was the second thing, to highlight elements of that debate.

Were there reprimands of people? Yes, there were reprimands of people because guess what? Imagine—I'm a doctor. I see something. I put it on a WeChat account, on social media with my friends. I get reprimanded. That kind of thing happens. You know, the commanding officer of an American ship goes out, and he writes a letter in his hometown newspaper, or he leaks it to the news. And the Trump administration removes him from command of the ship. Is that the suppression of the story? No. He operated outside the chain of command. It's a different thing. Somebody needed to come out and make some reasonable points:

One: The Chinese medical profession, initially—in Wuhan, in Hubei—didn't know what they were facing. That's important to establish. It's not like on the 26th of December, and they knew, "OK. This is the novel coronavirus." I mean, they had no idea what this was. That was very important. We had to tell the story: How did they learn what this was when they informed the Chinese CDC just three days later. On the 26th of December, they have already informed the Chinese CDC. Three days later, China CDC informed the World Health Organization. On the 31st of December, the head of CDC China calls CDC USA. This is now just a matter of days. They still don't have a name for the virus. They've already informed the Americans. And you continue to say they suppressed the story. I mean, it's the basic integrity of a journalist. The head of the US CDC says, "I was phoned during the vacation period. The head of China, CDC, was crying on the phone to me." This is the head of the US CDC, saying that this information was delivered on the 31st of December 2019.

So why is the Associated Press saying China suppressed everything from the 14th of January to the 20th of January? How could they have suppressed it when already in early January, the WHO, on their Twitter account and their website, said that there is a serious issue in Wuhan? There is an ideological game being played here basically for two reasons. Number one, you can say China is at fault for everything. Even if we screw up, if we didn't prepare, Trump didn't prepare, the Italians didn't prepare. You know, if the Western leaders didn't prepare. Don't blame the Western leaders. Blame China. It's a very convenient thing. That's part of it.

The other part of it is, you know, you can always pull the golden ring of racism. That's the easiest thing to say, "look at the Chinese. They eat bizarre food. Not only do they eat dogs and pangolins and bats, and God knows what." But if you look at the scientific literature, the scientists say we don't actually know the path of transmission. You

know, let's not assume it's a bat, pangolin, then humans. It's not that easy. Now there's a very malicious claim being made that the Institute of Virology in Wuhan was developing the virus, and then they leaked the virus. Come on. The scientific literature says there's no direct, singular explanation, but 90 percent of the media and the Trump administration, Mike Pompeo and others, are driving a hard ideological game. So it's really against that anti-scientific, highly ideological political game that the three of us authors felt it was worthwhile to write the series.

QIAO COLLECTIVE: We're curious to hear your thoughts on how Covid-19 is shaping existing geopolitical dynamics. We've seen infighting and competition for scarce medical supplies between European nations, bickering between the US and E.U., and highly visible aid from Cuba and China in places like Italy and Spain.

What do you think about China's role is in global geopolitics, particularly in terms of creating space for multilateral relations beyond a US hegemonic world system? And how might this pandemic be shaping these trends?

VIJAY PRASHAD: First, let's go back a little bit. If you look back at this very dense period between 2001 and 2004, you have the United States going to war in Iraq, the financial turbulence of the dot com bubble, SARS striking East Asia, you've got East Asia barely out of the 1997 financial crisis. This is a period of great density.

There was a lot of anxiety about what the Americans were doing. The Iraq war demonstrated to people in many of these countries that the US is an out of control government. They went to war against Iraq, with no real concern for logical warnings. They just went and destroyed the country. Before this, China, in particular, had been quite reticent to join platforms of international cooperation with Third World countries. China played an interesting role in the U.N. For instance, there was a group in the 1960s called G77, a developing country bloc. China didn't join that bloc. But it used to use all its votes with G77, so in many resolutions, you see: "G77 plus C, G77 plus C."

That was the case for a long time. You know, right through the Deng Xiaoping years, there was a sense that China would cooperate with these countries, but it didn't want to be tied down through formal affiliation. So it's only after the fiasco of the Iraq war that we saw the Chinese government in international negotiations, particularly

around subsidies of agricultural crops in the Global North. At the Cancun meeting in 2003, there was a debate about the world order and trade and how subsidy regimes should function. There were questions about financing for development, debates about patent exceptions for pharmaceutical drugs like AIDS drugs, and so on. At that time, India, Brazil, and South Africa created a bloc known as IBSA. That was the first major attempt at articulating on the global stage this theory of multipolarity. They said: we are now entering a harsh, unipolar world. The United States is driving a gangster's agenda. We need to have some air and oxygenation in the world order. And China starts coming in and getting involved in these trade negotiations, technical questions of how trade relations should be constructed, particularly around financial services. China started coming in and taking a position, getting involved with these countries.

So when eventually the BRICS bloc is formed, it's not BRIS plus C, you know, China actually became a full-fledged member of the BRICS bloc. At the same time, you saw China holding these Africa-China forums in Beijing, then in parts of Africa. China became an active member of this kind of diplomatic move for multipolarity. As more right-wing governments have come to power in India and Brazil and a right-leaning government in South Africa, in recent years, Chinese theorists have been talking about bipolarity. They wonder that maybe it's not going to be credible for a multipolar world to emerge, but it could be bipolar. There could be an American pole and a Chinese pole. This is a rational way to go. And maybe the Russians will have some relationship with the Chinese. So you saw a strengthening of ties with Russia, security, economic, military, and so on. So this has been a longstanding practical discussion about reorienting trade and so on.

I have to say, though, that in the last ten years, many of the attempts at creating alternative institutions—for instance, alternative banks, an alternative IMF—were unsuccessful. Many of the institutions just didn't turn up. Somebody needs to do an autopsy: why, between 2009 and 2019, was this very promising project not able to deliver things like an alternative World Bank, an alternative IMF, an alternative to the SWIFT system, so that you are not tied to a European-based money transfer system? It's these hegemonic financial systems that block Iran and Venezuela from accessing international finance under sanctions. Why weren't these alternative institutions built? It's a very important question. The Asian Development Bank is controlled by the Bank of Japan, which essentially pays fealty to the US Treasury. It's not really an Asian Development Bank. It's a Japan-US bank, it

happens to be headquartered in Manila, it happens to give development aid in Asia, but it's not exactly an independent institution. Why weren't these built? That's an important question.

I think the crisis of Covid-19 has brought on the table again the issue of multipolarity. But it's not good enough to have an emotional attitude to this. You need to understand, where are the institutions? Which institutions are you going to build? If the US is walking out of UNICEF, UNESCO, UNRWA, the Palestinian agency, and now WHO, will somebody come in and take care of it? Will there be another foundation?

So the question of multipolarity is not a question of just describing, "there is a rising China, a huge GDP growth rate, the West is declining." It doesn't work like that. You've got the United States—a massive military, and it controls international institutions. As long as this is the case, there is no multipolarity.

QIAO COLLECTIVE: We've been particularly interested in how many US economic policy advisers and pundits have framed this pandemic as a consequence of "globalization has gone wrong" in a way that particularly blames US over-dependence on Chinese manufacturing. There's an idea that it was a mistake to integrate China into global supply chains to the extent that the West did and that Covid-19 is the breaking point for this relationship. What do you think this pandemic means for the future of the US-China trade relationship specifically, and China's previous role in the global economy as the "factory of the world" more generally?

VIJAY PRASHAD: So, there are three things there that I think should be said. One is, I want to contest people's claims that "we've globalized too much and brought China into the chain"—let's look at the historical context to this. It's true that there is a relationship between pandemics and transportation networks. Obviously, if we were not connected to each other, a pandemic wouldn't happen because the definition of a pandemic is that it crosses boundaries.

If there were more border controls and less aircraft, it would be harder. For instance, I said earlier that the first modern pandemic is the cholera of 1832. But if the British didn't colonize India, then they may not have caught cholera from Bengal and brought it back to Britain. You know, too bad you guys came and colonized Bengal.

It's not a question of something new. If you take the influenza of 1918, 1919, it wrecked the world. But China was barely impacted by

it. The reason is that China wasn't integrated fully into the world at the time. There were not so many railroads in China. Chinese people were not being taken out and brought back. Yes, there was indentured labor to the Caribbean, to parts of Southeast Asia, and so on, but they were not going back and forth. Sixty percent of the people who died in the influenza 1918-1919 came from India. And the reason they died is because soldiers came back from WWI, and those soldiers brought the influenza back to back to the ports, and it devastated communities in India.

So sixty percent of global deaths took place in India compared to an almost negligible percentage in China because there were no troops coming back from WWI and so on. So for these people to shorten the clock of globalization from 1990 to the present is trivial. Globalization, in a general generic sense, is a long history of colonialism, of utilizing troops from one part of the world in another, and so on. So we should push back on this idea of globalization being just a baby, just a few decades, which is nonsense. It's actually amnesia about colonialism.

What they're talking about is the new supply chain as it's constructed with Chinese rim cities being very much part of the manufacturing section of the supply chain and so on. That's new. I agree. But let's face it, guys, if you're a German manufacturing company, a high-tech company, you're going to continue to manufacture. And if not in Wuhan, then you're going to move somewhere else, but you'll still be in China. Why? I mean, how many German workers are willing to work the way that Chinese workers work? Chinese workers have a couple of advantages. One is being highly skilled because the rates of literacy are much higher in China than in India, Ghana, or Brazil even. They're also much more disciplined. They've learned discipline. They're healthier. In India, there are pandemics nonstop, and it's just not called pandemics because they cross Indian states but don't get out of the country. So for lots of reasons, the Chinese working class is not going to be just dismissed.

It's very hard to pivot out of this particular supply chain issue. Ninety percent of vitamin C used in the US comes from China. So you say, OK, let's now manufacture vitamin C in the US. How are you going to do it? Which workers are willing to go and work in a factory producing vitamin C tablets for that price? And if you say, oh, let's just eat oranges. Who's going to pick them? How many US-born workers are willing to take those subpar salaries to pick oranges in Florida? It's not going to happen. You know, so it's very hard to pivot to supply

chain infrastructure. But also culturally, I mean, how many US workers are willing to work for like six dollars an hour? You know, it's not going to happen when these firms are not interested. They're used to having large margins. So in that sense, the pivot isn't going to be that quick.

But China has been extremely wary of the fact that it is in a satanic embrace with Western markets. This is a very serious problem for the Chinese government. In many ways, the Belt and Road Initiative is a way to pivot out of Chinese dependence on the US and European markets. Poverty reduction is still growing in the domestic market in China. But also there are these other markets, in Central Asia, in the Middle East, et cetera. There is an understanding that this satanic embrace is not tenable. China lends US consumers money, who then buy Chinese goods, but most of the profit isn't accumulated in China because so much is repatriated by the big firms. But this surplus going back and forth is ridiculous. The Chinese surplus is underwriting the fact that US firms haven't lifted wages in some thirty-five years.

So is China trying to advance its case? I don't think anything is that clear-cut. I think there are contradictions involved here. The Chinese establishment, intellectuals, and the government are very cautious about this particular period. Because as a consequence of Covid-19, global trade volumes have declined by 32 percent. So this is having an impact in China. You can send people back to the factories. That's happened, up to 80 percent capacity. But the ports are not open because you can send a ship out to the port of Los Angeles, but it's basically congested. So I think in China, the attitude isn't "oh, we're going to win now." The attitude is sober: firstly, Covid-19 has to be tackled. Secondly, we have to determine a long-term strategy to deal with this new turbulence in the world. But you have to give it to the Chinese establishment. I mean, these intellectuals don't think in two months, three months; they think in decades, in 10 years, 20 years, 50 years. They have long-term projects.

QIAO COLLECTIVE: A lot of people take China's integration into a global capitalist economic system as proof that China has abandoned the socialist path. But of course, it's important to look at what happens when capital enters China, how China is reinvesting the surplus it is able to capture under this system, and so on. Of course, the question "Is China still socialist" is oversimplified from the start, but how do you think we as Marxists can approach this question critically?

VIJAY PRASHAD: So, I want to reframe what you're asking me. These questions—has China restored capitalism? Is China socialist?—I think these questions are wrong because they are, in a way, non-Marxist questions. The non-Marxist question is, "is something this or that?" You know you want a direct answer—these binaries. But the Marxist tradition is a different tradition. We believe human history takes place through a series of difficult contradictions between the aspirations of people, their social relations, and the forces of production that they inherit. These things are in a certain tension. Then there are inherited traditions that we have. Historical materialism is a very rich tradition of understanding how change takes place. You know, just because there's a revolution doesn't mean the next day there's communism. That's not how it works. When the Soviet Republic was formed, the first ten, fifteen speeches of the leadership that you can read, they're all struggling. How do we create? How do we start a process of socialist construction? It's a process. It's not an event. You know, a revolution is both an event and a process. But socialist construction is a long process, and it's a process of debate because you're inheriting past institutions. You have to transform them. You're inheriting your limitations.

Why is it that all these revolutions happen in so-called backward countries, Russia, China, Cuba, Vietnam—I mean, a country that experienced chemical warfare from the United States. Its agriculture was destroyed by napalm and by Agent Orange. And then now people ask, "why isn't it socialist?" Friends, you can't destroy a country's agriculture and then go, "Oh, well, they should just collectivize." Along the whole Ho Chi Minh trail, you cannot grow anything there for a thousand years, maybe even die if you eat that stuff. So one has to have a measure of patience.

And in China, there's been a series of debates over time. Not only within the communist movement but a broader Chinese societal debate. What's the way forward? If you look at the Chinese and the Soviet experience in the 1980s, they are very different experiences. What the Chinese leadership understood quickly was that technological change was happening very rapidly. I remember reading the internal documents of the South Commission, which was chaired by Julius Nyerere. And the members who were on the commission from China were very, very interested in how these technology and science transfers took place. They understood that they were, let's use the old word, backward in science and technology that they needed to learn about computerization and new forms of producing things and so on.

So in China, they understood: we better learn this stuff because we can't feed our people in this way. Some people believe let's advance the productive forces so that we can better transport resources. And that's a legitimate way to think about things. You know, you can't socialize poverty. That's what happened in Cambodia. But that is not a legitimate form of socialist construction, where you take power, and then you just say, well, we're poor. So now, let's just divide poverty among all households. That is not acceptable to me as a road. That's a romantic thing. Some intellectual living in an apartment with a computer can romanticize socializing poverty. But it's not acceptable. You cannot condemn people to illiteracy and starvation and say everybody starves a little bit. That's not acceptable to me. So the question of advancing productive forces, sounds harsh and maybe I don't agree with everything that has been done, but I understand the argument is real, and inside China, there is an enduring argument about how far you go.

And you can see Hu Jintao, Xi Jinping, every moment there is recalibration. You know, now we are seeing inequality getting too high. So we need more attention paid to the poor. This is a debate, and you would have to be uninterested in the fact that the Chinese people are both thinkers and they are political to ignore that. This is a kind of incipient racism.

You're not interested in the fact that there is a debate in the Communist Party. It's a very large party. There are millions of people there, and there are factions and groups, and they debate with each other. Cheng Enfu, a scholar of the Chinese Academy of Social Science, wrote a brilliant piece identifying the different schools of thought in China: there are Maoists, there are neoliberals, there are even Jeffersonian liberals that he identifies, because there's a debate. And the irony is that Chinese intellectuals are telling you we have debates. So I don't get it. Either there's no freedom of speech, or these Chinese intellectuals are lying. Certainly, you can say we want to allow more extreme opinions in political debate. But you can't say there's no freedom of speech.

So, if somebody in the West says to me, well, you know, China, they're just a capitalist country. Well, you're entitled to an ill-informed opinion. But before you give that opinion, can you name two important debates that have taken place in Chinese society over the last three years? Do you know the names of five people in China who write about poverty? Do you know what kind of poverty schemes there are? And with regards to Covid-19, why has the Chinese reaction been so

different? Both the state reaction and public action—socialism, it's not about the state alone. It's about neighborhood committees, organizations, and civil associations. Why is their reaction so different? How is it that in one district, 440,000 people volunteered? In advanced industrial countries, people don't know how to volunteer. You know, you get six people involving themselves with mutual aid. That's brilliant, beautiful. Sensitive people are out there feeding the homeless and so on. But four hundred and forty thousand people volunteered. In Kerala (India), four and a half million women out of 17 million are in a co-operative called Kudumbashree. They are out there feeding people, making masks, and hand sanitizer. If you want to ask, what's socialism in Kerala, what's socialism in China: look at the quality of public action, the neighborhood committees, and volunteering.

You may have seen the charming video of the Wuhan doctors standing in a line, taking off their masks, one by one, like ballet dancers. If you look carefully, each one of them had the Communist Party lapel on. They were all Communist Party members. The thing is that the party instructed the doctors and said, look, we prefer that you go there because you made a commitment to serve the people. If there are non-Party member doctors who want to be there, they can be there. But if they want to leave, we will substitute them with you because you've committed to serve the people. That's a public action. The state didn't tell them to go there, and this is the Communist Party. I know some people would say the Communist Party and the state are identical. It's not true. It's not identical. There are institutions in Chinese society that are outside the Communist Party. So let's look at it more realistically, not in this kind of stereotypical, everything is top down, there's an emperor. There are hundreds of years of stereotypes about China that eclipse even the anti-Communism.

QIAO COLLECTIVE: What do you make of the charges, coming mostly from the West, that China is becoming an imperialist power? Specifically with regards to its Belt and Road Initiative, China Pakistan Economic Corridor, and these other infrastructure and investment programs. Increasingly many progressives are accepting the assumption that these actions are predatory. What do you make of these allegations? And if it's not a simple profit motive, what motive do you think China has in expanding its relationships, particularly with countries in the Global South?

VIJAY PRASHAD: So firstly, I think it's important to clarify what imperialism is. Because it's easy to use that word pejoratively, but what

is imperialism? A very quick shorthand: imperialism would imply that your economic system is premised on using internationally extra-economic forces of one kind or the other to get your own companies advantages.

This could be a country saying: if you don't buy from us, then we're going to use diplomatic and military force to sanction you or to make your life miserable somehow. So then you'll end up giving us the contract. Of course, it's more complicated than that, but I think that's a good thumbnail sketch. So let's take the continent of Africa because this is the most sensitive point of this conversation.

In 1885, European countries met in Berlin. And without the presence of any Africans, they divided the continent amongst themselves. So the whole of the African continent was divided up between European powers, and the United States was also at the meeting. Let's not be casual about the past. From roughly the 1880s, when there was this direct colonial intervention, until the 1960s and in some cases 1970s, the West actually withdrew the sovereignty of African people. And I'm not even going back to the slave trade, and I'm just talking about the 1880s to the 1970s. The West essentially stole the sovereignty of African people and plundered the continent. The most horrendous is the story in Belgium, obviously, where Leopold essentially wiped out the population in order to make a ton of money. OK, let's put that on the table. That, we know, is colonialism. We also know it is imperialist because after the West "left" the African continent, as Kwame Nkrumah wrote in his 1965 book, *Neo-colonialism*: you left, you gave us back political sovereignty, but by then, you had made us surrender our economic sovereignty.

Until today, Francophone countries in Africa are part of the French franc, and their profits are basically sitting in French banks. These countries have limited economic independence. If you look at the Congo, I mean, it is basically free plunder for big corporations. Glencore, which is registered in Switzerland, is the largest cobalt extractor from the Congo. So let's face it, it's basically a lot of European, Australian, Canadian, and American mining companies that continue to plunder the continent. The main companies that are currently exploiting the African continent are from Australia, Canada, the United States, and many European countries. That's the bulk of the exploitation.

China has a very different history in Africa. Its initial history was through a kind of socialist Maoist orientation, building the Tanzania-

Zambia railway, old relations with the government of Julius Nyerere in Tanzania, and so on. A fantastically important person and a Maoist in his orientation, A.M. Babu, who was eventually in the government of Nyerere, was part of a cohort of leaders that welcomed the Chinese into Africa to give them technical assistance and so on, and in Angola as well. Over that period, the Chinese government intervention into Africa was largely on a state-to-state basis.

After the 1978 reforms, things began to change. You know, Chinese companies began to come and bid for projects. But let's take the case of Zambia as an example. Chinese firms bid for projects. They don't come in and go and see the president of the country and say, if you don't give us the project, we'll withdraw, we'll ask the IMF not to help you with your debt that's coming up.

Until now, let's face it. What evidence we have suggests that Chinese firms, even state-owned firms that come in and bid for contracts, are bidding on a commercial basis. So what do you see as commerce? You know, China's economy has grown rapidly, and a lot of the raw materials that go to China don't end up in China. They go through cobalt mined by Glencore, through a German company in China where it's manufactured, and it's sold in the West. China is the territory on which the raw material is processed and manufactured into a good, but it's not going to China. Even when a Chinese government company or a Chinese private entity extracts the mineral in Africa, it often goes to European companies or American companies inside China to manufacture—not always, but often so.

Let's be clear that this is certainly part of modern capitalism. Zambia has raw materials. In another world, Zambia would not have to sell its raw materials at such low prices. We would like copper not to be sold so cheaply. It's a precious thing. We need to find a way for a country like Zambia to generalize the kind of profits of copper for its population. It's scandalous that in the copper belt region of Zambia, the children who live above these copper deposits, 60 percent of them cannot read. That's because the wealth is taken out, and nothing is really given to these people who live right there. This is a point of great criticism. But China is not the responsible party here. The responsible party is capitalism. Capitalism is at fault. I think one should focus on that.

It's convenient that so much of the press attacks China for "colonialism" in Africa. Come on. Let's be serious. There's a long history of real colonialism. This is commerce. I have a problem with capitalism.

I even have a problem with some kinds of commerce. But it's not China that's the author here; China is participating in a world system. That's a bigger, separate issue. The problem is global capitalism, not China.

Now, you ask, is China doing business in a different way than other companies or countries? It depends. There are private entities that are doing business. They have no obligation. Why should they? This is capitalism. If a private Chinese company comes and bids for something, when they say we'll build a hospital, is that for humanitarian purposes or to win the contract? Let's not be naive. I mean, a private company says, I'm going to build a road—that's to benefit your contract, to get the contract. But then when you see governments enter, it's not quite the same.

The Belt and Road Initiative in Pakistan is a good example. The Chinese government has understood for a long time, and the Belt and Road intellectuals write about this, that there's a need to integrate Asia. I've been in Beijing, at Tsinghua University, having a coffee, and I looked over, and there were three Pakistani students and six, seven students from China, all talking in Mandarin. And fluently with each other, because these Pakistani students come to these colleges and they learn Mandarin. This is integration. I've been in universities in China where students talk to me in Urdu, Chinese students who have learned Urdu. These things are happening, as well.

Is this entirely about commerce, so that they can do business there? Well, some of it is about commerce. But there's another side to this, which I don't want to exaggerate, but it's there. I mean, there are mutual benefits that are taking place. When the earthquake hit in Pakistan, Chinese doctors went to help them. When there was the 2008 earthquake in Sichuan, Pakistani doctors came. This is the building of a relationship between people. And I'm giving you this example because I dearly hope that India and China develop a relationship. India and Pakistan develop a relationship and that, you know, India and Bangladesh...I mean, this is the dream. These countries should cooperate with each other. Part of Belt and Road is entirely commercial, fine, but part of it is this cooperation.

When that train runs with more passengers from Shanghai all the way out to Lake Van in Turkey, that's eventually going to move people back and forth. Wouldn't it be amazing to have Iranians come for a holiday to Shanghai and have more interaction and people to people contact? One of the shambles of the post-colonial era is that it's ba-

sically been the West that's been tourists in the rest of the world, and people in the rest of the world haven't been able to afford to move places. After the 1978 reforms, you see more Chinese tourists around the world, many more. But that's unusual. I would like to see more people interact. And I hope that Covid-19 doesn't mean a retreat from this kind of integration because it's not cosmopolitanism that created the pandemic.

QIAO COLLECTIVE: It's interesting how the history of Western colonialism in places like Africa gets erased and displaced onto claims of Chinese predation. There often seems to be a framing of US-China relations as an imperialist rivalry, with an assumption that China simply seeks to recreate the hegemonic structures we've seen under US and Western imperialism and colonialism, which would simply keep poorer nations in Africa or Latin America under the trap of underdevelopment and resource extraction.

But when we look at Chinese state-owned enterprise investments in places like Zambia or Bolivia before the coup, there appears to be an alternative model of development that runs counter to the IMF neoliberal trap of underdevelopment. For instance, Bolivia turned to Chinese investment to help nationalize its lithium industry and to build up state enterprises of lithium manufacturing so that Bolivia could capture some of the value-added processes which have so long been the exclusive domain of Western corporations. So do you think that China is offering an alternative model of development for Global South nations?

VIJAY PRASHAD: I think that the question of pathways of development is a very fraught one. For many years the idea was that the West would provide aid to countries, which is tied aid. We give you money, but you buy our goods with that. It's almost like you're fronting credit. But then they are now indebted to you and will buy your goods and so on. This was the Western foreign aid model in the immediate years after decolonization. The World Bank would provide some loans, and you can build some infrastructure and see how it goes. But of course, it was all tied aid, and it wasn't real.

Then the Japanese had another theory called the flying geese theory, that in every region of the world, there is a "lead goose," and the other geese are in this V formation. The lead goose has the most advanced technology. And as it advances technologically, it transfers the previous technology to the next goose. And it goes back and back. So if the most advanced technology is 5G, then you can transf



Bolivia's Evo Morales meets with Xi Jinping

er processing lithium to the next goose. In some ways. I think that right now that the flying goose model is the most that we have on the table. What the Chinese have been doing is essentially the flying geese model. You know, it would be better for you to process the lithium in Bolivia. But, you know, we are now advancing to the digital phase, the next phase of technology, and so on. That's a flying geese model, and it's much better than the Western aid model, which was essentially leaving poorer nations at the extraction of the ore.

The Western aid model said we'll dig the ore, we'll process it and develop the new technologies, and we'll have intellectual property. We'll get everything, and you'll get nothing. The more of the Western model that you follow, the more unbalanced the world becomes. And there's a problem if one country has all of the surpluses and all the other countries are all in debt, how do you recycle the surplus? There's no mechanism to recycle the surplus. The only thing you can do is you can give aid, or you can give loans. So you put the nations in more debt. So the surplus recycling mechanism in the West was essentially a cycle of perpetual debt. That was the Western model of development.

What the Chinese government seems to be doing now is the flying goose model. The question is, is there a surplus recycling mecha-

nism? The Chinese government has said, if we have big surpluses, we will transfer our surplus to you by building infrastructure, and we will build a lot of infrastructures. So at least in my view, the Chinese have developed some form of surplus recycling mechanism. My opinion is on the question of development and the question of the macroeconomic issues. We need a robust international debate on creating a better surplus recycling mechanism. You know, Germany has a surplus. Greece has a deficit. How does the German surplus go to Greece? It's not like that's German money. It just happens, the way capitalism works. One place appropriates more wealth.

The Chinese, it seems to me in terms of international trade, have taken the position: yes, this trade has benefited us, we have huge current account surpluses, and now we'll recycle the surplus by building transportation networks. I think it's much more productive than what one sees from the foreign aid model. But it's still insufficient. We still need to have a public debate. What's the best way to recycle surplus? I'll give an example. Shouldn't surpluses be recycled more democratically? Right now, the Chinese government will say we should build a road here or a train there. I think we should advance to the stage where we have regional organizations, world organizations that are a mechanism for debate. You know, it's a sunrise, sunset thing. When you build a railway line, the town along with the railway line flourishes. The town, along with the place where the line wasn't built, dies. But that's not fair. It requires a kind of regional equity thinking for which you need public institutions that are able to make decisions about recycling surplus. You cannot leave it to one country. I mean, China is doing an admirable job on this. But this cannot be left to one country with surpluses to determine how surplus should be recycled. We've got to advance the conversation.

QIAO COLLECTIVE: Over the past few years, we've seen an intensifying of US aggression against China: the so-called pivot to Asia, the expansion of US bases surrounding China, weapons deals with Asian neighboring countries, and so much media distortion about China. Why do you think the US is ramping up this political, military, and media aggression? And with these rising tensions, do you see the possibility of what some call an "axis of resistance" opposing US hegemony?

VIJAY PRASHAD: So, let's take the first part of the question. It's true that the United States has been using any kind of leverage to try to slow down China's growth and to prevent China from having influence in the world. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the US twice forced

the government of Japan to revisit the yen-dollar exchange rate. It's tried to do this with China repeatedly. But China has said, we're not going to do it. They have readjusted the rates with the RMB, but China has been less willing, less pliable than the Japanese. And that's really bothered the Americans, that China basically has not bent to US pressure.

So you see a lot of ways of "encircling" China. Most recently, the Trump administration unveiled the Indo-Pacific strategy, which is basically a US-India-Australia approach to this. They've been giving these Millennium Challenge grants to countries as a way to get countries to join the Indo-Pacific strategy. So the United States has been attempting to build various institutional structures. That's on the one side.

I don't believe there's an axis of resistance, and I am personally not keen on this language because I think the engines need to be dampened, not inflamed. I feel that the approach was taken by many of these governments, the Venezuelan government, the Chinese government, the Cuban government—has been very sober. They basically are saying, look, we don't want a conflict. The Venezuelan government says: we want the sanctions regime to end. We don't want a conflict. The Chinese don't want a conflict. They want this to end, you know. So I think it's wrong to absorb the negative energy of the imperialist forces and then come back and say, no, we are resisting. It's not like that, actually, for two reasons. One is I think these countries fully are aware that they cannot actually tackle a military confrontation with the United States, a real confrontation. The US has enormous military capacity. No Chinese official wants this. The same in Venezuela. Even opposition leaders, Falcón, Capriles. All these people, when the US sends warships, they all say, send them back. We don't want them. Nobody wants this. So it's wrong to use that kind of language. I'm not keen on this, even the sort of social media belligerence.

The second reason it's wrong is that it's actually not the future we want to build. We are not trying to build a castle with a moat around it. We want to build humanity. We don't want to have a hundred years of tension between different parts of the world. This is not a war of Chinese people against the American people. This is a war between imperialism and the future. And I think if you accept the terms of this axis of resistance, then you're accepting the terms of the imperialists. We reject this conflict. We want to build the future. And the future is a future of socialism without conflict. I think the important thing to

say is that we don't want to accept this imperialist framework.

We are trying to build humanity, and that's our goal. And I think any attitude that goes against the project of building humanity is wrong. So, I think belittling people in the United States or Europe is a wrong attitude. I mean, these are people struggling in their own worlds. You know, we have to ally with all peoples in the world against this system, which is a criminal system. I think that genuine internationalism, genuine compassion, we know that these socialist countries are interested in that.

Do you know the reason why China took such immense interest in Italy, sent supplies, and so on? It's because when China was dealing with the earthquake of Sichuan, Italian doctors came there. Just a few, not sent by the government. I don't know what brought them there, but some Italian doctors, Pakistani doctors, came to assist. And their role was highlighted in Chinese media: they came to help us. China didn't become nationalistic and say we Chinese, and we survived this alone. No, no. So when there was a problem in Italy, it was not difficult to say let's send supplies. We are trying to build that kind of humanity. We are not trying to build competing nationalisms. Anti-imperialism is not a project of competing nationalisms. Anti-imperialism is humanity against imperialism. That's really fundamental. It's not only a moral and ethical place for a socialist. But I think it's just something that feels right. I'm not keen on jingoism. Yes, I'm a nationalist of a socialist kind, but not a nationalist in that nasty way. I believe in the right of countries to national self-determination and so on. All of that. Not in that narrow, desiccated way. We don't have to be the enemy. You know, we're the future, not the mirror to the enemy.

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SECTION III. WOMEN FOUNDERS OF PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE FRIENDSHIP

Introduction

Feudal China of the dynasties was a patriarchal society. Confucius specified as one of his five social relationships that the wife is subordinate to the husband. Chinese women had very low status. Peasant women, mostly illiterate, worked in the fields, and took care of the family. In the cities, bound feet were common. Marriages were arranged by the parents. Generally, “educating a daughter is like watering the neighbor’s garden.”



Qiu Jin

Things began to change at the end of the Qing Dynasty. Qiu Jin (1875-1907) was a revolutionary feminist who went to Japan to study and write and returned to China as an anti-Qing organizer. She was executed for treason. The May 4 Movement of 1919 demanded a revolution in modern culture. With the new culture came the “modern woman,” independent and educated.

Women hold up half the sky

The Chinese Communist Party organized on the principles of democracy, equal rights, and gender equality and that “women hold up half the sky.” Chinese women have made tremendous advances since 1949 in work and education. Today about 25% of the members of the National People’s Congress are women. Women are leaders in neighborhood committees and local political organizations, but there are few in the highest political positions. Traditional feudal patriarchal culture is still strong, especially in the less developed areas; there are still many challenges.

With the revolutionary movements of the 20th century, Chinese women came into much greater contact with the rest of the world.

An outstanding leader was Soong Qingling, wife of Sun Yatsen, who became an important political figure in her own right after the death of Sun. Soong defended the revolutionary content of the nationalist revolution and embraced working with the Chinese Communist Party; in the 1920s and 1930s, she was a leader in prominent progressive national organizations. In this capacity, Soong also had many international contacts and worked closely with the American reporter Agnes Smedley on medical aid for the wounded in battle.

Women were important as organizers, reporters, and writers; they started friendly US-China relationships connecting people through communication and mutual understanding. They helped establish a network of positive contacts between the peoples that continues to this day. Also contributing were other reporters such as Edgar Snow, author of the classic *Red Star over China*, and the “old China hands” from the State Department, and military comrades from the World War II alliance.

Smedley was born in Missouri and traveled to China in 1928; she wrote articles about the Chinese women she met and later a biography of Red Army commander Chu Teh. Helen Foster Snow came to China during the 1930s and filed classic early reports on the revolution, the communist party, and the new liberated zones. Anna Louise Strong wrote an important work on the democratic revolution in Wuhan in 1927 and later interviewed Mao in 1946 when he said, “All imperialists are paper tigers.”

Later in the US, Unita Blackwell was a civil rights activist and mayor of Mayersville, Mississippi. She traveled to China as part of a women’s group in 1973. Upon return, she educated others about the PRC and became president of the US-China Peoples Friendship Association from 1979-83. In China, Li Xiaolin worked for decades promoting China-US understanding and exchanges and became president of the Chinese Peoples Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries in 2011.

The YWCA in old China played a progressive role in supporting women’s rights and social welfare. Maude Russell was a YWCA secretary from 1917 to 1941 and returned to the US to head the Committee for a Democratic Far Eastern Policy. She published the *Far Eastern Reporter*, which documented progress since the founding of the PRC. Talitha Gerlach first went to China under the sponsorship of the YWCA International Division in 1926. She was a chairperson of the China Welfare Appeal in the US, which supported Soong Qingling’s

China Welfare Institute and its work in the liberated areas. Ida Pruitt was born in China to American missionary parents and helped establish the Chinese Industrial Cooperatives in the late 1930s. She wrote the book *Daughter of Han*, a biography of a Chinese working woman. All of these women made great contributions to building friendly ties between the two peoples and countries.

People-to-people activities such as education, culture, travel and exchange, medical aid, and fundraising acquire special importance in times when governments may be in friction or conflict, such as in 2020. People can make a real contribution to maintaining peace and avoiding war. Women's contribution to US-China relations is an important story to be told. Today the people's movement against a new cold war can draw on this history to become stronger.

Soong Qingling (1893-1981)

Soong Qingling was "a great patriotic democratic, internationalist and Communist fighter and outstanding state leader of China." -- statement by the People's Republic of China at the time of her death.



Soong Qingling was one of the most prominent women political leaders of the Chinese revolution in the 20th century and a lifetime builder of international friendship and cooperation. She was the middle daughter of the wealthy Soong family of Shanghai. Like her father, T.V. Soong, who had traveled and worked in the US, Qingling enrolled and graduated from Wesleyan College in Georgia. She spoke fluent English and had many contacts, friendships, and working relationships with Americans over the years.

Soong Qingling became an ardent supporter of the democratic revolution and the Guomindang (Kuomintang) when led by Sun Yatsen, who she met in Japan and married in 1914. This union was opposed by her parents, as Dr. Sun was 26 years older than Qingling. The self-arranged marriage was a demonstration of her independence as a "modern woman." Her younger sister, Mailing, married Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Kaishek), and her older sister Ailing married the richest man in China.

Madame Sun, as she was often called, supported and assisted Sun Yatsen in his leadership of the Guomindang in its revolutionary days. She continued this work after his death in 1925. After Chiang Kai-shek's treacherous betrayal and slaughter of Left, Communist, and Labor activists in 1927, Soong Qingling left China and declined offers to rejoin the Guomindang as a member of the central execu-

tive committee. She returned to Shanghai in 1929, Sun Yatsen's widow. Madame Sun became a focal point for opposition to Chiang Kai-shek's right-wing policies and, for 20 years, was a key figure in the revolutionary movement, promoting cooperation with the communists. She worked in Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Chongqing. Because of her high national and international profile, the GMD was not in a position to stop her activities.

In 1927 she was a founder of the League Against Imperialism, an organization to encourage unified stands in support of nationalist movements in Asia, Africa, and Latin America – to counter the League of Nations' status quo position on colonialism. After Japanese imperial forces attacked northeast China (Manchuria) in 1931, Soong Qingling was a founder of the National Salvation Association, which called for unity in national resistance to the Japanese invasion. She helped found the China Forum in Shanghai, a weekly publication that contained views close to those of the Chinese communists. She also knew and worked with many left-wing intellectuals and artists in Shanghai.

“Mme. Sun, although related to many of the Guomindang leaders, steadfastly refused to join the GMD and chose instead to oppose the Nanjing government and support a series of left-of-center causes. As with Lu Xun and Smedley, it was impossible for the Guomindang to arrest or assassinate her because of her international reputation, and of course, she was nationally respected as Sun Yatsen's widow. But she was under constant surveillance by Guomindang police, and she was made to watch as those around her disappeared into prison or fell to the assassin's bullets.” (MacKinnon, *Agnes Smedley: Life and Times of An American Radical*, p. 154)

Soong Qingling later became chairperson of the China Defense League, which raised money and medical supplies for wounded Red Army soldiers fighting the Japanese. “The influx of Chinese war refugees had turned Hong Kong into an important arena of Chinese politics. Mme. Sun was living there, providing a focal point for non-communist opposition to the Guomindang government in Chongqing. Hong Kong was the headquarters for the industrial cooperative movement being led by Rewi Alley, Chen Hansheng, Mme. Sun and others – most international aid was funneled through Hong Kong.” (MacKinnon, p. 226) Along the way, Qingling knew and worked with many Americans and Westerners such as Agnes Smedley, Edgar Snow, Anna Louise Strong, and Rewi Alley.

After the war ended, the Chinese Defense League changed its name to the China Welfare Institute. With the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Soong Qingling was named deputy chairman. She carried on many activities: China Reconstructs magazine, the founding of the Shanghai Children's Palace, women's health issues, the Asian and Pacific Area Peace Conference, and international friendship work. When Liu Shaoqi was under criticism during the Cultural Revolution, she fulfilled some of his ceremonial presidential obligations.

Soong Qingling was often called the "First Lady of China" and the "conscience of China." In 1981, she met with Unita Blackwell, president of the US-China Peoples Friendship Association, to support mutual understanding and people-to-people activities. Her message was: "the interests of the people, the creatures and movers of history, are everywhere in common." Shortly before her death, Soong Qingling was named the honorary president of the People's Republic of China. She was one of the outstanding historical figures of the twentieth century.

To the People of the United States: For Deeper and Wider People's Friendship

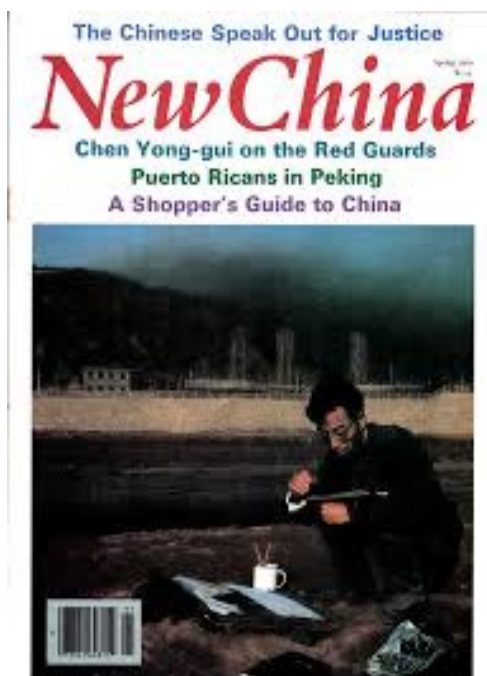
By Soong Qingling

*Soong Qingling served as the vice-chairperson of the People's Republic of China when this message (excerpted below) was printed in **New China** magazine (published by US-China People's Friendship Association, 1974).*

The sentiment of friendship is neither abstract nor incorporeal. It is built on the bedrock of an unalterable basic fact, that the interests of the people, the creators, and movers of history, are everywhere in common.

Such a spirit underlies the points of principle and action adopted by your association:

- Active and lasting friendship between the two peoples based on mutual understanding.
- The establishment of diplomatic relations between the two governments based on the well-known five principles of peaceful coexistence as stated in the Joint US-China Communique of 1972.
- The removal of barriers to growing friendship and exchange, including the presence of US armed forces in China's province of Taiwan and in Indochina.



-- The combating of distortions and misconceptions about the People's Republic of China.

-- Publication of literature and promotion of exchange of technical, cultural, and social experience. And in each activity, stress on issues of the greatest concern to the American people.

In presenting our new China's many-sided life to the people of the United States, I hope it will not confine itself to describing the surfaces but also convey and whys and hows, the moving spirit. In calling for and describing people's friendship, I hope it will also promote understanding of why this friendship is essential, so that the commitment to it will be as deep and enduring as the underlying basis on which it rests.

I hope too that it will serve practical needs and possibilities both in the general gamut of contact between the peoples and in expanding mutually beneficial exchanges in particular fields – trade, science, and the professions.

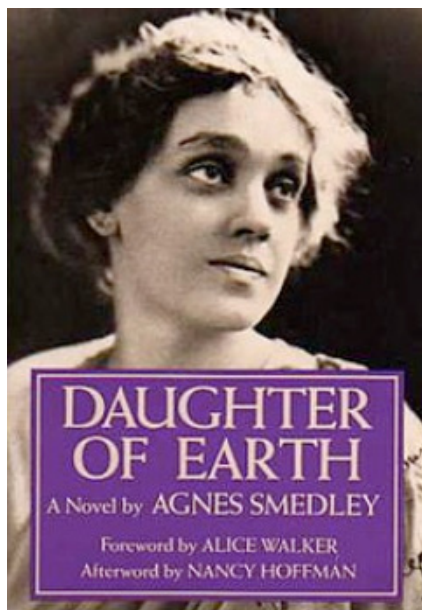
One heartwarming thing is to see, still active in the field of US-China peoples' friendship, old and staunch supporters who have upheld its banner through fair weather and foul. Welcome, too, is the growing number of those newly active, so many of the young.

And it is a good sign of the times that persons and groups who formerly held aloof, or even believed various slanders, are now helping create a positive atmosphere.

I hope American builders of our friendship will work in firm unity to help it reach far, stand fast, and continually grow... To the welfare and progress of the American people, to all others, we shall be constant, reliable friends.

,

Agnes Smedley: Pioneer of US-China Friendship and Understanding



The American journalist Agnes Smedley (1892-1950) traveled to China in 1928 and became the first Westerner to report on the Jiangxi Soviet base area established by Mao Zedong and Zhu De (Chu Teh) in 1929. She widely published stories giving voice to the oppression of Chinese women. Subsequently traveling to the communist base area in Yanan, Smedley wrote the classic biography of Red Army commander Chu Teh based on many interviews. This book is still highly regarded in China as a story of the revolution. Smedley was also an important and productive organizer of medical aid for the wounded during the wars in China in the 1930s

and 40s. She left China in 1941 as a pioneer of clear reporting for an understanding of modern China and a founder of people-to-people friendship between the US and Chinese peoples.

Agnes Smedley was born to a poor working family in rural Missouri farm country. Her mother hired herself out as a washerwoman, her father left home but came back. The family later moved to Colorado, where her father worked in the mining industry. Smedley did well in school and was able to get a college education. She obtained secretarial and editing work for a publisher. She wanted to be a writer and journalist. Smedley early showed a deep commitment to economic and social justice and turned toward radical politics. Smedley strongly supported women's rights, equality, and the right to birth control and was a long-term friend and associate of Margaret Sanger, the leader in birth control and women's health issues. Smedley also

became an active supporter of the nationalist movement of India, seen as key in the anti-colonial struggle at the time.

She moved to New York City, joined the Socialist Party with its anti-war platform, and began writing for the Socialist journal *The Call*. A variety of periodicals published Smedley's articles on political topics. She supported the Indian anti-colonial revolutionaries during World War I and attracted the attention of US intelligence agencies. The Indian nationalist movement being strongly anti-British, there was suspicion of a "Hindu-German" anti-British conspiracy. Smedley had a relationship with the Indian revolutionary Virendranath Chattopadhyaya and became an important organizer in the US and Germany in Indian groups opposing British rule. In 1918 Smedley was indicted under the Espionage Act and accused of working to oppose the British in India, thereby indirectly supporting Germany in the war. She was eventually bailed out and traveled to Berlin, where she continued to work on the Indian nationalist cause as well as undergoing the new Freudian therapy. She published a highly regarded autobiographical novel *Daughter of Earth*.

Smedley traveled to China in Dec. 1928 as a war correspondent for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and the *Manchester Guardian*. Upon her arrival in China and Shanghai, Smedley wrote vivid articles on the situation of Chinese women of different backgrounds. These were collected in the book *Portraits of Chinese Women in Revolution*.

"Smedley most often illustrated the tradition of oppression of women by reference to the brutal practice of footbinding, the reduction of the adult female foot to an elegant 'golden fig'... With some regional and class variation, footbinding had been inflicted upon Chinese women since the tenth century. Economically and socially, women lived in bondage, although here again, the form varied from class to class and region to region... lower-class women were brought or sold as *neicai*, household slaves."

"How marriage institutionalized the subordination of women to men was another theme of Smedley's stories. First, all marriages were arranged by parents, and a bride usually left her home (the wealthier ones, with a dowry) to live and work in the home of a stranger, her husband. Only within the institution of marriage, as a breeder of males, could a woman rise in status. Otherwise, as the old proverb went, "a woman married is like a pony bought – to be ridden or whipped at the master's please." Infanticide of baby girls is common among the lower classes. Traditionally, the only

escapes for women were suicide, prostitution, or a Buddhist nunnery.” (MacKinnon, p. 135)

Smedley was one of the earliest US reporters in China during the 1930s, stationed in Shanghai for years, traveling to Moscow, and then spending years in mostly revolutionary areas of China, although Smedley also maintained friendships among Guomindang supporters. Smedley wrote the first clear and factual reporting on the Jiangxi Soviet, the mountain base area which was led by the Chinese Communist Party and the prototype for the successful liberated zone strategy pursued during the wars. In Shanghai, she was part of a progressive and revolutionary circle of artists and intellectuals, including leading Chinese figures such as Lu Xun. In 1930 she wrote several of the first articles in a Western language on the new social realist movement in Chinese art and literature.

Smedley later traveled to Xian during the Xian Incident of 1936, where she gained international attention for her coverage of the dramatic events, as Chiang Kai-shek was kidnapped and then released after the united front was established. Smedley visited red army headquarters in Yanan and interviewed top CPC leaders Mao and Zhou Enlai, as well as conducting many interviews with Chu Teh (Zhu De), the commander of the Red Army and close associate of Mao. These interviews were the source for her book *The Great Road: The Life and Times of Chu Teh*. She also worked with Chu to establish the first formal contact between the Chinese communist movement and the Indian nationalist movement led by Gandhi and Nehru. *The Great Road* is excellent documentation of the Chinese revolution and has been widely read in China.

From 1938-40 she traveled in provinces east of Wuhan, mostly visiting resistance units led by both Communists and the Kuomintang. This was the longest stint in a war zone by any foreign reporter. Smedley spent significant time in units commanded by Li Xiannian, who became very influential politically and president of the PRC from 1983-89.

During the fighting and combat in China in the 1930s-40s, there were many casualties and wounded of both CPC and KMT armies, fighting the Japanese and often each other. Smedley was passionately down-to-earth in her concern for the wounded. She proved an effective organizer of badly needed medical aid to the growing numbers of wounded soldiers, working with Soong Qingling, the Red Cross, and others; this is one reason she is held in high regard by the Chinese people.

Smedley left China in 1941 for California. Her book, *Battle Hymn of China* (1943), was based on the two years spent in revolutionary zones; the book received a good reception in the US; it was a success and further established Smedley's reputation as a China expert.

Upon her return to the US, she went on numerous speaking tours, radio shows, and China debates at conferences during the 1940s. Her favorable public reception in the US, however, quickly changed with the onset of the "China question" and the cold war, starting in late 1944 and becoming Truman administration policy. The FBI investigated her as a possible communist contact or spy, and Smedley became victimized by the strident anti-communism of the early cold war period. She lost most of her speaking engagements and found it harder to publish.

In the midst of this persecution atmosphere, Agnes Smedley finally decided to return to China to live. She would return through Europe, but in England became gravely ill. Smedley died in England in 1950. She is buried in the Babaoshan Revolutionary Cemetery, Beijing.

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Chinese Women's Voices: From the Old Society and the Revolution

US women reporters during the 1920s and 1930s did important work by recording the voices of peasant and working-class Chinese women. Here they are quoted by Anna Louise Strong, Agnes Smedley, and Helen Foster Snow.

Child slaves

The saddest looking one of all was little Lu Tsen, a baby of seven years who fussed all the time with her dirty shirt-tails. "My father sold me," she said. "Otherwise, they all die of hunger. No food. No food." Beyond this, she could explain nothing about her family. "My master beat me all over my body," she added. "He forbid me to cry; when I cry he beat harder. I serve tea, dust chairs, clean spittoons. A policeman took me away from him; I do not know how the policeman knew that I was a slave girl." (Strong, p. 104)



Chinese girls with bound feet.

Bound feet

"By the old custom, women were not permitted to walk out of the house. Her feet were bound very small. Otherwise, she could not get a husband. They were forced into marriage, so the marriage relations became embittered." (Snow, p. 95)

Forced marriage

"With the exception of my two sisters, both of whom were unhappily married, every member of my large family tried to force me into

marriage. It was not merely my mother who pleaded with me, the tear rolling down her cheeks, but it was my brothers, my uncles, aunts, cousins, and all the variations of these relatives.” (Smedley, p. 12)

Married life

“When a girl married, she went to live in the home of her husband’s parents, where she served them almost as a slave. If happiness came to help her bear her burden of duty, it was by accident but not by right... Since her parents were old-fashioned, she served them constantly. Even when they ate, she could not sit, but had to stand until they had finished...He could recall nothing she had ever said – but then women are supposed to have nothing to say.” (Smedley, p. 79)

Exploitation of labor in the factories

“The British factory where I work is modern; it has two shifts of twelve hours each. But in old-style Chinese factories, women work sixteen hours a day, from four in the morning till eight in the evening. There is also one British factory where the weavers work seventeen hours, till nine o’clock in the evening.” (Strong, p. 92)

Union dues

A union member told of the method of union organization. “We elect committees in our mass meeting. If anyone really can fight for the benefit of others, we elect that person. The officials of the union are elected by delegates whom we send from the factory. Our union dues are ten cents a month.” (Strong, p., 92).

Women’s union

An activist from the women’s union: “we explain that men and women are now equal. Even though you are a woman, you are still a person. We say they have a duty to society and not only to husbands. It is a good thing to ask the advice of parents about your marriage, but not to let the parents decide everything concerning it. We explain the new doctrine of free choice in a marriage that young folks have the right to select their own life partners. We also explain that, by the new law, women may inherit property, and we say that the feet of young girls must not be bound.” (Strong, p. 98)

Overthrow of the Canton Commune in 1927: Brutality of the Chinese fascist repression

“Whole sections of the city were ruined by fire and fighting, and working men and women, students, men, and girls, were murdered by thousands in the streets. The White officers killed every workingman or student they met – sometimes they halted them, then shot them dead, or they had them captured, forced to their knees, and beheaded or sliced into bits. Every girl with bobbed hair who was caught was stripped naked, raped by as many men as were present, then her body was slit into two, from below upwards. Often the girls were no more than fifteen or sixteen, and officers, giving interviews to eager British journalists from Hong Kong, said: ‘The bobbed-haired girls are the worst; they are very arrogant and talk back defiantly. We have had to kill hundreds of them.’” (Smedley, p. 22)

Revolutionary Women on The Long March

Who were these thirty women leaders who dared not only be at the beginning but to survive the famous Long March over the highest mountains and most dangerous rivers in China? (Li Po-chao made a list). “Nine were students. Nine were peasants. Two were proletarians. Two were housewives. Two were teachers.” The origins of the others she could not remember. (Snow, p. 175)

Gains of the people’s revolution

“We started with nothing but the ancient system of brutal ignorance and subjection; today we have schools, hospitals, clubs, dramatic societies – as also free land for all that labor, and our various political and military defense organs. In this territory, I travel far and wide, establishing health institutes, lecturing on public health and hygiene, teaching women the care of themselves and their children. I have looked so long into the eager faces of millions of the oppressed, thirsty for knowledge, that now my eyes see nothing else.” (Smedley, p. 25)

World revolution

“The Chinese woman is the most oppressed creature in the world. We have no education and no time to study. We must demand shorter working hours so that we may study. Tell your comrades in America and in other lands to walk in the revolutionary path and get true free-

dom. Tell them that we are also part of the World Revolution. Tell them that if Chinese women are not free, then the whole world is not free either.” (Strong, p. 95-96)

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Tribute to Unita Blackwell (1933-2019)

By Paul Morris

The death on May 13, 2019, of civil rights icon Unita Blackwell, was widely noted in newspapers and websites. She rose from a life as a sharecropper's daughter in rural Mississippi to be an effective advocate for African-American rights and was elected mayor of her hometown, Mayersville, Mississippi.



Unita Blackwell meets Soong Qingling in Beijing, 1980

What was not always mentioned in the press was her role as president of the US-China Peoples Friendship Association (USCPFA) for six years.

Blackwell had caught the China bug when she was chosen for the 1973 group of women to visit the PRC with Shirley MacLaine, a political activist as well as an actor and filmmaker. The documentary *The Other Half of the Sky* showed the delegation's trip to China.

The young USCPFA invited her to speak at its second national convention in Chicago in 1975. In her speech, she pointedly observed that she didn't see too many "different kinds of folks" among those attending, as recounted in Bart Trescott's history of the association, *From Frenzy to Friendship*. "This helped inspire the delegates to designate outreach to working-class and minorities as a priority." By the time of the 1977 convention, Blackwell had decided to join the national board of USCPFA and was elected as an at-large candidate.

She and Frank Pestana of Los Angeles were chosen by the board to be co-chairs for the next two years.

This was a turbulent time for USCPFA, with heated internal disputes between moderates and die-hard Maoists and a burgeoning tour program that brought in members and money. The volunteer board members oversaw a paid staff that approached 20 at one time. Early in this period, the association received a preference from the Chinese for travel visas, and we sent as many as 2000 passengers to China annually. Still, by 1982, as other tour operators were granted entry, the number had declined to 400.

She was president when the Carter administration recognized China in 1979. Blackwell had a favorite anecdote that she said in her memoir, *Barefootin'*: "At that time I unveiled the new emblem of the friendship association, a pin showing the flags of the United States and the People's Republic of China crossed. I had originated the concept. Immediately souvenir companies began making and selling lapel pins with this image... It's been the symbol of American-China friendship ever since."

Blackwell spoke at the gala banquet in honor of Deng Xiaoping in January that USCPFA co-sponsored. She presented Deng with a gift of a Navaho rug.

Blackwell also organized China tours of black public officials and helped with hosting Chinese delegations in the US. According to Trescott, "In 1982, she received a graduate fellowship from the National Rural Fellows Program to study regional planning at the University of Massachusetts. She served as an intern in the office of the governor of Mississippi. She received USCPFA's Koji Ariyoshi Award in 1987. In 1991 she was selected as a fellow in the Institute of Politics at Harvard University. In 1992 she was awarded a \$350,000 'genius grant' from the MacArthur Foundation. She was a candidate for Congress in 1993 (not elected). By 1995, she had visited China 18 times."

Her obituary in the *New York Times* included a belief that may have been influenced by her exposure to the Chinese revolution:

"A small group of abolitionists writing and speaking eventually led to the end of slavery," she wrote in her memoir. "A few stirred-up women brought about women's voting." The people, she said, are the ones who bring about change. "Us. We are the movers. The president and Congress follow us."

Unita's Tibetan Adventure

In July 1980, President Blackwell visited Tibet for one of her many China trips. Some excerpts from editor Robert Mendel's article in the US-China Review follow.

First Impressions

Unita described her 1980 trip as an experience hard to put in words. "The mountains are absolutely gorgeous. Nothing can give you the sense of the glaciers below as you fly towards Lhasa. Then you begin to see the valleys where they are growing wheat and barley. When you get off the plane, there is so much splendor, and the sky is so blue that you don't know where you are.

"I could identify more easily with the rural areas of China because I have seen delta lands and agricultural environments, but the Tibetan people do things differently.

Strange Encounter

Unita recalled, "They would come to the bus and stare at me and look at my eyes, all of them with their hands out. We guessed it was because I was dark, tall, and had gold earrings that they looked on me as someone who had blessings to give them. One time they crowded so close that I reached out to touch them just to get through, and they parted for me.

"My group started teasing me by calling me a 'living buddha.' When I met the man who they called a living buddha, someone told him about it. He studied me and said, 'Yes, they would think you are one.' I said, 'Well, as one living buddha to another, pleased to meet you.' "

Reaching Out

The people remain in Unita's memory as reaching... for something. "They had warm hearts and a need to feel blessed or relieved, and that is what had been exploited. They would take everything they had and give it, just to be blessed. I'm not against beliefs, but I don't think religion should exploit people. But as I read biblical history, I see religion always did exploit people. I would take the need to feel

something and camouflage it under the name of religion and use the people.”

In retrospect, Unita recalls the strong, almost overwhelming quality of the Tibetan people, “beautiful, tall and handsome with lean features and the women with beautiful bronze skin. I was also aware of the presence of the Han people in charge, aware that they have a minority situation and are bending over backward working at the problem.”

*Paul Morris is an editor of **US-China Review**, journal of the US-China Peoples Friendship Association. He is currently a member of the USCPFA Board of Directors from the Western Region.*



Tibet 1985, photo by Margaret Witham

SECTION IV. TOWARDS A PEOPLE'S WAY OF LIFE

Roar China!

By Langston Hughes

Written in 1937

Roar, China!
Roar, old lion of the East!
Snort fire, yellow dragon of the Orient
Tired at last of being bothered.
Since when did you ever steal anything
From anybody.
Seepy wise old beast
Known as the porcelain-maker,
Known as the poem-maker,
Known as maker of firecrackers?
A long time since you cared
About taking other people's lands
Away from them.
THEY must've thought you didn't care.
About your own land either –
So THEY came with gunboats,
Set up Concessions,
Zones of influence,
International Settlements,
Missionary houses,
Banks,
And Jim Crow Y.M.C.A.'s.
THEY beat you with malacca canes
And dared you to raise your head –
Except to cut it off.
Even the yellow men came



To take what the white men
Hadn't already taken.
The yellow men dropped bombs on Chapei.
The yellow men called you the same names
The white men did:
 Dog! Dog! Dog!
 Coolie dog!
 Red!...Lousy red!
 Red coolie dog!

And in the end you had no place
To make your porcelain,
Write your poems,
Or shoot your firecrackers on holidays.
In the end you had no peace
Or calm left at all.
PRESIDENT, KING, MIKADO
Thought you really were a dog.
THEY kicked you daily.
Via radio phone, via cablegram.
Via gunboats in the harbor,
Via malacca canes.
THEY thought you were a tame lion.
A sleepy, easy, tame old lion!
Ha! Ha!
Haaa-aa-a!...Ha!
Laugh, little coolie boy on the docks of Shanghai, laugh!
 You're no tame lion!
Laugh, red generals in the hills of Siang-kiang, laugh!
 You're no tame lion!
Laugh, child slaves in the factories of the foreigners!
 You're no tame lion.
Laugh – and roar, China! Time to spit fire!
Open your mouth, old dragon of the East,
To swallow up the gunboats in the Yangtse!
Swallow up the foreign planes in your sky!
Eat bullets, old maker of firecrackers—
And spit out freedom in the face of your enemies!
Break the chains of the East,
 Little coolie boy!
Break the chains of the East,
 Child slaves in the factories!
Smash the iron gates of the concessions!
Smash the pious doors of the missionary houses!

**Smash the revolving doors of the Jim Crow Y.M.C.A.'s.
Crush the enemies of land and bread and freedom!
Stand up and roar, China!
You know what you want!
The only way to get it is
To take it!
Roar, China!**

Reprinted from PoetryNook.com

Norman Bethune, 'Wounds'

The following article, "Wounds" is by the Canadian communist and medical doctor, Norman Bethune, who died in China serving the revolution. It is a scathing critique of imperialist war, written in 1939 and published in 1940.

The kerosene lamp overhead makes a steady buzzing sound like an incandescent hive of bees. Mud walls. Mud floor. Mud bed. White paper windows. Smell of blood and chloroform. Cold. Three o'clock in the morning, December 1, North China, near Lin Chu, with the 8th Route Army. Men with wounds. Wounds like little dried pools, caked with black-brown earth; wounds with torn edges frilled with black gangrene; neat wounds, concealing beneath the abscess in their depths, burrowing into and around the great firm muscles like a dammed-back river, running around and between the muscles like a hot stream; wounds, expanding outward, decaying orchids or crushed carnations, terrible flowers of flesh; wounds from which the dark blood is spewed out in clots, mixed with the ominous gas bubbles, floating on the fresh flood of the still-continuing secondary hemorrhage.

Old filthy bandages stuck to the skin with blood-glue. Careful. Belief moisten first. Through the thigh. Pick the leg up. Why it's like a bag, a long, loose red stocking. What kind of stocking? A Christmas stocking. Where's that find strong rod of bone now? In a dozen pieces. Pick them out with your fingers; white as a dog's teeth, sharp and jagged. Now feel. Any more left? Yes, here. All? Yes; no, here's another piece. Is this muscle dead? Pinch it. Yes, it's dead, Cut it out. How can that heal? How can those muscles, once so strong, now so torn, so devastated, so ruined, resume their proud tension? Pull, relax. Pull, relax. What fun it was! Now that is finished. Now that's done. Now we are destroyed. Now what will we do with ourselves?

Next. What an infant! Seventeen. Shot through the belly. Chloroform. Ready? Gas rushes out of the opened peritoneal cavity. Odor of feces. Pink coils of distended intestine. Four perforations. Close them. Purse string suture. Sponge out the pelvis. Tube. Three tubes. Hard



Bethune operating during Sino-Japanese war

to close. Keep him warm. How? Dip those bricks into hot water. Gangrene is a cunning, creeping fellow. Is this one alive? Yes, he lives. Technically speaking, he is alive. Give him saline intravenously. Perhaps the innumerable tiny cells of his body will remember. They may remember the hot salty sea, their ancestral home, their first food. With the memory of a million years, they may remember other tides, other oceans, and life being born of the sea and sun. It may make them raise their tired little heads, drink deep and struggle back into life again. It may do that.

And this one. Will he run along the road beside his mule at another harvest, with cries of pleasure and happiness? No, that one will never run again. How can you run with one leg? What will he do? Why, he'll sit and watch the other boys run. What will he think? He'll think what you and I would think. What's the good of pity? Don't pity him! Pity would diminish his sacrifice. He did this for the defence of China. Help him. Lift him off the table. Carry him in your arms. Why, he's as light as a child! Yes, your child, my child.

How beautiful the body is: how perfect its pads; with what precision it moves; how obedient, proud and strong. How terrible when torn. The little flame of life sinks lower and lower, and with a flicker, goes out. It goes out like a candle goes out. Quietly and gently. It makes its protest at extinction, then submits. It has its day, then is silent.

Any more? Four Japanese prisoners. Bring them in. In this community of pain, there are no enemies. Cut away that blood-stained uniform. Stop that hemorrhage. Lay them beside the others. Why, they're alike as brothers! Are these soldiers professional man-killers? No, these are amateurs-in-arms. Workman's hands. These are workers-in-uniform.

No more. Six o'clock in the morning. God, it's cold in this room. Open the door. Over the distant, dark-blue mountains, a pale, faint line of light appears in the east. In an hour the sun will be up. To bed and sleep.

But sleep will not come. What is the cause of this cruelty, this stupidity? A million workmen come from Japan to kill or mutilate a million Chinese workmen. Why should the Japanese worker attack his brother worker, who is forced merely to defend himself. Will the Japanese worker benefit by the death of the Chinese? No, how can he gain? Then, in God's name, who will gain? Who is responsible for sending these Japanese workmen on this murderous mission? Who will profit from it? How was it possible to persuade the Japanese workmen to attack the Chinese Workman -- his brother in poverty; his companion in misery?

Is it possible that a few rich men, a small class of men, have persuaded a million men to attack, and attempt to destroy, another million men as poor as they? So that these rich may be richer still? Terrible thought! How did they persuade these poor men to come to China? By telling them the truth? No, they would never have come if they had known the truth. Did they dare to tell these workmen that the rich only wanted cheaper raw materials, more markets and more profit? No, they told them that this brutal war was "The Destiny of the Race," it was for the "Glory of the Emperor," it was for the "Honour of the State," it was for their "King and Country."

False. False as hell!

The agents of a criminal war of aggression, such as this, must be looked for like the agents of other crimes, such as murder, among those who are likely to benefit from those crimes. Will the 80,000,000 workers of Japan, the poor farmers, the unemployed industrial workers -- will they gain? In the entire history of the wars of aggression, from the conquest of Mexico by Spain, the capture of India by England, the rape of Ethiopia by Italy, have the workers of those "victorious" countries ever been known to benefit? No, these never benefit

by such wars. Does the Japanese workman benefit by the natural resources of even his own country, by the gold, the silver, the iron, the coal, the oil? Long ago he ceased to possess that natural wealth. It belongs to the rich, the ruling class. The millions who work those mines live in poverty. So how is he likely to benefit by the armed robbery of the gold, silver, iron, coal and oil from China? Will not the rich owners of the one retain for their own profit the wealth of the other? Have they not always done so?

It would seem inescapable that the militarists and the capitalists of Japan are the only class likely to gain by this mass murder, this authorized madness, this sanctified butchery. That ruling class, the true state, stands accused.



Mao Zedong with Norman Bethune, in Yennan, during the Long March period.

Are wars of aggression, wars for the conquest of colonies, then, just big business? Yes, it would seem so, however much the perpetrators of such national crimes seek to hide their true purpose under banners of high-sounding abstractions and ideals. They make war to capture markets by murder; raw materials by rape. They find it cheaper to steal than to exchange; easier to butcher than to buy. This is the secret of war. This is the secret of all wars. Profit. Business. Profit. Blood money.

Behind all stands that terrible, implacable God of Business and Blood, whose name is Profit. Money, like an insatiable Moloch, demands its interest, its return, and will stop at nothing, not even the murder of millions, to satisfy its greed. Behind the army stand the militarists. Behind the militarists stand finance capital and the capitalist. Brothers in blood; companions in crime.

What do these enemies of the human race look like? Do they wear on their foreheads a sign so that they may be told, shunned and condemned as criminals? No. On the contrary. they are the respectable



Wuhan communities fight Covid-19
Credit Xinhua

ones. They are honored. They call themselves, and are called, gentlemen. What a travesty on the name, Gentlemen! They are the pillars of the state, of the church, of society. They support private and public charity out of the excess of their wealth. They endow institutions. In their private lives they are kind and considerate. They

obey the law, their law, the law of property. But there is one sign by which these gentle gunmen can be told. Threaten a reduction on the profit of their money and the beast in them awake with a snarl. They become ruthless as savages, brutal as madmen, remorseless as executioners. Such men as these must perish if the human race is to continue. There can be no permanent peace in the world while they live. Such an organization of human society as permits them to exist must be abolished.

These men make the wounds.

1939

Book Review: Ghosts of Gold Mountain

The Epic Story of the Chinese Who Built the Transcontinental Railroad

By Gordon H. Chang

Houghton Mifflin

Boston, New York - 2019

US mainstream education teaches that the Chinese helped build the railways but doesn't say much about their home country, culture, or the racism they encountered, leading to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. In his book, *Ghosts of Gold Mountain*, Prof. Chang points out that most of the "Railroad Chinese" were migrants from Guangdong Province in south China. A large proportion in the 19th century came from four counties on the coast of the South China Sea. Many Chinese came from Taishan (Toisan) County.



Guangdong Province and the Chinese diaspora

Guangdong Province has a long coastline on the South China Sea. Its capital city, Guangzhou (Canton), was both the imperial administrative center for south China and a major commercial center, gateway to Southeast Asia and the Pacific region. The British colonized Hong Kong at the end of the Opium War in 1842. Guangdong was an economically developed part of China with historical and international maritime, commercial, and trade connections.

The Qing Dynasty early in the 19th century entered a period of stagnation and decline, largely stuck in old feudal ways; at the same time, European powers developed powerful military technology and

an aggressive, expansionist policy. Deteriorating conditions led to growing social unrest, and more young men in Guangdong began going overseas to find work and their fortune. As Chang says, the growing number became a diaspora:

“The effort to recover their history begins with the origins of the Railroad Chinese in distant rural villages located in the Pearl River delta near Guangzhou (Canton) in southern China. They were ‘Cantonese’ (a term commonly used to refer to any array of different regional and ethnic groups in southern China), who engaged in one of the great diasporas in human history. Numbering in the millions, they traveled across vast oceans to destinations in South America, the Caribbean, the Pacific, Southeast Asia, and North America, where, beginning in the early 1850s, one stream of this great migration became miners, farmers, fishermen, merchants, and railroad workers throughout California – or Gold Mountain as they called it – and the entire American West.” (p. 10-11)

The first Chinese to arrive in America mostly came during the Gold Rush starting in 1848; many Chinese worked in the mines and other occupations. In 1862, President Lincoln authorized the northern route to build the Transcontinental Railroad; this huge project was completed during 1863-69. A large number of workers were needed, and many Chinese, including new immigrants, were among the many thousands who worked on the job.

San Francisco

San Francisco was the city where most railroad Chinese entered the country. A Chinese neighborhood and community soon developed Chinatown. Many other smaller Chinatowns also emerged in different cities. This was a center of shopping for Chinese foods, business transactions, and the arrival of new immigrants. Chang observes: “the foundations of the Chinese American community are inseparable from the Transcontinental.”

Transcontinental Railroad

The Transcontinental Railroad was far more than another of the numerous railroad building projects, and it was one of the most ambitious engineering projects in the world. The railroad would be 1800 miles long, the longest railroad ever built at that time. The eastern part would start at Omaha, Nebraska, and run west through a mostly flat country to

Utah. The western portion would start near Sacramento, California, and the two would meet in Utah. The western part, however, was extremely difficult because it required major boring of numerous big tunnels in the granite of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, as high as 7000 feet. The blasting work was dangerous, as were the landslides. The construction challenges were staggering, a huge amount of manual labor was required; some construction sites were 7000 feet in elevation.

The railroad was seen as an historic project, a high moment of US “national destiny” when the Atlantic coast would connect to the Pacific coast and a continental nation, at last, be formed, where land routes would greatly facilitate shipping and replace the much longer sea routes.

Railroad Chinese

The project was labor intensive and would require thousands of workers. Central Pacific Railroad planned to build its portion hiring white workers as usual. However, due to the dangerous and difficult nature of the work for low pay, not nearly enough labor was recruited. At that point, the CPRR began hiring Chinese in large numbers, and they eventually made up as much as 90% of the construction crews in some areas. The Chinese workers were mostly supplied by other Chinese who would find and hire the workers from their Chinese connections. The railroad Chinese did an excellent job, laying high-quality railroad line in some of the most difficult and dangerous conditions through the Sierra Nevada mountains. Hundreds of Chinese workers died completing this project.

Food and Family

“The Railroad Chinese tenaciously maintained their preference for the flavors and food culture they enjoyed in their home villages. They drew on a well-established network of grocers, importers, and local Chinese food producers to provide familiar foodstuffs, cookware, eating utensils, tableware, and other familiar necessities.” (p.109)

“Many railroad Chinese sent remittances back to their family in the home village in Guangdong. “The flow of remittances to China over the years mounted, and sophisticated systems of money orders and funds transfer developed to support it. Many overseas Chinese regularly sent remittances to support parents and imme-

diolate families. The funds were also used to construct schools, village halls, and the famous diaolou guard-towers of the region. Whole new villages might even be constructed with remitted funds. The Siyi region over time became dependent on these remittances, which came from North America, Southeast Asia, Australia and elsewhere from the workers who went overseas.” (p.184)

Indentured Labor (Coolie) System

The labor system in California was different than the notorious “coolie system.” According to Chang, the Chinese in California had markedly different experiences than the Chinese who were forced to migrate abroad under the ‘coolie’ trade. Thousands of Chinese were taken as ‘slaves’ to Cuba, having been kidnapped and forcibly shipped there to the plantations. The coolie trade flourished in the region around Guangzhou from the 1830s to the 1860s, when moral outrage began to shut down the abusive system. An estimated 28,000 people were taken to Cuba, mostly on European ships, and many died in transit.

Slavery ended by law in the British Empire in 1833, but a system of indentured labor continued in the form of the coolie trade. According to Professor Chang, pirates and brigands provided hundreds of thousands of men from China and India for work on plantations and in mines around the globe. Many were prisoners taken in ethnic wars, and others were debtors or itinerants stolen off the land. From the 1840s to the 1870s, trades took as many as 500,000 Chinese to Peru, Cuba, and the Caribbean, most by way of Portuguese Macau.

Completion of the Transcontinental Railroad

The Transcontinental Railroad was completed in 1869 as the two lines met in Promontory Summit in Utah. There was a big ceremony for the hammering of the very last “golden spike.” Big celebrations were held in many cities, including San Francisco and Philadelphia, where the Liberty Bell rang for the first time since the end of the Civil War. Unfortunately, no Chinese or people of any non-white race were represented at the golden spike ceremony at Promontory Summit.

The national political situation at the time of completing the railroad in 1869 was that of the post-Civil War reconstruction period. Policies favored democratic change and the granting of equality to the former slaves. There was substantial black political power in the South. The Chinese railroad workers had built a national reputation as good



Chinese American protesters

workers for the Central Pacific Railroad. There was a surge of interest in hiring Chinese workers, and the Chinese dispersed from their center in San Francisco to many parts of the country, working on various projects.

Reconstruction ends, and the racist tide begins

However, the political tide greatly shifted in the 1870s. Reconstruction was ended, and a white racist power structure took control in the South. Anti-Chinese racism burst forth in the West, with many violent incidents. Politicians and the press promoted a negative image of Chinese as from a backward race, passive and indolent, who nonetheless could be clever and dangerous. Chang comments about the railroad Chinese, “the moment of possibility for them, however, was short lived. Chinese came to be seen as racial inferiors and competitors for work. Terrible violence and expulsion from America would be a bitter reward for their labor.” (p.11)

“The number of expulsion efforts and killings of Chinese has been documented to be approximately 170 episodes, which seventy-five Chinese killed in just the years 1885-1887, the high point in anti-Chinese violence in the United States and its territories. Many Chinese left the country...” (p.232-33).

This trend resulted in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, in which most Chinese were barred from coming into the US. The subsequent

century and more continued the ambiguous experience of the Chinese in America, at times appreciated as major contributors to society, at other times vilified with racism.

The Ghosts of Gold Mountain

Much of the history of the railroad Chinese has been lost or distorted in mainstream, mostly white accounts of the period. Chang's book does an excellent job of outlining and recovering some of that history, including stories and impressions carried forth among Chinese families. Though long overdue, the railroad Chinese were inducted into the US Labor Department's Hall of Honor in 2014. Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2015 visited the US hosted by President Barack Obama. During his state visit to the United States, President Xi explicitly called attention to the great contributions of the Chinese who worked on the railroad toward constructing early connections between the United States and China.

Who are the "ghosts of Gold Mountain"? According to their popular culture, when a person dies, his spirit lives and must be returned to the home village to reside in peace. But of the many Chinese who died in building the great railroad, some bodies or bones were never returned. They are the ghosts who are still wandering and wailing. But they are still remembered by the families and Chinese Americans, knowing their often contradictory history in the US. Gordon H. Chang's book gives a fascinating and informative account of the history of the railroad Chinese who built an essential part of the US national infrastructure.

Gordon H. Chang is a historian, author, and professor at Stanford University, where he also serves as co-director of the Chinese Railroad Workers in North America Project. He was formerly the director of the Center for East Asian Studies.

The Wuhan Conference on Marxism and Socialism in the 21st Century

By Norman Markowitz

Recently I traveled for the first time in my life to the People's Republic of China. I went to participate in a remarkable conference, the Fourth International Conference on Marxism and Socialism in the 21st Century held on November 15–17, 2019, and sponsored by the World Socialism Research Center (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences) and the School of Marxism of Wuhan University. The World Socialism Research Center studies the development of socialist thought, movements, and parties throughout the world.



There are many schools of Marxism in Chinese universities like the school at Wuhan, which seeks to develop Marxist learning and understanding in the interests of both students and teachers and society as a whole. I wish to thank especially Professor Yu Weihai, whom I sponsored and worked with this year at Rutgers University, and Professor Cao Yaxiong of the School of Marxism, Wuhan University, who were responsible for my participation in this important conference.

Wuhan is a large industrial city of 10 million people, larger than any US city. It reminded me a bit of Chicago, and a few Americans I met there from Chicago agreed, even though there were no homeless people on the streets or neighborhoods where people feared to go as there are today in most cities in capitalist countries.

The people were friendly and helpful, even though I spoke no Chinese, and outside the conference, I found few people who spoke any English. People were generally dressed casually, including a few I saw

wearing US T-shirts and even one with a New York Yankee cap. As a lifelong Dodger fan, going back to 1951 at the age of seven when the Korean War was raging, I wished I could have told him that I believed in peaceful coexistence between the US and the PRC and even between Dodger and Yankee fans.

Shared Future for Humanity

This was a conference to remember. While the majority of participants were from the PRC, some of the participants had studied and/or taught at universities abroad. There were Marxist scholars from Greece, Britain, Vietnam, Spain, Russia, Brazil, and other countries, and their wide-ranging areas of interest included philosophy, economics, educational theory, ancient history, political science, anthropology, and other subjects.

We used headphones which sometimes malfunctioned (when they did, there were always people around to help fix them quickly) to hear the presentations in English when they were in Chinese and vice versa. The theme of the conference emphasized Xi's leadership is continuing and enhancing what China calls the development of a socialist market economy with Chinese characteristics and the role of Marxist scholarship, learning, and education in developing a peaceful "shared future for humanity."

Many of the presentations were fascinating, including "China's New Paradigm of Democracy," which focused on the role of CPC leadership in developing China's new direction toward the building of a socialist society with Chinese characteristics. Li Shenming, former vice president of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, dealt with a global question in his presentation, "Understanding the Scientific Connotation of Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind." Professors from the School of Marxism at Wuhan University and other universities dealt with questions ranging from classic Marxist philosophy such as "Difference between Marx and La Salle—Based on an Analysis of the Critique of the Gotha Programme" (Yang Simai) to more current concerns such as "China's Road: Its Process, Essence, and Characteristics" (Luo Yuting).

Criticisms of Past Failures

There were also constructive criticisms of China's past failures and the importance of learning from those failures. These presentations



Markowitz with graduate student at the School of Marxism.

included “Some Problems in Upholding and Improving CPC’s Leadership System” (Ding Junping), “Rural Revitalization Strategy: General Requirements and CPC’s Original Intention and Mission” (Liu Mingsong), and “Analysis of Organizing Power of Grassroots Party Organizations in Rural Areas in the New Era” (Zhu Fengming).

Transformation over time

Other presentations from Chinese scholars dealt with the CPC’s struggle to establish over 70 years a society in which the people are the masters, the role of communists and CPC leadership in developing a critique of imperialist culture, the integrity, and centrality of Marxism in the 21st Century to both understanding and transforming society, and the transformation over time of a movement for socialism into a system of socialism.

This was very different from most academic conferences that I have attended in that the emphasis was on relating theory to real life; using critical analysis as a constructive tool rather than a weapon of attack; and using learning and education as a force to serve the entire society—a stark contrast to the standard boasting in US universities about “world-class research” in the service of corporations and the assembly-line approaches to teaching in order to credential obedient workers.



Topics of the Presentations

Presentations by scholars from abroad focused on many questions concerning Chinese development as opposed to what is happening in major capitalist countries. These included a talk on the role of spirit in Chinese philosophy by Martin Albrow (a member of the British Academy); “Marxist Activist Education against Neo-Liberal/Neo-Conservative? Neo-Fascist Capitalism” by Dave Hill, a long-time scholar-activist (Anglia Ruskin University); “The Political Economy of Liberalism” by Afredo Saad Philho (Brazilian Marxist social scientist teaching at King’s College, England); and “Marxist Analysis of the Commodification Processes in Education” by Juan Fernando (University of Leon, Spain).

Although some of the talks by foreign scholars focused on Chinese themes, for example, Professor Maria Nikolakaki’s (Greece) “Connecting Ancient Civilizations through Education in the 21st Century: Greece’s Participation in China’s Belt and Road Initiative and Its Cultural and Educational Exchanges,” most scholars from capitalist countries used Marxist analysis to show the continued destructive effects of capitalist policy on both the physical environment and the education and social welfare of the people throughout the capitalist

world. My own presentation dealt with capitalist responses to China's new direction, and I also gave two presentations to undergraduate and graduate students: "The Recycling of Cold War Ideology toward the People's Republic of China" at the Central Wuhan Normal School, and "The American Way of Imperialism" at the School of Marxism of Wuhan University; both led to interesting questions and lively discussions.

When I returned and told one colleague, a woman of very progressive views, about my experience, she smiled and said that China "was not a communist country." When I asked her what a communist country was, she pretty much said the Soviet Union. When I asked her if she was sympathetic to the Soviet model of socialism, she said no. Then I sought to convince her of the illogic of a position that defines "communism" in terms of one model and at the same time rejects that model while seeing that model as the only real one.

Attempts to Revive the Cold War against China

Today we see serious attempts to revive the bipartisan cold war consensus against the PRC at a time when such policies can only lead to devastating economic crises and possible war. A revived cold war against the PRC using as its model the cold war against the USSR would certainly have negative consequences for the PRC in its attempt to develop socialism with Chinese characteristics. However, the place of the PRC in the world economy and the fact that the US (which controlled 80 percent of the investment capital of the capitalist world when the first cold war began) is today by far the world's leading debtor nation suggest that such a cold war would be catastrophic for the US. It would lead to huge increases in the flight of productive capital and jobs from the US, both relative and extreme poverty in the US, and the collapse of the remaining safeguards in the banking system, labor law, social welfare, and environmental protections.

As the People's Republic of China seeks greater engagement with communist parties and socialist and anti-imperialist movements, we should welcome those engagements and build upon them as we work for a shared socialist future for humanity.

Norman Markowitz is an associate professor of history at Rutgers University. He teaches courses in socialism, imperialism, and US culture and history.

Labor Expert Liu Cheng's US Tour: Bringing Chinese and US Workers Together

By Donald Donato

CAMBRIDGE, Mass.--Noted China labor expert, Liu Cheng, Professor of Law and Politics at Shanghai Normal University, is making a tour de force of the US. He's meeting with top labor activists, government officials, and academics, promoting what he describes as a much-needed labor exchange effort to familiarize union workers from China and the US with each other and with their shared challenges.

In addition to his academic work, Professor Liu is director of the Center for the Study of Chinese Labor Issues and president of the Asian Society of Labor Law. He was an adviser to the Chinese government during the drafting of the 2008 Labor Contract Law, which was adopted by the National People's Congress in 2007 and went into effect the following year. This new labor law tightened restrictions on private companies and boosted the power of labor unions throughout China. US monopolies and the US Chamber of Commerce in China unsuccessfully lobbied to water down the 2008 law while it was under discussion. Liu testified before the US Congress about their meddling, which awakened some influential labor activists here to a much more nuanced and complex understanding of labor relations in China.

Liu's visit to the Boston area included a special presentation on the conditions and consciousness of the Chinese working class at the Center for Marxist Education in Cambridge and a dinner hosted by the Walden Workers Club in Central Massachusetts on August 19. He participated in substantive talks in Boston with the Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (MassCOSH) and a labor roundtable hosted by the Harvard Labor-Worklife Program in Cambridge on August 20.

US-China Labor Exchange Program

During his presentation to labor activists and academics at the Center for Marxist Education, he began with a simple observation: “Capital moves freely across national boundaries, but the workers fight each other!” He continued, “Workers of the world really do need to unite. The good news is, I think there is a willingness and the resources available to begin a US-China labor exchange program that can help to unite workers, but this work takes patience.”

According to Liu, the struggles of working people in the US and China share many similarities and root-causes. Take, for example, the predominance of neoliberal educators in both countries. Although China is a state formed by a socialist revolution in 1949, a combination of market mechanisms and mainstream neoliberal education at Chinese universities has begun to create internal contradictions just like those found in other industrialized countries. While market mechanisms and an opening to Western economic theory were put in place to develop the productive forces of the country, these forces have created growing income and social inequality.

Liu attributes these contradictory political and economic forces to what he terms “free-market fundamentalism.” He stresses that there is “a problem of overproduction...an imbalance between supply and demand.” In Asia, he says, “this imbalance is covered by exports, and in the West, by financial bubbles—the ubiquitous ‘boom-bust’ cycle and predatory consumer credit that periodically leaves millions of workers unemployed and impoverished.”

All-China Federation of Trade Unions

Far from being an armchair political and economic theorist, Liu previously served on the Binzhou Municipal Planning Commission in Shandong Province and later in the Shandong Provincial Auditing Office. In addition to his work in government and politics, his membership and close working relationship with the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) spans the course of three decades in which he has witnessed massive overproduction and a fundamental shift in the conditions of the Chinese workplace.

“Overconsumption (net import) in the US and Europe and net export in Asia have covered up overproduction,” Liu emphasizes. “In the past 40 years, production has doubled—this is caused by Wall

Street and the neoliberal members of the Chinese academy who were educated by the Chicago School beginning in the 1980s and 1990s.”

When US labor activists ask Liu what model needs to be embraced to make a change, he says, amusingly, “Let’s go back to examining the Labor Theory of Value contained not only in the work of Marx but also Adam Smith.” Liu pointed more than once to the importance for US and Chinese workers to understand and revisit the growth of inequality. According to Liu, this is one of the reasons why we need more labor exchanges.

In terms of the ACFTU and the conditions and class consciousness of workers in China, Liu recommends the building and strengthening of grassroots, democratic unions combined with long-term exchanges with other federations and unions outside of China to learn from the experiences of other industrial and post-industrial workers’ movements.

At the meeting with Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health on Monday, August 20, 2018, Liu indicated his intent to convene a conference in Shanghai to advance international labor cooperation around occupational safety and health tasks and to invite MassCOSH and US unions to send representatives.

Making Chinese Unions More Effective

While speaking later that day at the Harvard Labor/Worklife Program, Liu outlined two crucial elements needed for Chinese unions to be more effective. The first is the direct election of union officials. Today, elections are held in some unions, but they are not required. The provincial and local leaders of the ACFTU are largely appointed by provincial and local governments. This causes conflicts of interest and removes workers from the democratic process. Secondly, he argues that the Chinese government needs to litigate on behalf of workers—including individual workers. Liu explained that the ACFTU could be ineffective because neither it nor the labor law (until 2008) was designed to address the presence of private ownership and employers. That is changing, but slowly, according to Liu.

Another significant challenge to bolstering the strength of workers in China and the US is their lack of ideological education. In China, Liu says, “The government downgraded ideological education of workers when the market mechanisms were introduced. Young workers are



Left: Workers on strike gather at the factory gate of Hi-P International in Shanghai, Dec. 2, 2011. Eugene Hoshiko / AP. Right: Union workers and minimum wage activists at a Labor Day rally in Los Angeles, Sept. 4, 2017. | Richard Vogel / AP

conscious of their rights, but class consciousness is another matter.” To move forward, Liu recommends that unions participate more fully in policymaking to address the serious inequalities facing especially migrant workers in China.

Liu believes that the next steps taken by US and Chinese workers should be to meet each other and learn together, working side-by-side. “The world is changing. We need to find new tools, measures, and instruments. We need more social organizations to get involved in the workers’ struggles. We cannot expect the rise of unionism again, as you had in the US during the 1940s and 1950s, therefore we must find new measures and methods to move forward.”

Liu’s stop in Cambridge was part of a tour across the US stretching from August 5 to September 1. He began in California, visiting the Labor Center at the University of California, Berkeley. While in the Golden State, Liu also met with the US-China People’s Friendship Association and the Niebyl-Proctor Marxist Library in Oakland and then traveled south to meet with the UCLA Labor Center. From August 12-18, he held a series of meetings in Washington, DC at the Department of Labor, the Department of State, the AFL-CIO, and at SEIU headquarters. He will continue his visit with further meetings in Cambridge and the San Francisco Bay Area before returning to Shanghai.

*Donald Donato is a writer, editor, and field researcher from Boston, Massachusetts. He is author of **Agrotowns, a Brief History and Review of Resources** (Taylor & Francis/Routledge, 2019) and co-author of **Disrespect Today, Conflict Tomorrow: The Politics of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** (Critical, Cultural and Communications Press, 2009). Donato's work has also appeared in **People's World** and Britain's **Morning Star** newspapers. This article is reprinted from **People's World Online**.*

Chinese, US Health Care Reformers Explore Solutions to Problems in a For-Profit Health System

By Paul Krehbiel

Fifteen Chinese health care administrators from Jiangsu Province, China, met with six single-payer Medicare for All leaders in Los Angeles in December 2019 to discuss the problems and solutions in the for-profit US healthcare system. The meeting capped a week-long program for the Chinese health care managers at the University of California at Los Angeles on healthcare management in the US. The Chinese delegation wanted to discuss our analysis of the US for-profit health system and learn about our campaign to achieve a single-payer, Medicare for All system in the United States. The exchange also afforded us an opportunity to learn about the Chinese health care system.

Maureen Cruise, Registered Nurse, director of the Los Angeles Chapter of Healthcare for All California, and organizer of the exchange, opened the meeting with a blistering critique of the current for-profit health care system in the US. She said the US pays twice as much or more than other countries for health care, yet 100,000 people die each year due to lack of health insurance and inadequate health care. This was before the coronavirus (Covid-19) struck the US. Due to a complete mishandling of the pandemic by the Trump Administration, hundreds of thousands of people have died from Covid-19.

Cruise said in December 2019 that 30 million Americans were uninsured, and over 40 million were underinsured. Those numbers are much higher now due to Covid-19. Millions of people lost their jobs due to Covid-19, and 5.4 million lost their job-based health insurance just from February to May 2020. Cruise said, prior to Covid-19, that the US ranked 47th in the world in quality of care due to the high numbers of underinsured, and that for the past three years, under the Trump Administration, life expectancy has dropped. She said that 65 percent of American's said that health care costs were so high that they worried that they wouldn't be able to pay them and would become impoverished. That worry has increased since Covid-19.

China has progressed greatly after centuries of colonial plunder by foreign imperialist countries, which plunged the Chinese people into crushing poverty, starvation, lack of health care, and a short lifespan. That changed dramatically after the Chinese revolution of 1949, which brought the Chinese Communist Party to power. Steps were taken immediately to feed people, get the economy going, provide housing, health care, and education. China went from a life expectancy of 35 years before the revolution to 77 years today. China provides nearly universal health coverage for its 1.4 billion people, primarily through public funding by the government. The Barefoot Doctors program brought basic healthcare to rural China, where a majority of people live, but the great disparities in health-care between cities and rural areas have been a difficult problem to solve.

China's drive to industrialize and dramatically improve its people's standard of living has led the government to open the economy to foreign companies with special expertise, including foreign health care companies. The Chinese want to learn about the advances foreign companies can provide but avoid potential problems. Since the government controls the health care system, it can set regulations on companies that do business in China.

Shanjun Yu, Deputy Director of the Jiangsu Provincial Healthcare Security Administration and head of the Chinese delegation, said that the government is committed to providing quality healthcare to every Chinese citizen. The national health program currently covers 98% of the population, and plans are underway to include the remaining 2% this year. The government provides the majority of the coverage, but Yu said that there are also private plans. The employer pays 6%, the employee 2%, and the government the rest. He explained that there is a big push now to improve health care in rural areas where the needs are greatest and to standardize care.

The Chinese health care managers were interested in learning about how we are dealing with our current healthcare system and our strategies to achieve universal coverage in the US.

Dr. Bill Honigman, retired Emergency Room physician for 35 years, a leader of Progressive Democrats of America, and an activist with Physicians for a National Health Program (PNHP), talked about how doctors aren't given enough resources, including enough staff, because our healthcare system is driven by maximizing profits, at the expense of providing quality care.

Alice Ly, a patient advocate for the elderly, said that many seniors find that the care they need isn't covered in their health plan and that there are additional costs that they didn't expect, which too often they can't afford. "I represented a 90-year-old man who was paralyzed, and he was sent a bill for an ambulance that he called, with a note saying that he should have driven himself to the hospital."

Henry Broeska, a health systems researcher, a member of One Payer States, and who is an American Canadian, said he has designed electronic healthcare systems for years, in both Canada and the US. He said at Duke University hospital, with 900 beds, there were 1,600 billing clerks. In Canada, a 900-bed hospital would have eight billing clerks. "We would have great savings with a single-payer system in the US." He said our opponents try to scare the public with warnings about "socialism, but we already have socialism in public libraries, the fire department, and many other public services."

Lenny Potash, a retired leader and staff representative of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME, District 36), led an effort to organize a coalition of unions in support of single-payer healthcare, the Los Angeles-based Labor United for Universal Healthcare, which he co-chaired for years. Lenny pointed out that even good union-negotiated healthcare plans weren't guaranteed. Insurance companies constantly raised rates, and employers tried to pass the extra costs onto workers or offer inferior plans. When a worker left his or her job for any reason, their work-based health insurance was gone too. He said that workers and all people need a healthcare system that is sustainable, secure, and just.

Paul Krehbiel is a former chief negotiator for 5,000 Registered Nurse members of Service Employees International Union Local 721, a Los Angeles coordinator of the California single-payer Proposition 186 campaign, and coordinator of Los Angeles Labor for Bernie. He talked about the lies that private insurance companies told to the public to scare people from voting for Proposition 186 and the need to build a massive grassroots movement to inoculate voters from these lies prior to such an election. Krehbiel also talked about Bernie Sanders' Medicare for All program in his run for the presidency, and that ultimately the solution to our problems in healthcare and other sectors of society is to build a socialist society.

Paul Krehbiel is also a co-chair of the Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism. The Chinese delegation invited the US single-payer activists to visit them in China for future meetings.

China's Loose Canon

By Shaun Tan

China-US Focus



Many people are familiar with the Western canon, those core works of literature, history, and philosophy that are considered essential to the study of the subject. In the West, students of literature read Shakespeare and Cervantes, students of history read Herodotus and Thucydides, and students of philosophy read Plato and Aristotle. This canon is considered an integral part of Western civilization and has shaped thinkers, artists, and statesmen for generations.

Yet few outside China know much about the Chinese canon, a canon that is as rich and valuable as its Western counterpart, that has been revered and reviled at different points in Chinese history, and which may be the key to consolidating the Chinese Communist Party's authority – or destroying it.

In the field of literature, it includes what's known as "the four great books," *The Water Margin*, *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, *The Journey to the West*, and *Dream of the Red Chamber*.

The Water Margin features 108 heroes who, renouncing a corrupt and unjust Song Dynasty, form a band of outlaws and live, Robin Hood-style, in a marsh, righting wrongs and defending the weak in accordance with their own (extremely violent) code of honor. It explores the theme of a just insurgency, with the heroes choosing to serve "the will of heaven" over the Song rule of law.

The Romance of the Three Kingdoms is a historical novel and follows the breakup of the Han Dynasty into three warring kingdoms. It re-

lates the battles and the intrigues as the three kingdoms vie for supremacy. Its characters show strategic brilliance, nobility, and valor, but also hubris, stupidity, and self-destructive envy, in short, the full spectrum of human nature amidst triumph and disaster.

The Journey to the West is a fantastical account of the monk Tripitaka's journey to bring Buddhism from India to China, in the company of an anarchic fighting monkey, a lustful pig demon, and a fearsome sand demon, and the adventures they have on the way. The central theme of the comic novel is the tension between temptation and virtue, between passion and discipline, as the heroes strive (or fail) to live up to Buddhist ideals.

The greatest of the four is *Dream of the Red Chamber*. This novel follows the doomed romance of the protagonist Baoyu with his cousin Daiyu amidst the decline and revival of the illustrious Jia family. Its excellence lies in its execution, in its witty and spirited characters, in its colorful depiction of life inside a great house peopled by relatives and servants and the complex, shifting relations between them. It is a meditation on the meaning of life, as Baoyu is caught between his natural romanticism, the stern Confucianism of his father, and the Buddhist detachment born of suffering and enlightenment. Blurring the lines between reality and illusion, it is a bittersweet tribute to youth and youth's end.

In the field of history, the *Records of the Grand Historian* are widely regarded as the greatest classical work of history. Written by Sima Qian, the Records cover over two thousand years of Chinese history. Depicting rulers with all their virtues and vices, it's the primary means by which we know of many of them today.

The Chinese philosophical canon begins with Confucius. Far from the patron saint of Asian authoritarianism, as he is so often made out to be by opportunistic Asian dictators and clueless Western commentators, Confucius actually counseled balance, reciprocal obligations between ruler and ruled, and integrity in the face of unjust authority. Other canonical Chinese philosophers range from Mencius, who expanded on Confucius' teachings, to the Hobbesian Han Feizi of the Legalist tradition, to the metaphysical Zhuangzi.

Perceptions of this canon changed through Chinese history. Novels were traditionally viewed with disdain and deemed unworthy of serious study, but they were beloved by the general public, who often passed them on orally. From the time of the Tang Dynasty, scholars

wrote commentaries on Sima Qian's *Records*. Most of all, the Confucian texts were placed at the center of an education, as ambitious Chinese boys had to write essays on them in the all-important civil service examinations, and Confucian philosophy spread through the masses orally.

The fall of the last dynasty in the Xinhai Revolution of 1911 and the New Culture Movement after changed all that, though. The Chinese canon fell into disfavor, as it was associated with the "weak and backward past" that had left China at the mercy of Western powers.

Change after 1949 Revolution

The Communist takeover in 1949 saw this canon excised from public life. The tales of cavorting maidens were deemed decadent, the accounts of emperors were deemed counterrevolutionary, and Confucius was deemed the philosopher of reactionary feudalism. No longer were these things taught in schools or reenacted on the stage (although many parents continued to teach them to their children in private). Instead, Mao Zedong substituted his *Little Red Book* and revolutionary works like *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy*, along with the philosophy of Marx and Lenin. This came to a head with the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), when Red Guards declared war on "old ideas," burned books en masse—many of them Chinese classics—and even desecrated Confucius' tomb. Whilst the canon continued to be taught in schools in Taiwan and Hong Kong, for many years, it seemed to vanish from the land of its birth.

The irony was that Mao himself had a great appreciation for the canon. Former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who visited Mao in Beijing in 1972, described the chairman's study thus: "Manuscripts lined bookshelves along every wall; books covered the table and the floor; it looked more like the retreat of a scholar than the audience room of the all-powerful leader of the world's most populous nation." Mao's collection included classical Chinese poetry, *The Water Margin*, and even *Dream of the Red Chamber*, which he boasted of having read five times. What he enjoyed privately, he denied to everyone else.

After the death of Mao and the end of the Cultural Revolution, however, the canon was slowly revived, and it began to be taught in schools again. Today, students in China learn Chinese classics from

their early years all the way to university. President Xi Jinping laces his speeches with quotes by Mencius, and in 2014 he made a pilgrimage to Confucius' hometown in Qufu. "The classics should be set in students' minds," he said, "so they become the genes of Chinese national culture."

Why this renewed enthusiasm for the canon?

Many point to the enormous changes in Chinese society since Deng Xiaoping began opening and reforming the country in 1978. As fortunes rose with the embrace of capitalism, commitment to Communist values dwindled, such that few Chinese today take them seriously. Chinese policymakers worry about a populace driven only by materialism and without a moral compass.

"As communism gradually [loses] its luster, China finds herself trapped in a moral vacuum," says Kwok Ching Chow, Professor of Chinese at Hong Kong Baptist University. "It is only logical that the Chinese government would turn back to traditional culture, which is rich in morals and ethics."

The absence of any genuine loyalty to Chinese Communism also leaves many people without a strong sense of national identity. Restoring the canon, therefore, also serves a unifying function, explains Bryan Van Norden, head of philosophy at Yale-NUS College, and author of *Taking Back Philosophy: A Multicultural Manifesto*. "Xi is trying to reintroduce the traditional canon...to give people a group identity as 'Chinese,'" he says.

It's a logical decision, and the Chinese should certainly cheer the return of their canon to its proper place, but this move presents risks of its own for the CPC. The Party, after all, is the definitive authority on Chinese Communist doctrine, but the same cannot be said of Chinese canonical works, which can be interpreted in different ways by different people.

A parallel here is the Reformation. For centuries, the Pope, seen as God's representative on Earth, was the ultimate authority on Christianity, and salvation could only be obtained through the priests and churches he sanctioned. When Martin Luther began preaching that the last word on Christianity was not the Pope, but the *Bible*, which could be read and interpreted by anyone, he caused a revolt against the Vatican and a schism within the faith. Similarly, if the source of values in China is no longer the CPC, but the Chinese canon, which

anyone can read and interpret for himself, what might this mean for the Party's authority?

And how might Chinese people interpret these canonical works? Will they see the revolutionary CPC as the virtuous rebels in *The Water Margin*, or more like the corrupt and unjust Song Dynasty they resisted? Will they see Xi Jinping as one of the benevolent emperors in Sima Qian's histories, or more like the tyrant Qin Shi Huang? Will they see him as the kind of worthy ruler Confucius counseled serving or an unworthy one who should be shunned?

"Xi hopes [to revive the canon] so that he and the Communist Party can maintain strict control over the Chinese people," says Van Norden. "The danger, though, is that generations of intellectuals have found in these same texts the resources to challenge the status quo. Confucius and Mencius were both insistent critics of the governments of their eras. Perhaps Xi is unleashing forces he may not be able to control?"

Perhaps that's what Chinese authorities feared when in 2011, they surreptitiously removed the 31-foot statue of Confucius from near Tiananmen Square – just four months after they had unveiled it there. A loose canon like China's is an uncertain tool for social control.

The Chinese Canon

A totally non-exhaustive list of Chinese canonical works is provided below.

Literature

Novels

- Shi Naian, *The Water Margin*
- Luo Guanzhong, *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*
- Journey to the West
- Cao Xueqin and Gao E, *Dream of the Red Chamber*
- *The Golden Lotus*
- Wu Jingzi, *The Scholars*

Plays

- Wang Shifu, *The Story of the Western Wing*
- Tang Xianzu, *The Peony Pavillion*
- Hong Sheng, *The Palace of Eternal Life*
- Kong Shangren, *The Peach Blossom Fan*

Poems

Li Bai

Du Fu

The Songs of the South

Wen Xuan

For an introduction, see: C. T. Hsia, *The Classic Chinese Novel: A Critical Introduction Anthology of Chinese Literature*, Volumes I and II, edited by Cyril Birch

History

Sima Qian, *Records of the Grand Historian*

Philosophy

Confucian

Confucius: *The Analects, The Great Learning, The Doctrine of the Mean*

Mencius

The Five Classics

The Classic of Poetry

The Book of Documents

The Book of Rites

The I Ching

The Spring and Autumn Annals

Legalist

Han Feizi

Buddhist

Huineng, *The Platform Sutra*

Daoist

Laozi, *Daodejing*

Shaun Tan is a writer based in Hong Kong. His writing has appeared in Quartz, The Diplomat, and the Malay Mail Online. He enjoys reading, playing tennis, and talking about himself in the third-person.

POEMS BY GARY HICKS

Democracy, education and good manners. In cold war America these are items only for export.

'In this country where there are no death squads'
(1996)

mississippi!

Jugular vein of my country
upon whose capillary streams float
the bloated corpses of those who would not could not did not know
how to stay in their place

mississippi!

State of the union whose ways of life set the tone for the rest
of my troubled land

mississippi!

of river cities each given forth their school of the blues.

mississippi!

Land of cotton mechanized spawning refugees to Chicago and
its urban daley plantation. City of sandburg where black boys like em-
met till can be raised, sent to their people in mississippi to be safe
from a summer of dangerous streets, and die at the hands of fourth
reich wannabes for the crime of reckless eyeballing a white woman

mississippi!



Land of poor white people having only their skins to lord over darker peoples who are being themselves condemned to a white hell of eternal poverty.

mississippi!

Where the loudest attackers of welfare own the largest acres of government subsidized land, have congressmen with enough seniority to wage our country's foreign policy straight into the holocaust.

Mississippi!

In the summer of nineteen sixty-four in the year of our lord is in need of some democracy education and good manners. In cold war America these are items only for export.

Hundreds of miles to the northeast in Cambridge, it is six in the evening, by day the church basement in which I now sit is a child-care center, by night, out come the fold-out tables the telephones and one gawdawful sounding teletype machine, connecting us with atlanta. It is freedom summertime. And one thousand black and white volunteers will descend upon the state of mississippi to set up freedom schools, craft coops, and tent cities for evicted tenants who dare to register to vote. And they will help the local people organize the freedom democratic party.

Into meridian drive andrew goodman, michael schwerner, and james chaney.

Fresh from orientation and training in ohio they leave their unpacked luggages at their residences and drive off to investigate a church burning. It is June 21.

They do not return.

They have been arrested by the local sheriff and released, so the sheriff says. And they are nowhere to be seen. And we have no death squads in our country.

The word spreads to the ohio campus there most of the volunteers are still training. Meetings are held. Fears are spoke to. Death is very much a possibility. If the summer project commences. Parents,

loved ones and siblings are melting the phone lines of this ohio campus in concern to ask reconsideration, to entreat for discretion to be the better part of valor, fear in our country where have no death squads.

Death is very much a possibility, and no one will be thought of as less of a human being if they leave the project, some do. Most will stay: ordinary human beings, black and White,

About to do some extraordinary things in this country. Where there are no death squads.

All this comes over the transmission wires of our loud and ornery teletype, whose sound must be causing the dead to toss in their sleep in the revolutionary war graveyard the other side of Cambridge common.

On subsequent nights, black bodies will be found while searching for goodman, Schwerner, and – oh yes – chaney.

Churches will burn nightly as the search continues for Schwerner, goodman, and – oh yes – chaney.

The navy is called to aid the search, sailors are given good conduct and special mission-style medals for want of the kind of war they've been trained for and will soon fight

Ten thousand

Miles over the ocean. But for now citations for the search for goodman, Schwerner, and – oh yes – chaney.

And the bodies keep turning up and churches keep burning.

Wayne yancey, a white volunteer, is run over by a hit-and-run vehicle. He lays bleeding unto death for three hours, and no one lifts a finger in this land in which there are no death squads.

Freedom democrats travel to atlantic city to contest and unseat the dixiecrats from Mississippi at the democratic national convention. They are offered to symbolic seats. Instead, they march upon and occupy the convention floor. The whole world is watching and it is not yet Chicago.

We didn't come for no two seats, says fannie lou hamer in her thunderously soft voice. Especially when all of us is tired.

And freedom, democracy, and good manners continue to be items of export for our country's foreign policy, and at home there are no death squads.

The bodies of the three disappeared are found on august fifth.

That same day warfare breaks out in the gulf of Tonkin, ten thousand miles of the ocean

And in Mississippi, state of the union in my country of no death squads, the bodies

Keep

Turning up. The churches keep burning, and the news that never makes the newspapers and television humans along the hotwires of the old battered teletype machine, I am here in this church basement in Cambridge, in this room that by day is entrusted to the care of children.

Quest

(1999)

I am looking for the panther who is very much alive
In the hearts of the people who struggle to survive
I am walking down the road between the fires of right and wrong
I am high on the people, and freedom is my song

I am writing like a madman who hopes it's not too late
When I tell you that I love you and I'm here to share our fate
You're my people of great character, the north star of my soul
And the subject of my song
I cannot ignore the courage that informs our poetry
I cannot ignore our claim to a place among the free
Our dancing in that space where the darkness greets the dawn
What else can I say?

My people chopped the cotton that made this country rich
My people built the railroads, worked the factories, caught the fish
The ones who labored long night to day and can't to can't
And the subject of my song
My people played on baseball, basketball, and football teams
So that their sons and daughters might realize other dreams
My people had their schooling at the gates of hell
What else can I say?

We want peace, justice, clothing – rise and take our stand!
We want food, jobs and housing – and freedom in our land!
We want to more rich man's robbery—raise your banners high!
This is the subject of my song
So rise up singing your song throughout the night
Harmonize 'til morning and dare to scale the heights!
And keep on dancing here the darkness greets the dawn
What else can I say?

I am looking for the panther who is very much alive
In the hearts of the people who struggle to survive
I am walking down the road between the first of right and wrong
I am high on the people, and freedom is my song.

*Reprinted from the Massachusetts Liberator, Winter 1999, published
by Massachusetts Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and
Socialism*

*Gary Hicks is a retired (Boston) public school teacher. He now resides
in Berkeley CA, where he writes poetry occasionally, edits what he
calls a "wannabe blog" almost daily, and is active in tenant advo-
cacy and struggles about peace and justice, at home and abroad.
Despite being under glorified house arrest thanks to Covid-19, he
remains dangerously and shamelessly unattended at his laptop. And
oh yeah.... he's a communist.*

Sources and Media for learning about China and a Chinese perspective

Current politics and issues

—Dongsheng Collective -- Weekly news service.

—Qiao Collective – Grassroots media collective of the Chinese diaspora challenging US aggression on China and promoting socialism.

—China Study Group listserv -- Circulates current articles and features about China from different viewpoints, mostly sympathetic, with discussion; contact albertsargis@comcast.net.

Video

—*CGTN* -- China Global Television Network – produces many online news videos on current topics

Important sources from the Chinese government

—*Beijing Review* – Newsweekly published in five languages, including English, has covered Chinese politics since its founding in 1958, includes analytical articles.

—*China Daily* – China's most widely circulated English-language daily aimed at a general audience

—*Global Times* – Beijing – publishes opinion often close to that of CPC leadership

—*People's Daily* -- Beijing – the official paper of the Communist Party of China

—*Qiushi* – A theoretical journal published by the Communist Party of China, contains important decisions and statements by leaders such as Xi Jinping

—*Xinhua* – Official press service of the Chinese government

Other sources:

South China Morning Post – Mainstream press daily in Hong Kong for current news, providing information from both Chinese and Western perspectives

Wall Street Journal and *Financial Times* of London – These newspapers publish considerable factual material on business and economics in China, within a straightforward pro-capitalist framework and politics.

...and there are many others!

Political Campaigns against a New Cold War

- nocoldwar.org
- China is Not Our Enemy! codepink.org/china
- peacepivot.org

