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In the Vanguard of History
-the Beijing Democracy Wall Movement 1978-1981
and Social Mobilisation of Former Red Guard Dissent

by

Lauri Paltemaa

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From the Department of Contemporary History
University of Turku
Turku, Finland

Supervisor:

Professor Klaus Mühlhahn
Department of Contemporary History
University of Turku

Reviewers:

Professor Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom
East Asian Studies Center
Indiana University
Indiana, USA

And

Professor Peter Zarrow
Academic Sinica
Taipei, Taiwan

Opponent:

Professor Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom
University of Indiana
Indiana, USA

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SUMMARY

The work employs the new social movement approach to explain and analyse the ways the Beijing Democracy Wall Movement 1978-81 constructed itself as a social actor and thereby justified itself and the reforms it proposed. As the author argues, the approach provides a fruitful conceptual framework to analyse the emergence and behaviour of the Democracy Wall Movement as a social movement. The author argues that earlier Western research (there is no mainland Chinese research on the movement to speak of) has neglected the movement-side of the Democracy Movement and concentrated too much on the issues of the proposed forms of democracy and human rights in the movement's argumentation. The focus has caused confusions both in the historical nature of the Democracy Movement, the protest it presented and the individual activists, which the new social movement approach helps to clarify.

In the thesis the author elaborates the following findings: First of all, the Democracy Wall Movement was connected to the Cultural Revolution which preceded it not only as a negation of its policies, but in a more complicated manner through the so called new 'trends of thought' (*xin sichao*) or the 'theory of a bureaucratic class' that the radical Red Guards developed during the Cultural Revolution. The thinking went through notable transformation in the late Cultural Revolution and the Democracy Wall Movement, but the eradication of the structural causes of a bureaucratic class remained *the* theoretical rationale of democratic reforms for the Democracy Movement and served as the basis of the movement's social analysis.

Second of all, the Democracy Movement activists offered their debates on democratic reforms as their contribution to Marxism and a way to solve the problem of political superstructure obstructing the realisation of socialism and, finally, communism. Democratic institutions were offered as the necessary condition of realising socialism and a great majority of the theoretical articles and essays in the movement's journals should be understood as voices in a debate to this end. A sizable part of the movement activists returned to Marxist classics and the Paris Commune type of democratic institutions in their proposals. Western notions of liberal democracy and human rights also attracted wide attention, but were mostly used eclectically as providing structural models for socialist democracy. Furthermore, the activists founded their defence of these institutions through arguments that they were the historical progressive heritage from earlier developmental phases – a notably Marxist view of world history. Only a small minority of the activists used anti-Marxist arguments when defence of democracy.

Third, the Democracy Movement justified itself through presenting it as a historically progressive and necessary manifestation of the people's interests and its activists as the 'awoken generation' who had the moral stamina, courage and high

political awareness to lead the people as the vanguard in their struggle against the 'feudal fascist dictatorship' of Party bureaucrats. The Communist Party, however, did not come under criticism as an institution except from a small minority of the Movement. To define and defend their credentials the activists reconstructed a narrative of the Cultural Revolution as the period, whence they had grown to political maturity and learned to see through the Maoist doctrines the Party Left used as deception to hide its naked lust for power and privilege. The Democracy Movement was portrayed as the movement of the political aware youth assuming the vanguard position in revolution. Connected to this also the identities of socialist citizens using their legal rights and enlighteners of the people were used to justify the movement. The way the collective and individual activist identities were framed helped to keep the otherwise fractured and loose movement together.

The thesis brings new light to the relations between the Cultural Revolution and the Chinese Democracy Movement as well as post-Mao social protest in China. It shows that at least for the Democracy Wall Movement there was more continuity with the Cultural Revolution and discontinuity with the later phases of the Democracy Movement than earlier has been suggested. It also shows that native Marxist ideas of democracy and communist lore on protest had substantial influence on constructing the Democracy Wall Movement as a legitimate social actor, more than the liberal notions of democracy and human rights, although also they played their role.

Keywords: *Democracy Wall Movement, Protest, Social Movement, Cultural Revolution, China, Collective Identity, Red Guards*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
SUMMARY	5
TABLE OF CONTENTS	7
1 CHAPTER: Approaching the Democracy Wall Movement as a Social Movement	10
<i>Earlier Research</i>	10
<i>The New Social Movement Approach</i>	14
<i>Social Movement Approach and Historiography</i>	21
<i>Thesis' Aims and Structure</i>	25
<i>About the Sources</i>	26
2 CHAPTER: The Background to the Democracy Movement	32
<i>The Opposite Views on the Cultural Revolution</i>	32
<i>The Cultural Revolution –Growing Up in the Storm</i>	34
<i>The ‘New Intellectual Trend’ and the Theory of a New Class</i>	44
<i>Resurfacing Discontent: the Li Yizhe Group</i>	53
<i>The Legacy of the Cultural Revolution</i>	56
<i>The Immediate Background of the Democracy Wall Movement</i>	58
<i>Grievances and Political Opportunity</i>	68
3 CHAPTER: Emergence of the Beijing Democracy Movement	77
<i>Behind the Scenes</i>	80
<i>The Activists and Their Journals</i>	84
<i>Petitioners and the Democracy Movement</i>	97
<i>The Joint Council</i>	99
4 CHAPTER: The Movement’s Downfall	108
<i>The Democracy Movement and Authorities -Harassment and Co-Opting</i>	108
<i>The Emancipation of Minds Campaign Peaks</i>	112
<i>Deng’s Volte-Face</i>	113
<i>The First Freeze</i>	116
<i>The Second Thaw</i>	119
<i>The Second Freeze</i>	127

<i>The Third Freeze</i>	139
5 CHAPTER: Defining the Reasons for the Movement	154
<i>Bureaucratism as the Source of Grievances</i>	154
<i>Defining the Connection between Leftism and Bureaucratism</i>	168
<i>The Question of Chairman Mao's Reassessment</i>	172
6 CHAPTER: Narratives of the Emergence of the Democracy Movement	183
<i>Ascendancy of the Left</i>	184
<i>The Rise of Popular Resistance</i>	187
7 CHAPTER: The Movement's Collective Identities	208
<i>The Vanguard of the People</i>	208
<i>The Enlighteners</i>	213
<i>Socialist Citizens</i>	214
<i>The Antagonists</i>	216
<i>The Problem of Opposition to the Party</i>	221
<i>Refuting Unwanted Labels</i>	224
<i>Foreigners as the Neutral Audience</i>	227
8 CHAPTER: Individual Identities	233
<i>The Participants</i>	234
<i>Martyrs</i>	244
<i>Good Cadres</i>	247
<i>Bad Cadres</i>	251
<i>Identities and Motivation</i>	252
9 CHAPTER: Engaging Democratic Theory	258
<i>Marxist State Theory as a Defence to Democratic Reforms</i>	259
<i>Orthodox Arguments and the Paris Commune as the Model for Democracy</i>	273
10 CHAPTER: Liberal Ideas and Marxism	289
<i>Marxism as an Adaptable System</i>	291
<i>The Challenge of Human Rights</i>	294
<i>Critical Marxists</i>	321
<i>The Variations on Socialist Democracy</i>	331
11 CHAPTER: Conclusions	341

<i>The Democracy Movement as a Variation of Revolutionary Activism</i>	341
<i>Reasons for the Democracy Movement's Failure</i>	344
<i>The Movement's Legacy</i>	352
Bibliography	356
APPENDIX 1: The Democracy Movement Journals and Their Editors	356

1 CHAPTER: Approaching the Democracy Wall Movement as a Social Movement

The Democracy Wall Movement (*Minzhu qiang yundong*)¹ that erupted in the middle of November 1978 in Beijing and lasted to the spring of 1981 spreading to the whole country in the process is regarded as the beginning of the contemporary Chinese Democracy Movement. At the time, it attracted considerable attention from the West as it seemed to indicate that China was following many East-European countries and developing a dissident movement of its own. The movement's call for democracy and human rights was also welcomed especially in the United States, where President Carter's administration had just elevated human rights onto its international agenda. And, in the Cold War atmosphere of that time, all indications of problems within the communist bloc were studied carefully in the West and Taiwan. Consequently, the interest in the themes of democracy and human rights has also dominated Western research on the movement.

While the author does not feel that it is, as such, erroneous to study the ways in which human rights and democracy have been discussed in contemporary Chinese history, he feels that earlier studies on the Democracy Movement have largely neglected one important aspect in the Movement's argumentation by largely glossing over the way the Movement's participants themselves argued about their movement. Previous studies have thereby failed to fully grasp and explain what this collective action signified to its participants. As such, this study aims at rectifying this situation and thus provides us a better insight into the significance of the Democracy Wall Movement for its participants and its place in the history of Chinese democratic discontent and protest.

Earlier Research

Historical research always builds on earlier studies and aims at reconstructing parts of it using new approaches, new sources, or both. Earlier research is a natural starting point in framing the research questions, as one of the main rationales for historical research is to serve as critique of our knowledge of the past, both researched and otherwise. Knowledge of earlier research is also necessary in order to know paradigms in it and decide whether to adhere to these or not. Next the author analyses the approaches and results of mainly Western research on the Democracy Wall Movement and then argues why the new social movement approach that is used in this study is likely to bring out new important information about the Democracy Movement and Chinese social protest in general.

Not surprisingly, research on the Democracy Wall Movement has varied according to the place of origin of the studies. As the Democracy Movement was, and remains,

a sensitive event to the Communist Party, there are no Mainland histories on it as such.² As far as the author knows, the exiled Democracy Wall Movement activists have for some reason also not produced any comprehensive treatise on their movement as yet, although some short treatises of it have been published.³ Nevertheless, some reformist intellectuals who belonged to the Dengist faction at the time referred to the Democracy Wall Movement in their memoirs considering it as a part of the emancipation of minds campaign waged against the Maoist Party Left.⁴ This view has also been shared by some contemporary observers in the West, like Nieh Yu-his, who saw the Democracy Movement as a dissident wing of the 'emancipation of minds' campaign.⁵ While illustrating the closeness of the two movements, this view does not reveal much of the inner workings of the Democracy Wall Movement as such and subsumes it too much to the emancipation of minds campaign and thereby leadership of the Dengist camp. A quite different view on the movement has been offered in Taiwanese scholarship where the analysts, especially Liu Sheng-chi, have seen the Democracy Wall Movement as an anti-communist movement that belonged to the historical line of popular resistance against the Communists in the Mainland China.⁶ This, however, was off mark as the mainstream to the Democracy Movement did not challenge the Communist Party or socialism.

Much of the Western research on the Democracy Movement has been interested in the concepts of democracy and human rights in the movement's argumentation. In an extreme case the Democracy Movement has been viewed as a movement whereby the Chinese espoused the human rights ideals of the Enlightenment and the Democracy Movement activists have been regarded as human rights dissidents.⁷ Typically such analysis has not even tried to explain how the Democracy Movement activists viewed their own movement and tried to reconcile such concepts as human rights and representative democracy with Marxist social analysis. The result has been bafflement over the role of Marxism in the movement's argumentation, and an inability to see the movement as it was for its participants.⁸ The author argues that while human rights as such are a relevant topic in the Democracy Movement's argumentation, they had only a subordinate part in it. They formed only a part of considerably larger argumentation about socialist democracy and the social mobilisation required to achieve it. The historical significance of human rights in the Democracy Movement can and should be studied, but historically speaking, it would be inaccurate to consider the Democracy Movement as solely a human rights movement.

Another central concept that has been analysed with regard to the Democracy Movement has naturally been democracy. For example, Guang Lei has analysed the differences of the meanings of democracy between the Democracy Wall Movement and the Tiananmen Democracy Movement in 1989 also noting that most of the Democracy Wall Movement journals had articles in the dominant discourse of Marxism of the late 70s, but does not really engage in analysing its historical background or content.⁹ The Democracy Movement has also been analysed as a part of the Chinese democracy movements in the 80s culminating in 1989. However,

these works have concentrated mostly on relations between the Democracy Movement and the regime and not on the way the Democracy Movement was constructed as a social actor.¹⁰

Andrew. J. Nathan's *Chinese Democracy*¹¹ is in many ways the seminal work on the Democracy Wall Movement. In his work, Nathan connects democracy advocated by the Movement to the century long discourse on democracy in China, which he saw beginning with the late 19th - early 20th century thinker Liang Qichao. According to Nathan, Liang Qichao's way of seeing that the ruler and the people shared fundamentally the same interests was mediated to the Democracy Movement activists through Mao Zedong thought and formed the basis of their behaviour as 'remonstrators'.¹² Nathan did also not dismiss the influence of Marxism in the Democracy Movement argumentation. Indeed, he saw that most of the journals were 'Marxist pluralists' and he also discussed pluralist tendencies in Marxism and the theory of a new bureaucratic class developed during the Cultural Revolution by radical Red Guards. However, ultimately this was not the central theme in his work and his findings about the influence of Marxism were subsumed to the longer democratic tradition Nathan identified in Chinese modern history. This caused the biggest problems in his work. Putting Democracy Movement thinking in the frame of Liang Qichao – who the Democracy Movement activists very rarely even mentioned – and not Marx (who was constantly referred to), created findings that are sometimes contradictory, sometimes seem forced. One of these was seeing the activists as 'remonstrators', who identified with the state and considered themselves an integral part of it, and were trying to rectify the failures of the regime through their moral courage. Therefore, Nathan sees that the movement based its collective identities on re-enacting traditional political culture in modern dress.¹³

The results of a study by Merle Goldman challenge this position.¹⁴ Goldman has studied the Democracy Movement from the aspect of emerging political citizenship in China, i.e. people making demands on the government and asserting their rights as active participants in politics. For Goldman the Democracy Movement activists were not remonstrating with the leadership, but trying to gain a genuine right of say in politics. Goldman sees that the movement's activities and actual behaviour established the fact that the participants were becoming citizens through engaging in political debates, organizing and publishing without permission from above. But she thinks that it was not so much what they said, but what they did that demonstrated this. Goldman also sees that this was based on the influence of the Cultural Revolution, not the longer political tradition. As she argues, "*for a small number, the Cultural Revolution had inadvertently been a school for citizenship.*"¹⁵ However, Goldman fails to discuss the influence of Marxism or the Cultural Revolution on the notion of emerging citizenship of the activists or the way the significance of collective action was viewed in it. As Goldman argues, the Democracy Movement activists acted like citizens through their actions but were limited ideologically and intellectually to Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong thought.¹⁶ But if this is so, how exactly did this happen? How was it intellectually possible? How does one assert

socialist citizenship vis-à-vis the state and the party? Further, what was the role of a social movement in this argumentation? Was social activism really so individualistic and depending on the concept of ‘citizen’ as Goldman seems to assume? As such, there are two competing ways to understand the Democracy Movement protest: either as Marxist remonstrance, or an emerging citizen’s movement. Although both interpretations have their merits, it is argued in this thesis that they fail to fully capture the meaning of being engaged in a collective action had for the Democracy Movement activists and therefore the protest it signified.

Studies on the Democracy Movement can be divided roughly into two periods. The first period began when the Democracy Movement emerged and ended circa 1985. This period included studies on the events and development of the Democracy Movement such as the works by David S. Goodman,¹⁷ Chen Ruoxi’s,¹⁸ Flemming Christiansen, Susanne Posborg and Anne Wedell-Wedellsborg¹⁹ and Robin Munro.²⁰ After this the Democracy Movement has mostly been featured as a part of some larger themes, like human rights considerations in Chinese history or as an early stage of the Tiananmen Democracy Movement in 1989.²¹ The Democracy Movement has also been seen as a part of the Chinese ‘Enlightenment Movement’ that began at the turn of the century.²² Accounts that have concentrated mainly on the events and developments of the Democracy Movement usually include some analysis of the contents of the Democracy Movement argumentation, but none of them have engaged in deeper discussion about the intellectual background of the movement. As an exception to this, Robin Munro has offered a rare analysis of one of the most complete arguments for political reform developed by a Democracy Movement activist (named Chen Erjin). Munro’s study was also a rare case because in it the problem of democracy is discussed as a problem within Marxism for the Democracy Movement activists, but the analysis is unfortunately comparatively short and concentrates only on Chen Erjin’s argumentation.²³

The connection between the Cultural Revolution and the Democracy Wall Movement has been studied in some other works, too. Here Kjeld Erik Brodsgaard²⁴ and Stanley Rosen²⁵ have established a direct intellectual connection between the Democracy Movement and the Cultural Revolution. According to them, the radical ‘new class theory’ of the Red Guards served as the intellectual background for many of the Democracy Movement activists social analysis. However, exactly how it was used in constructing a social movement is absent in both analyses. Further other earlier studies have almost invariably noted the influence of Marxism in Democracy Movement argumentation, but they generally have had only a cursory interest in it, as if democracy and human rights and social mobilisation could or should somehow be argued separately from Marxism in the China of the late 70s.²⁶

Earlier research has also seen that the Democracy Movement was divided into two camps representing pro- and anti-Party views. These camps have been described variously Marxist and non-Marxists²⁷, socialist pluralists and their opponents²⁸, those most supportive to the regime and those rejecting it²⁹, radicals and moderates³⁰ and

reformers and abolitionists.³¹ The only researcher to offer a more elaborate scheme on the inner cleavages of the Democracy Movement journals has been Liu Sheng-chi, who divided the Beijing Democracy Movement's journals into three categories: radical left, moderates, and radical right where the former two remained within Marxism but disagreed on the needed reforms, whereas the latter challenged the whole regime.³² However, even Liu's scheme is not fully developed and does not go into details of the differences in the journals' argumentation or their background. While Liu Sheng-chi's scheme is the most useful of the offered models, the author argues that the argumentation about democratic reforms of the Democracy Movement should be approached as providing variations on socialist democracy. Here the main issue is how the activists saw the connection between democratic institutions and Marxism as well as realising socialism and ultimately communism in China and democracy's relation to the Communist Party.

However, the themes of democracy and human rights are studied here only as a part of a larger argumentation concerning the Democracy Movement itself and the mobilisation of a social movement it denoted. Unlike in earlier studies, the focus of inquiry is moved here from 'democracy' to 'movement' to see what was the connection between these two. In order to do this, the author expands the study of the Democracy Movement to include the Movement's argumentation about itself utilizing the conceptual framework developed in the new social movement school. The study also analyses the organisational and strategic options the movement faced and how they were related to larger events in Chinese society and its actors. The closing of this chapter introduces this new social movement approach and discusses the insights it offers in research into the Democracy Movement when compared to earlier works.

The New Social Movement Approach

In this thesis the Democracy Movement is approached as a social movement. As Alberto Melucci, one of the central theorists behind the new social movement approach, defines it, a social movement is a "*...collective actor, defined by specific solidarity, engaged in a conflict with an adversary for the appropriation and control of resources valued by both of them, and whose action entail breach of limits of compatibility of the system within which the action itself takes place.*"³³ There are other possible types of social protest that range from individual resistance to conformist competition that actors can engage in society, but a social movement is a collective actor that aims at changing at least some aspects of the decision making structures and thereby the way social values are distributed through the antagonistic challenge to some established political actors. Melucci also makes an important qualification noting that social movement is an analytical concept created to better capture the criteria that can be said to define certain forms of collective protest as social movements.³⁴

According to Melucci, social movements can be further divided into four different types depending on their organisation and aims: conflictual networks, claimant movements, political movements, and antagonist movements. The first type is typical of the early phases of a social movement where it has not yet reached organisational structure, but exists as networks of potential activists in the free spaces that the system offers. The second type refers to the movements that engage in challenge of power from within an organisation, whereas the third type, political movements, engage in the same action from outside. They aim at acquiring access to decision making for groups that have been previously excluded and open up channels for expression of accumulated grievances and demands. Thereby they work to change the rules of political decision making. The fourth type, antagonist movements, also seeks to transform the ways that resources are produced and distributed in society. All these types are also analytical concepts, because concrete social movements usually possess, to some extent, the characteristics of all four.³⁵ Nevertheless, the Democracy Wall Movement can be said to have been a social movement that belonged to the sub-category of political movements. It had all the attributes in Melucci's definition viz: it was a group of people who were conscious of the meaning of their activities and co-operated in a challenge (mostly rhetorical) against entrenched political adversaries in the establishment. The activists' goal was to gain access to the political system and change the rules of exclusion in decision making. This is also the way the concept of social movement is used in this work – as an analytical concept referring to the goals and nature, rather than the size or the historical significance, of the Democracy Movement.³⁶

What is central to the new social movement approach is that it sees that social movements construct themselves, rather than just emerge when some favourable social conditions arise. The approach does not deny the importance of social structures, shared grievances, political opportunities and organizational aspects as factors affecting the emergence and activities of social movements as such; indeed, they are considered necessary conditions for all social movements,³⁷ but it maintains that the impact of these aspects is dependent to a degree on how people perceive them.³⁸ The approach therefore tries to analyse the interconnectedness of structural and ideational aspects in a society and how they produce social movements.³⁹ As the approach has it, creating and maintaining social movements requires conscious efforts from its participants regarding definitions of grievances, ways to solve them and showing the necessity for collective action as a means to this end. Indeed, according to some theorists, identity formation of a social movement takes a central place in making collective action possible. Such formation is based on knowledge and especially the development of new knowledge about the world and social relations in it.⁴⁰ This approach therefore makes a student ask how individuals and groups make sense of their collective activity and justify it to themselves and their publics.

The significance of the activists' argumentation about the movement itself can be approached through the concept of *framing*, which is used in new social movement

approach to capture the operations that are conducted when a movement's participants define their collective effort and relate it to their social environment. As leading proponents of this approach, David A. Snow and Robert D. Benford, define it, framing means assigning meanings and interpreting "*relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support and to demobilize antagonists.*"⁴¹ Frames are therefore organising ideas for collective action that make it meaningful and guide it.⁴² The authors also argue that every social movement faces three types of framing tasks in trying to define the platform whereon to act collectively: *diagnostic*, *prognostic*, and *motivational*.⁴³ Without these a movement cannot exist as it would not have a platform to rally its participants on and to proselytise and influence its social environment.

Diagnostic framing deals with the grievances that are regarded as giving the rise to the movement. Through it, the movement's activists identify some social situations as problematic and also designate the agents who are considered culpable for the grievances. It also involves imputing traits and motives, usually evil, to those who are viewed as responsible for the problem. *Prognostic framing* then outlines the remedies to the grievances as the movement defines them. This includes the tactics and strategies of collective action and the preferred end-states of these efforts.⁴⁴ Diagnostic and prognostic aspects can of course also be found in other types of social discourses. For example, many social scientific treatises in official Chinese journals at the time of the Democracy Wall Movement both defined social problems and suggested ways to solve them, but they lacked the argumentation for collective action as a necessary function to solve the problems. This argumentation is a necessary condition for any social movement to emerge. In order to become politicised, diagnostic and prognostic framings must be connected to arguments about necessity and desirability of collective action through *motivational framing* which provides motives, collective reasons, for a social movement.⁴⁵ At the heart of motivational framing is the construction of collective identity, or identities, for the movement and for its participants.

Collective and Individual Identities

Another central concept employed in the new social movement approach is therefore *collective identity*. Melucci defines this as an "*interactive and shared definition produced by several individuals (or groups at more complex level) and concerned with the orientation of action and field of opportunities and constrains the action takes place.*"⁴⁶ Or it can be seen to refer "*to the (often implicitly) agreed upon definitions of membership, boundaries, and activities for the group... Through this the members constitute 'we'*".⁴⁷ In short, then, collective identity has two elements: the sense of 'we' of a group and at least a minimal consensus of the group's goals, means, and fields of action.⁴⁸ As Melucci notes, collective identity is also an analytical concept. It does not denote any essentialist entity as such, but is a

cognitive and emotional mental construction by the participants in a collective action.⁴⁹ It is “socially constructed” as a matter of definition: it is consciously created through negotiation and argumentation by the participants who thereby give meanings for their collective activity and create a mental platform whereon they can act together and see themselves as a group with a common cause.⁵⁰

In explaining the emergence and activities of social movements, collective identities matter because the concept helps to answer why the people mobilize in their own understanding. Collective identities can also have a direct bearing on the activities the movements’ participants choose to undertake. As Francesca Polletta and James M. Jasper argue, “*If people choose to participate because doing so accords with who they are, the forms of protest they choose are also influenced by collective identities.*” Accordingly, social movements may choose their strategies because they fit what people feel they are, not because of their strategic expediency.⁵¹ A pacifist movement does not engage in violence, feminist movements do not select male leaders. More generally, it is the participants’ shared self-perception of the movement’s nature and goals that both make a social movement possible, but also limits their capability to act as a movement beyond these identities and goals.

Identity Work and Identity Fields

In research literature social construction of collective identities has been analyzed using the concept of *identity work*, which can be defined as “*the range of activities individuals engage in to create, present and sustain personal identities that are congruent with and supportive of the self-concept.*”⁵² As Snow et al. argue, identity work consists of construction of collective identity through creation of symbolic resources and boundaries constitutive of collective identity and maintenance of both collective and individual identities so that they converge.⁵³ Indeed, converting members is important for a social movement as the “*central task of a social movement is to ensure that its members incorporate the movement’s collective definition to their own self-definitions.*”⁵⁴ McAdam sees that identity work occurs in the course of ‘identity talk’ among the activists, and when explaining the movement to others. It includes public statements about the movement’s nature⁵⁵ and other cultural contents like names, narratives, symbols, verbal styles, rituals, and clothing.⁵⁶ Identity work is therefore about collective creation and use of symbols in order to generate and sustain the platform to act upon as a group and as individual members of the group.

It has been argued that identity work has direct bearing on a movement’s success: “*How successfully groups frame their identities for the public thus affects their ability to recruit members and supporters, gain a public hearing, make alliances with other groups, and defuse opposition.*”⁵⁷ However, not all identity work is directed to attributing characteristics to the movement itself alone. An important part of constructing collective identities for a movement happens through assigning roles

and characteristics to other relevant social actors the movement wants to influence. Hunt et al. argue that movements frame themselves vis-à-vis three overlapping identity fields: the *protagonist* or sympathizers, who benefit from the movement and, at least according to the activists, should support them; the *antagonists* who oppose the movement and are usually seen as responsible for the grievances; and the neutral *audience*, which can have opinions about the movement, but whose actions have no direct bearing on it and which is not the direct target group of the movement's activities.⁵⁸

Framing the antagonists of the movement is a part of diagnostic framing. Collective identity has to be based on shared grievances that help to produce a 'we' feeling in potential participants. However, because grievances are ubiquitous in any society they are not a sufficient condition of themselves alone to cause the emergence of a social movement. Shared grievances need to become politicised in order to become the binding element of political protest and this is done through diagnostic framing of a social grievance as a problem that can be solved through collective action. This work is usually done by leading activists, political entrepreneurs, who raise the issue and formulate it to the other potential participants in a movement, calling for mass mobilisation to solve the grievance. However, a movement also needs someone to blame for the grievance, the antagonists, who are human actors and can plausibly be held responsible for the unwanted state of affairs. Grievances can be rapidly politicised especially if these actors are in authority and they are perceived to be unjust in their behaviour vis-à-vis the potential movement members.⁵⁹

As argued here, diagnostic, motivational, and prognostic frames form a chain where argumentation about the desirability and necessity of social movement is an integral part of any argumentation for political change and reforms.⁶⁰ A social movement offers the necessary social agency between peoples' ability to define reforms necessary for alleviating social grievances and making this possible in practise. In this thesis we analyse the diagnostic, motivational and prognostic parts of the Beijing Democracy Movement's argumentation as a whole and show how they were closely connected. By doing so we will expand our understanding of the ways a social movement was made intellectually possible for its participants in China of the late 70s, and what limits and possibilities these framings held for collective action. Studying the different framing processes in the Democracy Movement argumentation also shows how its participants aimed at creating a case for themselves both organisationally and rhetorically, reminding us of the fact that social movements do not just emerge, but are made. The study also aims to explain why certain frames were favoured over others in the movement. In order to do this, it is important to analyse the background of the discursive resources, ideas and ideology, of the Democracy Movement activists.

Cultural Resonance of the Frames

As a part of the argumentative chain, a social movement's collective identities are directly related to the prognostic and diagnostic parts of its argumentation. The activists' ability to define grievances and mobilise consensus on the need and aims of collective action gives rise to the movement and the movement itself is often seen as an instrumental part in settling the grievances and sometimes even a part of the new political order its programmes are aimed at producing. Making these connections from defining the grievances to constructing collective identities for a movement and finally offering solutions to the defined problems are all related to the discursive resources that the participants possess. These resources include values, social theories, and available ideologies in the society. It has been argued that a movement's success is partly determined by the 'cultural resonance' of the frames it advocates.⁶¹ That is, how acceptable and salient the public regards the images, ideas, and values the movement adheres to and how well it can tell the story of its social necessity and desirability. As Victor Gecas has argued, few identities are value-neutral⁶² and movements' participants can and do resort to 'resonant ideas' of a given society in constructing their collective and individual identities. Very rarely are movements' protagonists offered totally new and alien ideas. Instead, it can be expected that activists resort to creative use of the ideological and cultural repertoire at their disposal when they try to mobilise support for the movement.⁶³

As Snow and Benford argue, the resonance of the frames the activists use, their mobilisation potency, is affected by phenomenological constraints that determine how plausible and important people regard the offered frames. Successful framings need empirical credibility, experiential commensurability and narrative fidelity. Empirical credibility denotes how well the frames can be tested and verified, how plausible they sound. Experiential commensurability denotes how well people can directly experience the things as they are framed in their own lives and regard the prognostic frames as feasible solutions for problems. Narrative fidelity refers to how well the framings resonate with cultural narrations like stories, myths, and folk tales that inform people of events past and present.⁶⁴ Framings that serve as a basis for successful mobilisation of a social movement can therefore be expected to offer well-developed solutions to problems in people's lives appealing to the values⁶⁵ that people already hold.

The systematic nature of ideologies makes them a powerful source of values and therefore informs both individual and collective identities. As A. Hunt et al. argue:

"Ideologies have identity implications as far as they tell individuals who they are, how to understand the world, what is desirable and what is not, who is a member of the community and who is not, how to relate to authority, what kind of power and dignity they possess and a moral framework to assess social relations and individual experience".⁶⁶

Ideologies provide the value base whereon also social movements can construct their identities and social justification. Moreover, ideologies also offer diagnostic and prognostic tools to explain the reasons for grievances and how to correct the state of affairs. It is argued here that the Democracy Movement made no exception in this regard, and that Marxism and revolutionary values had a direct and dominating impact in framing the movement's place in Chinese society and history. One of the central themes of the work is also to show how the radical social analysis developed by the Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution formed *the* guiding source of the majority of framing activities in the Democracy Movement.

Importance of Political Language in China

The importance of collective and individual identities in Chinese politics is self-evident. As Michael Schoenhals has argued, in Chinese politics language is a highly formalized form of using power and defining that which is acceptable from that which is not. The Communist Party demands monopoly over the right to define symbols used in political communication and labels of identities are an essential part of this.⁶⁷ Labelling can be seen as an attempt to intentionally cause “*consequential effect upon feelings, thoughts and actions of people.*”⁶⁸ It can be argued that this is what the use of identity labels, or the practise of ‘putting hats’ (*kòu màozi*) on people also aims at in Chinese politics, where identity labels have easily become arguments in themselves demanding certain kinds of attitudes and behaviour from those people using them and those whom they are used upon. Examples abound, from using class labels during the Cultural Revolution to the way how the Communist Party at the present classifies Falun Gong as an ‘evil cult.’ Labels are used as shorthand for longer arguments on why and by whom popular participation in politics should occur. Sometimes this justification can be completely missing, or rest ultimately on brute force and not on any accepted forms of plausibility of arguments. Of course, in an authoritarian context, knowledge of what the government's stance is on certain people and activities can command obedience without any need to accept the truth value of official assertions of the state of things as such.

What also makes identity labels important regarding the Beijing Democracy Movement in 1978-1980 was its proximity to the Cultural Revolution. During it, identity labels were particularly widely used to either empower or discriminate against their bearers. It was a period when words mattered, either when one used them against someone, in one's own defence, or if one made mistakes using them.⁶⁹ This happened to the extent that labelling replaced all legal categories or considerations.⁷⁰ People were put in different categories based on their class origins that were defined as good, middle, and bad, and respectively dubbed “‘red,’” “‘grey,’” and “‘black’”.⁷¹ Of course, many more specific labels to denote the political standing of people were also devised and used, such as the proletariat, revolutionaries, progressive forces, the vanguard, the communists, or those of ‘stinking intellectuals’, counterrevolutionaries, revisionists, and class enemies, just to name a few.⁷² For an

individual to end up in the latter categories could be literally a matter of life and death.

Claiming identities is therefore important in Chinese politics, and it can be assumed that the way the Democracy Movement activists defined themselves and rejected definitions given by their adversaries was therefore not a light matter, but a serious political question that could have consequences for both good and bad. As Polletta et al. argue: “*Making identity claims can be seen as a protest strategy.*”⁷³ In the Chinese case this is quite evident. It can be argued that under the authoritarian situation of the late 70s, the rhetoric function of arguments about the Democracy Movement’s collective identity became especially important. These arguments therefore also had the clear function of defending the movement against its antagonists, while making the case for the collective action. To use a more Chinese metaphor, it offered a cluster of banners under which the participants could rally.⁷⁴ But before we turn to the analysis of these banners, we first discuss some of the theoretical underpinnings of the approach.

Social Movement Approach and Historiography

The new social movement approach supplies the theoretical framework and concepts used in this work, but otherwise the work is mainly historiographical. Therefore, the author wishes to discuss some important theoretical themes that have been recently raised in the field of China studies. During the last decades, Western social and historiographical research on China has come under criticism of ethnocentrism in its approaches.⁷⁵ As defined in anthropology, ethnocentrism means “*tendency to judge the customs of other societies by the standards of one’s own*”. In social research it is also used to refer to the practise of evaluating other societies according to models developed in the researcher’s home society. In anthropology the opposite to ethnocentrism is called cultural relativism and defined as “*the ability to view beliefs and customs of the other people within the context of their culture rather than one’s own.*”⁷⁶

Different kinds of historiographical approaches encounter the problem of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism in different contexts. To illustrate this, one can divide approaches in modern historiography into explanative (or positivist) and interpretative (or hermeneutic) ones. In the latter, a person is viewed as an intentional actor who follows certain culture-bound rules and principles, which define the rationality of his or her behaviour. According to this approach, in order to understand and make sense of people’s behaviour, one has to know these rules and judge behaviour only according to them. Conversely, for the positivists, human behaviour can be explained through causal origins and social structures that are open to more universal inquiry, and specific understanding of human intentions is not necessary to explain these causes.⁷⁷ The demarcation line between these approaches is nevertheless blurred in historiography and this also holds true for this study.

To see how the problem of ethnocentricity relates to different historiographical approaches, and also the approach applied here, we shall employ the ‘argumentative’ approach to historiography developed by Jorma Kalela. He argues that there are three well-defined criteria for assessing the soundness of historiographical argumentation: Firstly, it needs *impeccable reasoning* based on the sources. Secondly, it needs *cogency*, or the ability to explain matters at hand coherently and make a case for the arguments developed in the research as regards the earlier research on the subject. And thirdly, research has to fulfil the requirement of *plausibility* in a cultural sense.⁷⁸ According to Kalela, the study of history and that of other cultures are fundamentally about the same endeavour. The historians’ prohibition of anachronisms is therefore similar to the anthropologists’ definition of cultural relativism. In a strong sense it requires returning to the original intentions and meanings of the historical actors and describing them in the original language and concepts.⁷⁹

The condition of cultural plausibility has been refuted in different ways in positivist studies. In Chinese studies, using social theories has even been seen as a way to avoid ethnocentric bias in historical research.⁸⁰ In general, this is considered justified because theories move the focus away from individuals. Therefore, although the actions of single actors in history are often intentional and goal-oriented, the collective structures that individuals are part of and those they reproduce, do not possess the same features. As a result, many events in history are not intentionally ‘made’ by anyone. Nevertheless, these structures may have to be alluded to in research even if they cannot be controlled, or even comprehended, by the original actors. Furthermore, individuals can act on unconscious mental causes. This allows one to bring into the analysis concepts and causes unknown to the actors.⁸¹ Indeed, if historical research is to study phenomena that are beyond the understanding and knowledge of the subjects, the requirement to base the analysis on their own perceptions becomes unwarranted.

However, one has to take into account what Kalela calls the *argumentative* side of historiography. According to this, the fact that a historian is always engaged in reconstructing past events in order to create an argument about them for his or her home audience makes historical studies arguments in contemporary debate. A historian does not write in “nowhere for nobody”. Instead, historians always have an audience and a presumption, a hypothesis or a “hunch”, about their topics, as does the audience. Therefore, these preconceptions are always subject to argumentation whether or not the historian realises this.⁸² As such, the unquestioned use of explanative approaches in historical studies can be problematic. Theories may be applied on an explanatory level that does not directly contradict the prohibition of anachronisms, but because historical research also produces arguments in a debate between contemporary cultures, it may contribute to imposing views and notions of the culture of origin onto other societies. As Paul A. Cohen has noted, this becomes especially troublesome when the inquirer comes from a society that has played a part in shaping the object of inquiry.⁸³

Students of Western history writing on China have criticised its approaches for Eurocentrism in two ways. The first has been to criticise Western social theories for failing to explain the development and changes in Chinese society because of the way the models used have been based too much on Western societies. The demands for less mechanical application of Western social theories in China are examples of this line of argumentation.⁸⁴ However, this criticism is not so much concerned with the cultural plausibility of argumentation as with the models' ability to explain the evidence, something that could be called social plausibility. The second type of criticism has concentrated on the practise of social research as a source and extension of colonial or imperialist rule over its subjects. What has concerned these critics has been the way how the studies have changed their contemporary audience's perceptions of their own past, allowing Western intellectual dominance. Since the 80s, following the rise of post-modernist criticism of Western (social) scientific endeavour, this criticism has been voiced in the themes of 'Orientalism' and 'post-colonial discourse'.⁸⁵ For example, a leading protagonist of Orientalist critique, Edward Said, has argued that Western history writing on other nations has contributed greatly to our knowledge of these peoples. However, the task of writing Asian histories, including China's, should neither be given to Westerners alone, nor should Westerners dictate the approaches used in studying foreign cultures and societies, as has largely been done thus far.⁸⁶

What unites both critical lines is that they seem largely to deny the applicability of modernisation theories to Chinese history and their call for a second opinion. Although they do not share the same epistemological starting points, they both see as the problem the way in which the models and the whole scheme for evaluating Chinese society is taken from Western societies. Many theoretical models that are also used in historical research accept measuring Chinese society by Western standards and deriving research questions regarding China from Western concerns. To correct this situation, the condition of cultural plausibility has to be incorporated with what the author calls social plausibility: if the approach employs social theories or models that derive from Western societies, it must take into account the differences of the society under inquiry and avoid imposing models derived from Western societies as unalterable standards of evaluation of the subject societies.

The last condition is naturally not new to social research. As many authors have argued, if social theories are to pass the test of universality, they have to be reconstructed with greater sensibility to ethnic variation and an increased degree of generality.⁸⁷ Another variation of this is to seek lowest common denominators, features that are consistent in all human societies, and to base research on these features. Many theories in social anthropology fall under this category. Even though they may not be able to rise above the worldview of their culture of origin, they try to address common human experiences and elaborate the different meanings they have to different people using common points of reference.⁸⁸ A third way is to try to see how well concepts can "travel" or can be "stretched" from society to society and

revise theories accordingly.⁸⁹ In this work the author applies the first method to the new social movement approach, stripping it from findings that deal with collective action in liberal Western societies, but retaining the central conceptualisations in the approach.

The ‘stripping down’ of the new social movement approach can be done by analysing what universal assumptions the approach makes. It assumes that people who engage in a social movement are conscious of the existence of such a group and try to influence people who hold authoritative power over the distribution of social values. It also assumes that the members of this group do produce statements about the ways they perceive their own activities as a group, what role this group plays in society as regards other groups, why it has come about and what its aims are, as well as statements about its members. These statements are produced for the consumption of the group and the other members of the society in order to justify, legitimate and sustain the existence and activities of the group. Social movement and collective identity are analytical concepts. They attribute certain kinds of meanings to certain kinds of behaviour in social life and politics. They do assign certain social importance to particular forms of collective activities but do not touch their historical content as such.

The approach therefore allows the researcher to try to capture the specific historical meanings the participants gave to their collective undertaking. As Hunt et al. argue, the new social movement approach tries to analyse the ways in which people perceive themselves and situations that lead to protest, therefore “*to understand the emergence of particular expressions of collective action, analysts need to attend to actors’ intersubjective definitions of reality*”.⁹⁰ As the approach sees it, the ‘mechanics’ of protest and collective action share certain key features over cultural boundaries, but the aims and methods of protest are not universalistic and individual social movements have to be studied as historically unique cases. The new social movements approach is universalistic in its conceptualisations, but it does not necessarily imply any statements about the nature, or the development paths of the society where the collective action it studies takes place or the nature of the protest itself.⁹¹ For example, although the theory sees that free spaces, where the activists can come together and form their frames and identities, are needed for a movement,⁹² it does not assert that social protest always requires or implies emergence of civil society, or a natural yearn for democracy, freedom and liberty of man, as some approaches to the Democracy Movement have implied. These may be the historical contents of any given protest, but the concepts in the new social movement approach can be used to study the ways people come together to influence politics in many other contexts and under any other slogans too.

Thesis' Aims and Structure

This thesis has two goals: to analyse the Democracy Movement as a case of a politically motivated collective protest in China and to clarify its place in the history of the contemporary Chinese Democracy Movement. The author argues that combining the new social movement and historical approaches will help us better understand what the Democracy Movement meant to its participants, how to explain its emergence, and how to assess its historical significance. The approach has not been used to study the Democracy Wall Movement before⁹³ and it is based on more extensive reading of the sources available on the Democracy Wall Movement than any previous study made on the subject. In this thesis the author argues that the Democracy Movement was constructed as a movement of the youthful vanguard, enlighteners, and socialist citizens. These collective identities were combined with revolutionary individual identities of the movement's activists and based on the diagnosis that the movement offered a historically necessary counter-force to the bureaucratic class / stratum in society. Socialist democracy was seen as the necessary condition for the development of socialist society towards communism and the Democracy Movement was therefore constructed as an indispensable part of the still unfolding revolution in Chinese history. The movement was nevertheless divided over the exact nature of socialist democracy and offered orthodox, eclectic, and non-Marxist variations of it.

Furthermore, it is argued that the theory of a new bureaucratic class, that had been developed during the Cultural Revolution as 'Rebel' Red Guard criticism of the Maoist New Establishment, provided the movement with the basic diagnostic tools whereon it constructed its frames. It is also argued that the Movement's collective identities excluded many strategic options, including that of a conflict with the Communist Party. The author therefore argues that for its participants, the Democracy Movement protest was a more complex matter than just remonstrance or reassertion of citizenship in an emerging civil society. The mainstream of the Democracy Movement activists saw themselves in terms of both a revolutionary vanguard and emerging socialist citizens at the same time. The Democracy Movement should therefore be understood as a mainly Marxist reform movement that *offered a democratic variation of revolutionary activism* in its protest. The author also argues that using the new social movement approach will bring results that provide new information about the way social movements and protest is possible in contemporary China. Apart from increasing our historical understanding of the workings of the state – society relationship in China, the study also helps all students of Chinese politics, and especially protest, to understand the complex dynamics involved in creating and maintaining social movements in Chinese social and political contexts.

The thesis is structured as follows: following this introduction, chapter 2 deals with the Cultural Revolutionary background of the Democracy Movement, both as an experience that created the causes for the grievances, and as a period of time that had

a formative influence on the Democracy Movement activists-to-be, the Red Guards. Chapters 3 and 4 will introduce the reader to the events and development of the Beijing Democracy Movement 1978-1981, analysing its organisation, activities and relations with other social actors. Chapters 5 to 6 will then deal with the diagnostic elements of the movement's argumentation, while chapters 7 and 8 analyse the use of collective and individual identities in the motivational argumentation of the movement. Chapters 9 and 10 analyse the prognostics the Democracy Movement offered in discussing various forms of socialist democracy. Finally, the findings are summarised in the chapter 11 where also the historical legacy of the movement is discussed.

About the Sources

The primary sources used in the thesis are the journals produced by the Beijing Democracy Movement activist groups from 1978 to 1981. The main source is the 20 volume 'Collection of Underground Publications Circulated on Chinese Mainland' (*Dalu dixia kanwu huipian*, shortened here as CUP) edited by the Taiwanese Institute for the Study of Chinese Communist Problems from 1980 to 1985.⁹⁴ The editorial work on the materials is good and there is no reason to assume that the journals' text would have been altered during it. All editorial comments are clearly denoted in the volumes and relate mostly to language.⁹⁵ In addition, the author has used the Documents on the Chinese Democracy Movement 1978-1980 in 2 volumes (*Zhongguo minben kanwu huipian*, abbreviated here as DCDM) edited by Claude Widor.⁹⁶ This thesis is the first work to systematically utilise these collections of Democracy Movement journals in such depth as its source. There are also a number of more limited compilations of Democracy Movement texts, which are usually translated into English and occasionally used here as reference.⁹⁷

There is one further question about the sources: that of participant interviews. When this thesis was written, the Democracy Wall Movement is still comparatively recent and most of its participants still alive. However the problem with interviews (apart from the resources this would have required) is exactly that recentness of the events. Most of the Democracy Movement activists of 1978-1981 that could be reached are still active in the Chinese Democracy Movement abroad. Yet, the movement, as it stands, is as disunited as it ever was during the Democracy Wall Movement.⁹⁸ There is the risk that comments about the nature of the Democracy Movement today would be different to what they would have been back in late 70s, due to the different context in which the arguments are produced. But further, the author also wants to avoid taking part in the debates on and about the Contemporary Democracy Movement (although, in some ways, this may be impossible). Thus the author feels that focusing on the original texts of the Democracy Movement is a way past this problem as they convey the messages the activists wished to get through back in the late 70s, not today.⁹⁹

The geographical and chronological limits of the study also need some justification. The study is confined to the Beijing Democracy Movement for two reasons: first of all, most of the available sources are from the capital and it is the only city where the sources are quite comprehensive in their scope. This makes for example studying the Democracy Movement's inner tensions possible. Second, although other cities like Shanghai and Guangzhou produced their own viable movements with important journals, the fact that the Democracy Movement produced almost 250 known journals country-wide means that one simply has to make a decision about what to include and what not. Limiting the sample geographically is in this perspective a neutral way to make the choice, as it does not use any preset limitations concerning the 'importance' of the journals.¹⁰⁰ The high tide of the Beijing Democracy Movement was the years from late 1978 to early 1980, and its last major journal, *Jintian*, was silenced in the late 1980. However, the years 1978-1981 are used in the thesis' title because the analysis also deals in part in the country-wide reaction to the Democracy Movement which continued throughout 1981 and even later where also Beijing activists were involved. In early 1981 the Communist Party launched a major crackdown against the Democracy Movement bringing the overt activities of the Beijing movement to halt and forcing it to enter an underground stage. This serves as the cut-off point of the thesis.¹⁰¹

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

¹ In this work the author uses the names Democracy Movement and Democracy Wall Movement interchangeably. However, it is useful to note that, historically speaking, the period under study can be said to have been the Democracy Wall Movement period of the contemporary Chinese Democracy Movement.

² A good example of a study in mainland on contemporary history that deals with the period is provided by Ma Licheng and Qi Lingjun (1998) who deal with the period and the so called emancipation of minds campaign during it, but where the Democracy Wall Movement is never mentioned.

³ Hu Ping 1992

⁴ Examples of such memoirs are Ruan Ming (1991); Yan Jiaqi (1992); Li Honglin (1999) and Yang Jisheng (1999).

⁵ Nieh Yu-hsi 1979, pp. 1217-1222

⁶ Liu Sheng-chi 1984a; Liu Sheng-chi 1984b; Liu Sheng-chi 1981; see also Pan Jia-ching (1980, 42-62). Of the two Liu is much better versed in the Democracy Movement and occasionally even admits that most of the journals were actually either radical or moderate Marxist, but for some reason this does not prevent him from writing about the Democracy Wall Movement as an anti-communist movement. Here the influence of KMT regime that was still strong in the Taiwanese society of the early 80s may be detected.

⁷ Mab Huang and Seymour 1980, 1-26; Harrison 1983, 869-878

⁸ Good example of this is how Susan Shirk (1979a, 99-100 and 1979b, 263-264) saw that the Democracy Movement activists were dissidents who were taking part in the 'third wave of dissent' in China, but sees that explaining their dissidence was harder than the liberal democracy of the hundred flowers campaign in 1957 and the radical socialism of the Red Guards. Shirk states that Marxism exerted little influence over the third wave of dissidents and they were quite ignorant of it. A step away from 'human rights essentialism' and towards regarding Marxism important at its own right in the Democracy Movement argumentation was taken in a more recent study by Marina Svensson (2002) who does not make any essentialist claims about the nature of the Democracy Movement as a human rights movement but studies the use of human rights in the Democracy Movement argumentation. However, doing this she does not go the all way to discuss how the notion of human rights was reconciled with the Marxist class-based notion of democracy.

⁹ Guang Lei 1996; Guang Lei thinks that because the concept's meaning differs substantially, 'It is almost a misnomer to call minzhu movements in China movements for "democracy".' (437)

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- ¹⁰ Hsu Hsiang-tao 1996; Li Zong 1993
- ¹¹ Nathan 1985
- ¹² *Ibid.*, 45
- ¹³ Nathan (1985, 24-26) states that *'they [the Democracy Movement activists] saw themselves in a traditional role – as remonstrators, not only loyal to the state but forming an integral part of it... The difference between the twentieth century remonstrators and their precursors from the fourth century B.C. on was one of social class. What used to be the responsibility only of the official elite was now a concern of every man and woman, and especially the most politically conscious groups – students, workers, party members.'*
- ¹⁴ Goldman 2002
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 166
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 170
- ¹⁷ Goodman 1981
- ¹⁸ Chen Ruoxi, 1982
- ¹⁹ Christiansen, Posborg and Wedell-Wedellsborg 1980; also the works of Liu Sheng-chi belong largely to this category.
- ²⁰ Munro 1984a
- ²¹ Black and Munro 1993
- ²² Schwarcz 1984, Li Zehou and Schwarcz 1983-1984
- ²³ Munro 1984b
- ²⁴ Brodsgaard 1981; the first Western observer to make the connection, if only in passing, seems to have been Susan Shirk (1979a).
- ²⁵ Rosen 1985
- ²⁶ Guang Lei: 1996, 429; Burns: 1983, 35-53; Brodsgaard 1981, 768; Liu Sheng-chi 1981, 54; Harrison 1983, 872-873; Svensson 2002, 240-244; Goldman 2002, 170; Munro 1984a, 73-74 even Mab Huang and Seymour (1980, 26) note this. Nathan (1985) has one chapter about Marxism.
- ²⁷ Goldman, 2002, 170-171
- ²⁸ Nathan 1985, *passim*
- ²⁹ Burns 1983
- ³⁰ Chen Ruoxi 1982, 20
- ³¹ Brodsgaard, 1981, *passim*
- ³² Liu Sheng-chi 1981, 61-62
- ³³ Melucci 1996, 29-30; see also a little different version in Melucci (1988, 334).
- ³⁴ Melucci 1996, 29-30
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, 34-41
- ³⁶ In everyday usage social movement is also used to denote many other forms of collective action which do not necessarily seek to transform the existing political order. It can also be taken to mean a movement that is large and influential enough to actually have notable impact (however defined) on society, but as noted, the analytical concept does not make any assumptions to his end.
- ³⁷ See e.g. Jenkins and Klandermans (1995); Davenport (2005).
- ³⁸ Laraña, Johnston and Gusfield 1994, 21-24; Doug McAdam 1994, 39
- ³⁹ Cohen 1992; Melucci 1996, 77
- ⁴⁰ See e.g. Eyerman and Jamison (1991).
- ⁴¹ Snow and Benford 1988, 198
- ⁴² Gamson 1988, 222
- ⁴³ Snow and Benford 1988, 199 and Hunt, Benford, and Snow 1994, 191
- ⁴⁴ Snow and Benford 1988, 199-202; Hunt, Benford and Snow 1994, 191
- ⁴⁵ *Ibidem.*
- ⁴⁶ Melucci 1996, 70
- ⁴⁷ Laraña, Johnston and Gusfield 1994, 15
- ⁴⁸ Gecas 2000, 100
- ⁴⁹ Melucci 1996, 66-78, *passim*
- ⁵⁰ The author is not saying here that social movements exist only as linguistic constructs, instead he sees that they exist as complex forms of group behaviour just like a game of football exists: as a construction of shared rules, roles and strategies that bind physical objects and human beings together in a form of collective behaviour that the game's participants and its audience recognise as 'football'.

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- ⁵¹ Melucci 1996, 284
- ⁵² Snow and Anderson 1987, 1348
- ⁵³ Snow and McAdam, 2000, 46 and 49
- ⁵⁴ Stryker, Owens and White 2000, 9
- ⁵⁵ McAdam 1994, 53-54
- ⁵⁶ Polletta and Jasper 2001, 285
- ⁵⁷ Ibid. 292-295, the quotation from p. 295
- ⁵⁸ Hunt, Benford and Snow 1994, 186 and 190; Snow and Benford (1988, 215) divide groups targeted in framing efforts into seven categories: adherents, constituents, bystander publics, media, potential allies, antagonists and counter movements, and elite decision makers. Adherents are those who subscribe to movement objectives, but do not contribute to it actively. It can be argued that all these can be collapsed into the three identity fields used in the text.
- ⁵⁹ Klandermans and de Weerd 2000, 69
- ⁶⁰ The author does not argue that actual recognition of grievances and finding ways to settle them necessarily happens in these three steps. More likely recognising grievances and finding solutions to them come first and the realisation of the need for social mobilisation as a means to an end comes after this. However, they can be analysed in the order proposed here because social mobilisation logically precedes the settling of the grievances.
- ⁶¹ Snow and Benford 1988, 198-199; McAdam, 1994, 37
- ⁶² Gecas 2000, 93-94
- ⁶³ Snow and Benford 1988, 204
- ⁶⁴ Ibid., 207-211
- ⁶⁵ Values can be defined as “*conceptions of beliefs about desirable modes of conduct or states of being that transcend specific situations, guide decision making and the evaluation of events and are ordered by relative importance*” they “*serve as standards by which to live as well as goals for which to strive*”. (Gecas 2000, 94-95) Values can for example be divided into instrumental and terminal ones, where the former denotes individual characteristics, like bravery, and the latter the end-results of action, like equality. (Rokeach 1979)
- ⁶⁶ Gecas 2000, 98
- ⁶⁷ Schoenhals 1992, 18
- ⁶⁸ Ibid., 5
- ⁶⁹ Perry and Li Xun (2003) offer a good analysis of this.
- ⁷⁰ Shirk 1979a, 91-97; Shirk 1979b
- ⁷¹ Guobin Yang, 2000, 392; a detailed list of the content of these classes in Anita Chen (1992, 65-65).
- ⁷² Gao Yuan 1987, 53; lists these and other labels used by Red Guards.
- ⁷³ Polletta and Jasper 2001, 292
- ⁷⁴ In the case of the Democracy Wall Movement these banners would have been mostly red with some white ones, but all with the characters *minzhu* written on them.
- ⁷⁵ Some authors even call this a ‘paradigmatic crisis’, see e.g. Huang (1991).
- ⁷⁶ Both definitions in Plog and Bates (1980, 10-11) these are but one way to define the concepts.
- ⁷⁷ Niiniluoto 2003
- ⁷⁸ Kalela 2000a, 186-189
- ⁷⁹ Sihvola 2000, 108-111, Raatikainen 2004, 117-121 and 125-126
- ⁸⁰ Wakeman 1998, 25-30
- ⁸¹ Sihvola 2000, 111-112; see McCullagh (2004, 39-41 and ch. 4) on various conscious and unconscious reasons of historical actors’ behaviour, p. 184-187 on social structures and individual behaviour as their result. See also Cohen (1997, 59-68) on difference of experienced past and the past as reconstructed by historians.
- ⁸² Kalela 2000a, ch. 6
- ⁸³ Cohen 1984, 149-150
- ⁸⁴ See Thomas Metzger’s and Ramon H. Myers (1983) on the criticism of ‘Sinological shadows’ in Western, mainly American, research on modern Chinese history and Paul Cohen’s *Discovering History in China* (1984) for criticism of assigning too much importance to Western influence in Chinese history and prioritising research subjects based on Western rather than Chinese concerns. Philip C. Huang (1991) has offered similar criticism on Western research on China in criticising the ‘tradition–modernity’ school of the 1950s, the ‘Western impact’ school of the 1960s, and the ‘early-modern China’ school of the 1980s.

⁸⁵ This was connected to Edward Said's book *Orientalism* (1977), which applied Michel Foucault's concept of 'discourse' to the study of the impact of colonialism on Western history writing and literary history on Asia. See Cohn 1996; Shamsul 1998 on nature of "colonial knowledge"; Said (1994) on criticism of influence of imperialism in Western history writing also concerning China; Prasenjit Duara (1995, esp. ch. 7, and 1991) about nationalism and modernisation as examples of dominating Euro-centric narratives in China; Arif Dirlik (1996a, 1996b) on Orientalism as a manifestation of colonial powers' continuing intellectual domination over their former colonies especially in the form of modernisation theory although in the 21st century these notions have ceased to have any distinct geographical origin.

⁸⁶ Said 1994, 258

⁸⁷ Rüsen 1996:2-4; Smith 1989

⁸⁸ Leyton 1997: 211-215

⁸⁹ Collier and Mahon 1993. It is not clear whether any of these approaches can really be considered credible to strong cultural relativists, who view cultural content to be untranslatable in principle. Instead, in such relativists' eyes using theories may run the risk of becoming sets of trivialisations and 'trite' statements about societies (e.g. Geertz 2000, 134-136). However, as Raatikainen (2004, 117-118) argues, limiting studies only to the meanings the subjects give to their behaviour narrows the scope of social and historical inquiry too much. We have a right to ask our own questions.

⁹⁰ Hunt, Benford and Snow, 1994, 204

⁹¹ Here the author is very aware that the new social movements approach has been originally developed as a response to explain social movements and protest in post-industrial liberal democracies of the West (Klandermans and Tarrow 1988). The Democracy Movement does not fit most of the general descriptions given to new social movements in the West, like being against traditional values in capitalist society, antagonistic to conventional politics using unconventional forms of action, and taken part mainly by marginalised groups and the new middle classes, advocating post-material values, and participants' search for new identities in movements. (ibid, 7-8) However, the multiplicity and diversity of social movements in West alone has made the students acknowledge that national politics, traditions, and alignments do condition the formation, strategies, and outcomes of movements and also national political institutions have strong influence on the forms and focus of the new movements also in the West. (ibid, 23-25; Jenkins 1995, 30-32)

⁹² According to Johnston (2005, 109-111), these free spaces are, for example, private houses or hobby groups where people can express their thoughts to others under relative privacy from the authorities' control.

⁹³ Similar questions have been asked about some other Chinese social movements, like the Cultural Revolution (Yang Guobin 2000) and the Tiananmen demonstrations 1989 (Zhou Xueguang 1993). Analysing the influence of cultural models in Chinese protest also includes analysing the uses of identities and shared values in collective action and previous research on this end has been done by employing for example concepts of 'political culture' and 'theatre', (Wasserstrom 1991; Esherick and Wasserstrom 1990) and 'cultural repertoire' (Calhoun and Wasserstrom 2003; Perry 2001 and 2003). Many of these studies come close to my approach here, but do not drawn explicitly on the new social movement terminology in their analysis although the author does not see any fundamental conflict between the approaches. Based on these studies it is useful to note that not only the symbolic contents of protest, but also the very form it takes is a part of the activists' rhetoric attempt to influence the protagonists, antagonists and the audiences of the protest.

⁹⁴ The CUP has complete or partial series of 26 different Beijing Democracy Movement journals. Altogether there are about 10 000 pages and nearly 2000 articles in these volumes. It can be estimated that at least 80 % of the Beijing Democracy Movement journals can be found in the CUP and concerning the major journals only a few separate issues are missing, biggest shortage is concerning the Kexue minzhu fazhi, half of which numbers are missing.

⁹⁵ Tellingly, the only cases the CUP editors have made their own comments to the journals' texts were the occasions where the Democracy Movement activists criticised the KMT.

⁹⁶ Widor 1981 (I-II); some studies note that the DCDM was at least planned to consist of 7 volumes, but the author has been able to locate only the first two in the series.

⁹⁷ Mab Huang and Seymour 1980; Barmé and Minford 1980; Lin Yih-tang 1980; James Tong 1980-1981; Liu Guokai 1987, Munro 1984b

⁹⁸ See e.g. Ian Buruma (2003).

⁹⁹ The author acknowledges the fact that interviews could have been a great help in finding out information about the development of the movement and, for example, the identities of people behind pennames in the journals. As it is, this must wait for further research.

¹⁰⁰ There was at the time also a great number of student journals published by various university student organisations that were at least semi-unofficial but could be quite pro-democracy. Also these are excluded in this study because of the need to limit the size of the sample and because they were not regarded as a part of the Democracy Movement.

¹⁰¹ The actual dates of the Beijing Democracy Movement are debatable. Some authors like Henry Yuhuai He (2001) see that it started earlier than in mid-November 1978 with the emancipation of minds campaign and the 'Beijing Spring', others see that it lasted only to the first major arrest wave of the Democracy Movement activists in March-April 1979 (Garside 1981). Alternatively, for example Hu Ping (1998) sees that the Democracy Wall Movement began in November 1978 and lasted to spring 1981 when the national joint journal Zeren came to an end.

2 CHAPTER: The Background to the Democracy Movement

Assigning beginning and ending dates for complex events, like social movements, is seldom a straightforward task. In most cases the developments leading up to the events under scrutiny began long before any undisputed starting date can be assigned, and the impacts of the events last long after they themselves have ended. Therefore, such dates can usually be used only as points of reference that help to render the complexities at hand into an accessible narrative. This is also true with the Democracy Wall Movement, which can be said to have begun in late November 1978, but many developments that created the movement can be dated back to or even before the Cultural Revolution, which had formative influence on the political thinking of the Democracy Movement activists, most of whom were former Red Guards. Moreover, the Cultural Revolution created the grievances that were used in mobilising the Democracy Movement and it was also the very process of undoing the Cultural Revolution that gave rise to the political opportunity that made the movement possible. Therefore, to understand the background of the Democracy Movement and what motivated its participants, one has to know how the Cultural Revolution influenced the Democracy Movement activists and Chinese society.

The Opposite Views on the Cultural Revolution

The Cultural Revolution is still a highly sensitive and problematic period in the history of the Chinese people and the Communist Party.¹ This can be seen in the way that the Party has dealt with the period and decided on its politically correct interpretation. In the 'Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party since the Founding of the People's Republic of China' from 1981, the Party decided that the Cultural Revolution was basically a power struggle among the ruling elite that was caused by errors in the thinking of the late-Chairman Mao and evil usurpation of power by the so called 'Gang of Four'. The Party also decided that the Cultural Revolution had lasted from 1966 to 1976 when Mao Zedong died and the Gang of Four was arrested. After this Resolution the Party has stuck to its version on the Cultural Revolution and has been relatively unwilling to dwell on it.²

However, the Party has obviously been unable to impose its view on the Cultural Revolution outside Mainland China and there has developed a considerable body of research literature around the period.³ The approach the author finds important for understanding the significance of the Cultural Revolution for the Democracy Movement is, not coincidentally, more or less the opposite of the official Party version starting from the very periodisation of the event. As a leading proponent of this view, Anita Chan, has argued, the way the Party has presented the Cultural Revolution as a power struggle that lasted for 10 years hides the fact that the Cultural Revolution was based on a contradiction between the Party and much larger parts of the people the

Party could never admit. According to this view, the Cultural Revolution Proper lasted from 1966 to 1969 and was waged mainly by the Red Guards many of whom directed their struggle against what they saw as the emerging ‘bureaucratic class’ or the ‘red capitalists’ in the Party. In 1981 the Party Resolution on the Cultural Revolution lumped these Rebel Red Guards and the Gang of Four together making the former the ‘running dogs’ of the latter, even if the Gang of Four had only a few connections to the Rebels. The real crime of the Rebel Red Guards was that they had attacked the Dengist Party faction that triumphed at the end of the Cultural Revolution Proper and its aftermath, the Gang of Four period of 1969-1976. Furthermore, these Rebels had “*come up with a new paradigm of society that called into question the legitimacy of the ruling class.*”⁴

As this ‘social conflict model’ holds, the Cultural Revolution was more than just a power struggle in the Party leadership which the deceived masses followed blindly. According to this view, much of the initial motivation and grass-roots enthusiasm for the Cultural Revolution was created by pre-existing social conflicts which the political campaign started and conducted by Chairman Mao brought to boil. A similar interpretation can also be found in a so called ‘parallel revolution’ axiom developed by many former Red Guard members.⁵ This ‘parallel revolution’ approach implies that the grassroots dissatisfaction over official corruption and abusive government was an equally important reason for the Cultural Revolution as the power struggle at the top. The social conflict model adds to this explanation the grass-roots social tensions created by the officials’ categorisation of the people based on their class and political performance (discussed in the Introduction), which amounted to a virtual caste system and made wide misuses of power possible. The elite and the masses had their further sub-divisions that prevented the cleavage between the two social strata from occupying a salient position in Chinese society before 1966, but when the Cultural Revolution erupted, the cleavage became a central source of conflicts.⁶

What makes these views on the Cultural Revolution interesting for this thesis is their close resemblance to the way the Democracy Movement activists explained the emergence of their movement. While not using the same labels, they generally agreed on the parallel revolution theory and saw the Cultural Revolution as a period and process whence the Chinese youth grew politically mature and able to think for themselves for the first time in the history of the People’s Republic and therefore become conscious of the problems in the political system and the ‘new bureaucratic class’ it had produced. Notwithstanding its dismal social results, they called the Cultural Revolution a process of ‘enlightenment’.⁷ This view gives a valuable insight into the Cultural Revolution era and to the development of the political thinking of the democratic critics of the Democracy Movement. Indeed, arguing about the Cultural Revolution as an enlightenment experience was a central element in the narrative the activists constructed to explain the emergence of the Democracy Movement and in order to understand the ideational basis of the Democracy Movement, we need to answer what made the Cultural Revolution so enlightening to

its activists and what was the nature of this ‘enlightenment’? This means that we have to take a brief look into the intellectual and experimental sides of the Cultural Revolution.

The Cultural Revolution – Growing Up in the Storm

Of the possible ways of approaching the relationship between the Cultural Revolution and the Democracy Movement is studying the Cultural Revolution as an evolving experience⁸ of the Red Guard generation, where certain events and contents of communication (i.e. political ideas, ideals, etc) produced widely, if not universally, shared feelings and intellectual responses to politics. The question is why and for what purpose did the Red Guards understand what they were doing during the Cultural Revolution, and how did these matters change during the course of the events?

In general, the Cultural Revolution and its aftermath can be subdivided roughly into three periods, which contributed to the development of the Democracy Movement activists’ thinking.⁹ The first period was the ‘Red Guards phase’ of the Cultural Revolution in 1966-1969. During this time, the Red Guards had their hour upon the stage bringing them the promise of popular participation in politics and an experience of autonomous political activity of a kind. In the contemporary assessments these years were also the Cultural Revolution Proper.¹⁰ The second period was the years from 1969-1976. During this time, the Red Guards were first suppressed or disbanded and brought under the control of the newly established revolutionary committees by sending most of that generation ‘down to the countryside’ (*xiàfāng*, ‘rustication’). This period embittered many Red Guards who were now being punished for their previous enthusiasm by the very same people who they were supposed to be following, i.e. Chairman Mao and his Leftist followers in the Party leadership. The harsh punishments these former Red Guards received and the nature of the betrayal they felt made many of them continue the intellectual processes that had already begun during the Cultural Revolution Proper and to rethink their loyalty to the Chairman, and sometimes even the whole political system. It also made them critical of the use of the personality cult of Chairman Mao as a device for ruling over the masses. This period can therefore be seen as the fermentation time of democratic thought and criticism, as many activists would later argue in the Democracy Movement. It can also be called the Gang of Four period according to the leading Leftist group that Chairman Mao favoured.¹¹

The third period was the aftermath years following Mao’s death (1976) to the rise and demise of the Democracy Wall Movement (1978-1981). Politically this period was characterised by the rivalry between the reformist faction led by Deng Xiaoping and its more Leftist opponents that came to be called the “Whateverists” in the course of struggle.¹² As seen below, fluctuations in the political atmosphere created the political opportunity for the emergence of the Democracy Wall Movement in late

1978. The latter part of the period also marked the beginning of the gradual ‘opening up to the outside world’ (*kāifàng*) policy, which made it possible for Western ideas to have more impact on the activist thinking. These three periods shaped the lives of most of the democratic critics participating in the Movement, as did the constant Marxist teaching that they were subjected to before and during it.

Mao Zedong and the Idea of Worsening Class Struggle

The ideological background of the Cultural Revolution has been traced back to the early 50s when the doctrine of continuing class struggle under socialism and the possibility of capitalist restoration started to form in the minds of Mao Zedong and other members of his ideological entourage. As Mao had already written in 1951, as long as social classes existed, the contradiction between right and wrong ideas would also exist within the Party and which could become antagonist. Mao was also determined to persist with the principle of the need for class struggle against class enemies under socialism, even if he could argue that most of the existing contradictions were those ‘among the people’ and therefore not class contradictions.¹³

In practise, Mao’s willingness to wage class struggle against his political rivals determined how antagonist the class contradictions were regarded at any given time, but in general his position changed from moderation to confrontation from 1949 to 1966. By the early-1960s Mao had begun to see growing resistance to his policies, as well as creeping elitism and privileges within the intelligentsia, the government, and the Party, as serious threats to his rule and therefore the future of socialism in China. One important incident that also made Mao to regard class struggle within the Party as more acute was the split with the Soviet Union and Nikita Khrushchev that gradually developed from Khrushchev’s denunciation of Stalin in 1956 until it finally came out in public polemics between the two countries in 1963-64. That Khrushchev was removed from power in 1964 did not lessen this antagonism and the split added to Mao’s anxiety over the division of the Chinese leadership concerning the people’s communes and the measures taken to recover the economy after the failure of the Great Leap Forward (1958-1960), when governing the country was effectively taken over by the pragmatic and technocratic faction led by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping.¹⁴

Mao saw to it that this factional split came to be regarded as a sign of continuous class struggle which become the ideological justification for the Cultural Revolution. By the early 60s, Mao developed a view that the ‘bourgeois rights’¹⁵ could create the basis for the re-emergence of new bourgeois elements among the Party cadres and intellectuals. However, the extent and origins of this “new class” (a term which Mao did not use) remained vague in his writings and also left unanswered the question whether it marked that the old bourgeois elements were making a comeback within the Party, or that elements of the new cadre core were turning into a new bourgeoisie that made capitalist restoration possible. Another matter further complicating Mao’s

analysis was whether class was something that could be objectively defined by family background, or was a matter of subjective values and consciousness of individuals. In practise both ways were used to determine class and became part of disputes in the Cultural Revolution where the notion of an emerging bourgeois class was readily accepted by the ideological left in the Party which would use it against their opponents who were labelled as class enemies, bourgeois elements, and capitalist roaders in the Party.¹⁶

As Andrew G. Walder has argued, Mao's doctrine of continuing class struggle under socialism also borrowed heavily from Stalin who had used it to justify the great purges in the 30s. According to this doctrine, when society approached socialism, the hidden class enemies would reappear and utilise the lingering bourgeois ideas among the Party members and the people to halt the process. This had to be met with force, the conspiracy of the old bourgeois class had to be exposed and revolutionary justice had to be done on the class enemies. In short, class struggle justified the purges and terror on the enemies of the people.¹⁷ The Maoist variation on this Stalinist theme of a conspiracy amongst the people and the Party cadres became the leading rationale for political violence during the Cultural Revolution. However, Mao also brought something new to the conspiracy theory by remaining vague on the exact nature of the source of the conspirators – whether they were the members of the old bourgeois class making a comeback, or Party members turning into a new class. The possibility that a socialist system could produce a new exploitative ruling class had not been present with Stalin, but in the vague formulations of Mao it became a logical possibility and thereby the ideological basis of the conflict between Red Guards factions during the Cultural Revolution.¹⁸

Stuart Schram holds the view that the resistance that Mao ran into with his Great Leap Forward in the Lushan Conference in 1959, turned Mao to more radical interpretation of class struggle in China. After 1962, Mao's conviction on the need to purge his leading political opponents under the name of class struggle sharpened even further, and the need to smash the Party, at least in part, became more urgent in his mind. In early 1964, Mao began to emphasise the dialectical principle of 'one divides into two', meaning that the Party could develop a faction 'taking the capitalist road'. The issue at stake was also the fundamental strategy in building socialism: whether it would be the centralised technocratic approach following the Soviet model favoured by the pragmatic faction, or the more voluntarist Maoist model that had been tried out, for example, during the Great Leaf Forward. The struggle had also a substantial cultural dimension for Mao, as he saw that it was in the realm of the superstructure where the ideological groundwork for capitalist restoration was taking place. It was therefore not co-incidental that the first shots of the Cultural Revolution were fired in the field of literature and arts in 1965.¹⁹

Early Stages of Struggle -The Vanguard of the Revolution

By late 1965, the stage was set for a campaign against Mao's political adversaries. Using his class analysis and the argument about the need to resist bourgeois restoration within the Party, the Chairman now directed a mass campaign against his political enemies. The task of attacking the capitalist roaders in the Party and the intellectual circles was assigned to the youth, whom Mao regarded as unspoiled and having the energy, political awareness and loyalty to him for the task required. Indeed, what made the call to arms against the capitalist roaders persuasive for the youth, was that it came directly from Chairman Mao. The memoirs of former Red Guard members reveal how by the mid-1960s nearly unitary Maoist indoctrination formed the basis of their worldview and how the personality cult of Chairman Mao formed an integral part of it.²⁰ Indoctrination came to the generation through the school, media, work units, and home where unquestioning love and loyalty to the Party, the Chairman, socialism, and the country, as well as emulating martyred revolutionary heroes like Lei Feng, were constantly taught to children.²¹ As, for example, a Guangdong Red Guard member Dai Xiaoi saw it, the enthusiasm for the Red Guard movement was the outcome of the political indoctrination of the Chinese youth: "*We had studied his [Mao's] writings from the times we learned to read and always tried to implement them.*"²² Farther, most parents who were not actively engaged in this usually did not openly question the campaigns either. Another important channel of political socialisation was peer group organisations such as the Young Pioneers and the Youth League, which maintained strict discipline and ideological education of their members.²³

The Cultural Revolution²⁴ began in schools with the campaign to criticise Wu Han and the 'three family village' in May 1966. The students who were to play the main role in it had not anticipated it. Memoirs show how the beginning of the campaign was usually welcomed with enthusiasm, combined with ignorance as to what was the actual issue.²⁵ The generation did not have much of earlier experience in political movements, but they were fast learners. When the campaign evolved in the spring of 1966, students' activism was directed at teachers. This replaced the attacks against remote and largely unknown intellectual figures with local figures close to the students and brought enthusiasm to the campaign. The motivation for struggle included personal revenge and the 'sheer cruel fun' of humiliating the targets,²⁶ and denunciation and struggling against teachers sometimes even included torture and killing of the victims.²⁷ However, at this point, little resistance or doubts about what was happening entered the students' minds. Denunciations also caused some resentment because it was not always clear to the students why some teachers were to be criticised, but few really wanted to question Chairman Mao in this matter at that time.²⁸ For example, a Red Guards member from Changsha, Liang Heng, felt that the fact that "*good people were exposed as evil ones lurking behind Revolutionary masks*" was confusing, but he felt excited and happy and wanted to help.²⁹

As Dai Xiaoi has recalled, from the very outset the students were unable to comprehend the full meaning of the Cultural Revolution from the point of view of Mao, and their information on backstage events was fragmentary. In the provinces, the inspiration for activities was taken from the Beijing student movement. The students were also constantly looking for guidance and clues from the media as to how to conduct the campaign³⁰ and took Chairman Mao's, the Cultural Revolution Small Group's, and the Beijing Red Guards Headquarters' instructions, as the main sources for their guidance. However, it seems to have been common that their enthusiasm was combined with the inability to truly grasp the political issues involved, and that they accepted the conspiracy theory on the bourgeois elements aiming to restore capitalism in the Party at face value, even if it was sometimes hard to figure out who the conspirators really were. Acceptance of the conspiracy theory came naturally to them, as they had already been taught to be vigilant for counterrevolutionaries and class enemies before the Cultural Revolution.³¹ The Cultural Revolution gave them the chance to seek these people out. Indeed, people taking capitalist road had to be there somewhere because Chairman Mao had told the youth so. The students, taught not to question orders from the Chairman Mao or the Party, therefore genuinely believed that they were supporting Mao and attacking 'ghosts and demons' who were against him. In their minds things were only red or white and they were engaged in revolutionary struggle between good and evil.³²

Red Guard Factionalism Emerges

During the summer of 1966 the students in schools and universities were organised into Red Guards (*Hóngwèibīng*) who were to take the lead in the campaign.³³ Receiving their red armband was a proud moment for those who were selected for the first Red Guards. As a Red Guard member remembered it, "*At this moment in my new capacity and possessed of the 'young tiger spirit', I was ready to go from school into society to crush the old world to pieces.*"³⁴ However, Mao had probably not realised the full significance of social tensions arising from segregating the whole society into people with good, middle and bad class backgrounds. The motivation of the under-privileged student groups from bad and middle class backgrounds to get recognised as possessing the same revolutionary credentials as the self-proclaimed revolutionary upper classes, now served as a major source of the Red Guards factionalism that followed.³⁵ In the class background system, the majority of the students were not regarded as revolutionary by their birth as the children of the Party members, workers, peasants, revolutionary martyrs and soldiers. These now monopolised the right to lead and conduct the struggles and the Red Guards were at first their exclusive clubs that discriminated against the students from bad class backgrounds.

However, from the very outset the students from bad class background asserted their right to take part in the struggles and the student groups were split into two factions with their further subdivisions.³⁶ These factions were subsequently called the Rebels

and the Conservatives, although other labels were also used. Those belonging to the Rebel faction had in general, but not exclusively, 'bad' or not-so-good class background, whereas the members of Conservative faction tended to be sons and daughters of parents from 'better' class backgrounds. The Conservative Red Guards usually directed their struggle away from their cadre families to those with 'bad' class background and insisted that the Cultural Revolution should be waged by the youth from more 'revolutionary' class backgrounds, whereas the Rebels broadened the scope of the struggle to include the leading party cadres.³⁷

At first the access to the Red Guards was granted only to the students with good class backgrounds, who were supposed to conduct the Cultural Revolution at their schools, but in August 1966 this policy started to change when the scope of the struggle was expanded by the new instructions entitled '16 Points'. Now the 'capitalist roaders' in the Party were singled out as the main targets of the campaign, and students from 'bad' class background began to form their own Red Guard groups. This suited Mao who planned to attack conservative cadres who were being protected by Conservative Red Guards. In September the leftist leaders of the Cultural Revolution Small Group, that led the campaign in the Party Centre under Mao, framed the Cultural Revolution as a two-line struggle between the revolutionary line of Chairman Mao and the bourgeois reactionary line. They made it clear that also the Rebel Red Guards could be standing on the right side of the struggle.³⁸ When the 'blood line theory' that made 'good' family background the criterion of entry into Red Guards was finally discarded by the Party Centre in the early 1967 all obstacles of joining the Red Guards were practically removed.³⁹ However, the expansion of Red Guard membership only worsened factionalism as the Rebels now tried to prove their revolutionary credentials by attacking their conservative adversaries.

By this time the Red Guard factions had left the schools and started to find their targets for struggle in the wider society. A Rebel faction leader in Fujian, Ken Ling, has pointed out that selecting targets was a gamble – there was no way of telling objectively who was actually 'taking the capitalist road'. If the targets later turned out to be 'Maoists', the faction itself could be denounced, therefore: "*In the subsequent struggles against the local Party cadre and military commanders it was like making a bet with Mao – win or lose.*"⁴⁰ As Dai Xiaoi remembers it:

*"At the time we knew nothing about the real meaning of the Cultural Revolution and could not imagine its significance. Lacking any idea what was to come, we thought that Chairman Mao was giving us an opportunity to practice and to gain revolutionary experience. This was a basic reason, I think. Had we been aware of any over-all plan, or what that plan was to be, perhaps fewer students would have participated. I realize now that we were being used, but [at that time] ...such a thought was impossible."*⁴¹

The student groups that joined the Cultural Revolution under the banner of Chairman Mao were heterogeneous and their membership fluid. The Cultural Revolution was

also characterised by high volatility in factional alignments and chaos. Again Dai Xiaoi recalls it revealingly: “*The whole business was too complicated for words. I didn’t understand it then and I don’t understand it now.*”⁴² Liang Heng had similar feelings: “*It was as if someone was playing games with us all, but there was no time to figure it out, the play was too dramatic, the action was happening too fast, and too much information was missing.*”⁴³

The power struggle in the Cultural Revolution was couched in Marxist language of class struggle against the people’s mortal enemies and creation on a new socialist society. For example, when after the establishment of the Red Guards in Guangdong, the students took to the streets to destroy the ‘four olds’, their goals were spelled out in unmistakable strong Maoist language:

*“We will energetically eradicate all the old ideas, old culture, old customs, and old habits of the exploiting classes and transform all those parts of superstructure that do not correspond to the socialist economic base... We will make vigorous efforts to establish proletarian authorities, and new ideas, new culture, new customs, and new habits of proletariat.”*⁴⁴

The reason for Red Guards’ enthusiasm in carrying out the orders from the Party Centre and the later intensity of factional fighting was partly based on the way the Cultural Revolution liberated the youth from the earlier constraints of showing their activism and dedication for the revolution in the class room, and allowing them to emulate the revolutionary martyrs and war heroes they believed to be their models in self-sacrifice and bravery in the face of danger. It was no longer about following the good deeds of the model soldier Lei Feng; for many of the Red Guard members it was now a real class war and some were even ready to die for their ideals.⁴⁵

Seizing the Power and Losing It

The Cultural Revolution also provided Chinese youth unique opportunities to learn about the realities of Chinese society. During late 1966, the Red Guards got the chance to go on the ‘great exchange of revolutionary experiences’ (*chuánlián*). For Mao it was a new phase of power struggle to attack provincial leaders with students from other parts of the country. It was soon discontinued in November 1966,⁴⁶ but it gave the Red Guards the opportunity to see the social conditions around China for themselves. For many this experience was actually the beginning of developing disillusionment with official propaganda and social criticism against power holders. Even if it was still a long road to independent critical social analysis or questioning the authority of Mao, the youth had to explain to themselves the dismal sights encountered during the trips. For example, when in Anhui, Ken Ling and his comrades were shocked by hordes of beggars they saw begging food at railway stations:

“Our girl comrades wept. ‘What kind of new China is this?’ ... I kept thinking: Whose fault is this? Whose fault is this? ... I did not know on whom or what to blame for their [beggars’] sufferings. I thought of the propaganda slogan “The old society makes ghosts of men, but the new society makes men of ghosts.” It made me sick.”⁴⁷

After exchanging revolutionary experiences was brought to close, a new important development arose. The rebel ranks had by now grown larger than their conservative adversaries’ and workers had also begun to join the struggles when the Party Centre had allowed them to set up their own mass organisations for carrying out the Cultural Revolution in November 1966.⁴⁸ The Party Centre now directed the Rebels to ‘seize power’ from authorities which were ‘taking the capitalist road’. The campaign began in January and peaked with the establishment of the Shanghai Commune in early February 1967.⁴⁹ It took its inspiration from the Paris Commune which had already been declared in the August ‘16 Points’ as the goal of the Cultural Revolution and thereafter referred to repeatedly by the leading Leftist leaders in the Party Centre.⁵⁰ Mao initially took positive view of the Shanghai Commune and it was propagated in the leading organs of the Party.⁵¹ Mao had also advocated reading the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin, all of which contained some hints on alternative socialist political institutions. Engel’s writings about the Paris Commune particularly became useful when the Red Guards began to set up their own administrations.⁵² Reports about the Shanghai commune were read carefully and the Red Guard power seizure in the city was emulated in many other provinces and lower levels. Activities included seizure of the official seals and obtaining formal concessions of cession of power to the Red Guards from the old power holders. For example in Guangzhou, the policy of ‘supervised work’ was applied where the power holders stayed in office under the Rebel Red Guard and workers’ surveillance.⁵³

As a Guangdong Rebel Red Guard, Liu Guokai, would later recall, on its establishment the Shanghai Commune Declaration referred to electing its leadership according to principle of the Paris Commune after an interim period. According to Liu, people regarded the January seizure of power in Shanghai as a:

“Real revolution. Revolutionary masses would elect their leaders according to the principles of the Paris Commune. This is a tremendous political revolution! The leadership system created in this way would be completely different from the bureaucratic system of the past.”⁵⁴

But Liu saw that in reality these beautiful words in the document were just used to cover up a purge of Mao’s political enemies. However, before the truth of the matter, and the whole Cultural Revolution, was realised, the call for the seizure of power was enthusiastically welcomed by Rebel Red Guards. They now carried out the maxim ‘It is right to Rebel’ accusing their opponents of ‘slavish’ mentality of subservience to corrupt old rulers. For example, Ken Ling became a member of the leading group of the Fujian Rebel students, who attacked the highest Party authorities

in the province in the spring of 1967. For him it was about struggle of enlightenment against slavish thinking. Ken accused those afraid of attacking the provincial Party headquarters arguing that: *“Those poor people had the mentality of slaves. They thought we must have ‘eaten tiger’s guts’ or were out of our minds to assail great Party authorities.”* For his part Ken thought that

*“The Chinese people had gone too far down the road of losing self-confidence and personal dignity. I wanted to be a hero, to make people understand that the officials depended on the people, not the other way around. ... I was proud of being a student, whose knowledge could be used as a weapon to destroy the shackles of the past.”*⁵⁵

The righteousness of rebelling against authorities had been brought home to him some time earlier in a raid on a provincial Party leader’s luxurious home:

*“We had not realised that those Communist Party cadres who looked incorruptible and claimed to be selflessly rendering service to the people could actually be so corrupt and crime-soaked. It was even harder for me to understand how people could follow a government run by such officials. The vast masses were being kept in dark. We must let everyone know that there was not one good man among the present officials.”*⁵⁶

Even if seizing power was often a chaotic experience and happened usually rather *ad hoc* without detailed planning, the Paris Commune captured the Rebel Red Guard’s imagination as a model for intra-Red Guards’ democracy. The leaders in the groups had to follow their constituency or be removed. And when they seized the power, the same principle was also applied. For some of the Red Guards this experience formed a basis of realising an alternative way to Leninist centralism as the true form of popular democracy. As Anita Chan has cited an interviewee, who actively took part in seizing power on the side of Rebel Red Guards in Guangdong:

*“At that time I had this fantasy. I thought that those big shots should somehow only be up there in the same way as the heads of mass organisations [i.e. the Red Guards] were. That meant that when the masses were dissatisfied with them, they could remove them from office. Officials normally kept their posts for the rest of their lives. If the masses had the power to remove them then they wouldn’t dare do so many of the things, which were against the interests of the masses... Ah, I realized what it meant for a country to have democracy. That was it!”*⁵⁷

However, the power seizures and setting up of Red Guards’ administrations modelled after the Paris Commune, led the Rebel Red Guards to a gradual break with Mao. What alarmed Mao was that the new institutions resembling the Paris Commune did not have any room for the Party in them.⁵⁸ His leadership was therefore threatened as the Red Guards grew more independent in their actions, if not

yet in rhetoric. Consequently, in March 1967 Mao balked from his initially positive response to communes and proposed a new kind of power structure, the so-called revolutionary committees, where the army, the revolutionary cadres, and Red Guards would share the power.⁵⁹ His new policy, as always, was carried out with intensive factional struggle and the establishment of revolutionary committees in all provinces lasted to September 1968.

Meanwhile, Red Guard factionalism continued with a vengeance as it was unclear who would be appointed to the revolutionary committees. For a short period, the military stepped in and subdued matters with considerable brutality, arrests, and even executions of Rebels in the spring of 1967. The fact that the military mostly took the side of the conservatives helped to radicalise the Rebels even more and the summer of 1967 re-witnessed almost total breakdown of social order. Alarmed with the military takeover in the provinces when the Army cracked down on the Rebel Red Guards, Mao once more sided with the Party Left and favoured Rebel actions. As a consequence, a situation nearing a civil-war erupted in the provinces culminating in the “August anarchy” -or ‘revolution’ depending on which side looked at the events- when the Rebel Red Guards made a second attempt at seizing power. This action was encouraged by the leading Leftists in the Party Centre. Finally, in late summer of 1967 the Great Helmsman turned his support away from the students to the workers and soldiers. The army stepped in again arresting Rebel Red Guards leaders and the rest of the Red Guards were ordered to return to the schools.⁶⁰ The leading Leftists in the Party Centre also had to rapidly do an about face now accuse many over-enthusiastic Rebel Red Guards for being counterrevolutionaries under the guise of “ultra left” in order to keep up with Mao.⁶¹

What followed was the October 8 1967 ‘Urgent Notice’ on ‘sending down’ (*xiàfàng*) the ‘educated youth’. This aimed at dismantling the Red Guards and expelling them *en masse* from the cities to the countryside. When provincial order improved this policy was carried out throughout the country during 1968-1969. Combined to this during 1968, a campaign called “Cleansing the Class Ranks” was directed towards the Rebels, many of whom ended up in prison or worse.⁶² In July 1968, the Party Centre also sent Worker’s Propaganda Teams to schools in order to forge ‘great alliances’ there to end factional feuding. This was turning the tables from two years before when the Red Guards had been sent to factories to make workers join the Cultural Revolution. As for Mao, to symbolically demonstrate his change in allegiance, he sent a bucket of mangoes to a Beijingsese Worker’s Propaganda Team congratulating it for its work. Jiefang Ribao now ran an article showing the new order of the things from there on:

“Having played the role of a vanguard in the Great Cultural Revolution, the Red Guards young fighters must [now] ... humbly learn from workers, peasants, and soldiers and forever be their pupils.”⁶³

The 'New Intellectual Trend' and the Theory of a New Class

The first military crackdown in the spring of 1967 had already prompted some of the Rebel Red Guards to reassess their understanding of politics. They were discontent with the prospects that their rebellion would lead to nothing else than the return of the old rulers under military tutelage.⁶⁴ As Liu Guokai wrote during the Democracy Movement, the crackdown in February had marked 'a fascist atrocity' that signified for him how a bureaucratic system was not only restored, but also made 'fascist' all over China.⁶⁵ As another Guangdong Red Guard Dai Xiaoi recalled it, the military takeover in March and the situation where the Rebels could not seek redress had infuriated him:

*"Nothing could describe my anger at the way things had developed in March. Those sons of bitches [the military] had thrown us all out of the window. [The Rebels] had virtually succeeded in seizing power, in making a true revolution. Now the bastards had thrown it all away. It was unbearable to think at the time. It is still so, even now. [1969] ... One might say that the first two weeks [in March 1967 after the military takeover in Guangzhou] marked my political coming of age. It was the first time that I ever really sat down and independently questioned politics in China. Before that time, it would probably never have happened. But now I had personally been hurt and wanted to know why."*⁶⁶

As he saw it, Dai had participated in full in the Cultural Revolution in order to gain rewards, material and psychological, but now this hope was dashed. From the age of 7 and joining the Young Pioneers, his ambition had been to become a Party member and serve it well. This attitude had also been behind his participation in the Cultural Revolution. Struggling against teachers or the Party committee was not a big thing, but 'seizing power' in bloody and dangerous fights was different.

*"What did I get for this? Nothing! ... I was actually being attacked and suppressed by the very authorities to whom I had dedicated my life. It seemed they had used me and then cast me aside when I had ceased to be of value to them. My bitterness knew no bounds."*⁶⁷

The second crackdown on the Rebel Red Guards that came in late 1967 compounded this discontent and disillusionment. Ken Ling recalled the bewilderment and disappointment of the Fujian Rebel Red Guards who were now being sidelined:

*"When we shouted, "Long live Chairman Mao!" we no longer knew the meaning of the words. Why weren't we allowed also to shout, "Long live Red Guards!"? Our basic premise was that we were the future masters of the country. Only after this basic premise was destroyed by Mao Zedong, were we to realise too late that Mao had used us more than we did him."*⁶⁸

Ken Ling was not the only Rebel Red Guard to experience such confusion over the outcome of the Cultural Revolution and Chairman Mao's role in it.⁶⁹ The events around the two attempts at seizure of power and crackdowns following them in different times in different provinces, prompted some of the Rebel Red Guards to develop a new explanation for what the struggle was ultimately about. This response became to be known as the 'new intellectual trend' (*xīn sīcháo*), a label that was first coined by Rebel theorists in Beijing in April 1967.⁷⁰

The new intellectual trend showed how Red Guard factionalism had developed new tentative diagnostic frames for the Rebel Red Guards' social mobilisation. The key issue was how to explain the emergence of capitalist roaders in the Party and, as Andrew G. Walder has noted, it was the elusiveness of the very doctrine that gave the Red Guard factions licence to formulate their own distinct explanations.⁷¹ For the Conservative Red Guards, the source of the capitalist roaders was identified with the members of the old bourgeois classes, who had somehow infiltrated the Party or were a threat to it. The mainstream of the Rebel Red Guards saw that the source of capitalist roaders in the Party was in moral and ideological weakness of individual officials. Cadres from all class backgrounds could be contaminated by bourgeois ideas and therefore struggled against. However, apart from widening the scope of the social struggle to those who came from a 'good' class background, the mainstream Rebels were satisfied with moral explanations of the phenomenon and did not attribute to it any deeper structural reasons. In the course of struggles, the Conservatives and Rebels became to resemble each other and could only be distinguished by their allegiance to this or that political leader. Nevertheless, the Rebel Red Guards also gave birth to the "ultra left" thinking that saw the problem in a systemic light.⁷² These radical ideas were called at the time the 'new intellectual trend'. The other Rebel Red Guards usually kept distance from the radicals, which thus formed a faction of its own within the Rebels.⁷³

The Radical Red Guards explanation for the sources of capitalist roaders drew heavily on the Maoist class analysis and conspiracy theory, but now it came with a twist: for the radicals the re-emergence of revisionists in the Party was based on the privileges bestowed upon the leading Party officials by a centralised economic management and Stalinist political system, not their bad class background or intellectual contamination from the old bourgeois classes. Here the radical analysis differed sharply from the official Maoist doctrine, where there was no room for attributing the emergence of capitalist roaders to structural maladies in proletarian dictatorship. Indeed, the Maoists regarded such views as 'bourgeois'.⁷⁴

Liu Guokai discussed this difference in a Guangzhou Democracy Movement journal *Renmin zhi sheng* in 1980, in an essay that had originally been written in 1971 as an early attempt to explain the Cultural Revolution. According to Liu, Mao had noted that the Cultural Revolution had caused such an enthusiastic response from the masses and came to concern the whole rank and file of the Party, because some cadres had become divorced from the masses and treated them in undemocratic and

an unequal way, putting on airs. Mao saw that the solution was for cadres to go down to the grass roots level and ‘walk around and talk to the people consulting them when problems arise and see themselves as pupils of the masses.’ For Liu Guokai this illustrated how Mao’s understanding of the issues involved was only tenuous. Mao did not realise that the problem was essentially the bureaucratic system itself. “*To oppose bureaucratism it is necessary to reform the political system, not use useless seizures of power*”, argued Liu.⁷⁵ This was basically the crux of the ‘new intellectual trend’.

A group that probably best synthesised this new intellectual trend was a Rebel Red Guard group named Shengwulian, which stood for the ‘Hunan Provincial Proletarian Revolutionaries Great Alliance Committee’,⁷⁶ in Changsha. The Group’s Manifesto, and other essays it produced, provide an insight into the ‘new intellectual trend’ and demonstrate how by the end of 1967 there were emerging ideological differences between Mao and the Radical Rebels.⁷⁷ As the Shengwulian group argued in its declarations, the revolutionary committees represented the old state machinery in disguise and only perpetuated the system that produced the privileged bureaucratic class. The revolutionary committees had to be ‘smashed’ and ‘buried’ and real transformation of the superstructure had to ensue. The Cultural Revolution had prepared the Red Guards for this and now the revolution had to be carried through establishing the ‘People’s Commune of China’. Shengwulian denounced those who thought this was only a utopian goal and not a scientific prediction of necessary development of history -a development that would still need violent class struggle.⁷⁸ The three-in-one combination of the revolution committees was denounced as “*a type of regime for the bourgeoisie to usurp power, in which the army and local bureaucrats will play a leading role.*” Furthermore, the Shengwulian manifesto now argued that

“...the basic contradictions that gave rise to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution are contradictions between the rule of the new bureaucratic bourgeoisie and the mass of the people. The growth and intensification of these contradictions determine the need for more thorough changes in the society. This means overthrowing the rule of the new bureaucratic bourgeoisie, complete smashing of the old state machinery, realisation of social revolution, carrying out the redistribution of property and power, and the establishment of a new society – the ‘People’s Commune of China.’ This is the basic program and final goal of the first Great Cultural Revolution.”⁷⁹

The Manifesto’s writer Yang Xiguang had been influenced by Rebel theorists in Beijing, who argued that Mao’s objective for the Cultural Revolution was to ‘redistribute property and overthrow the privileged’, whom Yang had become to equate with the Party officialdom. He now felt that the notion of the struggle between Mao Zedong and Liu Shaoqi lines could no longer explain the mass conflicts of the Cultural Revolution. His own experience in struggles prompted him to make such conclusions, but also the contacts he had made with the ‘rightists’ who had been

exiled to the countryside before the Cultural Revolution, and the grievances of peasants had held there towards their cadres had influenced his views.⁸⁰

The Shengwulian manifesto demonstrated how by the end of 1967, a small group of radical Red Guards saw the transformation of the Chinese political system as the real goal of the Cultural Revolution. The theory of a new class⁸¹ offered a new paradigm of thinking about the struggle and social mobilisation the Red Guards were engaged in: It was no longer only about Chairman Mao's correct line against the capitalist revisionist anti-communist line of Liu Shaoqi in the Party. It was about something else. When Mao had argued that 95 % of the Party cadres were good or comparatively good, Shengwulian now argued that 90 % of the Party cadres had formed a red capitalist class and had to be removed. They thus disagreed with their leaders on how to understand class struggle and saw it as a conflict between the lower and upper strata of the society. Moreover, they also saw that a political system modelled after the Paris Commune had to replace the existing political structures that perpetuated the old state machinery.⁸² As Wang Shaoguang has pointed out, this theorising marked how the pre-Cultural Revolution segregation of the population into good and bad classes was now turned to correspond the underlying social cleavage between the power holding elite and the rebels, who usually came from 'bad' class background or the victimised members of good classes, and wanted to challenge the status quo. The theory therefore had its apparent function in the ongoing struggle over who would be the winners of the post-Cultural Revolution proper order.⁸³

As Liu Guokai wrote during the Democracy Movement in 1980, 'Whither China' was the sharpest sign of the new trends of thought that the disillusionment of the Rebel Red Guards with the existing regime had caused to develop during 1967. Although it was still not yet a clear, systematic, and mature theory, it marked a shift away from factional strife toward deeper social analysis by Rebel Red Guards. Citing at length the essay on bureaucratism and reform and how the aim of the Cultural Revolution must be a society where bureaucratism is eliminated, Liu declared that although time had passed, it had not eroded the brilliance of the words. In 1980 they still made people's hearts leap. While not agreeing with all the views of Shengwulian, they still struck as 'lightning in night sky'. Despite containing some mistaken views, the spirit of exploration in them was a model for all democratic activists.⁸⁴ In his own essay Liu demonstrated how the Radical Red Guards' ideas had spread and influenced other Red Guards and still held sway in the Democracy Movement and he was not the only one to do so in the Democracy Wall Movement.⁸⁵

The Shengwulian manifestos were spread by the contacts the group had all over China⁸⁶ and even through the denunciation campaign mobilised against them.⁸⁷ According to Liu Guokai, many people hid copies of writings containing Shengwulian's and other 'ultra-left' thinking and disseminated them among the people they trusted.⁸⁸ The campaigns against the Rebel Red Guards and 'sending

down' policies in 1968 also caused many people to change their thinking in favour of the 'ultra-left' thinking, as Liu argued (using a definite future tense still in 1980),

*"Many who had not read the 'Whither China' sought it out, those who had read it spread it orally in secrecy. Some students and educated workers assumed 'ultra-left' position developing it further and losing interest in factional fighting. They directed their attention at the whole system analysing its essential issues, looking for the causes of social evils and exploring the correct revolutionary road. Their numbers were few, but capability high and they will contribute to the progress of Chinese society. The 'ultra-left' thinking has a great enlightenment role in contemporary Chinese society, it smashes the pressure of the fascist regime and punctures the curtain of spiritual enslavement just like a red star appearing on a dark night sky."*⁸⁹

Shengwulian was not the only Radical Red Guard group to advocate this new intellectual trend and other similar groups could be found at least in Hubei, Hunan, Guangxi, Shanghai, Beijing, Shandong, Wuhan, and Guangzhou. These groups also engaged in intellectual exchanges of ideas in their process of conceptualising the struggle.⁹⁰ However, in general the Red Guards' responses to the manifestos varied from approval to rejection of them as 'anarchism'.⁹¹ The common Rebel view was to see the Radicals as too bookish, naïve, and divorced from the reality of the struggle and the size of the Radical Red Guards groups remained small.⁹² The Shengwulian manifestos were nevertheless regarded as a major political incident and its ideas were denounced by the Party Centre as an 'extremely reactionary trend of thought'.⁹³ The group was subsequently brought down, but the way the suppression campaign against them took time and a lot of effort, revealed on its part the support the radical ideas enjoyed amongst the youth.⁹⁴

In early 1969 there were already also other signs of development in the Radical Red Guards' thinking towards better defined institutional solutions to the social conflict. These took the form of a 'transitory theory' to a Paris Commune type of political system. For example, in Wuhan a student close to a Rebel group named Juepai argued in an essay that the establishment of the People's Commune of China seemed to be too far in the future, and a temporary solution was needed. To this end, the writer proposed that the workers' congresses which the Rebels had established should act as supervisory bodies over the revolutionary committees. The withering away of the state would take time, and this would be the first step in that process, argued the writer. Wang Shaoguang sees that the Wuhan radicals' proposal was motivated by the Rebels' need to find ways to check the power of the revolutionary committees which were dominated by their opponents. As the revolutionary committees appeared to have come to stay, the radicals began to search for institutional safeguards against them. This also caused the mainstream Rebels to welcome the radicals' proposals for the first time in Wuhan. But as the Party Centre continued suppressing the Rebels, these proposals were never carried out.⁹⁵ Although the proposal was as such yet another move in factional manoeuvring, the theoretical

justification of a transitory period was an important development on its own and could be applied later.

Other important intellectual developments also occurred in 1969, when the first signs of a liberal trend of new thinking emerged. In Zhejiang, a group of people advocated ending the distinction between Rebels, Conservatives, and the capitalist roaders, and instead, unifying all as citizens. They also advocated general elections for the revolutionary committees as a way to choose leaders and bring an end to the social conflict. The proposals were reported to have had some following in the province, but the group suffered the same fate as the radical trend of new thinking. The liberal line was also condemned as reactionary and advocating ‘blind faith in elections’ by the centre.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, as the Li Yizhe case and the Democracy Movement later showed, the suppression of the Radical Red Guards and their theories, both radical and liberal, was never fully accomplished, and these radical ideas lived on forming the basis of independent social criticism about the post-Cultural Revolution proper order in China.

Learning in the Countryside

The 9th National Congress of the Communist Party effectively ended the Red Guards movement in April 1969. The Red Guards’ organisation remained in place in name, but their function now was to carry out the implementation of the sending down policies.⁹⁷ The policy had already begun in the end of 1967 and touched at least 17 million young Chinese, most of whom were sent to the countryside with only a minority assigned to work in urban areas.⁹⁸ This caused further widespread disillusionment with the New Establishment of the revolutionary committees. It was especially disappointing to the Red Guard members in the Rebel factions who were also otherwise subjected to suppression through recurrent campaigns, such as the ‘Cleaning Up the Class Ranks’. However, most Red Guards’ members in all factions suffered much the same fate. From being the masters of cities they were now ‘*thrown into the garbage bin of history*’, as one former Red Guard put it.⁹⁹ The clampdown caused a traumatic sense of loss, disillusionment, depression, disappointment, anger as well as cynicism and passive compliance from many who had thought they had just been doing the right thing.¹⁰⁰

Further, the often harsh realities of the Chinese countryside just added to these grievances. The harsh life in the villages came as a shock to the urbanite Red Guards and the prospect of spending the rest of their lives in remote villages was unsettling for many. Some saw it as an ‘utterly pointless’ exercise¹⁰¹, others would later regard it as a ‘monstrous crime’ of the Mao faction¹⁰². Consequently, many of the sent down youth tried to gain a permission to return to cities with varying success.¹⁰³ In the first half of the 70s, some of them were lucky enough to be able to draw on their connections, or appeal to their medical conditions, to be allowed to return to the cities, but most of them had to stay where they had been sent. Nevertheless, these

developments did not end the Cultural Revolution in the minds of many youngsters. In the villages they could get some distance from factional fighting, do more reading (albeit the supply of sources was usually limited) and observe the society around them.¹⁰⁴

There was also a lot of time in the countryside to ‘synthesize the experiences’ of the Cultural Revolution Proper. Together with getting to know the radical new class analysis, many ex-Red Guards now read carefully through texts of Marx and Lenin and other authors in the search for a better understanding of the society and their situation and arguments against the new regime. Going directly to the original works of Marx and Engels bypassing Mao and his soothsayers would in particular bring the youth new ideas for social criticism. Underground literature was also read whenever possible.¹⁰⁵ The sent-down youth also engaged in spirited debates over social issues in self-organised study groups. Some even considered forming underground cells for further action if the opportunity for rebellion would arise again, but as time went by, this hope faded. The numbers of such youth was in any case a minority, but it showed how the potential for critical social activism remained under the surface.¹⁰⁶

While many Rebel Red Guards held to their ‘ultra-left’ thought and developed it further after 1968-69 some former conservative Red Guards also became critical of the political system through their personal experiences. The backgrounds of some of the prominent activists in the Democracy Movement serve as good examples of this. Like many other Democracy Movement activists, Chen Ziming who became the editor of a journal titled Beijing zhi chun during the movement, came from a cadre family in Beijing. During the Cultural Revolution he had joined the conservative Red Guards and participated in Mao’s ‘extensive democracy’ in his middle school for two years, until he was sent down with his comrades to Inner Mongolia. Living in the countryside was an educational experience to Chen, but not in the way originally intended. Although the experience was not altogether disagreeable, Chen learned many disturbing facts about the horrors committed in Inner Mongolia where some of the bloodiest purges during the Cultural Revolution had been carried out, and were still going on when he arrived there. Moreover, he was able to spend time reading works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Mao, and even Montesquieu, and discuss politics with his comrades. When their debates turned to analysing reasons for the problems they saw around them, Chen could attribute them to the lack of popular supervision of the Party. Around this time he began to think that without democratic control, the Party was unable to correct its mistakes and shortcomings.¹⁰⁷

Chen actually made it good in Inner Mongolia, becoming the chairman of his production brigade’s revolutionary committee and a member of the Communist Youth League. His term there ended in 1974 when he was admitted to a college in Beijing. The educational system was still under Leftist control and did not offer many incentives for free and critical thinking, but in private Chen continued criticising members of the Gang of Four. This caused him trouble in 1975 when his correspondence with a friend in Inner Mongolia was intercepted. The letters

contained Chen's criticism of the power holders and he was consequently arrested and sentenced to three years of reform through labour in September 1975, for conspiring to subvert the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialist system. At first, Chen was able to serve his sentence at his college, but in late March 1976 it was decided that right place for him was in the labour camp where he was to be sent on 6 April 1976.

Some conservative Red Guards went even further in their social criticism. Wei Jingsheng was a son of a relatively high cadre family, an offspring of a deputy director of State Capital Construction Commission, a close aide to Chen Yun.¹⁰⁸ At the beginning of the Cultural Revolution Wei had been in a graduate class of his junior high school at the People's University (Renmin Daxue). His parents had given him a Marxist education and living interest in philosophy. He was accustomed to Marxism and Maoism and a staunch believer of their truths.¹⁰⁹ When the Cultural Revolution had begun, Wei was, according to his own words, already a 'fanatic Maoist'.¹¹⁰ As a child of a cadre family, Wei was a 'genuine Red Guard' and joined the conservative faction.¹¹¹ He saw the Cultural Revolution at the beginning as a genuine struggle against the class enemies who had wormed their way into the Party, and for the realisation of utopian visions in the works of Mao, Marx, and Lenin. However, during the course of the movement, Wei gradually lost his conviction and even began to doubt the motives of Chairman Mao. As revealed in his autobiography, the decisive event that set him to the road of dissent seems to have been a *chuanlian* trip to Xinjiang as a Red Guard. In an episode very similar to Ken Ling (see above), Wei saw hordes of beggars at the railway stations. The most striking was when he saw a naked woman beggar at a desolate train stop in the middle of nowhere. It made Wei ask himself: "*Was this the 'fruit' of socialism?*" Having lived the protected childhood of a higher cadre family in the capital, Wei was now shocked and moved by what he saw around him and began to wonder about the true merits of socialism.¹¹²

In Xinjiang, Wei had met many 'rightists' who had been exiled there in 1957 after the anti-right campaign and other sent-down students living in wretched conditions. After discussing with them he began to wonder why these people had been sent to Xinjiang, when far worse individuals held high posts in the Party. He also saw the dismal state of the country around him.

*"From then on whenever I read glowing praise in the newspapers for the 'superiority of socialism', or heard people brag about how socialism was better than capitalism I would swear silently, 'bullshit!'"*¹¹³

Not that this meant that he now approved of capitalism, but he had become sceptical of all official propaganda. He first thought that this dismal social situation was the result of the low ideological level of the cadres, but then he began to wonder why Mao allowed these cadres to keep their posts. When he could not come up with any other satisfactory answer, he became sceptical about Mao himself and started to

suspect that all power holders were selfish and rotten, unless proven otherwise. This was helped by the fact that Wei's faction of old Red Guards had turned against Mao's wife Jiang Qing.¹¹⁴

Jiang Qing had disbanded Wei's Red Guards faction in the capital in the summer of 1967. Wei managed to escape the arrests which followed and spent the following year on the run, finally ending up in a small village in Anhui where his distant relatives lived. The continuing political campaigns made him sceptical for the need of class struggle against the members of old exploiting classes and, like many other Red Guards, he now turned class analysis towards the power holders. Although he does not give them as his intellectual source, Wei clearly subscribed to the Radical Red Guards' thesis of a new bureaucratic class ruling over the people and using the doctrine of class struggle to deceive them into fighting against each other. He used Marxist class analysis to explain this to himself and described the realisation as 'awakening from a long dream'; while he saw everyone else still plunged into darkness around him. He also had an opportunity to continue reading works on Marx, Engels, and Lenin, which all contained ideas about socialist democracy that he approved. He also learned disturbing facts about economic dislocation and outright cannibalism, which had followed the famine caused by the Great Leap Forward in 1957-59. Thus, Wei discarded the official propaganda that attributed the cause of the famine to natural disasters and instead began to blame Chairman Mao and his followers for it.¹¹⁵

Wei's exile in Anhui ended in 1969 when his parents managed to get him drafted to the army. In 1973 he was demobbed and returned to Beijing, where he was assigned a job as an electrician at the Zoo. Wei was officially now the reddest of the red: a worker, peasant, and soldier.¹¹⁶ This, however, did not make him an ardent follower of the Party anymore. Although he still accepted the Cultural Revolution as a democratic experience, he now saw it as flawed in a very fundamental way: The Cultural Revolution was not directed against Mao's own position and his despotism. As Wei saw it, the problem was that the people were demanding democracy by following a tyrant,¹¹⁷ Mao Zedong had used the theory of class struggle to divide the people into imaginary interest groups eradicating their ability to distinguish their true interests.¹¹⁸ This meant that they were actually fighting the battles of Mao, and not those of their own. Wei's intellectual development also showed how a conservative Red Guard could come to accept much of the radical analysis of the state of Chinese society when first victimised by its leaders. However, as discussed in chapter 10 Wei also showed how, based on this criticism, one could also end up abandoning Marxism altogether.

What the Cultural Revolution proper and the Gang of Four phases had taught the Red Guards was that there was something fundamentally wrong with Chinese society and politics. The ideals and the reality did not match. This discontent continued even when some of the former Red Guards managed to return to cities like Liang Heng, who would become a democracy activist in Changsha. As he recalls:

“I read selections from Marx and Engels to find out more about Socialism ... and the more I read, the more I compared the societies they described with the one in which I lived, and the more confused I became. Of course, I was not alone in this; my troubles were common enough and anyone could see there was a discrepancy between the glorious word of the newspapers and the painful reality. Together with a group of old friends from the Hunan Daily, I went to parks and teahouses to discuss these problems.”¹¹⁹

An evident result of the Cultural Revolution was also the general scepticism of the politics and the Party, and in some cases, former Red Guards’ willingness to fight on. Liang Heng summarises the result of the Cultural Revolution for his generation:

“[B]y experiencing disaster my generation did learn one terribly important thing – the danger that lies in blind obedience. We have regained the ability to see world critically...”¹²⁰

What also added to the ex-Red Guard’s grievances was how the New Establishment waged campaigns against its ‘class enemies’ in successive waves in the early 70s, and how the ‘theory of bloodline’ staged a comeback in public life, making a good family background the precondition for school admissions, army recruitment, and even hospitals.¹²¹ Adding to the disillusionment was the Lin Biao Affair in 1971, when the Defence Minister and Chairman Mao’s heir apparent suddenly fell out of graces and died in a plane crash after an attempted coup.¹²² The person who was supposed to know best what Mao Zedong thought (after Mao himself, of course) now became ‘Leftist in appearance, but Rightist in essence’. The absurdity of the sudden change made many rethink their faith in Mao Zedong. However, people’s disbelief and alienation from Chairman Mao and Leftist policies did not amount to a general rejection of socialist ideals and Marxist worldview. Even many of those who defected to Hong Kong, with its freewheeling capitalism, were noted by Western observers to be “*still capable of a solid doctrinal, indeed at times doctrinaire, approach to analysing political life in China.*” And although the defectors could now be cynical about their former activities, they could still hold on to their old interpretations of the reasons for the Cultural Revolution.¹²³

Resurfacing Discontent: the Li Yizhe Group

Later events in the Cultural Revolution also gave many former Rebel Red Guards the opportunity to develop their political thinking. As they saw it, the new system of revolutionary committees had actually made their fears of revisionist restoration come true. After the social order had been restored in 1968, the new establishment emerged as something of an antithesis to the extensive democracy of the Red Guards. Now the leading Leftist group around Chairman Mao (defence minister Lin Biao and the group later dubbed as ‘Gang of Four’) used Mao’s thought to form a harshly

authoritarian form of government based on doctrinaire class struggle that was directed at anyone opposing them.¹²⁴ The way this authoritarian regime was rejected by former Radical Red Guards (and not only them) was well demonstrated in the famous Li Yizhe poster 'On Socialist Democracy and the Chinese Legal System' which appeared in Guangzhou in 1974. The poster was drafted by a four member activist group, three of whom gave it its name. They were all former Rebel Red Guards and the group's leader, Li Zhengtian, had had direct connections with the Radical Red Guards of the Juepai group in Wuhan.¹²⁵ He had been arrested in the crackdown against the Rebel Red Guards in Guangdong in 1968 and only released in 1972, but while in prison, he had secretly begun to write down his thoughts about the reasons for the failure of the Cultural Revolution. He blamed Lin Biao, and his concept of an all-powerful state, for creating a suppressive regime with no legal safeguards for citizens in it. After many drafts, the poster was finalised in 1973. The group decided to take it to Beijing as a petition, but they were intercepted *en route* and stopped. However, the incident made the reformists in the provincial leadership aware of the Li Yizhe group.¹²⁶

Mao decided once more to allow criticism of officials in May 1974 and as the result, a wave of posters critical of the privileges of local cadres and demanding rehabilitation of the Cultural Revolution victims appeared all over China. In Guangdong, the pragmatic leader Zhao Ziyang had been restored as the provincial Party secretary in April 1974 and began to encourage the ex-Rebels to be active in the campaign and attack his political enemies in the provincial leadership. A "marriage of convenience" therefore formed between the former Radical Red Guards and the pragmatic wing of the Party, allowing the former to voice their discontent. As a consequence, the third draft of the Li Yizhe manifesto was publicly posted in Guangzhou on November 10, 1974 attracting a wide audience and debate.¹²⁷

The Li Yizhe poster offered a critical class analysis on the condition of Chinese society that was highly reminiscent of Shengwulian manifesto. According to Li Yizhe, the Cultural Revolution was far from being completed. Quite the reverse, they argued that the 'Lin Biao System' (*tixi*) had enabled feudal values to remain dominant in the political system and allowed for bourgeois restoration to take place. The Lin Biao system included the revolutionary committees, but it denoted a larger complex of ruling the masses through discursive and repressive means. The system was based on the personality cult of Chairman Mao that Lin Biao and the restored bureaucrats employed to rule over China. Li Yizhe argued that Lin Biao and his followers had carried out usurpation of power and restoration of capitalism through using the people's revolutionary movement and substituting peoples' attitudes towards 'genius' for judging whether one takes socialist or capitalist roads making the legal system redundant.¹²⁸ Li Yizhe argued that they were offering a return to true Marxism, stating that "*We only attempt to use the weapons of Marxism to make serious improvement in the spheres which have been influenced and damaged by the Lin Biao System.*"¹²⁹ As they argued drawing to the new class analysis:

“The essence of the new bourgeois mode of possession is ‘changing the public into private’ under the condition of socialist ownership of the means of production. When the leader of the state or an enterprise redistributes the properties and powers of the proletariat in a bourgeois manner, he is, in fact, practising the new bourgeois private possession of these properties and powers ... some leaders have expanded the necessary preferential treatment granted by the Party and the people into political and economic special privileges and then expanded them boundlessly to their families and clansmen, relatives and friends, even to a degree of exchanging special privileges [among themselves], of obtaining their children inheritance of political and economic positions ... they must maintain their vested privileges and obtain more preferential treatment, attack the upright revolutionary comrades who insist on principles, suppress the masses who rise to oppose their special privileges, and illegally deprive these comrades and masses of their political rights and economic interests. ... They have completed the qualitative change from “public servants of the people” to “masters of the people”, becoming what we call “power-holders taking the capitalist road”. ”¹³⁰

The Li Yizhe argued that the demarcation line between the proletarian revolutionaries and the conservatives was whether one acknowledged the danger of restoration of the privileged bureaucratic class or not. For them the Cultural Revolution had not accomplished its mission:

“The reason that our ‘system’ is frightening is ... because we assert that “This Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution has not accomplished the tasks of a great proletarian cultural revolution because it has not enabled the people to hold firmly the weapon of the extensive people’s democracy”. ”¹³¹

This extensive democracy included the freedoms of speech, press, association, and the exchange of revolutionary experiences which, apart from the last one, were all stipulated in the constitution. All had been practised in the Cultural Revolution, but now the people had been denied them because of the Lin Biao system.¹³² Lin Biao’s collapse had not meant the end of his system, which now had created a force of bureaucrats who shared vested interests and were afraid of the masses of the people whom the bureaucrats still continued to deceive and suppress.¹³³

Li Yizhe’s poster’s message was clear: it argued for returning the people the right to criticise and supervise officials and cadres without fear of retribution as people had supposedly done during the Cultural Revolution. The poster synthesised in many ways the basic features of Radical Red Guards’ social diagnostics. It was based on the view of an existing contradiction between the masses of the people and a new bureaucratic class. However, it also showed how, unlike the early radical thinking, the activists in the mid 70s had developed the transitory theory further, and become to stress the need of democratic institutions which enabled popular supervision of bureaucracy and legal system as the solution to this contradiction. The view of

possibility, even necessity, of social mobilisation to promote the change was also retained in Li Yizhe, when it argued that the Cultural Revolution was not over. The Li Yizhe poster was well known to the Democracy Movement participants and the poster was even reprinted in the Democracy Movement journal *Beijing zhi chun*.¹³⁴ It therefore represented ideological continuity from the Cultural Revolution that would also resurface in many other articles during the Democracy Movement. Indeed, some Democracy Movement activists even presented the Li Yizhe poster in this way.¹³⁵

The Party Centre finally denounced the Li Yizhe manifesto as a counterrevolutionary document. As a consequence a ‘Criticism Li Yizhe’ campaign was conducted in Guangdong in 1975. But the in which manner the accused were allowed to defend themselves also spread their fame and message further. Nevertheless, in 1977 Li Zhengtian was sent to a stone quarry and the other two members of the group went down to the countryside. After the purge of the Gang of Four, they were all imprisoned.¹³⁶ The Li Yizhe poster was also not the only reported case where the coming Democracy Movement activists had criticised the Party Left and the new bureaucratic class in wall posters. For example, on 11 September 1975 a former Red Guard, Xu Shuiliang, wrote in Nanjing a 10-sheet long poster critical of the result of the Cultural Revolution. Like Li Yizhe, he denounced the fascist dictatorship of the new bureaucrats and demanded struggle against ‘the privileged aristocrats’. He was imprisoned in 1975 and only released in 1979 after which he took part in the Democracy Movement.¹³⁷

The Legacy of the Cultural Revolution

As the proponents of the ‘parallel revolution’ view hold it, the Cultural Revolution had considerable popular support behind it and caused a profound change in political awareness of the Red Guard generation that experienced it. Taking this proposition as the starting point here, we have made a short inquiry into the popular side of the Cultural Revolution, enquiring what made the Cultural Revolution so ‘enlightening’ an experience to some Red Guards, and what was the nature of this enlightenment? It is clear that the answer is in the way the Cultural Revolution shattered a generation’s faith in Chairman Mao and authoritarian Party rule, and gave them discursive resources to diagnose the society and argue for social mobilisation for political reforms. As Wang Shaoguang has pointed out, the Cultural Revolution was important in two aspects when it comes to the Red Guards: They were the first popular organisations that were allowed to function in the PRC after 1949 outside a direct control of the Party, and they also broke down the organisational segmentation of the Chinese population into isolated units (be it work, study or other units) that the Party hierarchy guided.¹³⁸ This gave the Red Guard members the model for their later social activism. The Cultural Revolution also provided them with the example how the establishment could be challenged through protest – something which had not happened before the Cultural Revolution, not in any major scale anyhow, but which had become a real option after it.¹³⁹

The disillusionment with the establishment was also important. The youth had responded with enthusiasm to Chairman Mao's call-to-arms in 1966, even if at first it was unclear to them what the struggle was exactly about. When it dawned on them that they had been used in a Party-wide purge of Mao's political opponents, they had already experienced and learned to appreciate the freedom of political participation in struggle against authorities they rejected. As a consequence, the theory of a new class was developed to justify the Radical Red Guards' activism. The consequent crackdown exactly proved many of them the correctness of the fears of 'bourgeois restoration' and the formation of a privileged bureaucratic class in China. Not all Red Guards agreed on the theory of a new class or were willing to engage in political activism again, but the sheer size of China and the extensive nature of the Cultural Revolution would almost guarantee that there were always those Radical Red Guards and others convinced by their arguments, who would be willing to stick to their ideals and hopes of comeback in some form – and continuing the Cultural Revolution to its rightful end. As Li Yizhe predicted in its poster: "*A mass movement to thoroughly destroy the Lin Biao system will come in the not too remote future, it will restore and develop all the spirits of the first Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.*"¹⁴⁰ At the time this was as much about defiance against the post-1968 rulers than a calculated reflection, but in a way it turned out to be true, as the power struggle within the Party leadership did finally enable the pragmatic faction to once more enlist the former Red Guards' criticism to their side in 1978.

Li Yizhe also showed how the Cultural Revolution was regarded as a test and experience that gave Li Yizhe members their credentials:

*"We are, allegedly, the youth who are 'not afraid of tigers; but we are not unaware of the ferocity and cruelty of the tigers.' We even dare to say that we are survivors who were once bitten by that kind of animal but in the end could not be gnawed firmly between the teeth or swallowed; on our faces, there are claw marks so we are not handsome figures. Obviously, we have read very little of Marxism-Leninism; but chiefly because we have been educated by cruel reality, we have come to know a little of it and wish to say something of it."*¹⁴¹

Li Yizhe presented itself as a section of those Red Guards who had not given up the fight for 'realising the revolution'. A similar heroic self-image of being enlightened through the experience of the Cultural Revolution and remaining dedicated to the cause was projected by the Democracy Movement activists when they referred to themselves and their shared past experiences. However, Li Yizhe's case also pointed to another development: that of establishing ties between the radical Red Guards and the pragmatic members of the establishment, both of which shared the same enemies, even if not the same vision of the ideal political system. This was an uneasy coalition at best. For example, Stanley Rosen et al. have argued that on balance the Canton moderate leaders probably saw the Li Yizhe attack on the Leftists preferable than silencing the critics, even if part of their criticism was directed at the pragmatic

members now forming a part of the new regime. Some of these pragmatic faction members were nevertheless also ready to support the suppression of those sympathetic to the message of an emergence of a new privileged class under socialism.¹⁴² Therefore, when the Gang of Four period of what would be later termed as the 10 years of the Cultural Revolution drew to end in 1976, it had created most of the components needed to generate the Democracy Movement in 1978.

The Immediate Background of the Democracy Wall Movement

The later part of this chapter focuses on the events that created the political opportunity for the Democracy Movement. Like the Cultural Revolution, these events were closely connected to the power struggle in the Party leadership. It was brought to a new juncture when Chairman Mao's turn to 'go to meet Marx' came on the night of the September 9th, 1976. During the Gang of Four phase of the Cultural Revolution, the pragmatists – Leftists split in the Party leadership had been personified in Premier Zhou Enlai and Jiang Qing and her close allies, who were later labelled as the 'Gang of Four', but who at the time assumed the name 'left faction' (*zuǒpài*) as a honorific title. The struggle followed the factional lines that had already set the rhythm of the political pulse of the People's Republic long before. It was clear that Chairman Mao's death would bring another change in this rhythm, but in September 1976 it was not clear in which way the tune would go.

An important method in the struggle was cadre politics, whereby factions sought to appoint their own members to vital political and administrative posts, the two most significant of which were the premiership and especially the post of the Party chairman. Mao had had a heart attack in 1972 and Premier Zhou Enlai had been diagnosed with cancer in 1973 both of which had signalled the beginning of the post-Mao power struggle. Zhou Enlai had nominated his heir apparent in 1973-1975 by rehabilitating and restoring Deng Xiaoping to vice-premiership. This had happened with Mao's consent, if not with full endorsement.¹⁴³ Previously Deng Xiaoping had been purged at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution and dubbed as the 'no. 2 capitalist roader in the Party leadership' (no. 1 being President Liu Shaoqi who had also been purged and in effect murdered during the Cultural Revolution proper). In the mid-1970s, the Leftists constantly attacked Deng on similar charges: he was still accused of being the 'no. 2 capitalist roader' based on the 'three poisonous weeds' of pragmatic policy initiatives drafted under his direction.¹⁴⁴ Before the events in 1976 the situation favoured the Gang of Four.¹⁴⁵ But once Mao was out of the picture, the scene changed dramatically.

The Tiananmen Incident

Although Chairman Mao and Premier Zhou both died in 1976, Zhou went first on the 8th of February. The departure of their chief adversary from the scene emboldened

the Gang of Four to step up its attacks on Deng Xiaoping, who suffered an almost decisive defeat in the struggle after the Tiananmen Square demonstrations that occurred on 5 April 1976. The demonstrators were originally paying their homage to Premier Zhou on the *Qingming* festival (or 'Day of the Dead'). On this traditional day to commemorate the dead, it had also become the day to remember revolutionary martyrs after the revolution. It has been estimated that in January about two million Beijing residents had already mourned the premier publicly until the mourning period had been abruptly declared over.¹⁴⁶ In the following two months, the Party Left attacked both Deng and Zhou in the press and re-emphasised the urgency of class struggle. The late premier was now even labelled a 'capitalist roader' by some of the Leftist newspapers. This probably only helped to increase popular discontent over the Leftist leadership as Zhou Enlai had become widely popular for what were regarded as attempts to moderate the Cultural Revolution.¹⁴⁷

The events during the *Qingming* in early May brought this discontent to surface. As an act of civil defiance to the Party Left that had forbidden open mourning of the death of Zhou Enlai, tens of thousands of Beijingers gathered on Tiananmen Square laying wreaths, giving speeches, and reciting poems in memory of the late premier. Some of the mourners even openly criticised the Gang of Four and its policies. During the night between 4th and 5th of May, the Beijing authorities cleared Tiananmen Square of the flowers, posters and wreaths, which the mourners had left there. The next day tens of thousands of infuriated Beijingers, many of whom were former Red Guards and future Democracy Movement activists, came to the Square to protest against this action bringing with them new wreaths and citing poems even more openly critical to the Party Left. The broadcasted command to the crowds to disperse by Wu De, the Chairman of the Beijing Municipal Revolutionary Committee, did not help. The protest turned into a riot where the mob burned a police station, overturned cars setting them on fire, and injured several policemen. In the evening the demonstration was violently suppressed by the workers' militia and the police. Over a hundred people were reportedly killed and some four thousand arrested. The Gang of Four accused Deng Xiaoping for the incident and as a consequence he was once again purged from the Party leadership.¹⁴⁸

Chen Ziming also participated in the Tiananmen incident. At first, on 4 April, he joined the people on the Square reading out poems written by others but when the things turned ugly on 5 April, Chen became a leading figure in the riots. He was photographed and even shown on TV agitating the mob against the police. When the security forces started to restore order, Chen managed to escape, but the police wanted him as a ringleader of the riot. The TV even described him as a 'shortcut shorty' leading the riot. However, Chen managed to elude a second, possibly fatal, arrest by a curious stroke of luck. Initially the police had not identified him properly and therefore could not find him. Moreover, it did not know where to look for Chen in the first place – which was because he had already been sent to a labour camp to serve his previous sentence.¹⁴⁹

This event came to be known as the ‘Tiananmen Incident’ and the official Party line labelled it as a counterrevolutionary attempt to overthrow the proletarian class dictatorship and the Party. There was some truth in the charge, in that the demonstration was clearly not just about innocent mourning, but also an open expression of popular discontent against the Party Left, and ultimately Chairman Mao even. Condemning the events’ participants as counterrevolutionaries affected millions of people in the capital and all over the country,¹⁵⁰ and during the ensuing crackdown some 40 000 people were reported to be arrested for participating in the events.¹⁵¹ The official verdict on the Tiananmen Incident also became the key issue in the power struggle and the beginning of the Democracy Movement.

Deng Xiaoping and the Emancipation of Minds Campaign

Before he died, Mao’s last surprise decision was his choice of successor as the next Party chairman. This was the Security Minister and fifth-ranking Vice-premier Hua Guofeng, who was for all practical purposes a man from the blue. However, it was probably exactly his limited role in the factional fighting that made him the best choice in Mao’s search for a compromise solution as the next Party secretary. Mao frowned on the Party technocrats, but he probably realised that unpopular Leftist policies could destroy the Party after his death. Ideologically Hua was in the middle in this struggle and thus with him the chairman’s ‘heart was at ease.’¹⁵²

The first major action which Hua took after Mao’s death was removing the Gang of Four from power on October 6, 1976 in an action that took the form of a classical palace coup. This was followed with a nation-wide press campaign against the Gang of Four that lasted well into the year 1977.¹⁵³ Hua’s position in the Party leadership was weak, and a powerful Leftist faction with its own succession plans and power base was a real threat to him. Hua also announced his intention to uphold the decisions on the removal of Deng Xiaoping from the office.¹⁵⁴ However, Hua was not able to act on his own, but needed the backing of more conservative allies, which he could find in the army. Naturally, this did not happen without *quid pro quo*. The price of the support from the moderate army leaders for their help in the October coup was the rehabilitation of Deng Xiaoping and his restoration to his previous posts in the Party, many of which had actually been assigned to Hua after the Tiananmen Incident. After publicly accepting Hua’s leadership in two letters in October 1976 and April 1977, Deng Xiaoping was restored to most of his former positions.¹⁵⁵

Deng’s commitment to Hua’s leadership was tenuous at best. Immediately after Deng had been restored to his former posts in the third plenum of the tenth central committee in July 1977, he began to criticise Hua. Ostensibly, the issue was over the correct interpretation of Mao Zedong thought, but the challenge amounted to an indirect attack on Hua’s leadership and the Leftist policies in general. The relationship between Mao’s doctrines and the Party was very problematic after his

death. On the one hand Leftist policies and the Cultural Revolution had greatly damaged the Party's legitimacy, but on the other, criticising Mao could easily lead to criticising the Party itself. Both Hua and Deng faced this dilemma.¹⁵⁶

Hua's solution to the problem was the doctrine of the 'two Whatever's', which he raised on 7 February, 1977 in the leading newspapers. According to this doctrine, 'the Party had to follow whatever Chairman Mao had ordered and continue implementing whatever policies he had initiated'. And this had to happen under the leadership of Chairman Hua. The rationale behind this dogmatism was straightforward. Hua had received his post directly from Mao and thus criticism of his policies or to allow Deng Xiaoping to return to the political centre would have weakened Hua's already precarious position. Thus Hua's faction was termed the 'Whatever faction' (*fánshìpài*) after the formulation.¹⁵⁷ So although Hua had to give in concerning Deng Xiaoping's rehabilitation, Hua's unwillingness to give in on the ideological front meant that the year 1978 began in an atmosphere of growing power struggle cloaked in a controversy over rather abstruse ideological issues.¹⁵⁸

For the time being, the 'two whatever's' remained the official dogma, but the Dengist line gained more popular following during 1977 and 1978. A member of the reformist intellectual wing of the Dengist faction, Li Honglin, sees that the pragmatic line could be summarised in four related points: i) Leaders had to be regarded as people, not gods, and all 'superstitions' had to be eradicated including the personality cult of Chairman Mao; ii) in the economy, ideological incentives had to be seen as ineffective and egalitarianism had to be renounced, making the construction of an economic base the key to modernisation policy; iii) that class struggle should not be considered the key in politics anymore; and iv) that the emphasis had to be put on natural science and technical expertise in all fields, dispensing with ignorance and backwardness.¹⁵⁹ These points became the content of the so called 'emancipation of minds campaign' (*sīxiǎng jiěfàng yùndòng*) that the Dengists launched against the Whateverists in the summer of 1978.

In early 1978, Deng escalated his ideological assault. As Garside points out, Deng's tactics were not to denounce Mao Zedong thought *in toto*, but bring to the fore pragmatic features from his early writings thereby downgrading 'Mao the demigod into Mao the man'.¹⁶⁰ Deng now proposed that merits and demerits of Mao Zedong thought should be judged according to the formula of 'seeking truth from facts' (*shíshì qiúshì*) and the principle of 'practise is the sole criterion of truth' (*shíjiàn shì jiǎnyàn zhēnlíde wéiyī biāozhǔn*) that early Mao himself had advocated.¹⁶¹ The central message was that Mao's policies, or the Leftist interpretation of them, were not beyond criticism anymore. The doctrine was made public on 11 May 1978, when *Guangming Ribao* ran an article declaring that 'practise is the sole criterion of truth'.¹⁶² The article was published under the name of a Nanjing university lecturer, Hu Fuming, but it was drafted under the supervision of Deng's protégé, Hu Yaobang, and sounded the beginning of the emancipation of minds campaign. In July 1978 *Renmin ribao* also published Mao's speech from 1962 where he had made self-

criticism for the Great Leap Forward publicly portraying the Mao as fallible for the first time.¹⁶³

As the year 1978 went on, the debate in the press demonstrated widespread popular support for Deng's pragmatic doctrines making the campaign a decisive victory for his faction. Of the major newspapers and magazines, only the Central Committee's *Hongqi* (Red Flag) stayed out of the debate after being ordered to do so by its editor in chief Wang Dongxing.¹⁶⁴ As David Goodman rightly points out, neither side's doctrines appeared particularly original or philosophically sophisticated.¹⁶⁵ However, they had serious implications in the post-Mao politics in China. Indeed, Deng's doctrine was a direct step toward the demolition of the personality cult of Mao and met with strong resistance from the Whatever faction, whose members accused Deng of trying to 'cut down the banner' of Mao Zedong Thought. However, Deng affirmed his stance on Mao Zedong thought on 2 June 1978 when giving a speech to a national political congress.¹⁶⁶ Indeed, destroying Mao's excessive prestige would destroy the authority of those deriving their powers from the Cultural Revolutionary policies and the Maoist dogma.

Deng's stance enabled him to criticise Hua and his followers, who were usually younger, less educated and had benefited from the Cultural Revolution. Deng's support came from the older revolutionary generation in the Party and reformist intellectuals who all had suffered during the Cultural Revolution. However, his factional coalition was largely a product of the circumstances; it consisted of members of very diverse orientations ranging from reformists like Hu Yaobang to ideological conservatives like Hu Qiaomu and Deng Liqun, and economic pragmatics like Zhao Ziyang and economic conservatives like Chen Yun. What united the faction was its members' shared humiliation during the Cultural Revolution and opposition to the powerful rival Whateverist faction, but initially even Deng's faction had little ideological coherence.¹⁶⁷ Because cadre politics was the main method in the struggle, it was a genuine power struggle over leadership positions on its own. However, dimensions of ideology and satisfying a leader's own faction by tenures are always hard to separate in Chinese politics. Turning the tables on the Maoist policies required a loyal Party organisation, which was willing to carry out Deng's pragmatic policies. Nevertheless, ideology was not an empty issue in the struggle either, as there was a genuine disagreement over the political line the Party should take.¹⁶⁸

As Li Honglin has noted, the important fact in the campaign to liberate minds was that it was the first time in the history of the People's Republic when an officially endorsed campaign was aimed at the Party Left. All other campaigns before it had targeted the 'rightists' and various other elements in and outside the Party. Further, the campaign's methods were different from those before, as this one did not include 'giving out hats', 'striking down' designed enemies in mass meetings, or 'denunciation' of certain personages in media campaigns.¹⁶⁹ It was an ideological campaign that was welcomed by many as it ushered in a phase of openness. A

propaganda campaign – which is an integral part of all political campaigns in China – was also at the heart of this struggle, calling for theoretical debate and abandoning Leftist dogmatism. This formed an important background factor in the emergence of the Democracy Movement, as criticism of the Leftist policies, its ideology and leading personages formed a central part in ex-Red Guards' agenda. The political opportunity that gave rise to the Democracy Movement came about amidst an ideological struggle over the correct interpretation of Marxism in China. However, the reversal of the Tiananmen Incident verdict became the key event that allowed simmering discontent to surface.

Simmering Discontent

The signs of discontent had already been visible on the streets and walls of the capital for some time. As a show of popular defiance, the anniversaries of the death of Premier Zhou and the Tiananmen Incident on the April 5th, had been commemorated by Beijingers with wreaths, dazibaos and flowers both in 1977 and 1978. On January 8, 1977 a young worker and a demobilised soldier had put up a poster at Tiananmen Square demanding reversal of Tiananmen Incident verdict and criticising Wu De, the chairman of the revolutionary committee. They stated that the Tiananmen Incident had been a revolutionary and self-aware struggle against the Gang of Four and for the late Premier. It had shown great popular resistance *“against those taking capitalist road in the Party, deepest experience of our one billion of people and its revolutionary class consciousness. The practise of the Tiananmen struggle was connected to its deep historical origins and social contradictions, and it requires an honest conclusion...”*¹⁷⁰ In another incident on the same day, a poster by Central Art School teacher Du Jiang titled ‘Long Live the People’ also criticised Wu De. The case reportedly led to the arrest of some 80 people.¹⁷¹ A group of Beijing factory workers went so far as to present a six-point petition at the Xinhua gate demanding, among other things, reinvestigation of the Tiananmen Incident, reinstating of Deng Xiaoping and transfer of Wu De. These petitioners were arrested. Eyewitnesses also reported a young man giving public speeches around Beijing advocating Montesquieu-style democracy.¹⁷²

That these posters were taken seriously in the Party leadership was shown in the way the Central Committee issued the Central Document Number Five on 8 February 1977, titled ‘Notification of the Central Committee on Firmly Puncturing Political Rumours’. The poster writers were denounced as class enemies attacking viciously the image of Chairman Mao, inciting the masses and attempting to divide the Central Committee. The Notification also ordered the police to take firm action against the writers.¹⁷³ Despite the ensuing police action, similar posters continued to appear. In early 1978 there was a poster where Wu De was criticised for cruelly suppressing and persecuting the Tiananmen Incident protesters. The poster also implied that Chairman Hua had been Wu’s *hòutái*, (the one who pulls the strings behind the scenes). Although the poster was swiftly removed, it was followed by similar posters

criticising Hua Guofeng and members of the Whatever faction linking them to the Gang of Four.¹⁷⁴

On 13 March, during the 5th National People's Congress meeting, a dazibao was put up on Chaoyangmen entitled 'Is This Democracy?' accusing the representatives in the Congress had not been elected by the people. On 20 March a further dazibao 'Hide & Seek' appeared in the same place and continued the criticism of the National People's Congress as a charade of dictatorship and the police for tearing down the previous poster. In April there appeared three posters in Beijing criticising Hua Guofeng's faction members and praising Deng Xiaoping. Similar posters were also reported in Tianjin, Xi'an, and Guangdong. From June to November there were 12 reported cases of posters demanding the reversal of the Tiananmen Incident verdict in Beijing. Other provinces also reported similar posters.¹⁷⁵

The 'Fifth of April Movement' poems were also published in various underground collections.¹⁷⁶ For example, a collection of these poems was compiled, edited and published by the Beijing Institute of Foreign Languages number 2 in two parts in early 1977 to June 1977 under the name of Zhong Huaizhou – a pseudonym of 16 teachers at the institute.¹⁷⁷ In March 1978, the poems were also posted on the Xidan wall¹⁷⁸ located in the Xidan district in downtown Beijing to the west of Zhongnanhai and Tiananmen Square along Chang'an Avenue. According to a commentator in a Democracy Movement journal *Kexue minzhu fazhi*, a young person called Jun Ming had also raised the call for a public space for open discussion and expression of opinions in a poster entitled 'People's Forum – Calling for Co-Warriors' at the revolutionary memorial stele on Tiananmen Square around this time.¹⁷⁹

The Xidan Wall also came into the spotlight in the inner Party struggle in the emancipation of minds campaign, when the first issue of the Communist Youth League's journal *Zhongguo qingnian* (China Youth) was banned by Wang Dongxing. The issue that was scheduled to come out on 11 September 1978 carried articles appraising the Tiananmen Incident positively and criticising the way the police had handled the case. The journal also participated in the emancipation of minds campaign through criticising the personality cult of Chairman Mao as 'religious superstition' claiming that '*a priori* belief in Mao Zedong thought is absurd'. When Wang Dongxing as the head of the Party propaganda work stopped the publication of the issue, the journal's editors posted the whole magazine page by page on the Xidan wall. After learning about the case, Deng Xiaoping is said to have intervened personally, and the journal was published on 20 September.¹⁸⁰

Some students see the *Zhongguo qingnian* incident as the inauguration of the Xidan Democracy Wall,¹⁸¹ while some reformists in the Party still regard this incident as the starting point of Beijing Spring, or the Democracy Movement combined with the emancipation of minds campaign.¹⁸² However, there was a notable gap of two months between the incident and the beginning of the Democracy Wall Movement, and it is therefore hard to regard the incident as the proper starting point of the movement.

Nevertheless, there existed a geographical link between the two, as the incident did promote Xidan as a focal place for political posters, *dazibaos*.

Political Opportunity Arises: the Reversal of the Tiananmen Incident Verdict

As we have seen, Deng Xiaoping had been accused of having acted as the mastermind behind the Fifth of April 1976 demonstrations, and based on these charges removed from his leadership posts. Thus, when the working conference of the third plenum of the eleventh central committee reversed the verdict from a 'counter-revolutionary event' to 'a complete revolutionary' one on November 14 1978, it signalled a decisive victory for Deng.¹⁸³ Beijing's revolutionary committee was quick to comply and released all those who had been involved in the incident and still remained imprisoned on 15 November¹⁸⁴ and the decision to reverse the verdict was made public on 16 November.¹⁸⁵ On 19 November, Renmin ribao declared that none of the over 300 people who had been arrested during the incident were counterrevolutionaries.¹⁸⁶ Reversal of the verdict made also Chen Ziming a Tiananmen Incident hero overnight. Not only was he rehabilitated, but also made a member in the Communist Youth League. Knowing his background, it was not surprising that the Democracy Wall drew his attention from the beginning. It gave him an excellent opportunity to criticise the Leftist regime and his old enemies, as well as propose his ideas for political reforms. He was not alone.¹⁸⁷

The Tiananmen Incident's symbolic significance was central to the emergence of the Democracy Movement. Indeed, for most of the Democracy Movement participants, this reversal marked the beginning of the Democracy Movement proper.¹⁸⁸ The reversal happened after the Leftist Wu De had been removed from his post on 11 October, and a Dengist Lin Hujia had taken his place as the chairman of the city's revolutionary committee.¹⁸⁹ The reversal of the verdict also marked the beginning of a press campaign to applaud the Tiananmen Incident and its participants. On 21 November, Renmin ribao ran a long article on the 'Truth about the Tiananmen Incident' praising the people taking part in the Fifth of April Movement.¹⁹⁰ Zhongguo qingnian had already run on 27 October an article '*Safeguard Socialist Democracy and Bring It into Full Play*' emphasising democracy as the key issue to the Party. Renmin ribao's article on 8 November declared that '*Party Officials Should Welcome Criticism*'. On 15 November, Guangming Ribao declared in its turn that '*The Democratic rights of the People Brook no Violation*'.¹⁹¹ All in all the press campaign lasted well into late January of 1979, when the last articles of rehabilitation of the Tiananmen incident heroes were reported in the press.¹⁹²

At the same time as the emancipation of minds campaign also other important campaigns were going on. The first campaign advocated the expression of grievances against those low and middle level cadres and officials who had abused their powers during the Cultural Revolution, emphasising the need for 'democratic control over bureaucracy'. It was connected to the rehabilitation campaign for the victims of the

Cultural Revolution and the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957, which was going on simultaneously.¹⁹³ On 17 November 1979, Renmin ribao announced that all those who had been branded as rightists in 1957 would have their cases re-examined. In another article the cadres were also urged to properly deal with the petitions of people and not mistake them for ‘poison-pen letters’ (*hēixìn*).¹⁹⁴ In early 1979, the rehabilitation campaign was publicly expanded to include those who were branded ‘landlords, counterrevolutionaries and bad elements’ so that they would regain their citizen rights. In total, including the family members of the victims, the rehabilitation drive is estimated to have affected some 200 million Chinese.¹⁹⁵

On 24 and 27 November, Renmin ribao ran several articles on the importance of socialist legality, the legal system (*fǎzhì*), civil law, and democracy.¹⁹⁶ It also ran an article on reformation of the cadre system.¹⁹⁷ These all also became topics in the Democracy Movement that was beginning to take form. Connected to this press campaign, a play about the Tiananmen Incident written by a Shanghainese writer Zong Fuxian and entitled ‘Where Silence Reigns’, premiered in Beijing. It praised the courage of the Tiananmen Incident participants and received good reviews in the press, which sent another clear message to the audience on political activism against the Party Left.¹⁹⁸ Furthermore, ‘Tiananmen poetry’, which was written during the Tiananmen incident criticising the Gang of Four and the Cultural Revolution, resurfaced with Deng’s approval when *Tiananmen Sichao* (A Collection of Tiananmen Poems) was officially published in November 1978 – with Chairman Hua’s calligraphy on its cover page.¹⁹⁹ These were the key events which ignited the Democracy Movement.

The Xidan Wall

Immediately after the reversal of the Tiananmen Incident verdict was made public, wall posters appeared in many places in Beijing approving the decision, but it was the Xidan Wall that now started to attract most attention. It was an unimpressive grey-yellow brick wall that was about 200 metres long and some 3 metres high, protecting the municipal bus depot and running alongside the busy Chang’an Avenue lined with Chinese parasol trees. As a venue it might have lacked brilliance, but then it was just as crude as the state of the socialist democracy around it. Of course, when the Democracy Movement became better organised, it developed some sophistication in its own journals and seminars, but the main place remained the same. It was first called the ‘Chinese Hyde Park’, but as there were no parks nearby, the name was changed into the ‘Xidan Democracy Wall’ or just the ‘Democracy Wall’ (*Mínzhǔ qiáng*).²⁰⁰

The first posters of what was to become the ‘Democracy Wall Movement’ appeared on the Xidan Wall soon after the reversal of the Tiananmen Incident verdict. A writer in one of the Democracy Movement’s major journals, Siwu luntan, later considered that the first poster to appear at the Democracy Wall as a part of the Democracy

Movement proper was an unofficial report about the questions at the work conference of the third plenum of the eleventh central committee.²⁰¹ However, a leading Democracy Movement activist, Liu Qing, maintains that the poster that truly sparked off the Democracy Wall was written by Lü Po, a founding member of Siwu luntan. This poster appeared on 19 November on the Xidan Wall and criticised Zong Fuxian's play 'Where Silence Reigns' for describing the Fifth of April Movement as merely a movement to mourn the late premier Zhou Enlai and not as a popular show of discontent against the Leftist rule in general.²⁰²

A slightly different order of the first posters at the Xidan Wall has been proposed by Fan Sidong, who considered them as already starting with the Zhongguo qingnian poster in September. According to Fan, the second poster to appear was a dazibao titled 'Science, Democracy and Legality' written by personnel from the Chinese Academy of Science on 19 November. On the same day Lü Po put up his poster. These posters were accompanied by a Wu Jiang's poster titled 'Democracy Brings Dictatorship to Trial'. Wu also wrote a second poster on 21st and on 22nd demanding that Hua Guofeng would step down from the Party chairmanship.²⁰³ This marks the 19th of November as the first date when posters of the Democracy Wall Movement activists appeared on the Xidan Wall. However, the Qimeng society's poster 'God of Fire Symphonic Poem' that appeared already on 11 October 1978 in the capital can also be regarded as one of the first posters of the Democracy Movement proper, as it had a direct connection with an activist group in the Democracy Wall Movement. The poster was put up on an alleyway next to the Renmin ribao offices in downtown Beijing and reposted on 24 November at Tiananmen Square. Being over 60 meters long and criticising the Cultural Revolution, the poster attracted a wide audience.²⁰⁴ The group's poster on the 24th of November at Tiananmen Square also included the 'Qimeng Society Declaration',²⁰⁵ which was the first formal declaration about forming an activist group in what would become the Beijing Democracy Movement.

Although it is probably impossible to ascertain which dazibao really 'ignited' the Democracy Movement proper, the significance of the early posters is probably best captured in the description that could be found in a Democracy Movement journal:

*"This dazibao brought along that the corporately courageous people, who welcomed such democratic atmosphere, were brave enough forgetting their fears in struggle and placed many dazibaos at the wall, the words that were deep in the hearts of the people poured out in torrent and because these people did not receive any official restrictions and did not know what at that time was and was not allowed to say, they only knew to say what they had personally witnessed, they [the dazibaos] were multifarious, but because they were enthusiastic, they were warmly welcomed by the people."*²⁰⁶

One can say that the Democracy Wall Movement thus began in Beijing somewhere between the 15th and 20th of November when the Xidan Wall began to attract an increasing number of posters which had political content and were not immediately

ripped down. It now became the chosen place for dazibaos in Beijing – giving the name to the whole movement.

Grievances and Political Opportunity

We have seen above how the Cultural Revolution had been the shaping years of the Red Guard generation. It had first given them a great promise of participating in real revolution as its vanguard, only to snatch it away after a while. Instead of being promoted to power, the Red Guards were punished for their enthusiasm and their newly found political activism was dashed. Yet, through their experiences and the influence of the new intellectual trend, many of them had learned to analyse the society in critical terms. The new establishment that arose with its revolutionary committees after 1968, excluded and penalised them. It also seemed to confirm their fears of capitalist restoration within the Party and the emergence of a new bureaucratic class in power. The new order was regarded as unjust, its ideological premises unsound, and its social consequences as reactionary. This view remained strong in the minds of many of the former Red Guards, especially the ex-radical Rebels. They were both able and ready to criticise the Party Left for its failure to realise socialist ideals and its distortion of what the radicals regarded as correct Marxism. With the culminating power struggle in the later part of 1978, they were offered a political opportunity to voice their grievances.

How the source of the grievances was located in the Party Left, was already shown in the three early posters of the Democracy Movement. Lü Po's dazibao 'Open Letter to Zong Fuxian' directly criticised Chairman Mao for purging Deng Xiaoping and suppressing the Fifth of April Movement. However, just as much criticism was also directed towards the way in which the Gang of Four had used Mao's mistaken views on class struggle to suppress and deceive the people. Lü Po made it clear that struggle against the Leftists was the duty of all youth with political awareness.²⁰⁷ In his poster, Wu Jiang called for a public trial of the main culprits of the suppression of the Fifth of April Movement, but he also argued that the decade between the 1967 'February Reverse Current case' and the Fifth of April Movement had been marked with the line struggle between those advocating scientific socialist democracy led by Zhou Enlai and the feudal fascist dictatorship-ism led by Jiang Qing, Lin Biao and their minions. Zhou Enlai had taken the side of the people leading "*the struggle to let the Chinese people to enjoy scientific socialism's people's livelihood rights and democratic rights, that is proletarian human rights.*"²⁰⁸ The Qimeng poster on 24th November at Tiananmen Square also included the 'Qimeng Society Declaration' that had 12 points advocating human rights, the call to arms of the Chinese against Leftist dictatorship, demanding reassessment of Mao Zedong and the Cultural Revolution and enlightenment against 'modern superstition'.²⁰⁹

The political opportunity for voicing these grievances was generated in the emancipation of minds campaign, and the attack on the Leftist dogma that it

signalled. Now, not only the leading Leftist figures but also their ideological premises, were assaulted in public and even the autocratic system they had created came under official criticism in the press. Finally, as the key event, the verdict on the Tiananmen Incident was reversed; making the incident the first officially sanctioned non-Party led popular movement in the history of the People's Republic.²¹⁰ Combined with the ideological campaign against the Party Left, these showed an implicit acceptance of collective popular action against the Leftists. The former radical Red Guards, armed with radical social criticism, were also there. Many of them had been sent down in 1968-69, but later managed to return to the Capital. The Tiananmen Incident had also produced more people with grievances against the Party Left. The discontent of these people that had been simmering in the capital now surfaced as the Democracy Wall Movement.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

¹ Hereafter the Chinese Communist Party will be referred as 'the Party'.

² 'Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party since the Founding of the People's Republic of China' 1981 in Orville Schell and David Shambaugh (1999, 37-49). For the official line on the Cultural Revolution, see *A Concise History of the Communist Party of China* (Hu Sheng, ed. 1994). It gives an accurate description of the major political events during the decade and discusses at length the ideological mistakes committed by Mao and his followers, but at the same time it fails to discuss the social roots of the upheaval, mentions only once the Red Guards and ends up in the reassuring conclusion that the Party always eventually corrects its mistakes. However, recently a few more analytical works on the Cultural Revolution have also come out in the Mainland like Ke Ling et al. (ed., 1998), Zhang Hua et al (ed., 2000). As a sign of sorts of dealing with the traumatic events, the Cultural Revolution has also made it into TV soap operas, like the 军人机密, *Jūnrén jīmì* [Soldier's Secret] shown on HEBTV-1 in 2005. It was also the Democracy Movement that produced the first unofficial interpretations of the Cultural Revolution. For one of the most thorough analysis see *Wénhuà géming jiǎnxī* [A Brief Analysis of the Cultural Revolution], *Renmin zhi sheng*, 2nd special issue December 1980, CUP 17, 91-244, also translated as an edited version by Anita Chan (Liu Guokai 1987).

³ See e.g. Yan Jiaqi and Gao Gao (1996), which was blacklisted when it first appeared in China. For the general Western account in Harding (1991) and MacFarquhar (1991); alternative views in Joseph et al (1991) and Kam-yee Law (ed., 2003) and especially Lynn T. White III and Kam-yee Law's (2003) article in it on the multitude of possible ways to approach the Cultural Revolution.

⁴ Anita Chen 1991, the quotation from 73

⁵ Zheng Yi 1996, 126-129 and Wang Shaoguang 1995, 273-275

⁶ Anita Chen 1991, 63-74; Wang Shaoguang (2003b) analyses in detail the complex social conflicts that created the basis of the Cultural Revolution.

⁷ See Rosen (1985, 27-28), this view is also accepted to some degree also by Vera Schwarcz and Lin Zehou (1984); see also Vera Schwarcz (1986).

⁸ This draws inspiration from Paul A. Cohen (1997) who writes a substantial account on the way the participants in the Boxer movement experienced their undertaking. This is, like Cohen puts it, a quest to find out the way the members "made sense of their world" (xiv), without the advantage of hindsight or access to information on a larger scale that historians usually have.

⁹ For the general timings of the course of the Cultural Revolution this text draws on Harding (1991) and MacFarquhar (1991). The Cultural Revolution offers of course many other alternative periodisations and it can be divided with much finer refinement than this one, but this crude periodicalisation serves the argument here as we are not interested in the day-to-day development of the turbulent movement but the experience of promise and betrayal in it.

¹⁰ And, as some adherents of the social conflict model see it, only this period should be referred to as Cultural Revolution excluding the seven years that the official Party version offers as the part of the '10 years Cultural Revolution' see Anita Chen (1991).

¹¹ This name is also proposed by Anita Chen (1991, 85).

¹² The names of the Communist Party leadership factions, like those of the Red Guards, are a complex and sometimes even frustrating matter for a historian. The labels are usually politically loaded and using them may make the historian to take unwittingly sides in the struggles one tries to reconstruct. At the same time, some labels are obviously needed. In this text the author uses the name 'Leftists' and the 'Party Left' to denote the Gang of Four and those favouring Maoist policies in the Party leadership, also the name Whateverist is used for them when discussing period after 1976 –although this obviously is a label given to the faction by its adversaries. The opponents of the Party Left after 1976 are called here 'Dengists', while the name 'reformists' is used regarding those who supported political reforms and the Democracy Movement within the Dengist camp. This is the same group Merle Goldman (1994) calls as the 'democratic elite' of Party Intellectuals, whereas 'Conservatives' is used for the group in the Dengist camp that supported Deng and reversing the Cultural Revolution policies and verdicts, but not political reforms. 'Pragmatists' are used for those favouring pragmatic economics and political stability before 1976. They could be called Liu-Zhou-Deng faction, but this is too cumbersome. As for Red Guards, the labels are explained in the text below.

¹³ This discussion is based on Schram (2001, 417-427).

¹⁴ The complex issues involved in the development of Mao's doctrine of continuous class struggle are outlined in Schram (2001, 448-461).

¹⁵ That is, the society's normative system that created inequality in pay and social status also under early stages of socialism.

¹⁶ Ibid., 462-470

¹⁷ Walder 1991, 42-44

¹⁸ Ibid., 51-52

¹⁹ Schram 2001, 470-475

²⁰ Using memoirs, instead of authentic diaries to map the intellectual development of the Red Guards generation is of course problematic. Memoirs are, by definition, written with the benefit of hindsight and influence of different environments. The memoirs used here, apart from Liu Guokai's Brief analysis of the Cultural Revolution, were all written in the West from early 70s to the 90s. Their writers have had time, and to an extent a need, to think what their audiences want to hear. For example writing about disillusionment with the socialist system is something a Western reader would expect to read about, otherwise the writer's decision to move to the West could seem pointless. Memoirs may therefore emphasise developments that at the time were less clear-cut or even conscious and also the chance to use other memoirs as models may influence the memoirs. However, these memoirs nevertheless tell about shared experiences of the members in the Red Guards generation and the general responses to them that we seek, not so much the developments of individual thinking as such.

²¹ Chen 1985, 20; Chang (1993, 340, 346-348 and 355-356) describe the Mao cult in schools and how the study of the model soldier Lei Feng and worshipping the Chairman formed cults of 'personality and impersonality' (340).

²² Bennett and Montaperto 1971, 69-71, the quotation from p. 71

²³ Chen 1985, 15-17

²⁴ The concept itself was not new in socialist world, as it could already be found in Stalin's *kulturnaia revoliutsia* in the 30s that preceded his Great Purges (White and Law 2003, 4). In China the term had been used since 1958 (Wang Shaoguang 2003, 30). It indicated that the cultural circles had to be purged from non-proletarian intellectuals, but also that a new proletarian culture had to be established to replace the old bourgeois culture.

²⁵ Gao Yuan 1989, 36; Bennett and Montaperto 1971, 32-35; Ken Ling 1972, 3-5; Ken Ling (a pseudonym) was an elite middle school student and a leading Rebel Red Guard in Xiamen, Fujian, who defected to Taiwan in mid-1968

²⁶ Bennett and Montaperto 1971, 38-39 and 52-53

²⁷ Killing may not have been the direct aim of struggling the victims at the time, but in the midst of political campaign it was easy to get carried away and get away with it. In principle, struggling was a technique meant to force the change of consciousness of its victims, but much of it was just humiliation and public torture (Bennett and Montaperto 1971, 36).

²⁸ Ken Ling 1972, 9-12

²⁹ Liang Heng and Shapiro 1983, 45

³⁰ Bennett and Montaperto 1971, 55

³¹ Chang 1993, 341, Gao 1987, 25-26

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- ³² Chen 1985, 125-127
- ³³ This name for student groups was a later development than the formation of student groupings in schools. A Rebel group in Qinghua University first adopted the name "Red Guards" at the end of May 1966. When Mao approved the name at a student mass rally in Tiananmen Square on 18 August 1966, all student groups rapidly emulated this example in the provinces; see e.g. Qin Xiaoying (1998, 73-105).
- ³⁴ Ken Ling 1972, 28-30 and the quotation from p. 35; later the armbands would become abundant and even used as underpants.
- ³⁵ Chen 1991, 63-74
- ³⁶ Yin Hongbiao (1996) has divided the Red Guards into four groups: the Old Red Guards of Beijing, Conservative Red Guards, Rebel Red Guards and Ultra Left Red Guards. Below a little different names are used to refer to these groups, but the division is basically the same.
- ³⁷ Harding, 1991, 145-152; As Wang Shaoguang (2003, 76-82) has showed, people from 'good' class background could also become active in Rebel Red Guards for example if they had had been penalised by current power holders (for whatever reason) before or during the Cultural Revolution and therefore had grievances against them.
- ³⁸ Wang Shaoguang 2003, 40-43
- ³⁹ Chen 1985, 130-138
- ⁴⁰ Ken Ling 1972, 16-22
- ⁴¹ Bennett and Montaperto 1971, 71
- ⁴² Ibid., 68-69
- ⁴³ Liang Heng and Shapiro 1983, 132
- ⁴⁴ Bennett and Montaperto 1971, 77
- ⁴⁵ Chen 1985, 141-142
- ⁴⁶ Bennett and Montaperto 1971, 125-126
- ⁴⁷ Ken Ling 1972, 151-153
- ⁴⁸ Wang Shaoguang 2003, 44
- ⁴⁹ An eye-witness description of the events can be found for example in Li Sun (1998, 112-169). The article is an account of the Shanghai Commune ending in the conclusion that it was manipulated and used by the Leftists in the Central Cultural Revolution Group in Beijing to gain power in Shanghai. This, however, was not known to the Red Guards around the country and the Shanghai Commune became the model that they tried to emulate.
- ⁵⁰ Mehnert (1969, 12-15) on these assertions. The Sixteen Points that was the basic document issued by the Party Centre at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution mentioned Paris Commune in point 9.
- ⁵¹ Wang Shaoguang 1999, 200
- ⁵² Harding 1991, 159-166; Gray (1991, 377-379) gives Lenin's *State and Revolution* and Engel's *The Civil War in France* as the two most influential books of the Red Guards' non-Mao readings.
- ⁵³ Bennett and Montaperto 1971, 150-160; Ken Ling 1972, 242-247
- ⁵⁴ Liu Guokai, *Wénhuà gé mìng jiǎn xī*, 23
- ⁵⁵ Ken Ling 1972, 72
- ⁵⁶ Ibid., 75-78, 141
- ⁵⁷ Chen 1985, 144
- ⁵⁸ Harding 1991, 185-186
- ⁵⁹ Wang Shaoguang 1999, 200
- ⁶⁰ Chen 1985, 149
- ⁶¹ Mehnert 1969, 26-27 for an example of this.
- ⁶² Harding, 1991, 185-186; Mehnert 1969, 36-40; Walder 1991, 59
- ⁶³ Jiefang Ribao in August 18 1968, as quoted in Mehnert 1969, 32, on the incident with the mangoes pp. 43-45.
- ⁶⁴ Walder 1991, 59
- ⁶⁵ Liu Guokai, *Wénhuà gé mìng jiǎn xī*, 134-135 and 149-150
- ⁶⁶ Bennett and Montaperto 1971, 214-215
- ⁶⁷ In August Dai left to his family at the countryside to escape the violence in the city. In November 1967 he defected to Hong Kong. Bennett and Montaperto 1971, 216-220, the quotation from p. 216
- ⁶⁸ Ken Ling 1972, 131
- ⁶⁹ See Chen 1985, 124
- ⁷⁰ Wang Shaoguang 1999, 200

⁷¹ Walder (1991, 55) calls these lines orthodox radicalism, heterodox radicalism and dissident radicalism that corresponded to conservative, Rebel and ‘ultra left’ Red Guards’ factions.

⁷² Walder 1991, 55-58; Yin Hongbiao 1996, 270-276. As the name of “ultra left” is a loaded label used by the Dengists, the author calls this faction as the ‘Radical Red Guards’.

⁷³ Yin Hongbiao 1996, 275-276. As Wang Shaoguang (1999, 199-200) notes, the idea of reforming the political system in order to solve the problems of revisionism through the Paris Commune institutions had been raised by some Red Guards in Beijing as early as in November 1966 following the ‘16 Points’ and Mao’s comments during the early Cultural Revolution. Already at this time the Red Guards advocating such reforms were jailed.

⁷⁴ Walder 1991, 52 and 58-60

⁷⁵ Liu Guokai, *Wénhuà gé mìng jiǎn xī*, 193-194

⁷⁶ Shengwulian consisted of more than twenty Rebel Red Guards groups all which were forced to unite after the Centre’s polices had swung to the favour of ‘reliable’ Rebel Red Guards in creating the Hunan Revolutionary Committee in August 1967. About the group see Wang Shaoguang (1999, 204-207) and Unger (1991, 22-25).

⁷⁷ Mehnert 1969, 57

⁷⁸ Shengwulian’s Programme, Resolutions and the major theoretical document titled ‘Whither China?’ are translated in Mehnert (1969, 72-100); the essay was originally written by a 18-years old high school student named Yang Xiguang, who was jailed for 10 years for this theoretical exercise. (For Yang’s intellectual development see Unger (1991)

⁷⁹ Shengwulian: ‘Whither China?’ cited in Mehnert 1969, 97

⁸⁰ Unger 1991, 25-27

⁸¹ The new class theory was the name used by Milovan Djilas (1957) in his analysis of Soviet and Yugoslavian political systems. It is uncertain if Shengwulian was familiar with Djilas’ arguments (Wang Shaoguang 1999, 17), but Djilas’ book was translated in Chinese already in 1963 and circulated as a *neibu* book for reference within the leading party circles. Xiaoxiao (1999) lists it as one of the most influential restricted books the Red Guards had access in the disorder of the Cultural Revolution. Although Xiaoxiao does not refer directly to Shengwulian or any other pre-Democracy Movement author, it is therefore not impossible that even Djilas’ ideas would have been behind at least some of the Radical Red Guards’ argumentation. The content of the class analysis between him and the Radical Red Guards is by and large the same and the author uses here also the name ‘theory of a new class’ when referring to this ‘new intellectual trend’.

⁸² Chen 1985, 144-146

⁸³ Wang Shaoguang 2003b, 77

⁸⁴ Liu Guokai, *Wénhuà gé mìng jiǎn xī*, 208-210

⁸⁵ Also another Democracy Movement writer named Xiao Ping noted in 1983 the importance of the Shengwulian’s essay as the most influential document produced by Rebel Red Guards in their fight against the ‘red capitalist class’ of bureaucrats and therefore an early phase of democratic awakening of the generation. However, he saw that Shengwulian was still not fully democratic and too much influenced by Mao Zedong’s peasant egalitarianism. For Xiao Ping only Li Yizhe’s essay On Socialist Democracy (discussed below) really marked democratic mature thinking. Xiao Ping: *Zhōngguó Mínhǔ yùndòng chéndiàn yǔ shēnghuá* [The Sediments and Sublime of the Chinese Democracy Movement], Yecao 1 / 1983, CUP 19, 235-240 and *Zhōngguó Mínhǔ yùndòng chéndiàn yǔ shēnghuá (zhī èr)* [The Sediments and Sublime of the Chinese Democracy Movement (2)], Yecao 2 / 1983, CUP 19, 253-259

⁸⁶ Liu Sheng-chi 1984, 2

⁸⁷ Unger 1991, 4

⁸⁸ Liu Guokai, *Wénhuà gé mìng jiǎn xī*, 239-240

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 240

⁹⁰ Yin Hongbiao 1996, 276; Unger 1991, 29; Wang Shaoguang 1999, 214

⁹¹ Chen 1985, 162 and 171

⁹² Wang Shaoguang 1999, 214

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 207

⁹⁴ Mehnert 1969, 29-33

⁹⁵ Wang Shaoguang 1999, 212-213

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 216-217

⁹⁷ Bennett and Montaperto 1971, 232-234

⁹⁸ Liu Sheng-chi 1984, 3

⁹⁹ Quoted in Madsen 1991, 667

¹⁰⁰ About Guangzhou radical Red Guards' bitter feelings in Rosen (1985, 4); Chen (1985, 148-149) and Brodsgaard (1981, 751). However, not all were initially dissatisfied with sending down. At first, people volunteered to go to the countryside. Reasons were many: exhaustion with the fighting and struggling, boredom with the fact that there was nothing to do at school, romantic interest in changing the countryside, and of course, because Mao told them to go. When information about the true situation in the villages began to come back, nobody volunteered anymore, but by then it had become compulsory (Liang Heng and Shapiro 1983, 142-143).

¹⁰¹ Chang 1993, 515

¹⁰² Liu Guokai, *Wénhuà gé mìng jiǎn xī*, 222

¹⁰³ Chang (1993, ch. 22) describes these feelings and attempts very well.

¹⁰⁴ Frolic (1980, 15, 69 and 82) gives examples of this.

¹⁰⁵ Xiaoxiao (1999) on this

¹⁰⁶ Chen (1985, 185-188 and 191-194) for a personal account of an informant of such activities.

¹⁰⁷ Chen's story here is based on Black and Munro 1993, 8-21

¹⁰⁸ Butterfield 1982, 413; Chen Yun was an influential reformist economist and politburo member.

¹⁰⁹ Wei's mother Du Peiju was a nurse and a cadre, too. Their status as privileged capital cadres relatively close to the centre of power was shown in the way Mao's children would visit their house and the father, Wei Zilin, would even teach the Confucian Classics to Mao Anying. (Chan Jinsong 1998, 3-5)

¹¹⁰ The following description is based on Wei's political autobiography written in prison. Wei Jingsheng 1979 / 1998, 229-230

¹¹¹ Chen Jinsong 1998, 22-23

¹¹² Wei Jingsheng 1998, 234-236

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 238

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 236-240

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 243-248

¹¹⁶ Chen Jinsong 1998, 59

¹¹⁷ Wei Jingsheng 1998, 231

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 248

¹¹⁹ Liang Heng and Shapiro 1982, 232

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 292

¹²¹ Liu Guokai, *Wénhuà gé mìng jiǎn xī*, 225-230

¹²² See Chen Zaidao (1999, 201-263) for a Chinese account of the incident.

¹²³ Bennett and Montaperto 1972, xix and 236

¹²⁴ Munro 1984b, 3

¹²⁵ The name came from **Li Zhengtian**, **Chen Yigang** and **Wang Xizhe**. The fourth member of the group was named Guo Hongzhi. Li Zhengtian was a native of Wuhan and had taken part in the activities of the Juepai group when it was active. (Wang Shaoguang 1999, 217) As seen above, Juepai was influenced with Shengwulian's radical arguments. Another influential member of the group, Wang Xizhe, would comment on Shengwulian's influence on them noting that "*The Yang Xiguang group was the forerunner of the thinking generation.*" (Quoted in Unger 1991, 4)

¹²⁶ Rosen et al, 1985, 2-6

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 5-14

¹²⁸ Li Yizhe 1976, 133-134

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 112

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 114-115

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 115

¹³² *Ibid.*, 133

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 136

¹³⁴ Rosen (1985, 8) sees that while the poster did circulate at least among the children of higher cadres, the number of people who knew it in the Democracy Movement participants was no higher than 10 %. Possession of such subversive material was punished harshly before 1978. However, the fact that the poster was reprinted in Beijing zhi chun shows that the poster was, or became, more widely known. Nevertheless, in 1979 criticism of 'Lin Biao system' was already a little *passé*, as now the target of criticism was 'Lin Biao and the Gang of Four'.

- ¹³⁵ For example writing to a Democracy Movement journal Yecao [Wild Grass] in 1983, Xiao Ping argued that the Li Yizhe's essay had shown how the Rebel Red Guard thinking of Shengwulian had matured into real democratic thinking of the second democratic generation in the PRC that the Democracy Movement manifested. Both Shengwulian and Li Yizhe had shared the same enemy in the special privileged bureaucratic class, but only the former had some clearly developed democratic institutions to propose. Xiao Ping: *Zhōngguó Mínhǔ yùndòng...*, Yecao 2 / 1983, CUP 19, 256
- ¹³⁶ Rosen et alii, 1985, 5-14; the late timing of the sentence has been seen as an over-cautious reaction from the Guangdong officials to avoid radical criticism upsurge again in the uncertain situation after the demise of the Gang of Four.
- ¹³⁷ AI 1984, 41-42; Widor 1987, 69-70
- ¹³⁸ Wang Shaoguang 2003, 38
- ¹³⁹ Calhoun and Wasserstrom (2003, 246-247) point this out on the 1989 student demonstrations, but this was clearly even more the case with the Democracy Wall Movement activists. Also Perry (2003) points out that the earlier protests in the People's Republic served as a model for popular protest in and after the Cultural Revolution, but she also agrees that the Cultural Revolution has been by far the most influential event for Chinese popular protest in its dimensions and as a challenge to the establishment.
- ¹⁴⁰ Li Yizhe 1976, 148
- ¹⁴¹ Ibid., 130
- ¹⁴² Rosen et alii, 14-15
- ¹⁴³ Fairbank 1991, 404-405; Baum 1996, 29; Lieberthal 1995, 116-118
- ¹⁴⁴ These were 'Outline Report on the Work of the Academy of Sciences', 'On the Accelerated Development of Industry' and 'On the General Program for All Work of the Party and the Country' which outlined pragmatic policies in the fields of science and education, industry and administration. (See Garside, 1980, 72-81)
- ¹⁴⁵ Baum 1996, 28-29; Gray 1990, 374
- ¹⁴⁶ Garside 1981, 8-12
- ¹⁴⁷ Garside 1981, 109-110
- ¹⁴⁸ Garside 1981 ch. 6 gives a good eyewitness account of the demonstrations. See also Goodman 1981, 33-55 for poetry of the Fifth of April Movement
- ¹⁴⁹ Black and Munro 1993,
- ¹⁵⁰ There were reports that similar demonstrations occurred at least in fourteen provinces and two other major cities. Garside 1981, 114
- ¹⁵¹ Garside 1981, 135-136
- ¹⁵² Lieberthal 1995, 123-124; Baum 1996, 48-51. This was the note Mao had scribbled to Hua Guofeng in a meeting some time before his death. Hua used this note as his best, indeed sole, source of legitimacy to his Party leadership.
- ¹⁵³ Christiansen et alii 1980, 11-12
- ¹⁵⁴ On October 26 1976 Hua Guofeng declared that the Gang of Four and Deng Xiaoping had to be criticised together, the Gang of Four line had actually been rightist in essence, all that Chairman Mao had ordered or said was beyond criticism, and the Tiananmen Incident was not to be revised. (Ma Licheng and Qi Lingjun 1998, 8)
- ¹⁵⁵ Lieberthal 1995, 123-124; Baum 1996, 48-51
- ¹⁵⁶ Ibidem.; Hu Sheng (Ed.) 1994, 724
- ¹⁵⁷ Ma Licheng and Qi Lingjun 1998, 22-24
- ¹⁵⁸ Li Honglin 1999, 229-230; the power struggle aspect can be given some concrete figures. As Garside points out (1980, 58 and 63), in 1976 14 members of the 25 strong politburo had gained their position through the Cultural Revolution and that c. 300 members of the Central Committee had been elected when Deng's influence was weak. It can be assumed that the same pattern was repeated at provincial and local levels.
- ¹⁵⁹ Li Honglin 1999, 231-232
- ¹⁶⁰ Garside 1981, 189
- ¹⁶¹ Lieberthal 1995, 124; Goodman 1981, 8
- ¹⁶² GMRB 11.5.1978: *Shíjiàn shì jiǎnyàn zhēnlǐde wéiyī biāozhǔn* [Practise is the Sole Criterion of Truth]
- ¹⁶³ Ma Licheng and Qi Lingjun 1998, 52-54
- ¹⁶⁴ Li Honglin 1999, 228 and 233-235; the major newspapers and magazines on the Dengist side were at least Renmin ribao, Guangming Ribao, Jiefang bao, Zhongguo qingnian, and Zhongguo qingnian bao (236).

Also some democracy activists see this article as the actual beginning of the Democracy Movement (He 2001, 19). Wang Dongxing was an ally of Hua Guofeng and a leading Whateverist opponent of Deng Xiaoping and his faction. After the fall of the Gang of Four he headed the Party propaganda work and was the man behind devising the doctrine of ‘two Whatever’s’. For his propaganda work he also employed a small theory group, whose members were former aides of Kang Sheng, the notorious Leftist *éminence grise* during the Cultural Revolution. (Ruan Ming 1994, 22)

¹⁶⁵ Goodman 1981, 8

¹⁶⁶ Li Honglin 1999, 233-234

¹⁶⁷ Baum 1996, 9 and 27-30

¹⁶⁸ Fewsmith 2000, 151

¹⁶⁹ Li Honglin 1999, 228

¹⁷⁰ *Rénmín wànsuì! Tiān'ānmén dòuzhēng yǒng fàng guānghuī!* [Long Live the People! The Forever Brilliant Tiananmen Struggle!], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 7 / 1979, CUP 12, 25-28, the quotation from p. 25; Garside (1981, 176-177) reports about similar posters.

¹⁷¹ Bi Dan: *Mínzhǔ qiáng zònghéng tán* [Survey of the Democracy Wall], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 15 / 1979, CUP, 17

¹⁷² Garside 1981, 177-178

¹⁷³ Ruan Ming 1994, 20-21

¹⁷⁴ Chen Ruoxi 1982, 9-10; Garside 194-195

¹⁷⁵ Liu Sheng-chi 1984a, 26-27. The provinces were Heilongjiang, Jilin, Shanxi, Henan, Shanghai, Hubei, Zhejiang, and Nei Menggu.

¹⁷⁶ Bi Dan: *Mínzhǔ qiáng zònghéng tán*, 17

¹⁷⁷ Christiansen et alii 1980, 113; Munro (1984a, 72) Gives the penname as “Tong Huaizhou”

¹⁷⁸ Other places where posters appeared were at least the front door of the City Party committee, Wangfujing Road, Chairman Mao’s memorial hall’s east wall, and at Qianmen Gate notice board. Dazibaos were naturally not a novelty to the participants in the Democracy Wall Movement. The Red Guards had used them widely during the Cultural Revolution in denouncing their victims and expressing their own views. After Mao’s death and during 1978 people expressing their personal grievances had put dazibaos on display in Beijing demanding rehabilitation. More about the medium can be found in Leijonhufvud (1989).

¹⁷⁹ Bi Dan: *Mínzhǔ qiáng zònghéng tán*, 17-18

¹⁸⁰ Henry Yuhuai He 2001, 282-283; Ruan Ming 1994, 46

¹⁸¹ Ruan Ming 1994, 46

¹⁸² He 2001, 282-283 and Li Honglin 1999, 238-241. The Zhongguo qingnian incident is also noted in Nieh Yu-hsi 1979, 1217.

¹⁸³ According to Ma Licheng and Qi Lingjun (1998, 74-76) Chen Yun was the first one to take up the issue of reversing the Tiananmen Incident verdict on 12 November in the meeting.

¹⁸⁴ As Nathan (1985, 10) notes, the many Tiananmen Incident activists had been progressively released since May 1978, but the decision on 14 November made the policy official. See also CA Oktober 1978, 629; November 1978, 710

¹⁸⁵ RMRB 16.11.1978: *Tiān'ānmén shìjiàn wánquán shì géming xíngdòng* [Tiananmen Incident Was a Completely Revolutionary Action]

¹⁸⁶ RMRB 19.11.1978: *Wúgū bèi bǔde tóngzhì chēdì píngfǎn huīfù míngyù* [The Innocent Arrested Comrades’ Names Have Been Thoroughly Rehabilitated]

¹⁸⁷ Black and Munro 1993, 18-33

¹⁸⁸ *Běijīng Mínzhǔ qiáng jìshí* [The Records of Beijing Democracy Wall], *Qunzhong cankao xiaoxi* 3 (2 / 1979), CUP 1, 286

¹⁸⁹ Nieh Yu-hsi 1979, 1217

¹⁹⁰ RMRB 21.11.1978: *Tiān'ānmén shìjiàn zhēnxiàng* [The Truth about the Tiananmen Incident]

¹⁹¹ FBIS 27.10. E4-E5; XH, FBIS 9.1 1., E1; GMRB, FBIS 13.11., E3

¹⁹² SWB/FE 6021, 19.1.1979

¹⁹³ Nathan 1985, 6-7; Chen Ruoxi 1982, 6-7

¹⁹⁴ RMRB 25.11.1978: *Huàqīng shàngshū-shàngfǎng yǔ xiě hēixìnde jìxiàn* [Make a Clear Distinction Between the Petitions and Poison-Pen Letters]

¹⁹⁵ Nieh Yu-hsi 1979, 1217-1218

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- ¹⁹⁶ RMRB 24.11.1978: *Yǐdìng yào jiāqiáng shèhuìzhūyì fǎzhì* [Socialist Legality Has to be Strengthened]; *Mínfǎ yǐdìng yào gǎo* [Civil Law Has to Be Promoted]; 27.11.1978: *Mínzhǔ yú fǎzhì* [Democracy and Legality]
- ¹⁹⁷ RMRB 27.11.1978: *Tán tán gàn bù zhìdù de gǎigé* [On Reforming the Cadre System]; *Mínzhǔ xuǎnzé gàn bù hào* [Electing Cadres Democratically Is a Good Arrangement]
- ¹⁹⁸ RMRB 16.11.1978: *Rénmín de yuàn wàng rén mín de lì liang* [The Wishes and the Power of the People]
- ¹⁹⁹ RMRB 19.11.1978: *Huá zhǔxí wèi Tiān'ānmén shǐchāo xiě shǔmíng* [Chairman Hua Writes the Cover Page of the Collection of Tiananmen Poems]
- ²⁰⁰ Lan Sheng: *Lùn Mínzhǔ qiáng* [On The Democracy Wall], Siwu luntan 5 (3 / 1979), CUP 2, 87; The name 'Democracy Wall' was not a novelty, as the name was used at least for a wall where students at Beijing University placed their dazibaos during the Hundred Flowers Campaign in 1957 (Mackerras et al. 2002, 80). Similarity of the name is probably caused by very practical reasons: while the ideas of 1957 were not generally known in the Democracy Movement, expressing opinions freely was what democracy was about for many participants.
- ²⁰¹ Lan Sheng: *Lùn Mínzhǔ qiáng*, 88; Lan does not identify the poster's content or exact date more accurately.
- ²⁰² Liu Qing 1983, 64; Munro 1984a, 70; the poster can be read in *Zhì Zong Fuxian bing Shanghai wénhuàgōng gōngrén yú Wú shēng chū jùzú quántǐ tóngzhimende yī fēng gōngkāixìn* [An Open Letter to Zong Fuxian and All Shanghai Culture Palace's Workers in the 'Where Silence Reigns' Drama Group], *Mínzhǔ qiáng* 1 (December 1978), DCDM I, 365-370. In the later accounts of the Democracy Movement by its activists there is of course the matter of credentials (*zīgé*) or seniority in the Democracy Movement, also concerning the claims of who was the first to put up a poster in the Democracy Wall Movement.
- ²⁰³ Wu Jiang wrote using a pen name Wu Wen. Fan Sidong gives the date of Wu Jiang's poster as 20th of November, which may be the date it was actually posted on Xidan Wall, but the poster itself was dated 19th November. Wu Wen: *Mínzhǔ shěnpàn dúcái* [Democracy Brings Dictatorship to Trial], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 3 / 1979, CUP 8, 317-318
- ²⁰⁴ Garside 1981, 210 and 218
- ²⁰⁵ Liu Sheng-chi 1984b, 60-61
- ²⁰⁶ Lan Sheng: *Lùn Mínzhǔ qiáng*, 88
- ²⁰⁷ Lü Po: *Zhì Zong Fuxian...*, 365-370.
- ²⁰⁸ Wu Wen: *Mínzhǔ shěnpàn dúcái*, 317-318
- ²⁰⁹ Liu Sheng-chi 1984b, 60-61
- ²¹⁰ As pointed out in Hsu 1996, 34

3 CHAPTER: Emergence of the Beijing Democracy Movement

During the two last weeks of November, the poster campaign against the Leftists at Xidan reached critical mass covering the 200 metre wall and attracting wide audience. Early on the question of the emerging Democracy Wall Movement's connection to the Dengist faction also arose, as many of the posters openly supported Deng Xiaoping and his reform policies criticising the Party Left. For example, *dazibaos* attacked the Leftists' main organ *Hongqi*, for not joining the discussion on criterions of truth,¹ and demanded the sacking of the whole editorial board of the magazine.² Other posters expressed criticism of Hua Guofeng's relation to the Tiananmen incident³ and called for an investigation into the crackdown on the Fifth of April Movement.⁴ Of course, Deng's calls for making the 'four modernisations' the official Party line and ending the emphasis on permanent class struggle were also warmly welcomed in the posters. It was no accident that Deng initially supported the posters. They came just in time for him in his struggle against his political rivals in the November-December working conference and in the third plenum of the eleventh central committee that followed it.

After the verdict of the Tiananmen incident had been reversed at the beginning of the work conference, Deng Xiaoping continued his attack on the Whateverists. Important as the reversal of the verdict was for his own political credentials, it was only a part of a larger prize he was after: radical shift in the Party line and demotion of Leftist elements in the Party leadership. As the Democracy Wall Movement supported his policy initiatives and shared common enemies with him, Deng expressed his initial support of the Movement and even encouraged it during November. The movement was also supported by many of the reformist intellectuals whom Deng needed to enlist in ideological assault against the Party Left. Immediately after the reversal of the Tiananmen incident verdict on 16 November Deng toured different universities in the capital with his ally and protégé Hu Yaobang, who was regarded as one of the most reform-minded members of the Dengist faction.⁵ On his tour Deng discussed with students the posters that had appeared in the streets as well as the issues of democracy and legality. He was reported to have declared to the students:

*"Anyone who dares to deal blows or to retaliate against you [for putting up posters] will surely be dealt with sternly... I assure you that every citizen can surely exercise the rights granted by the constitution."*⁶

Deng was also reported to have defended the people's right to put up posters at the working conference of the central committee.⁷ Nevertheless, his most direct endorsement of the Xidan Wall came about more accidentally. As an eyewitness later described the early activities at the Xidan Wall, people had gathered there in thousands on 25 November to organise a meeting called 'Democratic Forum'.⁸ It continued on 26 November, when a visiting American reporter Robert Novak came

to Xidan Wall and announced that he was going to interview Deng the very next day. Novak inquired what kind of questions the people would like him to ask the vice-premier, promising to return to convey the answers to them. He was promptly requested to enquire what Deng thought about the Democracy Wall. On 27 November John Fraser of the Toronto Globe and Mail relayed the results of Novak's interview to the ten to twenty thousand strong crowd at Xidan. Fraser told his audience that "*Vice-Premier Deng said that he thought the Xidan Democracy Wall was a good thing.*"⁹

As this short statement was translated and relayed to the crowd, uproar of approving applause went through the crowd, and the news that Peng Dehuai, a critic of Mao Zedong during the Great Leap Forward would be rehabilitated got a similar response from the audience.¹⁰ However, the mood was cooled somewhat when Fraser conveyed Deng's follow-up remark that

*"Some of the things the masses were saying and writing at the Xidan Wall were not correct... For example, Vice-Premier Deng said that he did not agree with seventy-thirty evaluation of Chairman Mao's historical record. He said that Chairman Mao was better than seventy-thirty."*¹¹

This made listeners less jubilant, but the reminder did not overshadow the basic approval that Deng's '*Xidan hǎo*' had given to the Democracy Wall. Encouraged by the message relayed by foreign journalists and acknowledging the fact that it was too crowded at Xidan, the organisers decided to take the people to Tiananmen Square where they set off marching on Chang'an Avenue hand in hand shouting: "*We want democracy, we want freedom!*" They gathered at the Monument of Revolutionary Heroes, the organisers standing on the steps to provide them a platform. The speeches and debates that ensued dealt, at least, with the topics of the Fifth of April Movement legacy, the revolutionary spirit of the movement's participants as well as the Paris Commune system.¹² This gathering continued on 28 November with thousands of mostly young participants.

Deng Xiaoping continued to show his support for the Democracy Wall Movement on 27 November, when an article in Renmin ribao quoted him saying that the political atmosphere should be made livelier and more relaxed. He also told visiting Japanese Socialists leader Sasaki Ryôtsaku that:

*"The masses putting up dazibaos is a normal thing, and shows the stable situation in the country... Writing dazibaos is constitutional, we do not have the right to deny or criticise people from making the most of democracy and putting up dazibaos. If people have things to say, let them say them out loud."*¹³

Deng emphasised that the people's opinions were correct and their political awareness high. There was nothing to worry about them. Renmin ribao also ran encouraging articles on the same matter urging: "*Let the people say what they wish ...*

when people are free to speak, it means the Party and the government have strength and confidence."¹⁴ In his closing Speech of the Third Plenum on 13 December 1978, Deng also continued to express his indirect support for the Democracy Wall. He first criticised Lin Biao and the Gang of Four for over-concentration of power during the Cultural Revolution and then called for general respect for the law and the citizen's rights, as stipulated in the Constitution, and for genuine practice of a proletarian system of democratic centralism, which required a full measure of democracy. Deng also called for the creation of conditions for practising democracy through the reaffirmation of the principle of 'three do nots' viz: not picking on other people's faults, not putting labels on them, and not using a 'big stick' against them.¹⁵ According to Deng, hearing what the people had to say was part of this:

*"The masses should be encouraged to offer criticisms. There is nothing to worry about even if a few malcontents take advantage of democracy to make trouble... One thing a revolutionary Party does need to worry is its ability to hear voice of people... opinions voiced by masses should be studied analytically... in dealing with ideological problems we must never use coercion... Let hundred flowers and thousand schools of thought concede."*¹⁶

Deng declared that no leading comrade should ever oppose the masses. However, having said this, he also spoke about balancing centralism and democracy and added the necessary backdoor, which might prove useful later: "*But of course we must not let down our guard against the handful of counterrevolutionaries who still exist in our country.*"¹⁷ The communiqué of the plenum also echoed Deng Xiaoping's speech, emphasising the need to uphold the constitutional rights of the citizen. It also called for strengthening the socialist legal system and systematisation of democracy into law in order to ensure stability and full authority of the democratic system.¹⁸

However, right from the beginning Deng clearly did not welcome all opinions expressed at Xidan. He already had reservations in his interview with Robert Novak on the criticism that was directed against Mao. On 27 or 28 November he is also reported to have authorised a 19 points internal central committee document that was circulated to *danweis* and government departments noting that dazibaos criticising Mao and other demands expressed on dazibaos should not be too excessive. The document was also circulated at the work conference of the third plenum of the eleventh central committee.¹⁹ When Deng's comments became known, the organisers of the 'Democratic Forum' at Tiananmen Square notified on the 29th of November that the meeting would not continue to take place.²⁰ The 19 points notice did not, however, close down the Democracy Wall, which was still gathering momentum. Activists' rallies were also just moved to other places from Tiananmen Square. For example, the Siwu luntan group held a forum discussing democracy on 1 January 1979 in front of the Working People's Palace of Culture.²¹

As the result of the third plenum of the eleventh central committee, the Whateverists' ideological ramparts collapsed under the assault from the Dengists. Hua Guofeng had

to make self-criticism and admit that he was responsible for the doctrine of the two whatevers, but that it was not useful for emancipating minds. He also affirmed that practise was the sole criterion of truth.²² Hence official Party history describes this plenum as the ‘turning point to the Party’. Deng’s victory was two-pronged: the plenum accepted his doctrines of ‘emancipating minds’ and ‘seeking truth from facts’ as the new political line for the Party. In economic policy, priority was given to the ‘four modernisations’ of industry, agriculture, national defence and science and technology. Furthermore, the policy of ‘opening up to the outside world’ was adopted in order to learn and use Western capital and technology.²³ This meant that maintaining class struggle as the key in politics, the very corner stone of the whole Leftist dogma, was dropped as the leading principle of the Party and attention was turned to economic reforms instead.²⁴

There were other signs that created the impression of a thaw. In the arts, traditional opera, theatre, ballet, and Western music went through a virtual Renaissance after the Cultural Revolution.²⁵ As Chen Ruoxi points out, now that Deng had announced that the economy should ‘take command’, the atmosphere in Beijing was palpably relaxing. The Party began to loosen its restrictions on tourism and foreign trade. Foreigners, merchants, tourists, and journalists could now be seen in Beijing touring places and people could even talk to them. Western-style clothing was permitted and dance parties took place; even Coca-Cola announced its impending arrival.²⁶ Hairstyles were changing after the monotony of the Cultural Revolution. So as well as some young people letting their hair grow following the new fashions, they even began to publicly show affection to the opposite sex.²⁷ Even the Ministry of Public Security declared January 1979 to be the ‘Love the People Month’.²⁸ It may have been a typical cold winter in Beijing, but the signs of a political thaw and anticipation for more were real. The feeling of relaxation and hope was conveyed in a reader’s letter to a Democracy Movement journal *Tansuo* in October 1979, when the writer recalled the sentiments at the beginning of the Democracy Wall Movement: “*Our fatherland has hope! Thaw has come!*”²⁹

Behind the Scenes

Open support for the Democracy Wall from the Dengist faction was undeniable, but what did it receive in return? Some authors have described the Democracy Movement’s role as “*a part of the wind that pushed Deng’s politics to its target.*”³⁰ Others believed that “*the Democracy Wall Movement helped to make Deng China’s paramount political leader.*”³¹ Alternatively, the connection between the Democracy Wall Movement and Deng’s faction seemed so close at the time that some commentators believed that the Democracy Movement activists could really be ‘activists’ in the sense that the word was used in communist vocabulary viz: youth aspiring for membership of the Party, who were used to initiating and undertaking political denunciation campaigns. In this, the Democracy Movement would have closely resembled the beginning of the Cultural Revolution when students were used

by all sides in the struggles.³² Indeed, many Communist Youth League members took part in the Beijing Democracy Movement, particularly in the ranks of the Beijing zhi chun group which had close connections with the Dengist faction, and was used as a channel to discredit the Whateverists. However, the development of the Democracy Movement did soon demonstrate for most, how free and spontaneous the movement was.

Ruan Ming, a reformist intellectual and an adviser to Hu Yaobang, who participated in drafting the communiqué of the third plenum of the eleventh central committee, believes that the close alliance between the Democracy Wall Movement and the democratic reform forces within the Party enabled Deng's victory over the Whateverists at the plenum.³³ According to Ruan, Hu Yaobang was crucial in forming an alliance between the reformists in the Party and the 'socialist democratic movement' that caused the retreat of the Whateverists at the plenum by combining the emerging Democracy Movement and the work conference. He demanded that the Party school, newspapers and news agencies, as well as the Youth League, had to pay attention to the Democracy Wall Movement and relay its message to the delegates at the work conference. All the issues raised at Xidan were therefore conveyed daily to the work conference participants and debated in the meetings. Ruan asserts that this "*made the central committee's work conference to alter its original direction.*"³⁴ The demands to rehabilitate many cadres after the Cultural Revolution especially received cheers from the conference audience, and the demands expressed at the Democracy Wall made the conference shift its focus to the issue of the rehabilitation of many leading cadres and debate on the reassessment of historical events.³⁵ In the meeting the reformist forces also criticised the Whateverists over the continuation of Mao's personality cult, and the creation of a new one for Chairman Hua, which prevented liberation of minds, suppressed democracy, restricted rehabilitation of unjust cases, etc. This attack made the Whateverists lose their leadership over ideology, as well as many, like Wang Dongxing, also to lose their leading posts.³⁶

In the plenum, Hua Guofeng had prepared to reaffirm his eleventh Party congress line of 'taking class struggle as the key link and bringing about great order in the country', together with turning the focus from Party work to economic modernisation. However, Deng Xiaoping was able to force the issues of reversal of the Tiananmen Incident verdict, adopting the policy of the four modernisations, and changes in the key personnel in the Party leadership onto the plenum's agenda, while ending taking class struggle as the key in politics. The change was ideologically extremely important. As Ruan Ming points out, the theory of 'continuing the revolution under proletarian class dictatorship' was linked to Hua Guofeng by the logic that it had been Chairman Mao's greatest contribution to Marxism and therefore upholding it qualified Hua as Mao's successor. Both this and modernisation policy were incompatible, and one had to go.³⁷ Along with it went the intellectual leadership of the Whateverists, too.

A Conspiracy after All?

The Democracy Movement gave the Dengist faction a tactical advantage over its adversaries and therefore it had a clear political backing from Deng Xiaoping and his faction at the beginning. More generally, the ongoing emancipation of mind campaign also benefited from expressions of popular discontent over Leftist policies, dogma, and those responsible for them. However, the relationship between the Democracy Movement and Deng's faction were not as straightforward as, for example, the initial relationship between Chairman Mao and the Red Guards had been. Deng seemed to advocate a new kind of thinking and tolerance of criticism, but what this new thinking meant in practice was unclear, which allowed the voicing of different opinions of reform.³⁸ It was this tolerance, as much as the direct calls, that caused people to perceive the situation as the political opportunity they had been waiting for. The Democracy Movement activists also seem to have been largely unaware of the role their movement played in the power struggle within the leadership during November-December 1978. Had they known it, they would certainly have referred to it in their journals as a justification for their activities. Instead, they had to settle with the third plenum of the eleventh central committee communiqué and refer to it as a central document that justified the Democracy Movement both in spirit and in letter.

However, there are those who see the explanation of the emergence for the Democracy Movement being based on a political thaw unsatisfactory, and claim that there was a more direct relationship between the movement and the Dengists. Fan Sidong, who advocates a conspiracy explanation, bases his view on the dates of the Beijing and Shanghai Democracy Movements and the Zhongguo qingnian incident. According to Fan, the emergence of democracy movements in both Beijing and Shanghai practically simultaneously suggests that there was more manipulation at the background of the beginning of the Democracy Movement than is normally admitted. That the Shanghai Democracy Movement should begin on the very same date as the Beijing movement did, was an unlikely coincidence. Furthermore, in Shanghai the beginning of the local democracy movement has usually been connected to the Beijingers students who came to give speeches at the People's Square after the reversal of the Tiananmen Incident verdict. Fan estimates that the activists in Shanghai already numbered some 10 000 around 19th – 20th November, when the Beijing movement was just getting started with a few posters and maybe only 2000-3000 spectators at Xidan.³⁹

Furthermore, Fan sees that the contents of the banned first issue of Zhongguo qingnian could only be accessed by someone quite high in the Party hierarchy, and the action to put them up on the Xidan Wall therefore had to have some form of backing from Dengist leaders. According to Fan, it was also not a co-incidence that Lin Hujia had been transferred from Shanghai to Beijing to assume the position previously occupied by Wu De just before the key events in November. According to

this argument, the Zhongguo qingnian incident and the posters that followed it at the Xidan Wall and the use of the People's Square for popular meetings in Shanghai were two different stratagems in the same plan to create a popular movement against the Party Left. The latter stratagem was more risky, but potentially more effective than the first, and was therefore tried out in Shanghai which was under control of the Dengist faction and also significant as a political centre. That the strategy succeeded in both places was clearly a good result, and Fan argues that both the Beijing and Shanghai Democracy Movements were equally important. In the beginning, at least, Beijing was not even the paramount model everybody followed. In sheer numbers of participants alone the Shanghai movement even surpassed Beijing.⁴⁰

Although Fan's account smacks of a conspiracy theory so common in Chinese politics, it deserves a second look. First, those putting up the Zhongguo qingnian at Xidan were likely to have some sort of backing in Dengist leadership, but how high did this go, is uncertain. Maybe the creation of an incident with wider repercussions was exactly in their minds. Assuming that some, maybe many, people would respond to the dazibaos with similar anti-Left posters was a likely scenario. However, this did not happen in September and it took reversal of the Tiananmen Incident verdict until Xidan became the focal point in the emerging movement. The obvious problem with the argument connecting the Zhongguo qingnian incident directly to the Democracy Wall Movement therefore is that there was nearly a two month gap between the incident in September and the beginning of the Democracy Wall Movement in November.

Yet, Fan Sidong's argument about the Shanghai and Beijing movements also has its appeal. If the two movements did begin simultaneously, it was unlikely to have been a co-incidence and must have involved some kind of previous planning. Here the question becomes one of timing. Fan places much significance on the five students who came from Beijing to incite the Shanghai movement. He dates the first signs of the Shanghai movement around 15th and 16th of November and the presence of the Beijingers on 19th and 20th of November. If this were the case, some Dengist support for their activities would have been highly likely, taking that the Beijing Democracy Movement had not really started in full before the 20th or so. However, the early signs of the Shanghai Democracy Movement can also be attributed to news about the reversal of the Tiananmen Incident that was released nation-wide on 16th of November. Moreover, in a Beijing Democracy Movement journal *Kexue minzhu fazhi*, the Beijingers' arrival in Shanghai was dated on 24th of November – enough time for the Beijing movement to have developed some momentum.⁴¹ Anne McLaren, who has studied the Shanghai Democracy Movement, also refers to the students who had come from Beijing, but gives 25th of November as the date of the beginning of the movement in the city.⁴² Furthermore, the first posters and gatherings at the People's Square were not reported in foreign press until the 27th of November, referring to meetings that had taken place a couple of days earlier.⁴³ This does not support the view of simultaneous beginnings of the two movements.

Nevertheless, even the 25th November would have been an early point for five students from Beijing to go to Shanghai to give speeches in the Democratic Square on their own, as Deng Xiaoping had not yet publicly backed the Xidan Democracy Wall, nor the ‘Democratic Forum’ at the Tiananmen Square taken place yet. So even in this later date support from the Dengist leadership would have been entirely possible, especially when considering Deng’s visit to the leading Beijing universities and his encouragement of expression of grievances against the Party Left there. Therefore, the Democracy Movement might well have been more pushed into the scene rather than bounced to it, at least in Shanghai. However, the evidence is circumstantial at best, and does not support the view that the birth of the Democracy Movement was brought about through a well-timed conspiracy by the Dengists. The emancipation of minds campaign, the reversal of the Tiananmen Incident verdict, and even the direct support from Deng Xiaoping were all more than enough for people with grievances against the Party Left to become public.

The Activists and Their Journals

The Democracy Wall Movement gained momentum and more popular support throughout November and December 1978. It also spread to other major cities in China like Shanghai, Guangzhou, Hongzhou, Wuhan, Chongqing, Changsha, Nanjing, Qingdao, Tiensin, Kaifeng, Xi’an, Luoyang, and many others. Liu Shengchi has estimated that at its peak, the movement reached areas where some 100 million people lived.⁴⁴ For a couple months after the third plenum of the eleventh central committee, the Party continued its official line and tolerated the Beijing Democracy Movement as well as its offshoots in other cities. The official press also continued to run articles on the issues like the reform of the cadre system, and strengthening legal system and democracy in the spirit of the third plenum of the eleventh central committee communiqué.⁴⁵

One common finding about social movements is that, at least in its early phase, mobilisation of participants is based on existing networks of relationships.⁴⁶ The rapid emergence of the Democracy Movement activist groups showed that the Democracy Movement also did not come into existence out of nothing. The majority of the participants in it were young workers, those ‘waiting for work assignment’, and university students in their twenties and early thirties. As Goodman points out, the activists were also surprisingly homogenous in their social origins. Many of them were sons and daughters of middle and upper-middle level cadres and intellectuals. Coming from ‘bad’ class origins many of them had missed their chances of gaining a higher education, but due to family connections they had been able to gain work assignments in factories in Beijing and not forced to remain in the countryside as many less well connected members of their generation. Goodman even goes so far as to call them the ‘unprivileged privileged.’⁴⁷ Apart from the ex-Red Guards, another notable group of activists were the veterans of the Tiananmen incident of 1976 who had been too young to participate in the Cultural Revolution Proper. Many of the

members of both groups had also been recently released from prisons and turned into 'Tiananmen heroes'.⁴⁸

The relatively high social (if not always class) background of many Democracy Movement activists is not surprising. It has been noted that social movements are seldom products of marginalised and atomised individuals, but of people who possess some social standing and the ability to articulate their grievances, and whose expectations towards society have been frustrated. They are usually socially central in some respects, as in their educational level, geographical location and exposure to cultural messages, but marginal in others, like their position in labour market, access to political system, or social recognition.⁴⁹ The Beijing Democracy Movement activists matched these general characteristics quite well. Even those, who had been assigned to industrial jobs, were workers in the Capital and were supposed to be, at least in class terms, the leading echelon in the society. Many of them also had high school level education which made them better endowed than the great majority of the Chinese, but their exclusion from politics still made them marginal compared to the Leftist political elite which they detested. It was therefore not surprising that abolishing this exclusion became the central theme of the Democracy Movement, especially when they had fresh memories how this exclusion could be challenged.

It is also generally observed that the Democracy Movement did not have notable intellectual participation. Some intellectuals even expressed attitudes that were rather condescending towards the 'uneducated mob' at the Xidan Wall. This has usually been explained by the years of persecution that had taught intellectuals a lesson about joining too soon or eagerly in political campaigns. Furthermore, Deng's reforms promised them rehabilitation and return to their earlier social status, which made many of them averse to the risks of participating in a movement outside the Party leadership. Many of them also preferred to stay outside politics or to try to influence policies from inside – where at least Party intellectuals had some access.⁵⁰ Despite the relative privileged family background of some of the Democracy Movement activists, they generally did not have access to the Party leadership, and therefore the option to work inside the system. The only options they had were to take part in a popular movement or stay quiet.

One of the few known exceptions of Party intellectual who participated in the Democracy Movement was Yan Jiaqi, who became Beijing zhi chun's inside contact to the reformist Party establishment. He was a political scientist in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and a leading reformist figure in the 80s. As he recalls in his political autobiography, he was assigned to write a book about the Fifth of April Movement and in this capacity he met with the leading activists of what was to become the Beijing zhi chun group, in late 1978. During their discussions they also considered the option of starting a journal of their own. It was actually Yan who proposed the name 'Beijing zhi chun' [Beijing Spring] for the journal and the first mimeographed issue of the journal contained his article "The Tricks of the Trade of Modern Religion." However, Yan had been admitted into the Party as a provisional

member as recently as in October 1978, and he wanted to ensure that nothing would stand in the way of his promotion to the status of a full party member, so he did not take part in the editorial work on Beijing zhi chun. But he did submit another article to it, on abolishing life-tenure of leading party cadres. This was the speech he had given at the Conference of Theory Work that began in February 1979.⁵¹ As Yan saw it, joining the Democracy Movement was not preferable for him because, “*Although I agreed with the points of view being expressed in Beijing Spring, I nevertheless chose in early 1979 the path of remaining within the Communist Party in order to seek reform from within the system, and thereby to work for the democratization of China.*”⁵² These sentiments were echoed by other establishment intellectuals, too.

However, there is one particular aspect that has been missing in all the analysis on the reluctance of intellectuals to take part in the Democracy Movement: The Democracy Movement was predominantly a movement of former Red Guards who used variations of new class theory to diagnose the social evils. That many of the Democracy Movement activists had been ‘conservative’ Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution, showed how sending them down to the countryside and the post-1968 establishment of revolution committees had also made them more open to their former adversaries’ social criticism. Indeed, it was the only critical theory around to explain the emergence of the Leftist autocracy. Intellectuals, by and large, had been victims of Red Guards, no matter which faction they had come from, and assuming the radical social analysis of their former enemies may have not been very attractive for intellectuals, even if it had been by now purged of any hostility towards intellectuals as such. Consequently, none of the Democracy Movement journals was led by an establishment intellectual - i.e. a person with high education and a government job. However, some journals like Beijing zhi chun⁵³, Qiushi bao⁵⁴, Wotu and Qunzhong cankao did have some reformist intellectuals writing to them.⁵⁵

Furthermore, it has to be noted that the style and content of some articles in the Democracy Movement’s journals suggests that behind the pennames there were a few more educated writers with reformist allegiances than is generally known. One can estimate that about 5 % of the articles in the journals were of considerably high quality in their style and content, seen for example in their references to contemporary academic discussion and sources. This indicated small, but tangible, intellectual participation – even if they preferred to stay anonymous behind pennames. Nevertheless, the fact remains that intellectuals did not assume a leading role in the movement and that it was led by young workers and students. This was both acknowledged and employed as strength in the Democracy Movement’s argumentation. It was also in this respect where the movement differed from East-European dissident movements.⁵⁶

The Democracy Movement was also an open movement in a sense that anyone who was critical of and against the Party Left and willing to bear the risks involved in participation could join in and take up its banner. This caused visible diversity in the movement’s agenda and the activists were quite aware of this, too. As Liu Qing

described the activists, he saw it as quite normal that they had different ideologies and motives:

“Some were willing to devote themselves to the enterprise of public interests out of a strong sense of responsibility to society, or sense of history, or because of a sense of urgency; there were also others who came because of personal gratitude or vengeance or who were people of pure emotions in their dissatisfaction toward social phenomena. Moreover, there were those who were extremely ambitious and longed for power and influence, and tried to make the Democracy Movement open the doors for them. And there were street-corner bullies and vagabonds who came for the fun and for the opportunity to grab some profit.”⁵⁷

Based on this honest observation about the Democracy Movement’s activists’ personal motives Liu Qing did regard the differences between the journals as unsurprising. He also noted that some of the activists joined the movement in order to gain political positions. In the beginning, similar doubts concerning the motives of the early Democracy Movement activists were cast by many foreign observers who did not regard the Democracy Wall posters as a genuine expression of popular feelings.⁵⁸ However, the number and diversity of posters and people behind them soon made it clear that the Democracy Movement was not under backstage manipulation, even if its connections to the Dengist faction were evident. Moreover, as Liu Qing noted, most of the participants were not in it for personal gain and positions, because *“today, when one joins the Democracy Movement, one is closer to the jailhouse than to wearing an official’s hat.”*⁵⁹ This was written in 1981 after Liu had been arrested, but it was always clear, what were the risks in being involved in an officially unauthorised, if not initially disapproved, movement.

The number of the Democracy Movement activists was never very substantial. Goodman estimates that the number of hard core activists was about two hundred, but this figure excluded those who only contributed articles to journals.⁶⁰ Goldman assessed that there were ‘several hundred to a few thousand at any one time’ of them and that they had tens of thousands of readers and listeners.⁶¹ Using a rough estimate if one calculates that the journals had on average 10 to 20 active members in their editorial crews with the number of known journals, 55 in Beijing and 173 in other places,⁶² a figure of anything between 2200 and 4500 activists engaged in publishing journals countrywide is obtained. Comparing it to the Chinese population, or even only its urban part, this is a negligible number. However, it does not include those who were active in writing dazibaos, which was a much higher number.

The participants were also predominantly young, mostly aged from 20 to 35, which gave the movement its own energy and made identity forming aspects important in it. Indeed, many of the leading Democracy Movement participants would become ‘democracy activists’ for the rest of their lives – some of them still continuing on that road to date. As such the Democracy Movement activists had most of the

characteristics that a social movement requires to get it underway: a political opportunity, pre-existing groupings and networks, shared grievances, commitment to ideals, and a relative young age of the participants.⁶³

The Journals⁶⁴

Publishing journals became the central activity of the various Democracy Movement groups that rapidly emerged at the end of 1978 and early 1979.⁶⁵ As the innovation of publishing journals spread, the third anniversary of the death of Zhou Enlai on 8 January 1979 also marked a high point in the Democracy Movement in this respect. In the time honoured way of timing popular demonstrations to important dates, many new journals like Tansuo, Kexue minzhu fazhi, and Beijing zhi chun now made their first appearance to commemorate the day. Other journals that had already started to come out, like Qunzhong cankao, also celebrated the day by publishing their own issues. Zhongguo renquan published its 19-points declaration of Chinese human rights that had two days earlier appeared as a poster, and also Qimeng published a special issue on human rights. On the same date, some ten thousand people gathered in Tiananmen Square to commemorate Zhou Enlai, many of them Democracy Movement activists.⁶⁶

The Beijing Democracy Movement produced at least 55 different journals on a wide variety of contents and topics, but only about ten of them achieved a lifespan that was longer than one or two issues, or otherwise attracted wider attention, viz: Beijing zhi chun, Siwu luntan, Kexue minzhu fazhi, Qimeng, Zhongguo renquan, Tansuo, Qunzhong cankao, Qiushi bao, Qiushi, Wotu, and Jintian. In general, the journals could be divided into political and literary titles, although this division was not strict in either way. Furthermore, as discussed more in the chapters 9 and 10, the arguments concerning political reforms used by the Democracy Movement activists could be divided into three general categories according to their stance on Marxism and sources of inspiration the writers had: orthodox / classical and eclectic Marxists, and anti-Marxist radicals. However, dividing journals strictly according to these categories is not possible as different arguments were contained within the same journal. Nevertheless, Beijing zhi chun, Siwu luntan, Kexue minzhu fazhi, Qunzhong cankao and Qiushi bao published most articles that could be classified as classical Marxists, whereas eclectic arguments could mostly be found in Siwu luntan, Kexue minzhu fazhi, Zhongguo renquan, Qimeng, and Wotu. Non-Marxist or outright anti-Marxist articles were furthered by Tansuo and Jiedong, a splinter group of Qimeng. Qiushi, Wotu, and Jintian were mostly literary journals. The writers advocating orthodox and eclectic views formed the group the author refers to here as the mainstream of the Democracy Movement, while the non-Marxist writers were the movement's radical wing.

The editors of the major journals became the celebrities of the Beijing Democracy Movement. Although important activists included many others, the most notable

editors included Huang Xiang and Li Jiahua of Qimeng; Xu Wenli, Liu Qing, Lü Po, and Chen Erjin of the Siwu luntan; Wei Jingsheng, Lu Lin, and Yang Guang of Tansuo; Chen Ziming, Wang Juntao, and Han Zhixiong of Beijing zhi chun; Ren Wandong and Chen Lü of Zhongguo renquan; Xia Xunjian of Qunzhong cankao; Hu Ping of Wotu, Gong Nianzhou of Kexue minzhu fazhi; and Mang Ke and Bei Dao of Jintian. Outside of Beijing, particularly notable journals were Renmin zhi lu and Renmin zhi sheng in Guangdong edited by Wang Xizhe, He Qiu, and Liu Guokai and Minzhu zhi sheng in Shanghai edited by Fu Shenqi.

Depending on the context and development of the official attitudes, the journals had many labels. Their publishers called them the people's (*mínjiān*), spontaneous (*zìfā*), unofficial (*fēiguānfāng*), and mimeographed (*yóuyìn*) publications, or 'journals of likeminded people' (*tóng rén kānwù*).⁶⁷ Their most common reference was as the people's publications (*mínkān* short for *mínbàn kānwù*), while the authorities called them underground (*dìxià*) or counterrevolutionary and reactionary (*fǎndòng*) publications.⁶⁸ They were mostly mimeographed leaflets of rather poor printing quality of anything between 4 to 200 pages, and sold in the price range of 1 Jiao (0.10 Yuan) to 1 Yuan – higher prices were usually charged from 'foreign friends', mostly reporters. Some special issues were even more expensive. Journals were both sent by mail to subscribers and sold at Xidan Wall – usually on Sunday afternoons.⁶⁹ A journal's editorial 'office' was usually located at an activist's home or workplaces, and were edited in their editors' free time – a feature the editors were keen to stress, as it gave them the aura of selfless sacrifice.⁷⁰

Journals became the Democracy Movement's backbone and much of its core activists' energy and attention was dedicated to running them. Indeed, the Democracy Movement never developed any strong and overarching organisational structures but remained a loose assembly of activist groups concentrated on journals, which were the foci of organised activities. The journals did establish a loose co-ordination body called the Joint Council in late January 1979, but its powers were limited. On the national level the journal groups were only able to formally co-operate in early 1980 when increasing police oppression drove them to it. As some have argued, the organisational weakness of the Democracy Movement was partly a result of the diversity of its agenda,⁷¹ but also of the way its mainstream avoided organisational opposition to the Party. Naturally, when it began, oppression also made achieving united organisation difficult, if not outright impossible. Nevertheless, although a strong centralised organisational structure on which to adhere one's membership was largely lacking in the Democracy Movement, the sense of being a part of a movement that had a common past, goals, and adversaries, was strong in the ranks of its participants and important to justify their activities.

The natural rationale to publishing journals was that they provided better media for disseminating the message of the Democracy Movement. Already the *dazibaos* on the walls were meant to be copied and disseminated.⁷² However, this method had its obvious disadvantages in creating as wide as possible circulation of the activists'

ideas. Therefore, editing journals was a logical step forward. It was also something the ex-Red Guards generation knew from their earlier experience.⁷³ Indeed, in the first appearance the journals may have reminded people about the various ‘red papers’ (*hóngsè xiǎobào*) from the Cultural Revolution, which had vanished after the fall of the Gang of Four, but the purpose of these new journals was not to praise Leftist policies. Nor was it to copy the official press, which had virtually become a system of ‘two newspapers and one magazine’ (*liǎng bào yī kān*) under Leftist rule and was only slowly recovering from this experience. Under these conditions, the supply of printed media could not match the demand of critical social commentary and these journals moved in to fill this gap.⁷⁴ The posters and the journals were also intimately linked. It was a common practice to print posters in the journals as well as post the printed pages on the Xidan Wall, too. The editorial staffs of the journals also came to dominate the activities and discussions of the Democracy Wall.⁷⁵

The journals’ circulation was relatively small, usually from 200 to 500 copies per issue. As, for example, Qunzhong cankao’s editors calculated it in May 1979, they had some 300-400 subscribers and had received almost 1000 letters from readers in two months. Adding to this the fact that the journals were disseminated and posted on democracy walls all over China, Qunzhong cankao estimated that its readership could reach “*several tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands*”.⁷⁶ Further, circulating journals from reader to reader and recopying them after purchase was also common, as a letter from a Shanghai Worker to Kexue minzhu fazhi editors explained. According to the writer, even if the journals were not printed, and their numbers were not great, they had great many readers. The writer compared the effect to a poem made during Fifth of April Movement ‘*Hai yan*’ (Sea Sparrow) by a Gao Erji. It had been copied in tens of thousands even if originally it had less than ten copies.⁷⁷ In its February issue, Qunzhong cankao also estimated that the Beijing Democracy Wall alone had some forty thousand visitors a day.⁷⁸ However, there are also more conservative estimates on the reach of the Democracy Wall. For example, Fox Butterfield gives a much lower figure stating that only ‘a few thousand’ people dared to read posters on the Xidan Wall daily.⁷⁹ And even here, as Goodman points out, public interest did not necessarily mean support for the Democracy Movement.⁸⁰ People were also just interested to know how the power struggle was playing out and the posters on the Democracy Walls offered one indicator in this.

However, other factors indicate that the impact of the Democracy Movement through its posters, journals and contacts was more substantial than numbers of subscribers and visitors to the walls indicate. The news of the movement’s major documents and events seems to have travelled around the country swiftly through informal networks, *neibu* media, and foreign broadcasts. Although it is impossible to assess exactly how extensive the influence was, some statements provide clues. Liu Qing recalled having received and talked to two to three thousand guests during the time (less than a year) he was the editor of Siwu luntan.⁸¹ When a foreign correspondent visited the Siwu luntan office (that is, Liu Qing’s home) after Liu Qing’s arrest in October 1979, he met with people who had come there from Yunnan to meet the editors.⁸² People

travelling from the provinces to the capital would visit the Democracy Movement taking notes or even tape recording the most interesting posters. Fraser mentions a railway security worker who would regularly visit the Xidan Democracy Movement taking notes and buying the magazines, to take them back to his home town.⁸³ Although the actual geographical and social reach of the journals remains unclear, the letters to their editorial offices came from every corner of the country. Maybe the high estimates on the numbers of the people the journals could reach was partly wishful thinking on behalf of the journals' editors, but any prospect of such popularity and circulation must have appeared an attractive vision to them – and a potential threat to the Leftist and conservative Party authorities.

Publishing journals was not an easy task even technically and some groups were not able to publish their own journal, but had to rely on others as the conduits for their messages. Editors were usually workers or low level cadres and office workers and therefore did not have access to facilities required for high quality printing. They had to edit the journals in their free time under crowded conditions in some of the editors' homes and mimeograph the journals by hand. This required carving the articles with a needle onto a wax plate. For example in Siwu luntan, one 40 x 27cm plate contained some 2700 characters on it and one issue of the journal needed about 30 such plates. To make single characters discernible, a cursive style of highly simplified characters had to be used.⁸⁴ Ink and paper were in short supply even in Beijing, and large purchases of them needed connections – or outright theft. Furthermore, inflationary pressures also bothered the journals, which were forced to raise prices every so often.⁸⁵ However, the editors saw working under such conditions as a sign of their high moral character. As Fen Quan wrote to Qiushi bao:

*“Ink printing is not an easy task but the Qiushi bao has overcome various hardships, and has continued to come out this far, which shows that the members of the Qiushi bao have developed the spirit of hard working, bravery and not fearing hardship.”*⁸⁶

This said, he suggested that the state should help Qiushi bao by giving access to lead printing and help with mailing costs, but for most of the journals no such help was forthcoming, and the official attitude toward their wishes stayed hostile. The editors also tried to act out as openly as possible as not to be labelled ‘underground’ journals. Many of them printed the names and addresses onto the coversheets of the journals – which of course was also required for reader correspondence and subscriptions as well as having material submitted for publication. Further, the journals did not want to keep their lights under lid. For example Siwu luntan editors sent copies of their journal to Deng Xiaoping, Beijing Mayor Lin Hujia, and various libraries.⁸⁷ Jintian also had a list of leading Party cadres it sent its copies to.⁸⁸ This was probably deemed as a genuine channel of influence. After all, the Dengist Party leaders were the main target of the articles in the journals. The Democracy Wall also attracted many cadres from provinces who would visit it when attending meetings in the capital. For a while ‘inhaling the air of democracy in Beijing’ was fashionable.⁸⁹

Many journals also tried to officially register.⁹⁰ The law required this procedure, but none of the journals actually managed to secure an official registration. In a Kafkaesque manner, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress declared, in November 1979, that the laws and decrees promulgated since 1949 were in effect, meaning that the regulations of 1952 concerning printing and publishing were supposed to be in force, too. Following these rules was impossible as they stated that journals should be guaranteed by two private shops, which did not exist anymore. Furthermore, printing was supposed to take place in fixed facilities, but which were denied to the journals. Thirdly, registration had to be made with the local industrial and commercial federation, yet which had ceased to exist.⁹¹ This situation meant that as long as the journals lacked political endorsement, they were neither legal nor illegal, but remained in the grey zone and at the mercy of political developments.⁹² However, in the final analysis, the question with the journals was never their legality or illegality, but their rather acceptability to the Party leadership and in this the journals, like the rest of the Democracy Movement, were at the mercy of the evolving power struggle.

The example of Jintian, a central literary journal in the Beijing Democracy Movement, illustrates the difficulties involved in editing and printing a journal. The Jintian group started their endeavour with a small circle of seven people. As they were under government or *danwei* control, one task which was difficult was to get a printing machine, but later one of the editors, Huang Rui, found a used printing machine which they bought. Paper was also a problem. As the editors were poor at the time, they had to steal it. A member of the editorial board, Mang Ke, worked in a printing house and could pilfer some paper, but other members who also had various office work also engaged in workplace theft. It took them one month to obtain enough paper for the first issue – and then it came in different hues. It took three days and nights to get the first 1000 copies out, and afterwards everyone was exhausted. Later they got donations and incomes from sales and 'other sources' and were able to buy the paper they needed.⁹³

They also had to use the skills which they had learned to cope with the scarcity of everything. One of the journal's editors, named Xu, was a member of her school student body and responsible for the school paper. As such she had access to her school's hand-used printing machine. As they naturally could not get an official letter of introduction to open the doors for printing the journal's title pages, Xu had to bribe the head of a printing shop with some wine and chocolate to get the access. After the first issue they developed other connections to print the front pages. Through her school, Xu also had access to sound equipment they used for public reading sessions.⁹⁴ Most of the Jintian's issues were edited and printed at the Liu brothers' home, 'number 76', in an atmosphere which a Jintian member, Nan Li, has described as 'communist': all contributed to common needs, like food tickets or money. The atmosphere was amiable and the editor in chief of Jintian, Bei Dao,

brought a tape recorder to play songs while they worked.⁹⁵ However, not all journals shared such a cordial work atmosphere and even Jintian developed inner splits later.

Jintian also gives us a good glimpse into how one of the most central journals in the Beijing Democracy Movement came about. As with some other journals, the Jintian's editors shared history also did not start in November 1978. Its chief editors, Bei Dao and Mang Ke, had first met in Beijing in 1972, when they were introduced by a mutual friend belonging to a 'vanguard faction' (*xiānfēngpài*) of the art circles in the capital – a group of romantic poets.⁹⁶ Many other members of the Jintian group also knew each other before joining it and had gone through similar experiences during the Cultural Revolution. Most notably many of them had also spent time in prison together. E Fuming, a 29 year old car mechanic who ran the daily affairs of Jintian, and Li Nan had befriended each other in Inner Mongolia in 1976 where they had been sent down. Xu Xiao, Xiao Wang and Li Dongmin had been imprisoned in 1977,⁹⁷ and Zhou Yifan had been arrested in 1975 and spent two years in prison. Zhou Yifan had a collection of forbidden literature and he had introduced Xu Xiao to Bei Dao personally and his underground poetry. Zhou Yifan's house was a meeting place for likeminded people in the artistic circles of Beijing, where those people who established Jintian had been able to meet.⁹⁸

Another member of the Jintian group was a poet and writer Liu Zili, who had been a middle school student during the Cultural Revolution Xu Xiao's classmate from 1968. As he had been a Rebel and challenged the theory of family origin in a *dazibao* during the Cultural Revolution, he had been accused of being a counterrevolutionary. In fact, Xu Xiao had headed his denunciation meeting at their school. Now the former 'class enemies' became friends at Jintian.⁹⁹ Liu Zili's and Xu Xiao's case shows how at least in Jintian the old Red Guard split between the rebel and conservative factions did not influence the activities of the Democracy Movement members in a way that they would have formed their own exclusive groups. Other members of the Jintian group included Ma Desheng, who was a model worker in his *danwei* and a secretary of its Youth League. Others, like Gua Gua, who was a nurse, and Zhou Meiyang, an office worker, joined the group after reading Jintian in public. They practically just walked in the journal's office and after introductions began working for it.¹⁰⁰

The idea of an independent journal was first discussed by Bei Dao and Mang Ke in the mid-70s, when the two used to toy with (usually after many classes of *báijiǔ*) the possibility of a movement to liberate Chinese art and how they would personally contribute to it. It was Bei Dao who first came up with the idea of an independent journal during such a session. Mang Ke, an easily excitable person, thought the idea excellent, although after sobering up the next morning no longer seemed as attractive as it had done in the evening before.¹⁰¹ However, this idea was taken up once more in October 1978, when the political climate in the capital started to thaw. Now Mang Ke, Bei Dao and Huang Rui began to search for a way to express their sentiments in public and decided that a literary journal was needed. They recruited five other

friends and convened a brainstorming meeting in a park. As a result a seven member editorial board was set up, with each member assigned specific responsibility areas. The journal's title 'Jintian' [Today], was suggested by Mang Ke and approved by the rest of the group. The first journal was edited and printed at Lu Huanxing's home who was a member of the editorial board (he withdrew after the first split of the group in February 1979).¹⁰² As such, these events indicate how a 'free space' existed for the movement's incubation as is usually found in social movements. In such situations what is said about action proceeds what is done when the political opportunity arises.¹⁰³

The first issue of Jintian came out on 23 December 1978. The Democracy Wall poster campaign had already been going on for over a month after the Tiananmen Incident verdict had been reversed. Jintian activists were also aware of Deng Xiaoping's favourable remarks to visiting Japanese socialists on 26 November that *dazibaos* were constitutional and the people should have right to express their opinions and feelings publicly. Bei Dao had also heard Deng Xiaoping's comments of approval about the Xidan Democracy Wall when they John Fraser conveyed it to his listeners at the Xidan Wall on 27 November. However, even if the journal's opening declaration was: "*The moment has finally arrived to let our generation reveal the poems and songs that have been buried in its hearts for over ten years without fear of dark punishment*"¹⁰⁴, the fear of official reaction to the publication of an unofficial journal still remained.¹⁰⁵

When the first issue of Jintian was ready on 22 December after three days and nights of carving and printing only Bei Dao, Mang Ke and Lu Huanxing, were brave enough to go to the City to distribute the new journal. Next day, after some schnapps for courage, they left to fulfil a mission with, as they felt at the time, possibly no return. They took the precaution to alter their tricycle plate number to prevent the police from tracing them, as had happened to many of the Fifth of April Movement's participants in 1976. The three volunteers also left instructions for their friends and relatives on what to do if something happened to them.¹⁰⁶ Their posters were placed on the Xidan Wall, at Tiananmen Square, Wangfujing, the People's printing house, the Cultural Ministry, the National People's Congress, and Hufangqiao, after which darkness fell and they returned to the editorial 'office' exhausted but happy. On the second day they went to Renda, Beida, and Qinghua universities. Their posters received the warmest reception in Beida and most reserved in Renda – where the poster was torn down, but even in Beida the police followed them. Their first issue was 1000 copies, the second 1500.¹⁰⁷ Jintian had also close ties to Siwu luntan through its editor Liu Nianchun, who was Liu Qing's brother.¹⁰⁸ Indeed both journals shared the same address for correspondence. Jintian became the most popular and longest running of the literary journals in the Democracy Movement.

At its heyday, Jintian had 20 – 30 people working for it, all relatively young, working as nurses, industrial workers, university students, or just 'waiting for work'.¹⁰⁹ The support staff included many university students especially in Beida. At

its peak after the second issue, the Jintian editors received a pile of letters everyday. Its second issue had some 900 subscribers and later steadied at 1000. The rest was sold at Xidan. The income generated from sales and donations was adequate to finance Jintian and improve its quality. As in other journals, the editors were not usually paid for their work, but after Mang Ke refused to submit a written report of his activities in Jintian and the Democracy Movement to his *danwei*, he was not welcome there anymore, so Jintian had to support him with weekly allowance of six Yuan.¹¹⁰ For Jintian, finding good quality manuscripts of short stories to publish was also comparatively hard, but finding poems was not so, as the editors had written a lot of unpublished poetry themselves during the late Cultural Revolution. In addition to Jintian, other journals that focused mostly on literature, were also founded in Beijing, e.g. Wotu.

Organisation and Finances

The journals formed the foci of the Democracy Movement activities and their rules and organisations therefore had not only practical significance, but also offered examples of what democracy and democratic activism meant for their participants. The rules and financial report of Siwu luntan provide a good insight into one of the largest journals in the Democracy Movement in this respect. According to its rules, the leading principle of the journal was democratic centralism. Power was invested in the general assembly of the functionaries, which was responsible for discipline and editorial decisions (*zēng-shān*, add and delete) as well as official relations, important political campaigns, work reports inspection, criticism, revisions, economic planning, personnel appointment and dismissal, ‘and other important questions’. In the general assembly, two thirds of the members convened a quorum. Within 6 months of the establishment of the journal there was to be a general assembly elections. In the interim, an editorial commission of three members was responsible for the running of the editorial board of the journal. There was also a discipline commission of three members. A membership fee for the functionaries was one Yuan per month, which was to be used as the running capital for the journal. All contributions and assistance was also welcome.¹¹¹

Disciplinary procedures were also made public: The members of the general assembly were forbidden to do anything that violated the interest of the people. Joining and resignation from the Siwu luntan group was voluntary. Editorial work and printing was to be conducted under high unity. After editorial decisions had been made collectively, the texts were not to be altered by anyone. To control quality, the printers only had the right to correct single typos and the change of complete sentences could only be approved by the editor-in-charge. If a decision had great principal value, it had to be approved by the editorial board, which also inspected any major errors realised after printing. Except for grammar and mistaken characters, contributions from readers should not be altered without author’s permission. The submitted articles were filed and held by the editors, thus not returned to the writers,

unless requested to. The editors were obliged to protect the confidentiality of the contributors.¹¹²

According to the rules, no one was authorised to represent the journal without clear authorisation from the general assembly or the editorial board. Authenticity and trustworthiness were declared ‘the second life of the members’ and the editorial board was obliged to avoid a bureaucratic style of operation and be sincere in receiving critical opinions, warmly receive all visitors, and promptly reply to the letters and articles the journal received. The editors were urged to have compassion towards people’s hardships, and be discretionary and ‘not to steal the show’. The rules also stated that the people working for the journal should only use their free time to do so. Their working ethics should be held high. The members were obliged to follow the journal’s meeting and work times in a self-aware manner, not to arrive late or leave early, and to submit to the authority and correct leadership of persons in different assigned sectors. Those who did not attend the official meetings and work for five to six times, should automatically resign. They should also possess the feeling of collective honour, so as not to only do the minimum required, nor create disputes, but to uphold the truth, correct mistakes as indicated, be good both at criticism and self-criticism, seek to minimise differences and consensus and do good work united. Further, all major financial decisions were to be decided collectively.¹¹³

Similar rules were also published in the August 1979 issue of *Siwu luntan*. Now the general assembly was instructed to convene at least once a month and the editorial board once a week. The latter had four branches: discipline inspection, theory, editing, and publishing. While the general assembly was in recess, the branches were led by a three-member committee elected by secret ballot. All adult law-abiding (lit. abiding the constitution) workers who had paid their membership fees and accepted the rules could become functionaries in the organisation. Membership required a written application, ‘a short period’ of work experience, reference from two members of *Siwu luntan*, and the agreement of the ‘conveners’ (*zhàojírén*) i.e. the three elected leaders. Here the rules resembled those of the Communist Party somewhat, which of course offered the best known organisational model for the activists. There were two classes of functionaries: formal ones and reporters. The former took part (presumably actively) in the actions of the assembly and the movement at large. The latter were either local reporters or located ‘elsewhere’ (*wàibù*). They were responsible for ‘propaganda’. The journal disavowed any ‘political and social’ responsibility of the activities of its members taken outside its own activities.¹¹⁴

In the same issue, *Siwu luntan* also published its revenues and expenditures to demonstrate its activities transparently. The journal had total revenues of 2264.52 Yuan to meet the expenditures of 1620.93 Yuan equalling a surplus of 643.59 Yuan.¹¹⁵ This was a considerable sum in China of the late 70s. Indeed, *Siwu luntan* was even criticised for being in the business only for money, a notion that the editors strongly refuted.¹¹⁶ However, as Andrew J. Nathan has correctly pointed out, the journals’ balance sheets did not include the hundreds of hours of unpaid labour.¹¹⁷

Had there been full compensation for work, the prices of the journals would have soared and their readership dwindled. When the journals were forced underground in early 1980s, finance became a major problem, because sales no longer covered the cost of editing and printing. Most of the journals then had to print “free circulation” on the front page and the cost came out of the editors’ own pockets. Some journals even tried to raise income through advertisements, like the Hailang Hua [Sea Waves], whose November 1980 issue, for example, published an ad for ‘delicious seaweed’ on its last page’.¹¹⁸ The journals were therefore experiencing Deng’s new market oriented regime in many ways. Further, the impact of the general thaw and rehabilitation campaign in Beijing was also felt through the so called ‘petitioners’.

Petitioners and the Democracy Movement

The Democracy Movement activists were not the only ones who coveted public hearing and official recognition of their cause. Indeed, in 1978-1979 a far larger group of people also took advantage of the political thaw. This so called ‘petitioner movement’ (*shàngfǎng yùndòng*) consisted of individuals who had been wronged in various political campaigns that had swept across China in the previous 30 years and been victims of abusive government in general. The petitioner movement was a countrywide phenomenon but Beijing, the capital, attracted many petitioners from the provinces. In a century old tradition kept alive by the Party, the petitioners hoped that the higher authorities in Beijing could rectify their complaints about wrongful cases (*yuān’àn*) once the authorities were made aware of the facts. This fanned the petitioner movement, as did the reversal of the Tiananmen Incident verdict.¹¹⁹ It has been estimated that by the end of December 1978, some 30 000 petitioners had gathered in Beijing. The system of petition offices, even if it had been willing to help, could not cope with such a great number of petitions. As many of the petitioners were unable to find a shelter, they camped out in the streets, begging for food creating grim scenes on the roadsides of the capital.¹²⁰ This in turn resulted in some public disorder, which alarmed Beijing City officials.

The petitioners’ agenda was somewhat different from the Democratic Wall Movement. Petitioners usually made such apolitical demands such as food and shelter, or a fair hearing in their personal or some relative’s unjust cases, but they had connections with the Democracy Movement. They put up their posters on the same walls, and marched in the same demonstrations,¹²¹ and some Democracy Movement activists tried to help them to organise. The journals also published many articles supporting the petitioners’ cause. This made it possible to treat the movements as a united source of social instability for their adversaries. However, it is not surprising that the petitioners received such a warm response from a section of the Democracy Wall Movement activists, since many of them too had experienced similar treatment during the Cultural Revolution and, as they saw it, the injustices the petitioners criticised had been created by the same abusive political system that had given rise to the Democracy Movement.

One of the most forceful appeals for the petitioners in the Democracy Movement journals was published in the second issue of *Tansuo*, in late January 1979, by Lu Lin (using the penname Mu Mu). The article was entitled '*Selling Children at a Beijing Street Corner*'. In it the writer described a scene he had witnessed in Beijing: A peasant woman, a petitioner, was selling her children at a street corner to get some money for food. The last time the writer had seen such a thing was in a film about pre-liberation Shanghai. Back then, it had made him hate capitalism and love socialism, but now he witnesses the similar scene in Beijing. "*I am a conscientious young man, I do not want to see a fatherland where people have to sell their children and beg for food on the streets.*" and he continued on the petitioners "... *I think deeply: also they are human! But why do they not get treated like ones?*"¹²² It could not be, as the leaders told them, that China had no money, for it had built the expensive memorial hall for Mao Zedong – and where had this money come from? Furthermore, why two years after the downfall of the Gang of Four these problems still persisted? The solutions that the Centre attempted were ineffective, unless social system would be reformed agreed Mu.¹²³

Some activists helped the petitioners actively, like Wei Jingsheng who invited petitioners his home giving them food and money¹²⁴ and Chen Lü of Zhongguo renquan who took part in their activities and visited them at the Beijing Railway Station and petition offices.¹²⁵ However, while most of the Democracy Movement's journals sympathised with the petitioners and did not criticise their activities, it was a fact that they could drown out the Democracy Movement's own message in the noise and this worried some of the Democracy Movement activists. As one writer of a *dazibao* complained, the petitioners' *dazibaos* weakened the Xidan Democracy Wall's function as an arena for discussion on the future of the nation, human rights and other such matters. Petitioners' posters covered the more political posters of the Democracy Movement and the writer argued that the Democracy Wall should therefore be reserved only for political posters that discussed the fate of the nation, Party and various policies and that those on personal matters should not be posted at Xidan.¹²⁶ However, there does not seem to have been any real attempt to evict the petitioners from the Democracy Wall. Some others were also worried about the petitioners and what they saw as 'leftism' in their actions appearing in strikes, traffic blockades, demonstrations, unreasonable demands, harming the economy and stability and unity, and generally creating trouble etc. Some of the petitioners' posters were accused of using cursing and vilifying language, the more exclamatory the better, which all made the masses and the Party Centre suspicious of the Democracy Movement.¹²⁷ This observation was correct, as all signs of social instability were quickly seized upon by the adversaries of the Democracy Movement to turn against it.

Some students have regarded the Democracy Movement and petitioner movement as essentially the same movement,¹²⁸ but the two were separate movements in two crucial aspects: the Democracy Movement developed a loose organisation and

collective identities to define and support its collective activities, while the petitioners never were able to do so. The agendas of both movements were also different in that the Democracy Movement concentrated mostly on matters relating to political reforms, while the petitioners were, almost by definition, more interested in their immediate grievances. However, as the case of Fu Yuehua well demonstrated, the two movements overlapped and participants in them tried, to some extent, to use each other to further their own ends. The issue of mobilising petitioners also caused internal divisions in the Democracy Movement. The actions of petitioners also had more immediate consequences for the development of the Democracy Movement as was shown in the events surrounding the commemoration of Zhou Enlai's death on 8th of January 1979.

On this day, a group of about 500 petitioners marched to Tiananmen Square carrying banners demanding food, democracy and human rights in violation of a police instruction. They marched around the Square to the Statue of the Revolutionary Martyrs. Here they read a moving petition to central authorities and people in the audience also demanded that the authorities should provide the petitioners with food and shelter, seriously pay attention to their grievances and to reform the petition system.¹²⁹ One of the demonstrators, a woman named Fu Yuehua, read aloud the *Zhongguo renquan tongmeng's* 19 point declaration of Chinese human rights.¹³⁰ She also took part in another petitioners' demonstration in front of Zhongnanhai on 14 January, when a group of demonstrators even tried to force entry into the compound in order to meet Chairman Hua Guofeng personally, but the police blocked the attempt.¹³¹ For helping to organise the petitioners and to write *dazibaos*, Fu Yuehua was arrested on 18 January 1979 making her the first known member of the Beijing Democracy Movement to suffer such a fate.¹³²

The Joint Council

Fu Yuehua's arrest was not the first sign of the hostile attitude of the Beijing City authorities and the police that prompted the Democracy Movement activists to seek closer co-operation with each other. The first target for suppression by the local authorities in Beijing had already been the 'Democratic Forum' at Tiananmen Square in late November 1978. However, when the Democracy Wall Movement activists were not browbeaten and continued their activities and even grew, the city authorities issued a notice entitled 'Meeting Spirit' on 23 January, exposing their negative attitude to the Democracy Movement. In this the authorities warned that among the wall-posters and activists groups there were also those engaged in publishing 'underground publications' of which some were counterrevolutionary. Furthermore they were accused of contacts with foreigners and 'making a mess in the city'. As the result of this notice, *dazibaos* were removed from the walls and buildings at Wangfujing, but nothing further tangible happened on the behalf of the authorities, as yet.¹³³

In its second issue on 29 January 1979, Tansuo reacted to the Meeting Spirit running an editorial entitled 'Limits of Democracy?' It, stated that the notice had criticised the Democracy Wall dazibaos for 'selling out the country', 'creating disturbance', 'allowing the enemy to sneak in', and suggested that the activists should be re-educated and their question resolved as an 'us – enemy' basis. The last point was a strong hint as to the possibility of a crackdown, but still did not deter the activists. In the article (attributed to the Tansuo's editorial board, although the text carried clear signs of Wei Jingsheng's pen), the writers criticised heavily the 'Meeting Spirit'. Particularly irritating for the writers was how the city authorities referred to them as 'underground journals'. They pointed out that the journals were 'underground' only because the government forced them to be so, which gave the government the right to suppress them at will.¹³⁴

The most important consequence of the Meeting Spirit was that it made the activists realise the need for closer co-operation and a united front vis-à-vis the authorities. Seven journals now drew up a Joint Declaration on January 25, signed by Siwu luntan, Tansuo, Qunzhong cankao, Zhongguo renquan tongmeng, Qimeng Beijing Branch, Renmin Luntan¹³⁵ and Jintian.¹³⁶ Beijing zhi chun is said to have declined the offer to join the declaration and at first it did not participate in the activities of the Joint Council signifying the journal's closeness to the establishment at the time.¹³⁷ Another prominent journal that did not formally participate in the Council was Wotu, but both journals did co-operate with the Council on many issues. In the Joint Declaration, the activists emphasised the constitutional nature of their actions, and that all were stood for socialist democracy and development of the economy. They demanded the upholding of their freedom of speech, legal protection and open trials for those who had been arrested, and pledged to provide help for them and their families. They further pledged to report all instances where their constitutional rights were infringed and to solicit popular support for their task.¹³⁸

On 28 January, the same groups organised a public meeting at the Xidan Wall under the banner of 'Democracy Discussion Meeting', urging the need to struggle for democracy and to denounce the accusations contained in the 'Meeting Spirit'. This gathering was estimated to have had an attendance of some 700.¹³⁹ After the rally, the journals formed the Joint Council (*Liánxí huìyì*). Its rules were quite similar to the Joint Declaration they had issued three days before. According to Liu Qing, the participants of the conference decided to organise the Joint Council in order to 'facilitate communication' and to 'have frequent consultation' between the activist groups. Liu Qing was elected as the 'Convener' of the Council and its postal correspondence address was Liu Qing's home.¹⁴⁰ For example Yang Guang of Tansuo later commented that that the establishment of the Joint Council signified the groups' shared realisation of futility of working separately.¹⁴¹

Thus the Joint Council became loosely the coordinating body of the Democracy Wall Movement activities. In it the journals' representatives held weekly, sometimes biweekly, 'round table' talks discussing and co-ordinating articles and actions at the

Democracy Wall, but its actual ability to co-ordinate and unite the various Democracy Movement groups was not that effective.¹⁴² For example, in March the council prevented an open debate between the three splinter groups of Qimeng. By this time also the Zhongguo renquan group had split in two competing groups and already caused a serious loss of united face of the movement in public.¹⁴³ However, even joining the Council was not easy for all journals. For example, the decision to join caused Jintian to lose many of its members. When the journals' meeting decided on a 'resistance movement' over Fu Yuehua's arrest, Jintian's representative, Huang Rui, did not dare to sign the resolution.¹⁴⁴ After finding this out, Mang Ke added his name to the decision afterwards. However, as a majority of the journal's original editors disagreed with the decision, they left the board leaving only Bei Dao and Mang Ke continuing the work. Thereafter, it took them one month to reassemble a new editorial board and resume publication. The decision to join the Council held, however. Mang Ke felt that the journals shared the same fate and Jintian could not dodge the bullet, should it come to it and the journals be banned.¹⁴⁵

For Tansuo, joining the Council posed a problem for other reasons: when attending its first meeting, Tansuo sent three representatives, although the rule was to send only one representative per journal. Tansuo justified its action on human equality, which angered the other members of the Council. Only an alternate member system, proposed by Liu Qing, saved the situation. Wei Jingsheng was an active, if not always pragmatic, member of the Council. For example, he proposed that the Council and the journals should erect a permanent building in front of the Xidan Democracy Wall to serve as a democratic study centre and the movement's Head Quarters.¹⁴⁶

The arrest of Fu Yuehua, who had connections to the Zhongguo renquan group, was the first major issue the Council had to react to. After her case was brought to the its attention through Fu's brother, the Council decided get more information about the case and then demanded her release on 2nd of February in an enormous dazibao on the Xidan Wall.¹⁴⁷ On February 7, five journals posted a joint dazibao demanding the same. They also sent reporting teams to the police on 8 February and 15 March to inquire about her case, then published their discussions with the authorities as posters.¹⁴⁸ When there was no reply from the authorities, the activists also held a protest rally for Fu's release on 8 February 1979. Moreover, some of the journals protested the arrest on their pages. For example, Zhongguo renquan stated that the arrest was illegal and against due process.¹⁴⁹ Tansuo claimed that the 'masters' in the capital used Beijingsese localism to attack petitioners branding them criminals. They also tried to connect this attack to their opposition to the Democracy Movement and brand them as counterrevolutionaries.¹⁵⁰

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

- ¹ Yan X: *Běijīng Mínhǔ qiáng jìshí* [Record of Beijing Democracy Wall], Qunzhong cankao xiaoxi 3 (2 / 1979), CUP 1, 287; Chen Limin: *Zhì Zhōng-Gòng Zhōngyāng rénmínribào de gōngkāixìn* [An Open Letter to Renmin ribao], Kexue minzhu fazhi 2 / 1979, CUP 7, 327-329
- ² *Mínhǔ* [The People's Feelings], Kexue minzhu fazhi 2 / 1979, CUP 7, 333
- ³ Chen Ruoxi 1982, 9 and 11; however, Hua was also praised in some journals although he was a minor figure in the whole argumentation of the Democracy Movement, see Ge Sheng: 'Zhuī' hé 'fàng' ['Arresting' and 'releasing'], Siwu luntan 6 (4 / 1979), CUP 1, 39
- ⁴ Garside 1981, 215-216
- ⁵ Liu Sheng-chi 1984a, 29. The universities were the Beijing Geological Institute, Beida, Qinghua, the Aeronautical Institute, and Shifan Daxue.
- ⁶ Liu Sheng-chi 1981, 50
- ⁷ Liu Sheng-chi 1984a, 28
- ⁸ Fraser (1980, 230-250) gives a detailed description of Western journalists' role in the meeting. A Chinese eyewitness account can be found in Xiao Chen: 'Shíyī èrwǔ' mínhǔ tāolùnhuì jiànwén jìshí [An Eyewitness Account of the Democracy Meeting in 25.11.], Siwu luntan 14 (11 / 1979), CUP 9, 22-26. The topics of the meeting included realising the constitutional rights of the people, criticism on the Gang of Four and demanding socialist democracy.
- ⁹ Fraser 1980, 245
- ¹⁰ Garside 1981, 224-225
- ¹¹ Fraser 1980, 245
- ¹² Garside 1981, 225-228
- ¹³ RMRB 28.11.1978: *Dèng Xiǎopíng fūzǒnglǐ huìjiàn Měiguó, Riběn péngyǒu shí zhǐchū* [The Instructions from Vice-Premier Deng's Meetings with American and Japanese Friends]. Deng also repeated his stance in a discussion with a French journalist at the beginning of December when he declared that the "*dazibao* movement may continue because it is a good thing" (Widor 1981 I, 38).
- ¹⁴ SWB/FE 5982BII/1-2; XH, FBIS 28.11., E7; RMRB 21.12.1978: *Rénmín wànsuì!* To show Deng's support for the Democracy Movement Qunzhong cankao published in February 1979 a short news report that Deng had told the American senator Shi Zhong Shen (Johnson?), whom he met on 7 November 1979 that the Democracy Wall and Democracy Movement will not be limited in any ways as China continues to open up to the world. News was originally taken from the Japanese Riben Shibao. *Guānyú Mínhǔ qiángde zhòngyào xiāoxi* [Important News Concerning The Democracy Wall], Qunzhong cankao xiaoxi 4 (3 / 1979), CUP 3, 191
- ¹⁵ Deng Xiaoping: *Emancipate the Mind, Seek Truth from Facts and Unite as One in Looking to the Future*, in SWDX II, 1978 / 1995, 150-154: Deng was not the only Communist leader to express his support for the Democracy Wall. During the third plenum's closing speeches Ye Jianying, the marshal who had been integral to the rehabilitation of Deng Xiaoping, reportedly praised Democracy Wall as "a model of people's democracy". Chen Jinsong 1998, 96-97; Li Honglin 1999, 244
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 154
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 155
- ¹⁸ Communiqué of the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of C.P.C., in Hsinhua News (Weekly), December 28, 1978, 10-11
- ¹⁹ Liu Sheng-chi 1984a, 40; Deng was not the only one critical of those criticising Chairman Mao. See *Wōmende kànfǎ hé hūyù* [Our Opinion and Appeal], Minzhu qiang 1, DCDM I, 373-376, where a poster opposing the proponents of the 'anti-Mao movement' were reprinted. However, not all were happy with Deng's comments. A *dazibao* dated 29 November 1978 commented on Deng's remarks that criticism on Mao Zedong showed how the Chinese had matured enough to express their own opinions about things that they could not even have thought about doing in the past. Laoshiren: *Yī diǎn yìjian* [An Opinion], Kexue minzhu fazhi 2 / 1979, CUP 7, 330-331; *Bó 'Wōmende kànfǎ hé hūyù'* [Refuting 'Our Opinion and Appeal'], Minzhu qiang 1, DCDM I, 377-379 offers a similar argument.
- ²⁰ Kua Ke: *Mínhǔ qiáng yǔ 11.25 tāolùn huì* [The Democracy Wall and the 25/11 Discussion Meeting], Minzhu qiang 1 (December 1978), DCDM I, 359. Fraser (1980, 266) reports that *danweis* were discouraging their members to attend the democratic forum already on November 30 and Garside states that there was a Central Document to that end already on 28 November (1981, 226; AFP, FBIS 1.12. E1)
- ²¹ Liu Sheng-chi 1981, 58
- ²² Yang Jisheng 1999, 140-141

- ²³ Hu Sheng 1994, 730-731; the policy of the four modernisations was not actually a novelty to Chinese politics. Premier Zhou Enlai had endorsed it the first time in 1964 and again in 1975, when it was adopted as the basic economic policy of the Party. This time, however, it was to be the paramount policy. (Baum 1996, 27-31)
- ²⁴ Li Honglin 1999, 244-245
- ²⁵ Nieh Yu-hsi 1979, 1218
- ²⁶ Chen Ruoxi 1982, 8
- ²⁷ Christiansen et alii 1980, 13-14
- ²⁸ RMRB 16.12.1978: *Gōng'ānbù tōngzhī gèdì kāizhān ài mǐn yuè* [The Ministry of Public Security Announces Love the People Month to Commence at All Levels]
- ²⁹ Zhang Yongning in *Dúzhě lái xìn* [Letters from Readers], Tansuo 5 / 1979, CUP 4, 33
- ³⁰ Christiansen et alii 1980, 20
- ³¹ Goldman 2002, 168
- ³² Liu Sheng-chi 1981, 48-49; Chen Ruoxi 1982, 9-11; Goldman 2002, 168
- ³³ Ruan Ming 1991, 44
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 28-29
- ³⁵ Ruan Ming 1994, 45
- ³⁶ Ruan Ming 1991, 29-31. Ruan Ming helped draft Deng's closing speech at the plenum, which Deng regarded as better than Hu Qiaomu's original version which still had a reference to class struggle.
- ³⁷ Ruan Ming 1994, 44-45 and 47
- ³⁸ Lan Sheng: *Lùn 'Mínzhǔ qiáng'* [On The Democracy Wall], Siwu luntan 5th issue, 10.2. (3 / 1979), CUP 2, 88
- ³⁹ Fan Sidong: *Mínzhǔ qiáng kǎo* [Examining the Democracy Wall]
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁴¹ *Shanghai sì yuè* [Four Months in Shanghai], Kexue minzhu fazhi 10 / 1979, CUP 14, 85-86
- ⁴² McLaren 1983, 4
- ⁴³ FBIS (ANSA) 27 Nov 78, G1
- ⁴⁴ Liu Sheng-chi 1981, 47-78; Widor 1987 lists all the known journals outside Beijing
- ⁴⁵ E.g. RMRB 1.1.1979: *Mínzhǔ xuǎnzé yǔ dǎngde lǐngdǎo* [Democratic Elections and Party Leadership]; RMRB 2.1.1979: *Mínzhǔ hé fǎzhì shì xíxiàn sīhuàde zhèngzhì bǎozhèng* [Democracy and Legality Are the Guarantors of the Four Modernisations]; RMRB 3.1.1979: *Fāyáng mínzhǔ hé sige xiàndàihuà* [Develop Democracy and the Four Modernisations]
- ⁴⁶ Melucci 1988, 343; Snow and McAdam 2000, 48
- ⁴⁷ Chen Ruoxi 1982, 5 and 14-15; Goodman (1981, 15, 36-37 and 127) sees that the children of intellectuals were more often found in literary journals and children of cadres in political journals of the Democracy Movement. There is another way to see the activists. Accordingly, they were mostly workers and from poor families (See Kang Fuxin: *Dàlùde 'mínzhǔ kānwù' yǔ 'xīngwù yī dài'* [The Mainland Democratic Journals and the 'Awaken Generation'], CUP 5, 303-304) But this view is based on arrested activists' occupations, not their family backgrounds.
- ⁴⁸ Goodman (1981, 36-38) and Brodsgaard (1983, 762) use similar categories.
- ⁴⁹ Melucci 1996, 310
- ⁵⁰ Goldman 1994, 46-47; Butterfield 1982, 415-417; Goodman 1981, 127-128. Also some Democracy Movement activists would explain the situation like this, see Yang Guang as cited in Goodman (1981, 141-142)
- ⁵¹ Zhèng Yán: *Shèhuìzhǔyìde zhèngtí wèntí* [Problems of Socialist Political System], Beijing zhi chun 9 / 1979, DCDM I, 540-545
- ⁵² Yan Jiaqi 1992, 44. Indeed, it is generally agreed that most of the establishment intellectuals did even less for the Democracy Movement than Yan, and his participation in the Democracy Movement, small as it was, was one of the biggest contributions from them. However, the content of the Beijing zhi chun followed many issues raised by the reformists in the conference on theoretical work, which makes one suspect that the relationship was stronger than the journal's editors and the intellectuals let be understood.
- ⁵³ See Yan Jiaqi 1992
- ⁵⁴ Brodsgaard 1981, 763
- ⁵⁵ Qunzhong cankao's editor Xia Xunjian was a nuclear physicist whose residence was located in the Beida compound. But he also appears to have been out of work and did not occupy any real position in his facility.
- ⁵⁶ Brodsgaard 1981, 762-763

- ⁵⁷ Liu Qing 1983, 79
- ⁵⁸ Fraser 1980, 208-209
- ⁵⁹ Liu Qing 1983, 164-165
- ⁶⁰ Goodman 1981, 127
- ⁶¹ Goldman 2002, 167
- ⁶² Nathan 1985, 23-24 and 263. Widor (1987) lists all known Democracy Movement journals. The figure for Beijing keeps with the contemporary estimate that there were about 50 ‘democratic small groups’ in Beijing in January 1979 (*Guonei jiānxùn* [Domestic News in Brief], *Qunzhong cankao xiaoxi* 2 (1 / 1979), CUP 2, 184). The actual figure of journals in the entire country was probably even higher; moreover, there was a lively genre of school journals, some of which were quite critical of the Leftist policies, but they are not used in the figures given. See Chen Ruoxi: *Zhōngguó dàlù tánhuā-yìxiàn Mínhǔ qiáng hé mǐn bàn kānwù* [The Short-lived Democracy Wall and Popular Journals on the Mainland], in CUP 4, 323-324
- ⁶³ Laraña, et al., 1994, 17-18
- ⁶⁴ For a closer introduction to the Beijing Democracy Movement journals and their editors see Appendix 1.
- ⁶⁵ Initially the movement participants also organised themselves as ‘mass organisations’, but most of the known mass organisations would eventually have a journal of their own. (Goodman 1981, 3-4) However, there were also groups that did not publish their own journals, Liu Sheng-chi (1984a, 156-157) reports at least three such groups in Beijing, although their number was likely to have been higher (compare to the note 62), see also *Fù lái xìn yī fēng* [An Attached Letter], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 5 / 1979, 183
- ⁶⁶ Liu Sheng-chi 1984b, 31
- ⁶⁷ *Zhì dúzhě* [To the Readers], *Siwu luntan* 17 (2 / 1980), CUP 11, 1; As Brodsgaard (1981, 762) has pointed out, the term underground journal became more appropriate when the crackdown deepened in the late 1979; He Bian: *Shìlùn tóngrén kānwù* [On Publications of the Likeminded People], *Wotu zengkan* 3 / 1979, CUP 13, 225-234
- ⁶⁸ Chen Ruoxi 1982, 2 and 17; Goodman 1981, 17
- ⁶⁹ Christiansen et al. 1980, 21
- ⁷⁰ A journal’s editorial facilities and practical work was described in *Siwǔ lùntán fūzé rén Xu XX* [The Man Behind Siwu luntan Xu XX], *Siwu luntan* 14 (12 / 1979), CUP 9, 39-51
- ⁷¹ Goodman 1981, 3-4
- ⁷² For example Zhongguo renquan meng declared in its *dazibao* the 19-Points Declaration of Chinese Human Rights that readers were welcome to copy and post it further. (Pan 1980, 45)
- ⁷³ The journals’ editors stayed largely quiet about their Red Guard background and activities during this period. It was obvious, though, that some of them were familiar with printing techniques.
- ⁷⁴ Liao Yiwu 1999, 317-319; the two newspapers were Renmin ribao and Jiefang ribao and the one magazine was Hongqi.
- ⁷⁵ Chen Ruoxi 1982, 17
- ⁷⁶ *Liè lùn wǒguó qúnzhòng mínzhǔ yùndòng fāzhǎn* [On the Development of Chinese Democracy Movement], *Qunzhong cankao xiaoxi* 6 (5 / 1979), CUP 4, 144-149
- ⁷⁷ *Zǔguó gèdì lái xìn zhāi fā* [Collection of Letter From the Whole Nation], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 3 / 1979, CUP 8, 333
- ⁷⁸ Yan X: *Běijīng Mínhǔqiáng jìshí* [Record of Beijing Democracy Wall], *Qunzhong cankao xiaoxi* 3, 2 / 1979, 3.2.1.1979, CUP 1, 286
- ⁷⁹ Butterfield 1982, 410
- ⁸⁰ Goodman 1981, 127
- ⁸¹ Liu Qing 1983, 59-60
- ⁸² Butterfield 1982, 407
- ⁸³ Fraser 1980, 309
- ⁸⁴ Christiansen et al. 1980, 37-38
- ⁸⁵ *Jìnggào dúzhě* [Respectful Information to the Readers], *Qunzhong cankao xiaoxi* 5, (4 / 1979), CUP 3, 205
- ⁸⁶ Fen Quan: *Xīwàng guójiā duìyú Qiú shì bàode chuàngzàoxìng gōngzuò gěiyǐ gǔlì hé bāngzhù* [Hoping for Encouragement and Support from the State for Qiushi Bao’s Creativity], *Qiushi bao* 11 / 1979, CUP 4, 133
- ⁸⁷ Nathan 1985, 16
- ⁸⁸ Xu Xiao: *Jintiānyǔ wǒ* [Jintian and I], 386
- ⁸⁹ Ruan Ming 1994, 46-47
- ⁹⁰ Example of such attempt of registration in *Siwu luntan* 5 (3 / 1979), CUP 2, 117

- ⁹¹ Nathan 1985, 16
- ⁹² Brodsgaard 1981, 762
- ⁹³ Liu Hongbin 1999, 330-332
- ⁹⁴ Xu Xiao 1999, 388-390
- ⁹⁵ Liao Yiwu and Chen Yong 1999, 363
- ⁹⁶ Liu Hongbin 1999, 328-330, Bei Dao's real name was Zhou Zhenkai and penname Lao Mutou, (Old Woodhead). Mang Ke's real name was Jiang Shiwei and penname Houzi (Monkey, but also Mang Ke was taken from the English word 'Monkey').
- ⁹⁷ Liao Yiwu and Chen Yong 1999, 366
- ⁹⁸ Xu Xiao 1999, 380-381
- ⁹⁹ Ibid., 400-401
- ¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 402-406
- ¹⁰¹ Liu Hongbin 1999, 328-330
- ¹⁰² Tang Xiaodu 1999, 342-343
- ¹⁰³ Johnston 2005, 109-110
- ¹⁰⁴ *Zhì dúzhě* [To the Readers], Jintian 1 / 1978, CUP 4, 241
- ¹⁰⁵ Liu Hongbin 1999, 332-334. Fraser (1980, 213) notes how those people putting up dazibaos did not usually spend long time in the operation at the Xidan Wall, disappearing quickly into the crowd afterwards. Behind their collective image of fearless democratic warriors, still lay a sombre fear for the establishment.
- ¹⁰⁶ Liu Hongbin 1999, 332-334. The last expression was an official way to call the unemployed.
- ¹⁰⁷ Tang Xiaodu 1999, 344
- ¹⁰⁸ Brodsgaard 1981, 768
- ¹⁰⁹ Liu Hongbin 1999, 336
- ¹¹⁰ Tang Xiaodu 1999, 347-349
- ¹¹¹ *Zhì dúzhě* [To the Readers], Siwu luntan 4 (2 / 1979), CUP 4, 78; As Liu Qing (1983, 65) notes, elections of the editors were held in Siwu luntan at least once. Zhongguo renquan also had a similar organisation with the organisation department, whose duty it was to recruit members nationwide; the law department, which was the League's research unit on human rights matters and tried to extend help to arrested activists; the propaganda department which was responsible for putting up posters and arranging public meetings; and the editorial board which bore responsibility for editing and publishing. (Chen Ruoxi 1982, 40-41)
- ¹¹² Ibid., 78-79
- ¹¹³ *Zhì dúzhě* [To the Readers], Siwu luntan 4 (2 / 1979), CUP 4, 79
- ¹¹⁴ *Siwu luntan zhāngchéng* [Rules of the Siwu luntan], Siwu luntan 11 (9 / 1979), CUP 7, 2-4
- ¹¹⁵ *Siwu luntan shàng bànnián cáiwù hōu-zhī jiǎnbào* [A Financial Report of the First Half of the Year], Siwu luntan 11 (9 / 1979), CUP 7, 7
- ¹¹⁶ *Shíjù hé wǒmende rènsì* [Current Political Situation in our Reckoning], Siwu luntan 15 (13 / 1979), CUP 10, 1-16; Bi Dan: *Mínzhǔ qiáng zònghéngtan* [Survey of the Democracy Wall], Kexue minzhu fazhi 15 / 1979, CUP 17, 22
- ¹¹⁷ Nathan 1985, 15
- ¹¹⁸ Chen Ruoxi 1982, 26
- ¹¹⁹ Christiansen et alii 1980, 22-23; Nathan 1985, 26-27; Baum 1996, 75-77
- ¹²⁰ Chen Ruoxi 1982, 15-18; According to Nathan (1985, 29) in 1979 the central authorities received one million letters of appeal and two hundred thousand cadres were assigned to solve the cases. Christiansen et alii (1980, 114) give the number of petitioners in Beijing as 34 000.
- ¹²¹ An observer estimated on April 3 1979 that the posters on the Xidan Wall could be classified as follows: Of 101 posters 55 dealt with democracy, 16 were about the cases of personal injustice, 2 on problems of the educated youth and the rest 28 were mainly poems and stories (ICM June 1979, 14).
- ¹²² Mu Mu (Lu Lin): *Běijīng jiětóu mài háizi* [Selling Children at a Beijing Street-Corner], Tansuo 2 / 1979, CUP 2, 37
- ¹²³ Mu Mu, Tansuo 2 / 1979, CUP 2, 38-39
- ¹²⁴ Liu Qing 1998, xxvii
- ¹²⁵ *Guānyú Chen Lǚ tóngzhì* [On Comrade Chen Lü], DCDM I 1981, 553
- ¹²⁶ *Zǔguó gèdì lái xìn zhāi fā* [Collection of Letters From the Whole Nation], Kexue minzhu fazhi 3 / 1979, CUP 8, 332-332
- ¹²⁷ *Lüè lùn wǒguó qúnzhòng mínzhǔ yùndòng fāzhǎn* [On the Development of Chinese Masses' Democratic Movement], Qunzhong cankao xiaoxi 6 (5 / 1979), CUP 4, 145-146

¹²⁸ For example Munro (1984a, 72) sees that the Democracy Movement consisted of four kinds of people: the activist behind the journals, educated youth demanding return from the countryside, peasant petitioners, and other petitioners with grievances.

¹²⁹ Peng Fei: *Yīyuè bā rì Tiān'ānmén chǎng jìshí* [The January 1st Records from Tiananmen Square], *Qunzhong cankao xiaoxi* 3 (2 / 1979), CUP 1, 300-301; Huang and Seymour 1980, 17 and 19

¹³⁰ Liu Sheng-chi 1984b, 41

¹³¹ AFP, SWB / 6017 / BII, 1-4. The petitioners' demonstrations at the Zhongnanhai Xinhua Gate continued sporadically throughout the year 1979. A colourful description of one such demonstration at Xinhua Gate on 28th of August is given in Hua Yi: *Bā èrbā Xīnhuámén qián qǐngyuàn jìshí* [Records on Presenting Petitions at Xinhua Gate on 28 August], *Tansuo* 5 / 1979, CUP 4, 56-59. Many of the demonstrations took place in summer 1979, and in September the government decided to solve the situation by sending twelve ombudsmen to the provinces and establishing 38 petition stations to handle the cases locally (Christiansen et alii 1979, 26-27).

¹³² Fu had her own grievance against the Party secretary at her work unit who had reportedly raped her in 1972 and later accused her of being a counterrevolutionary causing her to suffer a nervous breakdown and lose her job and husband who divorced her. Fu had petitioned her case with authorities several times to no avail. (AI, 1984, 21-23)

¹³³ Goodman 1981, 88-89. A petitioners' demonstration in front of Zhongnanhai were also reported on 21 January 1981. Garside 1981, 255

¹³⁴ *Mínzhǔde xiàndù?* [Limits of Democracy?]. *Tansuo* 2 / 1979, CUP 2, 1-5; Lu Lin states that the article was a direct response to Beijing city authorities' announcement. Lu gives February 29, 1979 as the date of the "Meeting Spirit" declaration, but it is imprecise because the Joint Declaration was a response to the Meeting Spirit and this happened already on 25 January 1979. Lu Lin: *Fā kān yǔ tíng kān* [Publishing And Discontinuing Publishing], *Tansuo* 4 / 1979, CUP 3, 19-20. Goodman (1981, 17) notes that the 'a circular of the Beijing Party Committee' was reproduced in a wall poster already on 23 January 1979. Qimeng also discussed the declaration, in *Hé Àodàliyà jìzhě Kāng Dēlín tánhuàde zhāilù* [A Record of Discussion with an Australian Reporter Kang De Lin], *Qimeng* 1, 1 / 1979 (Beijing), CUP 3, 87-88, the writer took more moderate view on the declaration accepting that the constitution must protect the Democracy Wall, but this must not prevent government from arresting bad persons like enemies.

¹³⁵ Renmin luntan was a one man operation. It was published by Zhao Nan who left Siwu luntan in January and latter joined *Tansuo* (Widor 1980, 31).

¹³⁶ *Liánhé shēngmíng* [Joint Declaration] *Tansuo* 2 / 1979, CUP 2, 24. According to Chen Ruoxi, Ren Wanding of Zhongguo renquanmeng headed the drafting of the declaration. (Chen Ruoxi 1982, 40-41).

¹³⁷ Liu Sheng-chi 1981, 59; Widor 1981 (II), 59-60 as Widor points out, it was actually Beijing zhi chun that became active in organising co-operation in September-October when the radical wing of the Democracy Movement had been silenced.

¹³⁸ *Liánhé shēngmíng*, *Tansuo* 2 / 1979, CUP 2, 24

¹³⁹ Garside 1981, 246

¹⁴⁰ Liu Qing 1983, 76-77

¹⁴¹ As cited in Goodman 1981, 137

¹⁴² Liu Qing (1983, 16-19 and 76-78) assesses the Joint Council was 'in fact non-existent' when it came to helping the arrested. He lets to understand that taking care of this task was largely left to an informal small group he headed.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 78-79; for both splinter groups, see appendix 1.

¹⁴⁴ This was the November 25th Joint Declaration.

¹⁴⁵ Tang Xiaodu 1999, 344-346

¹⁴⁶ Chen Jinsong 1998, 91-92 and 98-99

¹⁴⁷ Fu's relation to Zhongguo renquan tongmeng is given by Goodman (1981, 89), Mab Huang and Seymour (1980, 17) and Liu Sheng-chi (1984b, 39-42). However, Liu Qing (1983, 76-77) does not see that she had any direct connection to any of the Democracy Movement groups; similar view in Christiansen et alii (1980, 23) and Widor (1981, 20). The connection may be explained by the piece of information that Fu Yuehua read the Chinese human rights declaration on the January 8th 1979, on a 'big mass meeting', which was probably the one held at Tiananmen Square. (Liu Sheng-chi 1984b, 41) It is interesting to note that in Shanghai the first arrest of a local Democracy Wall activist had occurred already in mid-December 1978 and had met with resistance from the local Democracy Movement activists. The arrested person was named Teng Husheng, a central figure in the early Shanghai Democracy Movement. (*Shanghai sì yuè* [Four Months in Shanghai],

Kexue minzhu fazhi 10 / 1979, CUP 14, 89-91). Teng was released in early February, but did not continue active in the Shanghai Democracy Movement (McLaren 1983, 7-8); Liu Qing (1983, 45) notes also that a Wang Zhenxiang, an overseas Chinese from California had been seized in January like Fu for participating in the same march. Also in Harbin the police was reported to have banned the 'Heilongjiang League for Freedom and Democracy' as a counterrevolutionary organisation and sentenced its head figure Zhou Erxun (Erh-chün) to 6 year prison on 9 January 1979. (ICM, April 1979, 2) Furthermore, some 40 activists were reported to have been arrested in Chongqing in February (ICM May 1979, 5) but it is unclear what their charges was based on.

¹⁴⁸ This is according to Liu Qing (1983, 16-17 and 76-78) and Widor (1981, 20-21); however, the Joint Declaration already referred to helping arrested members of the movement and many authors believe that the arrest of Fu Yuehua contributed to the establishment of the Joint Council. According to Widor (1981, 20-21) it was Tansuo and Wei Jingsheng who were especially active in organising the journals' campaign to release Fu Yuehua, but Zhongguo renquan tongmeng was also notably active on her case.

¹⁴⁹ *Jiù Fù Yuèhuá shìjiàn gěi gōng'ān, jiǎnchá, sīfǎ děng yǒuguān bùménde gōngkāixìn* [An Open Letter to the Police, Prosecuting, Legal and Other Related Departments Concerned with the Case of Fu Yuehua], Zhongguo renquan 2 / 1979, CUP 3, 230-232. According to Chen Ruoxi (1982, 40) the articles that denounced the arrest only appeared in the version of Zhongguo renquan edited by Chen Lü. But the above comments are from the version edited by Ren Wandong.

¹⁵⁰ *Mínzhǔde xiàndù?* Tansuo 2 / 1979, CUP 2, 3-4

4 CHAPTER: The Movement's Downfall

By the end of January 1979 the Beijing Democracy Movement was in full swing. Its major journals had all emerged and were developing closer co-operation with each other. Thousands of spectators and supporters read the *dazibaos* at the Xidan Wall every day and international interest in the movement was clear to all. However, the first signs of a counter-reaction from the authorities were also now felt and the activists' ability to continue drawing support from the Party Centre became increasingly important for the movement's growth and development. In the end, it failed in acquiring this support and was suppressed in three successive crackdowns from March-April 1979 to early 1981. This chapter focuses on the later phase of the movement and its relations to the Party and its factions, and the factors that contributed to the downfall of the Democracy Wall Movement.

The Democracy Movement and Authorities -Harassment and Co-Opting

While the Beijing city authorities' attitudes towards the Democracy Movement were hostile, those reformist forces within the Party who were sympathetic to the movement attempted to co-opt its activists to the establishment.¹ Various journals and the Joint Council had their informal connections with the establishment. The most notable of these were of course Beijing *zhi chun*, whose editorial board mostly consisted of members of the Communist Youth League and which was regarded as the journal of a reformist wing of the League (see appendix 1). However, also other journals had their official connections. Early 1979, a Beijing *ribao* reporter Tang Ruoxin asked Liu Qing of *Siwu luntan* if the central figures in the Democracy Wall Movement would be willing to work for the Party. The reporter explained that he had been sent by Deng Yingchao, the widow of Zhou Enlai, hinting at high-level backing for his endeavour.² He was well received by the Joint Council, but Wei Jingsheng and Lu Lin of *Tansuo* were suspicious of his motives and the Council declined his offer to engage in youth work for the Youth League as they also did to the suggestion to move the Democracy Wall activities to a more far-off location in Yuetan Park.³ Single journals were also approached by the official press. *Renmin ribao*'s international politics reporter, Zhou Xiuyang, invited Huang Xiang of *Qimeng* and others in the *Qimeng* society to a journalist meeting, but Huang refused to attend. He was also invited to visit *Renmin ribao* and *Guangming ribao* and submit an article about the 'The Beginning and End of *Qimeng*'. This would have clearly implied that he had relinquished the society but which he was not ready to do.⁴

Liu Qing recalls that his journal, *Siwu luntan*, was visited by people from the Research Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League, the Beijing Municipal Revolutionary Committee and personnel from *Beijing ribao*, like Tang Ruoxin. He was also invited to an interview and to attend discussion groups in

Renmin ribao and Zhongguo qingnian. The activists hoped that such contacts could help to convey their views to the Party Centre and serve as a source of inside information.⁵ These contacts also showed how the reformist elements of the establishment, especially the Youth League, were keen to make contacts with the journals and try to co-opt the most vocal activists. In June-July 1979, Siwu luntan and its editor Liu Qing even convened a theoretical conference under the sponsorship of Zhongguo qingnian. Other known contact points between the activists and the establishment were Renmin ribao and its deputy editor Wang Ruoshui and Jiefang ribao which reportedly had a lively exchange of communication with the Democracy Movement journals. The Marxism-Leninism Mao Zedong Thought Institute of the CASS also invited activists to its seminars.⁶ It was also evident that those activists who held formal positions in the Party had more access to reformist leaders. This was especially true of Beijing zhi chun.⁷

Other individual activists were also tempted into co-option to the establishment. For example, for a period of time many people ‘offered amnesty and enlistment to rebels’ (*zhāo’ān*) for Jintian. Bei Dao was given membership of the Xin guangcha [New Observer] editorial board, the journal of the Chinese Writers Association. He was dismissed from the editorial board after he wrote a praising review to the Xin guangcha of the “Stars” exhibition organised by local artists and Democracy Movement activists in October 1979.⁸ Some activists were also invited to roundtable discussions at the Academy of Social Sciences and local Party secretaries in provinces had contacts with them. Some activists, like Liu Qing, were also offered jobs and positions, and accepted to the writers’ and artists’ associations.⁹ In Guangdong, Wang Xizhe was offered a job in the Pearl River Film Studio in March 1979 but on the condition he would tone down his criticism, which he refused to do.¹⁰ As Liu Qing noted, refusing such offers was to show that they were not in it for ‘speculation and adventure’ and because they felt that the Democracy Movement needed them more.¹¹ Although this explanation is highly idealistic, it is not entirely unconvincing. For many hard core activists, the Democracy Movement was a mission and not a springboard for higher positions. This is also evidenced by the fact that the authorities’ offers did not create any significant exodus of activists from the leading ranks of the movement.

City Authorities’ Anxiety Grows

Despite the arrest of Fu Yuehua, the activists were actually quite optimistic about their future in the first months of 1979. The growing numbers of people taking part in the movement seemed to support a positive outlook on matters. In its February issue, Qunzhong cankao estimated that the Democracy Wall had some forty thousand visitors a day.¹² As it was centrally located at Xidan passers by Chang’an Avenue alone would easily have accounted for this. As to whether they actively read or participated in the activities at the Wall is another matter. For example, when Zhongguo renquan tongmeng held a ‘democratic forum’ at Dongtan Park starting on

29 January 1979, the Chinese New Year, the meeting lasted for four days but had only 500 participants.¹³

However, with the first arrest and the ‘Meeting Spirit’ incident at the end of January the tone in the official press was also changing. On February 12, Renmin ribao ran an editorial on upholding social order claiming that while the masses’ constitutional rights should be respected, some were misusing their democratic rights only to make trouble and further their own interests. The article declared that: “*We should use legal measures to punish those specific individuals with ulterior motives who wish to create disturbance and cause bad results...*”¹⁴ Tansuo reacted to this article by arguing that it was from a Leftist minority whose aim was to harm the Democracy Wall Movement. Restriction of democratic rights only served people who usurped power for use it regardless of human or economic cost.¹⁵

In the meantime, the situation had turned even tenser in Shanghai than in the capital, and this had its repercussions in Beijing, too. In Shanghai, the local activists had chosen their own Democracy Wall at the eastern end of the People’s Square facing Nanjing and Xizang Roads.¹⁶ Shanghai also seems to have been affected by the petitioner movement even more than Beijing. Here an estimated one million people had been sent-down or assigned to factory work during the Cultural Revolution. As a consequence, many of the sent-down youth and workers were discontent with their situation. Many of them had returned to the city to escape a harsh life in the countryside, looking for work and demanding reversal of their cases and an end to the policy of sending down educated youth in general.¹⁷

On 10 December 1978, hundreds of people demanding work, food, and permission to return to the cities, but also human rights, marched to the city Party headquarters at the Bund to state their cases.¹⁸ During the Chinese New Year, hundreds of thousands sent-down youth were estimated to have returned to the city. On 5 February 1979 their discontent broke out once more when they took to the streets of the city, stormed the Party buildings and stores and managed to paralyse rail traffic between Shanghai, Nanjing, and Hangzhou for over 12 hours.¹⁹ They also besieged the local Party headquarters, which alarmed the city officials, who responded with a warning in Wenhui bao declaring that “*those individuals who harbour dissatisfaction towards the Party and socialist system, who have hidden motives and damage the security of society, will be examined and dealt with in accordance of the law.*”²⁰

As a response to this ‘February Fifth Incident’, on 6 March the Shanghai city authorities issued a circular prohibiting all demonstrations ‘disturbance of public order’ and limiting where posters were allowed to be placed. This circular was heavily criticised in the Beijing Democracy Movement journals,²¹ and although it did not end the Shanghai Democracy Movement activities altogether it calmed things down notably in the city.²² During the first months of 1979, similar signs of social disorder where the slogans of freedom and democracy were used were reported from at least Hunan, Sha’anxi, Anhui, and Sichuan provinces;²³ sent-down youth protests

were also reported from Xi'an, Zhejiang, Shandong, Heilongjiang and Guangdong.²⁴ This news was capitalised on by the Leftist and conservative adversaries of the Democracy Movement as they helped in creating the impression of impending social disorder.

However, it is difficult to assess how much these signs of instability were really caused by the petitioners and the Democracy Movement activists, or the police itself. The relationship between the Democracy Movement and the police was strained at best. All journals sensed, witnessed, and criticised the hostility from the security authorities. From the very beginning the Democracy Wall Movement was under police surveillance. This was criticised and ridiculed in the journals, as a short satirical dialogue in Siwu luntan illustrated:

“[A man at Xidan asks] *Question: Excuse me, when has this dazibao been hung on the wall?*
Answer: I don't know; go ask that fellow in blue clothes, he has been on duty here all day long.”²⁵

Further, the police had also infiltrated the Democracy Wall Movement's ranks.²⁶ This was noticed and criticised by the activists, who even called Xidan the place with the 'highest concentration of police' in the capital.²⁷ Many of the activists' offices and meeting places were probably bugged by the police²⁸ and through the use of *agent provocateurs*, the police tried to ferment internal strife and generally negative publicity for the movement. The police was also successful in its actions to some extent as in the case of Zhongguo renquan group, which reportedly split after the police had infiltrated its leadership.²⁹ Foreign correspondents also witnessed *agent provocateurs* actions at Xidan, where hired thugs rough-handled them and tried to disrupt the activists' peaceful gatherings.³⁰ Another method was the spread of rumours about those activists arrested and their alleged counterrevolutionary and subversive activities like receiving money from Taiwan or entering foreign embassies for the purpose of prostitution.³¹

In its last issue in May 1979, Qunzhong cankao heavily criticised the police infiltration of the Democracy Movement. The writers complained that the central Party authorities had not properly analysed the situation and discussed how to correctly guide the Democracy Movement. The authorities used 'dams' instead of 'dredging channels' to deal with the Movement, fearing that it would grow in size and destabilise unity. Their policy was to infiltrate the popular organisations to discover what their aims were, and not to get a correct picture in order to guide the organisations accurately. Some infiltrators had even voiced extreme rightist opinions to create troubles to 'catch the big fish' – which meant luring out the real 'dissidents'. They also complained about Leftist infiltrators who created troubles by inciting strikes, blocking traffic, and making unreasonable demands.³² Police surveillance also caused demands for the reform of the secret police.³³

Complaints about *danweis* attempting to prevent people from visiting the Democracy Wall were also expressed in the Beijing Democracy Wall Movement's dazibaos, and also in other cities like Shanghai.³⁴ A writer in Siwu luntan commented that the way in which the police harassed the Democracy Movement showed how the supporters of the Gang of Four were like a hydra: When you cut off one of its heads, eight heads were still left to devour you. The writer also complained about how the newspapers cursed the KGB, yet stayed silent on the 'KGB' back home.³⁵ Others complained about the fact that many posters were torn down or defaced at Xidan. For example, an activist who used the penname 'Warrior' complained in a poster dated 2 January 1979 that Wei Jingsheng's dazibaos 'the Fifth Modernisation' and 'More on the Fifth Modernisation' had been smeared with excrement.³⁶

The Emancipation of Minds Campaign Peaks

In the end of January, another important development now also occurred with direct consequences to the Democracy Movement. This was the Conference of Theory Work on ideological guidelines which began in Beijing on 18 January 1979 and lasted to 3 April 1979, with the Chinese New Year providing a break between the two sessions. This conference was actually a series of meetings headed by Hu Yaobang. Marshal Ye Jianying had already proposed it before the third plenum of the eleventh central committee, when Hongqi and the CASS institute of philosophy had refused to accept the 'practise is the sole criterion of truth' formulation. The participants were from the CASS, the Party Central Committees' propaganda department, over 100 Beijing intellectuals, and representatives from the provinces.³⁷ The reformist intellectuals in the Party have regarded this conference as the peak of the emancipation of minds campaign. During the conference they launched a salvo of criticism against the Whateverists positions on issues such as the personality cult of Chairman Mao, Leftist distortion of Marxism-Leninism, the life-tenure system of the leadership positions, the Cultural Revolution and the doctrine of 'continuing the revolution under proletarian class dictatorship', class struggle under socialism, the line struggle within the Party, as well as the general problems of socialist democracy and intra-Party democracy.³⁸

Deng Xiaoping instructed the drafting committee of the Conference of Theory Work, on 27 January 1979, clarifying that political reform discussion was part of the conference's agenda. In his instructions, Deng compared socialist democracy to its capitalist counterpart and noted that

"Proletarian democracy must achieve an even higher stage of democratic development and in order to surpass the democracy of the capitalist class the good aspects of bourgeois democracy must be carried forward. In the past the proletariat has not succeeded because of Stalin's mistakes and our own. We must discuss the Paris Commune, one aspect being elections, and the other the wage system. But I oppose discussing only these two points, as the most

*important goal is to turn government officials from the rulers of the society into its public servants. We must also think of methods for making the people see themselves as the rulers of the nation.”*³⁹

Such instructions to the conference revealed the ideological affinity of the reformist forces in the Party and the mainstream of the Democracy Movement outside it and (if correctly quoted) also Deng Xiaoping at this time. Through Beijing zhi chun the Democracy Movement activists were also made aware of the conference,⁴⁰ and conversely the conference was also kept informed about the Democracy Movement. As noted by Wang Ruoshui, a then deputy director of Renmin ribao, two of the paper's editors filed comprehensive reports to the conference on the situation of the Democracy Movement. This was made possible by the way the paper had been instructed by Chen Yun in late 1978 to find out and report on the developments of the Democracy Wall.⁴¹ Some of the participants, like Yan Jiaqi, also leaked information from the conference to, at least, Beijing zhi chun.

In the conference, reformist intellectuals agreed that during the Cultural Revolution, China had been under a 'feudal fascist dictatorship' and that, for Mao, democracy had been only a means to an end and therefore the lack of democratic institutions in China was generally admitted. Some speakers even went so far as to assert that the lack of genuine popular elections of the People's Congresses led to the lack of supervision and recall powers, and as such the people did not have the real power to manage state affairs as their own. Further, even if the People's Congresses were directly elected by the people, the Party would still be unaccountable to them.⁴² The reformist criticism expressed during the conference came close to the classical Marxist arguments developed also in the Democracy Movement. Events in the conference also had direct bearing in the movement. The Democracy Movement was tolerated for as long as the conference lasted, and the speech that Deng Xiaoping gave near the end of the conference on 16 March 1979, on upholding the four cardinal principles, marked both the end of the emancipation of minds campaign to the Party reformists, and the beginning of the crackdown on the Democracy Movement.

Deng's Volte-Face

At this point, the problem for Deng Xiaoping had become the emerging schism between the reform-minded and conservative cadres of his 'practice faction'. While the handling of the Democracy Movement was framed as a matter of social order by local authorities in Beijing and other cities, it was now also made into an ideological issue by the Party conservatives. By March 1979, the Party leadership had split into two factions of how to deal with the Democracy Movement. The reformist camp included leading cadres like Hu Yaobang, Renmin ribao's editor Hu Jiwei and its associate editor Wang Ruoshui, and the CASS vice-president Yu Guanyuan, while the conservative 'law and order' faction was headed by such senior cadres as Deng

Liqun and Hu Qiaomu⁴³ and also had Whateverist backing. The ‘law and order faction’ demanded an all-out crackdown on the Democracy Movement, whereas reformist intellectuals wanted to prevent this. Typical of his leadership style, Deng Xiaoping took a centre position in the dispute. This meant that he supported selective suppression of the Democracy Movement, but not an all-out campaign.⁴⁴

There were at least two reasons for Deng Xiaoping’s timing on the crackdown. After the third plenum of the eleventh central committee, Deng was preoccupied with the restoration of full diplomatic relations with the United States, which he visited in late January - early February 1979. Not only being personally away from China, Deng also could not offend President Carter’s administration, which had raised human rights high on its international agenda.⁴⁵ Deng returned from the United States on February 8, and only a week after a war against Vietnam broke out. The *casus belli* was the Vietnamese invasions against China’s ally Cambodia, and Deng is said to have been personally behind the decision to ‘teach Vietnam a lesson’. When the short 17 days war turned out unfavourable to the Chinese forces, Deng therefore, lost face. This made his position vulnerable and the Whateverists, as well as the conservative members of his reform coalition, did not miss the opportunity to criticise his policies. Deng was accused of a too fast reform speed and had to yield to some of his critics’ demands about the Democracy Movement.⁴⁶ This time it was the conservatives, like Hu Qiaomu and Deng Liqun, who kept Deng updated on the critical on the war with Vietnam and Deng himself in the Democracy Movement. Reportedly, Deng did not take public criticism of his military genius lightly, and the conservatives’ analysis that the situation was close to that of 1957, caught his ear.⁴⁷ The social disturbances associated with the Democracy Movement were probably also a factor that contributed to the decision, which was seen in the way it was justified through rhetoric of stability and unity.

Thus Deng now reined in the Democracy Movement. He made his altered stance clear in a speech to the Conference on Theory Work, which was drafted by Hu Qiaomu and his allies. To what extent Deng altered the draft is not known,⁴⁸ but in his speech Deng was reported to have said that the majority of the Party and military leaders favoured closing the Democracy Wall, but he thought that this was too harsh and would only lead to a situation where the masses’ trust on the Party leadership would evaporate. Instead, he proposed that the Democracy Wall should be allowed to continue, but that some “*proven evil-doers in the human rights organisations*” should be arrested.⁴⁹ This then gave a green light for a selective crackdown on the Democracy Movement, but this limited nature of the crackdown also saved some face for Deng, who had earlier supported the Democracy Wall.

Deng’s speech at the Conference on Theory Work was not an official document as such as would a decision of the Party Central Committee have been, but when he gave a speech at the Great Hall of the People on 30 March entitled ‘*Uphold the Four Cardinal Principles*’ with similar content to over 6000 strong audience of leading Party cadres, it signalled that the Party leadership was toughening its attitude to the

Democracy Movement, and that correction of the ‘rightist slant’ that had prevailed after the third plenum of the eleventh central committee in Party line, might be impending.⁵⁰ In it Deng announced that the ‘four cardinal principles’ should guide the Party hereafter, viz: Keeping to the socialist road, upholding proletarian dictatorship, leadership of the Party, and Marxism-Leninism Mao Zedong thought.⁵¹

Probably referring to social disturbances in Shanghai, Deng described how ‘certain bad elements’ had caused trouble by raising unreasonable demands that could not be met and provoked and tricked the masses into raiding Party and government organisations, as well as strikes and sit-downs, obstructing traffic and disrupting production. In addition they had raised slogans like ‘oppose hunger’, ‘give us human rights’ and incited people to hold demonstrations. Deng also attacked Zhongguo renquan group by name the for its dazibaos addressed to President Carter on the issue of human rights. Also the Jiedong (Thaw) Society and Democratic Forum in Shanghai received special attention from him:

“There is also the so-called Thaw Society, which has issued a declaration openly opposing the dictatorship of the proletariat on the ground that it ‘divides mankind’. Can we tolerate this kind of freedom of speech, which flagrantly contravenes the principles of our Constitution? ... In Shanghai there is a so-called Democracy Forum. Some of its members have slandered Comrade Mao Zedong and put up big counterrevolutionary posters proclaiming that ‘proletarian dictatorship is the source of all evils’ and that it is necessary to ‘resolutely and thoroughly criticise the Communist Party of China. ... It is obvious that these people are out to use any and all means to disrupt our efforts to shift the focus of our work to the achievement of modernisation. If we ignored these grave problems, our Party and government organs at various levels would be so harassed that they would find it impossible to function...”⁵²

Deng admitted that there were only a handful of such people, but the problem was serious, because the trouble-makers claimed they were speaking in the name of democracy and this could very easily mislead people. He asserted that due to problems remaining from by Lin Biao and the Gang of Four, people could easily be deceived and that trouble-makers had also begun to form secret organisations and forge connections to all corners of the country and even the political forces in Taiwan and abroad, as well as criminal organisations and followers of the Gang of Four.⁵³ Deng therefore painted a picture of a potentially serious political threat if the bad elements in the Democracy Movement were allowed to continue unchecked. The people had to be educated that the democracy they needed was a socialist democracy based on centralism, not a bourgeois individualist democracy:

“Departure from the four cardinal principles and talk about democracy in the abstract will inevitably lead to unchecked spread of ultra-democracy and

anarchism, to the complete disruption of political stability and to the total failure of our modernisation programme.”⁵⁴

As Richard Baum points out, Deng indicated the whole Central Committee of the Party as the source of his speech, which was unusual for him and indicated how he was unwilling to shoulder the responsibility of the crackdown alone all by himself.⁵⁵ The speech itself had been drafted by a small group headed by Hu Qiaomu.⁵⁶ However, that Deng accepted only a partial crackdown and partial responsibility for it, shows how he was also unwilling to let the conservatives and Whateverists to gain the upper hand in the power struggle. An all-out crackdown on the Democracy Movement would have given the green light to crackdown against the reformist intellectuals in his own faction too. This would have threatened economic reforms and alienated the intellectuals he needed for his continuing struggle with the Party Left that, although diminished in influence, was still a force to contend with.

As Li Honglin has argued, the end of the Conference on Theory Work marked the ‘parting of the roads’ of the ‘Marxist’ and ‘bourgeois liberalisation’ factions in the Party, as they were called by the conservatives. Now that the Whateverist dogma was decisively defeated, many of its adherents moved to a conservative stance on upholding a centralist political system. For many cadres in Deng’s faction, defeating the ‘two whatevers’ had been good enough, but too far-reaching democratisation and economic reforms would have endangered their positions. They supported the four cardinal principles and rectifying what they saw as a rightist slant of the third plenum of the eleventh central committee. The conservative faction which “*hated to one’s very marrow the Democracy Movement and its journals*” now started to wind down the emancipation of minds campaign and act against over liberal intellectuals, who in their turn, now tried to make the four cardinal principles subject to the emancipation of minds.⁵⁷

The First Freeze

The Democracy Movement activities had continued unabated during the Conference on Theory Work. For example, the Zhongguo renquan group held a meeting with speeches and songs to celebrate the Working Women’s Day on 8th of March at Xidan discussing the issue of the gender equality in China.⁵⁸ However, after Deng’s Speech on 16 March, the Central Committee issued a Central Document declaring that modernisations did not mean capitalist modernisation; therefore freedom of speech must not go beyond the limits of proletarian class dictatorship. No behaviour was permitted to violate Marxism-Leninism Mao Zedong thought and all ‘unofficial propaganda’ was forbidden. Furthermore, criticism of the military had to remain internal and the regulations on publications and their distribution had to be strictly enforced. Expressing opinions to foreigners who did not yet have close contacts with the Chinese was forbidden and all *danweis* had to increase study Mao Zedong’s ‘On People’s Democratic Dictatorship’, and conduct internal criticism activities.⁵⁹

The news of Deng's change of attitude also reached the Democracy Movement, where Wei Jingsheng reacted to Deng's speech in the special issue of *Tansuo* on 25 March.⁶⁰ Typically disregarding all niceties, Wei now criticised Deng first, as a dictator in the making, and secondly of trying to make the Democracy Movement a scapegoat for the failure to rescue the Chinese economy by accusing it of various crimes. Furthermore, according to Wei, Deng's failure was that he continued support Chairman Mao and playing down his mistakes. Was he afraid the investigation would bring up something bad or was he going to continue the dictatorial system of Mao, asked Wei. In the latter case, Deng could not be forgiven as this would mean infringement of people's interests. *"If somebody forgives this crime, it is tantamount to a crime against the people."*⁶¹ Indeed, for Wei, to brand different opinions as criminal was a form of fascistic dictatorship and he declared that: *"People have to on guard against Deng Xiaoping degenerating into a dictator."*⁶² The label of fascistic dictatorship was widely used by the Party reformists and the Democracy Movement activists in their criticism of the Party Left. Now Wei turned it against Deng Xiaoping.⁶³

It may have been Wei's attack on Deng Xiaoping that caused the first crackdown on the Democracy Movement, but Deng's speech on March 16 had already clearly sent a message to the security organs of the tightening political atmosphere. This was displayed on 18 March when the Beijing *Ribao* called for the arrest of the *'riffraff sabotaging stability'*.⁶⁴ On 29 March 1979, the Beijing Revolutionary Committee employed a new emphasis on the four cardinal principles issuing a 'Notice of Six Articles' declaring that:

*"All slogans, posters, big and small character posters, books, journals, pictures, photographs and other representations which oppose socialism, the dictatorship and the leadership of the Party, Marxist-Leninist-Mao Zedong thought, as well as the disclosure of state secrets and violations of the constitution and the law are prohibited."*⁶⁵

A bandwagon effect followed Beijing's Six Articles, as provinces and cities issued their orders on the Democracy Movement activities. Guangdong, Hangzhou, Hebei, Harbin, Gansu, Shandong and Nanjing, at least, announced their own decrees.⁶⁶

In Beijing, the first crackdown began when the police arrested Wei late at night at his house on 29 March. Rumours about his impending arrest had been circulating for a while, but despite these, Wei did not try to avoid his fate and leave Beijing. Other leading activists soon shared his fate. These included the head of the *Zhongguo renquan*, Ren Wanding, and Chen Lü, the splinter member of the same group who had been responsible for the league's organisational work. Huang Xiang of the *Qimeng Society* also soon followed them.⁶⁷ Ren Wanding was arrested on 4th of April as he was putting up a poster entitled 'The Enemies of Democracy Have Begun Their Attack' in which he criticised Wei's arrest and supported human rights.⁶⁸ Other

arrested Zhongguo renquan tongmeng activists included Li Weisan and Gao Shan.⁶⁹ On 7 April, the Ren Wanding group of Zhongguo renquan published the last issue of their journal and, on 10 April, the group declared a temporary halt of its functions, and its remaining members scattered. However, in May some of the group's members posted a dazibao at the Xidan Wall containing a song about human rights.⁷⁰

Also some other journals stopped publishing. In its sixth issue in April 1979, the editors announced that Qunzhong cankao would be temporarily suspended and that its title would be changed to *Minzhu yu sihua* (Democracy and the Four Modernisations).⁷¹ The reason being that this better fitted the journals purpose to promote these two issues. Qunzhong cankao's last issue came out on the third anniversary of the Fifth of April Movement in 1979, but the new journal does not appear to have been published⁷² – probably because the editor, Xia Xunjian, was arrested on the 30th of April 1979.⁷³ Also Qimeng's three splinter groups ceased publication around this time. Reportedly, the members of the groups returned to Guiyang where they were taken into custody and subjected to ideological rectification, after which they were returned to their *danweis*.⁷⁴ However, some of them did later continue the Qimeng under different titles, but they did not regain their activities in Beijing.⁷⁵ Tansuo's two remaining editors, Lu Lin and Yang Guang, fled the city remaining fugitives for most of April, sleeping in cold railway stations and half-starving. They had to return to Beijing in late April when Yang Guang developed serious illness. Lu was briefly detained by the police, but released as a 'token of good will', whereas Yang Guang was arrested on 22 May but not released.⁷⁶ Another Tansuo member, Yu Yi, was also arrested.⁷⁷

Altogether it has been estimated that some 30 activists were arrested in Beijing during the arrest wave in late March–April. The Democracy Movement activists began to refer to these events as the 'Adverse Wind of March'⁷⁸, or, in a more imposing manner, 'the anti-third plenum of the eleventh central committee spirit extreme Leftist counter-current'.⁷⁹ Police also harassed other journals like Siwu luntan with house searches.⁸⁰ As the result of the crackdown, Tansuo, Zhongguo renquan, Qimeng, Qunzhong cankao and Minzhu yu shidai stopped publishing. Also the Joint Council ceased function due to the arrests.⁸¹

The crackdown could also be seen in the streets of Beijing. On April 1, a cleanup campaign of walls was conducted in the city and the authorities limited the right to place dazibaos to only the Xidan Wall. This obviously made activist control easier for the police. On the third anniversary of the Fifth of April Movement, Renmin ribao ran an editorial denouncing all:

“those who had pretended to inherit Tiananmen incident's mantle presenting the state with unreasonable demands for their personal interests without considering the interest of the whole.”⁸²

The paper declared that this was not the defence of democracy, but ‘ultra democratisation’ and continued: “*We do not want bourgeois democracy, which enables a handful of people to oppress the majority of people.*”⁸³ The same press that only a half a year ago had praised the Tiananmen heroes and rallied for the constitutional rights of the people to express their views in public had now changed its tune. Other newspapers echoed Renmin ribao, calling for restoration of order and stability during March-May 1979, in what amounted to a minor press campaign.

Apart from Wei Jingsheng and Tansuo, it is actually difficult to state with certainty what exactly were the reasons behind the other arrests.⁸⁴ Zhongguo renquan had probably committed the worse of its ‘mistakes’ by raising the slogan of human rights and advocating learning from the West as well as writing an open letter to President Carter. Another aspect was the willingness to organise and mobilise the petitioners of a part of the league under Chen Lü, while the other faction sought an officially recognised status as an independent party from the National People’s Congress. Further, Huang Xiang of Qimeng also angered the Party Left with his harsh criticism of Mao and the open letter to President Carter too, but then similar comments were also published, for example, by Kexue minzhu fazhi, which continued publication and also open letters to President Carter. Xia Xunjian’s Qunzhong cankao was even less confrontational, but was nevertheless silenced.

The remaining journals’ open reaction to the arrests was surprisingly mild. Most of them denounced the attacks in the press against the Democracy Movement as well as ran articles defending the freedom of speech and deplored the ‘adverse current’, but in Beijing at least, only Tansuo actually denounced the Party leadership for oppression.⁸⁵ Indeed, most other journals tried to distance themselves from the troublesome ‘right’ wing of the movement, or put the blame for the crackdown on the hostile elements, especially at the local levels in the Party and the government. Some posters even welcomed the crackdown on the movement’s ‘right’ wing, but these were published only in the Kexue minzhu fazhi, the ‘Reader’s Digest’ of the Democracy Movement, and did probably not represent the views of active Democracy Movement groups.⁸⁶

The Second Thaw

The activists had looked forward to the third anniversary of the Fifth of April Movement. A poster had even predicted that on that day the Democracy Movement would ‘explode like a bomb,’ but instead of celebration, the Beijing spring had now turned to freeze. On the day some 3000 people did gather on Tiananmen Square, but atmosphere was subdued.⁸⁷ However, there was still defiance in the speeches given in the Square, as a young participant commented:

“People say that the situation is tense, and that the Democracy Movement has met with setbacks. But the movement has not died... people have now learned how to think and how to judge; no one can trick them again.”⁸⁸

However, the movement’s contacts with foreigners were now restricted, as for example, the Hong Kong newspapers that previously had contacts with the Guangdong Democracy Movement, were now denied access to the country. Honqi carried a series of articles from March to June criticising the Democracy Movement activists and their ideas of human rights claiming that they represented demands for the return to capitalism. In another article, the Democracy Movement was even compared to the Lin Biao and the Gang of Four’s rule and a deviation from true socialism.⁸⁹ However, as the crackdown focused on those activists that were considered members of the most radical wing of the movement, other journals and wall posters continued appearing, although the criticism on the political system was muted for a while.⁹⁰ In contrast, in Shanghai, the crackdown was more thorough with an estimated twice the number of activists arrested than in Beijing. As the consequence, most journals stopped publishing in the city, and others revived only in the autumn 1979.⁹¹

However, the significance of the March-May crackdown was not obvious to all the journals in the capital. That it damaged the Democracy Movement and reduced the people’s enthusiasm to participate in it all over the country was noted,⁹² but still the activists could see that the status of the remaining journals was uncertain – did the fact that the rest of the journals were allowed to continue, even if not exactly endorsed to do so, imply tacit approval for their more Marxist editorial lines? This feeling was conveyed in the July issue of Siwu luntan, where the editors criticised Wei Jingsheng’s article ‘Democracy or New Dictatorship’. They did not think that Deng Xiaoping had used his prestige to oppose the Democracy Movement, or was establishing individual dictatorship and harboured bad intentions. Instead, as they saw it, the Party centre had a strong Whateverist faction and it was therefore difficult to imagine that if the Democracy Wall Movement did not have the backing of Deng and his followers, it would have been allowed to develop to its present stage. The reasoning went that if Deng had been against the Democracy Movement, he would have already suppressed it.⁹³ The Siwu luntan editors would cling to the hope of not being told clearly ‘no’ as late as November 1980.⁹⁴ Further, in June 1979, a writer in Siwu luntan analysed the political situation and offered another version of the same theme:

“At the moment demanding realisation of democracy has two heads hot and the middle part cold. The first hot head is the far-sighted leading comrades at the Party Centre; the other end is the masses. But part of the leaders in the middle is cold. A big part of these leaders lack knowledge and understanding, a smaller part are deeply poisoned by the Gang of Four, or those who personally benefit from enforcing Leftist policies. They all frown upon the people and do not have faith in it and harm it. Armed with official power they demand the

*masses to obey, obey and once more obey them, sincerely follow them and allow to be controlled. They need lackeys (núcǎi), not people of ability (réncái)...*⁹⁵

Patently, it was the Democracy Wall Movement's duty to oppose these cadres and educate the people in democratic consciousness. Siwu luntan was not the only journal to assess the middle echelon of the Party and government as the problem while regarding the bottom and top ends of the society as enthusiastic for reforms.⁹⁶ This view was both simplified and mistaken, however, as hostility towards the Democracy Movement reached up to the very top of the Party leadership, and conversely not all of the masses seemed to be very enthusiastic about the movement either. Yet, it served as a working explanation for the setback of the Democracy Movement for its mainstream which anyhow saw itself as engaged in a long struggle where fortunes would vacillate.

What contributed to this uncertainty was that matters were indeed undecided yet. Deng Xiaoping had declared upholding the four cardinal principles as the new Party guideline, but what this actually meant was unclear, and the struggle between the Party conservatives and the reformist intellectuals continued. As the reformist view now judges it, the dispute over the meaning of the four cardinal principles was the first round in the series of ideological clashes that continued through the 80s and culminated in 1989. In his closing speech of the Conference on Theory Work on 3 April Hu Yaobang had already tried to give the four cardinal principles a liberal interpretation arguing that a campaign against the 'right' was not the order of the day.⁹⁷ Li Honglin also defended the gains of the emancipation of minds campaign and the 'liberal' faction within the Party, in articles that appeared in Renmin ribao in summer – autumn 1979.⁹⁸ The reformists continued trying to get the four cardinal principles submitted to the principle that practise was the sole criterion of truth. Already on 12 May, Renmin ribao ran an article of a 'commentator' defending the freedom of speech on the grounds that mere speech could not constitute a crime, and on 1 June, the paper called for officials to accept popular criticism.⁹⁹ Many other articles continued to attack Leftist dogmatism and demand equality and legality.¹⁰⁰ The debates in the press indicated that the same struggle that was seen behind the Democracy Movement still continued and that the March-April Adverse Current could be taken as a lost round in a fight for socialist democracy that was, in any case, deemed as a long and hard process.

After the arrests in March-April, things actually appeared to calm down for the Democracy Movement. There even appeared to have been attempts at reconciliation with the reformist forces in the Party and the remaining Democracy Movement journals.¹⁰¹ For one, Jintian was not deterred by the arrests, and organised the first unofficial read-aloud poetry meeting already on 8 April. It had some 300 participants and the topics of the poems ranged from political to romantic. Representatives from Siwu luntan, Beijing zhi chun and Wotu and also reporters of Xinhua and neibu press attended the meeting – as well as the police, but this did not interfere with the

meeting.¹⁰² Wotu sponsored a symposium on the characterisation of the “New Man” (*xin ren*) in literature on July 15, 1979 at the premises of the CYL. The participants included members from the CASS institute of literary research, Ministry of Culture, Youth League, and several literary journals as well as representatives from the Democracy Movement journals like *Siwu luntan* and *Beijing zhi chun* – and also the police.¹⁰³ Although ostensibly about literary theory, the question of human characterisation in literature touched upon freedom of expression and in general the Leftist class-centred view of man and therefore the whole of society.

The springtime freeze did not kill all the sprouts of the Democracy Movement and when the summer came, some of its journals blossomed again. It appears that the reformists within the Party were able to gain new foothold in the power struggle when the anti-Democracy Movement campaign started to turn into a wider campaign against the resolutions of the third plenum of the eleventh central committee. There were rumours of a new ‘adverse current’, a coalition of disgruntled ‘Whateverists’ and those cadres with personal stakes to lose in reforms, who wanted to undo the reform policies and had used the Democracy Movement as an issue in their fight against the ‘bourgeois policies’ of the third plenum of the eleventh central committee.¹⁰⁴ The plenum’s resolutions and the Conference on Theoretical Work had also caused discontent in the provinces where Leftist influence was still strong and the new policies were regarded as rightist and the liberation of minds campaign was attributed to cause ideological chaos and social disorder.¹⁰⁵

Many high level cadres were reported to have already expressed their discontent in the Central Committee work conference from the April 5th to 28th, arguing that upholding the four cardinal principles showed how the decisions made in December on ideological emancipation and promotion of democracy were wrong. Some Whateverists even saw the third plenum of the eleventh central committee guidelines as rightist. At this time Hua Guofeng also made a series of visits to army units soliciting support which concerned Deng Xiaoping on the loss of the initiative in politics and in the army. Deng countered by launching a campaign to criticise the ‘two whatevers’ in the army.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, the four cardinal principles were reported to have been used by conservatives to attack economic reforms, like the trials on the household responsibility system in the countryside. Complaints were also sent to newspapers on how the people defending the liberation of minds were now under pressure on the pretext of the four cardinal principles.¹⁰⁷ At this point Deng was unwilling to press further on crackdown against the Democracy Movement.

The upcoming second session of the 5th National People’s Congress also made debate on legal reforms possible. This had been going on in the Party for a while, and culminated in summer.¹⁰⁸ When the radical wing of the Democracy Movement was silenced, the more Marxist journals stepped in to express their views on legal reforms. In its May issue, *Beijing zhi chun* ran an article that created considerable interest with the Western spectators called ‘A Tragedy that Might Happen in the

Year 2000'. The article included a remarkably accurate prediction on China in the late 1990s. According to it, Deng Xiaoping would die in 1998, China's population have reached about 1.5 billion, and Beijing would have many skyscrapers, but more inaccurately, it also predicted that the Democracy Wall would still exist at Xidan.¹⁰⁹ The article told a fictitious story of how the remaining Democracy Wall Movement would be suppressed after a successful *coup d'état* by the Whateverists after Deng's death. In it the author repeated the point, which had already been made clear in many other writings in Democracy Movement journals, that if the political system could not be reformed along with the economy, there would always be the danger of a Whateverists backlash. Modernisation required political reform and strong democratic institutions; otherwise everything would be lost after those persons, who were the guarantors of the modernisation policies, died.

Siwu luntan also published an important article on political reform when it ran Chen Erjin's long political essay 'On the Proletarian Democratic Revolution' in June. In it the author stated that the Cultural Revolution had done away with the new-bourgeoisie bureaucratic class, but unless 'proletarian democratic revolution' was not carried out, the bureaucratic class would return and restore itself. To prevent this from happening, a new Marxist constitution would have to be promulgated with elected officials at all levels of government, a two-party system and an independent judiciary to ensure that the Constitution would be followed. As discussed further below, the essay showed how the 'Paris Commune' model and the new class theory of the radical Red Guards, could be influenced by many ideas from the western liberal democratic tradition.¹¹⁰

The 2nd session of the 5th National People's Congress took place between the 15th of June and the 1st of July. When the Congress passed the proposals for legal reforms, unsurprisingly, it did not pay much attention to the Democracy Movement activists' arguments. Instead, it adopted several laws and regulations on counterrevolutionary crimes. The old laws on punishment of counterrevolutionaries from 1951, the Security Administration Punishment Act of 1957 and the 'State Council Decision on Re-Education through Labour', as well as 'Regulations on State Secrets', both from the year 1951, were amended.¹¹¹ Soon after, these laws were applied to the Democracy Movement. The Congress also affirmed the policy line taken in the communiqué of the third plenum of the eleventh central committee, and this new legislation could be seen as a tangible sign of Deng Xiaoping's commitment to re-establishing legality in country. Among the laws passed was also the new law on local and national People's Congresses elections. The new electoral laws introduced multi-candidate elections with secret ballots at local and county levels of government for the first time in history of the People's Republic. This was a step, in a small way, towards popular control of government that the Democracy Movement demanded, but there is no indication that the movement had influenced the decision.¹¹² More ominously for the Democracy Movement, there was also a spirited debate in the Congress on whether to remove the 'four great rights' from the constitution, but for the time being they were retained.¹¹³

After the National People's Congress session, the debate over the criteria of truth became stronger once more. That the reformers now strengthened their positions was shown in how even the Leftist organ, Hongqi, criticised itself for not participating in the practise is the sole criterion of truth debate in 1978.¹¹⁴ At the same time a gradual resurgence of the Democracy Movement's activities was also noted in journals.¹¹⁵ Perhaps one of the most notable signs of the second thaw was the re-emergence of Tansuo, whose remaining editor, Lu Lin, managed to publish two more issues in September and October. Having lost its most creative writers, the journal centred mostly on defending the arrested and the issue of the freedom of speech, but the revival was still a remarkable feat from Lu Lin who managed to gather almost as big an activist group around Tansuo than it had had at the beginning of the year.¹¹⁶ The interest in the journal was also demonstrated by its fourth issue in September 9, the third anniversary of Mao Zedong's death, it sold 600 copies just in forty minutes.¹¹⁷ Some totally new journals also emerged in Beijing, although they tended to be small literary journals, like Hua Ci [Thorn]¹¹⁸, Bai Hua [White Flowers]¹¹⁹, and Women [We].¹²⁰ Some other newcomers also had political content, like Xin Tiandi [New Times]¹²¹ and Shidai [Times] which came out in October.¹²² Further, older journals published spin-offs under different titles.

Late summer and early autumn 1979 saw increasing activity from the remaining Democracy Movement as well as petitioners. On August 26, Siwu luntan arranged a large meeting at Xidan demanding legal protection for the Democracy Movement activists. The topics were broadly defined as democracy, legality, and bureaucratism and it attracted an audience of around one thousand people. The organisers also conducted a survey of the audience on the arrested activists. Questionnaires were handed out to the audience asking if the detention and the delay of an open trial of Fu Yuehua were justifiable, and whether it had been acceptable to arrest Ren Wandong and Wei Jingsheng as counterrevolutionaries and delay their trials. Furthermore, they asked if the city government's 'Notice of Six Articles' from late March was according to law. The rate of return of the survey was not that high, only 40 % (20 people), but of the results polled they were favourable to the three arrested. This survey was said to be first of its kind in China¹²³ – although clearly the activists still need more practise on how to get unbiased samples. Numerous posters demanded the release of Wei Jingsheng in June to August.¹²⁴ On its part, Jintian organised a 'Writers, Editors and Readers meeting' in Zizhu park on 9 September 1979 with 200 – 300 participants who expressed their strong support for the journal.¹²⁵ At this time some of the Zhongguo renquan group were also reactivated. On 23 September three of its original members wrote a poster critical of the suppression of the Democracy Movement and demanded the release of Ren Wandong and Chen Lü. They also reposted the '19 Points of Human Rights in China' at the Xidan Wall and planned to republish their journal.¹²⁶

Other demonstrations also occurred. On 13 September around one thousand peasants and demobbed soldiers demonstrated in Beijing under the slogan of the 'Society to

Study Scientific and Democratic Socialism' against the privileged bureaucratic class. One week later, youth that had failed exams to enter university took to the streets of Beijing to demonstrate against the privileged status of cadre children in enrolment to universities.¹²⁷ Petitioners, who still continued to flock to the capital during the summer, also carried on their protests staging sit-ins and demonstrations in front of Zhongnanhai's Xinhua Gate. One of the biggest of such demonstrations was reported to have taken place on 28-29 August. According to a participant in the demonstration, those gathered at Xinhua Gate were petitioners and Democracy Movement activists, who were 'opposing repression, hunger and bureaucratism'. They demanded that Hua Guofeng and Deng Xiaoping should personally express their firm support to the petitioners, and hear out their complaints. They also opposed arrests, deportations, and restrictions on petitioner movement, and demanded the release of Wei Jingsheng, Fu Yuehua and Ren Wanding.¹²⁸

The Stars Exhibition and the National Day Demonstration

On 27 September Jintian organised an art exhibition at the park next to the National Art Museum entitled 'Stars' (*Xīngxīng*) with the help of other journals. Works from 23 artists were displayed, and many visitors enjoyed this new 'street culture'. One purpose of the exhibition was to satirise the official annual national art exhibition at the Art Museum. Applications for permits required had been made but not granted from the police. Thus on 29th of September a police force of almost 100 men was dispatched to the scene besieging the park and scolding the artists, confiscating the pieces of art on display. Those who could not prove their identity were taken into detention.¹²⁹ After police involvement, the Beijing City Party Committee sent a representative from the Beijing Fine Arts Association, named Liu Xun, to mediate the situation, but he was unable to solve the situation even if the terms he offered were rather favourable: to hold the exhibition in a gallery at Huanfangzhai or later in the Gallery of Fine Arts, advertise the exhibitions in *Renmin ribao* and *Beijing ribao*, and 50 % of the income generated from ticket sales for the organisers of the Stars exhibition. This met the organisers' demands for an exhibition area and official sanction to the exhibition, but an official apology from the police, which they also demanded, was not forthcoming. Liu Xun had no authority to negotiate on these issues, and so the organisers pressed on announcing that they would march on October 1, the national day, if an acceptable reply was not forthcoming. The City Party Committee dispatched Liu Xun to renegotiate, but an agreement could not be reached.¹³⁰

The organisers were divided over the way to respond to the authorities' offer. A more uncompromising line saw that the reformist forces had the upper hand in the City administration, thus this would be a good opportunity to embarrass the Whateverists and conservatives by pressing for an apology. A more moderate line doubted that the demand for an apology would only strain the Democracy Movement's relationship with the reformists and that seeking conflict could lead to even further repression.

The organisers should therefore have accepted the offer the authorities had made and write a dazibao stating their stance on the need of freedom of speech. The uncompromising line won the argument, and the activists decided to organise a demonstration.¹³¹

The main organisers of the demonstration were the editors of Jintian and Siwu luntan: Mang Ke, Bei Dao, Liu Qing, Xu Wenli, Wang Keping and Huang Rui, but members of Tansuo and Beijing zhi chun were also involved. The organisers set up two sub-groups headed by Xu Wenli, Bei Dao and Huang Rui. One group waited for the authorities' answer at Liu Qing's home, while the others went to organise people. The slogans of the demonstration were "*We demand freedom of speech and freedom of art*", "*We want political democracy*", and "*Demonstration for the protection of constitution*".¹³² The demonstrators came to the Xidan Wall in two separate groups, so that if one group was arrested, the other might get through. However, as there were no problems with the police this time, the groups were able to unite, and march under police escort which emerged while they marched. The police had strict orders prevent the demonstrators entering Tiananmen Square, so they marched another route ending at the City Party Committee, where Bei Dao, Xu Wenli, and Huang Rui delivered a letter declaring the reasons of the demonstrators' discontent.¹³³ Some 5000 people were estimated to have participated in this demonstration.¹³⁴

This was not the only demonstration in town. On 10 October, Renmin Daxue students organised a demonstration on Chang'an Avenue, demanding the return of their school property from the army unit which had occupied parts of the campus since 1972.¹³⁵ At Beida students also demonstrated on the campus against their poor living conditions. There were gatherings for discussion on current events that drew great crowds.¹³⁶ The Stars exhibition and the subsequent demonstration also showed the re-emergence of co-operation between the journals that had become defunct in March-April. There was even talk on reviving the Joint Council between Siwu luntan, Jintian, Beijing zhi chun, and Wotu, and a 'miniature' Joint Council was convened to compile, edit, and distribute materials about the Stars exhibition to counter the rumours circulating in society about it.¹³⁷ This time the initiative for co-operation came from Beijing zhi chun, but a more lasting revival of the council came to naught.¹³⁸

Indeed, the Stars incident and the demonstration may actually have contributed to the second crackdown on the Democracy Movement. Unofficial contacts between various official organs, such as the Youth League and the major remaining journals, had been growing in the late summer of 1979. The journal's representatives had been invited to various meetings with state-run media like Zhongguo qingnian, and Wotu and Beijing zhi chun were even said to have been invited to attend meetings of the Committee on Law in the National People's Congress. Furthermore, there were rumours about promulgation of a Publication Code in 1980 that would have stipulated the limits for the publication of unofficial journals.¹³⁹ There also appears to have been an ongoing debate within the Party on whether the journals should be

allowed to register, and by the end of September, the Beijing City Party Committee signalled that it was willing to discuss with the activists after the National Day on October 1st.¹⁴⁰ A report by the Central Committee of the Youth League at the end of August favoured reversing the legislation to legalise the remaining journals. This report was based on the Youth League investigation of the journal groups which praised their members as the people “*who are concerned about state affairs and like to use their brains.*” To make these reports, the journals’ editors had been invited to round-table talks at the CASS and the Department of Propaganda by Ye Guangyuan.¹⁴¹

As Liu Qing later saw it, the demonstration on the National Day foiled all these promising developments.¹⁴² However, it is difficult to assess how much blame can be put on the demonstration alone, but as such, it obviously contributed to the conservative argument about the need to strengthen ‘stability and unity’. The symbolically loaded day of the October 1st could indeed be used to show the ‘unpatriotic’ nature of the demonstration, however contrary its original meaning for the demonstrators was. Unfortunately, the behind the scenes material on the decisions made on the fate of the Democracy Movement is too sparse to conclude definitely on this. For example, the communiqué of the fourth plenum of the eleventh central committee on 28 September warned about ultra-Leftism, but remained silent on the ‘right’, which demonstrated the upper hand the reformists had regained. But then other signs, like marshal Ye Jianying’s speech on 29 September, revealed how the Party conservatives were still wary of the ‘rightism’.¹⁴³

The Second Freeze

The harsh reaction to the National Day demonstration came in two weeks. On the 15th of October, Peng Zhen criticised by name Renmin ribao, the Central Committee of Youth League and the Foreign Language Press for supporting the Democracy Wall Movement.¹⁴⁴ The next day Wei Jingsheng was finally brought to public trial. It was also the first and, one of the most famous, of the cases in which the newly re-activated laws on counterrevolutionary activities were used.¹⁴⁵ Wei was found guilty as charged of conducting counterrevolutionary activities, attempting to overthrow proletarian dictatorship and socialism, and passing military secrets to foreigners and was given a sentence of 15 years in prison on October 16, 1979.¹⁴⁶ His appeal to the People’s Supreme Court was turned down and his defence labelled as ‘sophistry’.¹⁴⁷ Fu Yuehua’s trial also started a day later, but was postponed until she was given 2 years of labour reform for violating public order on 24 December 1979.¹⁴⁸ Wei’s sentence aroused a fury of protest from the remaining Democracy Movement activists, who had been publicly demanding for the release of the arrested activists since the spring. Poster writers and journals rallied to criticise the harshness of the sentences gathering large crowds at Xidan. The members of the now defunct Joint Council also put up a joint poster at the Xidan Wall criticising the sentences.¹⁴⁹

Wei's sentence was a significant step in the suppression of the Beijing Democracy Movement as it signalled that the previous political thaw was now over. It also radicalised some of the journals and gave more reasons for the arrest of their editors. Siwu luntan experienced one of the most dramatic endings. Some of the Democracy Movement activists had tried to attend the supposedly open trial of Wei Jingsheng, but were denied access.¹⁵⁰ Nevertheless, Liu Qing acquired the tape recorded proceedings of the trial from a journalist who had access to the trial.¹⁵¹ Three weeks after the trial the activists set out to sell over 1000 copies of the transcript printed with the Jintian's printing machine.¹⁵² The leaflets were sold at Xidan even though the activists could anticipate a harsh reaction from the authorities. According to a writer in Siwu luntan, when the leaflets were put on sale on 11 November, a crowd nearing 'several thousand' people rushed to buy a copy. The crowd was then surrounded by several hundred policemen, and shouts and a melee followed. As the result, the police arrested several of the buyers.¹⁵³ When Liu Qing went to the local police station with a few companions to inquire about the arrests, he was first answered that the arrests were ordered by 'higher authorities'. After he pursued his inquiry to the *Gonganju* Beijing municipal bureau, he was also detained and put under 'administrative detention' for 'violation of social order'.¹⁵⁴ The content of the leaflet was not the reason for the arrests, since the trial transcript had already been posted on the Xidan Wall over half a month before. This led Liu Qing doubt that the first arrest may have been orchestrated rather *ad hoc* by the Beijing police.¹⁵⁵ However, as the remarks by Deng Xiaoping show (see below), this crackdown had already been decided on at the beginning of November. Liu's activity in the situation as a member of a 'minority creating trouble' and requiring oppression made him an obvious target, even if the police found it difficult to prove that he had actually broken any laws.

Both cases were denounced in the journals – although in Wei's case with some moderation, as even Liu Qing had anticipated that Wei would receive a sentence for violating regulations on classified information.¹⁵⁶ For example, Siwu luntan argued that the dissemination of the records of Wei's trial could not be illegal – how could recordings of a public trial be secret?¹⁵⁷ An Yang argued that the arrest indicated that the return of the Whateverists to the political scene was possible:

*“Stay on alert! The Whateverists have not died out! Are they not really planning a counterattack? If they return to power, no ‘democrat’, ‘reformist’, ‘Leftist’, or ‘rightist’ will be able to escape their grasp! The millions do not want the Whateverists to return!”*¹⁵⁸

Elsewhere, Siwu luntan expressed regret at the lack of strength of the reformist faction in the Party:

“We support wholeheartedly the correct line of the intra-Party practise faction. This so-called practise faction is a revolutionary faction that accepts the cardinal principle that ‘the principal part of practise is the masses’. But we

cannot regret enough the fact that the supporters of this faction do not seem to be as many as we wished [there would be] in the Party.”¹⁵⁹

This concern was substantiated by the fact that Liu’s arrest marked the start of a new arrest wave that the Democracy Wall Movement activists referred to as the ‘November Crisis.’¹⁶⁰ Wei Jingsheng’s sentence and the suppression of the Democracy Movement was also bad news for the Party reformists, as it strengthened their conservative adversaries and made their own reform agenda and open discussion on them weaker. One of the most outspoken reactions of the Party reformists to Wei’s sentence came from a Beijing University professor, Guo Luoji, who demanded freedom of speech in his writings in *Guangming ribao*, branding a regime dictatorial and fascist if free speech were not allow. Mere speech could not be called a crime, only actual activities, argued Guo.¹⁶¹ Li Honglin sees that the criticism of the article was actually criticism of the sentence of Wei Jingsheng. The article received censorship from Hu Qiaomu and the ‘law and order’ faction which branded Guo as the ‘the leading figure of the bourgeois liberalisation’.¹⁶²

The police also arrested Lu Lin who had continued to publish *Tansuo* and the journal was banned by the Beijing city authorities in early November.¹⁶³ The *Tansuo* group around him was actually one of the most passive in the Democracy Movement even if the sentence of Wei Jingsheng had most to do with them. This was partly due to the fact that the group was under constant police surveillance and that the rest of the movement prevented them from acting. It was feared that radicalism on their behalf would bring more trouble to the whole movement, but in the end their low profile did not matter much. As one of its last acts, the group wrote an open letter to Prime Minister Thatcher.¹⁶⁴

Other arrests and acts of oppression followed. Liu Nianchun of *Jintian* was arrested ostensibly for his works published in France,¹⁶⁵ although his close connection with Siwu luntan and Liu Qing was probably also relevant, as perhaps also was the fact that, in defiance to Wei’s sentence, *Jintian* had continued its activities with a second read-aloud poetry meeting on 21 October which attracted an audience of between 1000 – 2000.¹⁶⁶ Four organisers of the October 10 demonstration at the Renmin Daxue were also arrested.¹⁶⁷ *Wotu* stopped its publication in October, and *Beijing zhi chun* was forced to cease its publication, but the way in which this occurred also showed the journal’s special status. When Wei’s sentence had been made public, the Youth League had asked the editors of *Beijing zhi chun* to cease publication of their journal, and to make self-criticism acknowledging their mistakes. This finally took place in the Youth League Central Committee in February 1980.¹⁶⁸ However, after being told to close down, the editors vacillated for one more issue which came out on October 28 and even contained a plea for Wei Jingsheng. Although the editors prepared to publish also the tenth issue, the ninth was the last one they could produce.¹⁶⁹

Siwu luntan editors continued to campaign for its arrested editor. On 15th November and again on the 20th, Xu Wenli and some companions went to the Renmin ribao department of readers' letters and met the deputy editor, Wang Ruoshui, there to discuss the Liu Qing affair and the Democracy Wall. Xu presented Wang a letter containing the appeal to release Liu Qing, and a proposal that the government should take measures to formally legalise the Democracy Wall. Wang agreed to publish the letter internally.¹⁷⁰ However, one of Xu Wenli's companions appears to have been a police informant because the meetings, and the fact that Wang gave his support to Siwu luntan, were reported to the minister of Public Security, Zhao Cangbi. The report was also circulated to leading cadres in the Party Centre. Deng Xiaoping requested a written report from Wang Ruoshui on the incident and Hu Yaobang was given the task to sort the incident out. It appears that Hu Yaobang let Wang off lightly, but was unwilling to personally come out in favour of Siwu luntan or any other of the journals. Han Ying, the secretary of the Central Committee of the Youth League, who took part in sorting out the incident, stated that Xu Wenli had also contacted the Youth League about the Liu Qing case and that Wang Juntao and Han Zhixiong of Beijing zhi chun supported Xu.¹⁷¹ Now Han Ying ordered the members of the Central Committee of the Youth League to cease the publication of Beijing zhi chun, which, as seen above, its editors did dragging their feet.¹⁷²

Under these conditions, Siwu luntan celebrated its first anniversary on the eve of 25th November by throwing a tea party in its editorial office. Those invited were Siwu luntan members, long term readers and representatives from other journals,¹⁷³ but the atmosphere must have been gloomy. Rumours were circulating that the Party conservatives were going to solve the 'problem' of the Democracy Wall before the New Year and that the 'four great rights' in the constitution would be abolished.¹⁷⁴ On the same day the Siwu luntan editors wrote a letter to the Central Committee of the Youth League appealing to its leaders that the journals and the League should have a meeting to exchange views and support each other.¹⁷⁵ There are no records that indicate such a meeting took place, but the arrests united the journals once more against the external threat. They convened a joint meeting at the end of 1979, pledging mutual support and that should one of them get in trouble, the others would promptly make it public. Sentiments ran high in the meeting over the issues like freedom of press, and resulted in the second split of Jintian when its editors could not reach agreement on what to do. Many of them felt that taking part in such activities would lead them to imprisonment. Others felt that collective decisions should be upheld, while others wanted to write a dazibao announcing that Jintian did not approve the meetings decisions or that they were illegal. As the result, the majority of the members withdrew from Jintian. Once again, only Bei Dao and Mang Ke were left to continue the publication of the journal.¹⁷⁶

At the same time the political freeze was getting deeper at the Xidan Wall too. That the crackdown had approval of Deng Xiaoping was revealed in his speech to leading cadres on 2 November 1979, when he noted that both ideological work and a crackdown against a handful of 'bad elements' at the Xidan Wall was needed.¹⁷⁷ On

26 November 1979 Deng Xiaoping told two visiting editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica that some people were mistaking democracy which the Party advocated with anarchy and justifies the crackdown by arguing that

*“Now, the Xidan Wall in Beijing has for some time been a place where those people, who do not work, often create disturbances. They are perniciously influenced by the ideology of the Gang of Four and gather to make trouble and even engage in espionage. Although few of them are well-intentioned, actually they are imbued with the ideology of the Gang of Four. They practise ultra-individualism and anarchy. Although these young people are few in numbers, they have enormous influence. We have adopted a serious attitude towards them for the purpose of educating the younger generations.”*¹⁷⁸

Deng is also reported to have noted that Wei’s sentence was to serve as a warning to hundreds of others.¹⁷⁹ During its session from the 23rd to 29th November 1979, the Standing Committee of the Fifth National People’s Congress further criticised the Democracy Wall in Beijing and demanded that the City revolution committee should solve the problem of the Xidan Democracy Wall through ‘proper means’. This stance was openly revealed in a speech given by Tan Chenlin, vice chairman of the National People’s Congress, who argued that because of the Democracy Movement activities *“the people were in danger of losing their real freedom.”*¹⁸⁰ Tan’s speech also revealed that the participants in the conference were given an ‘Initial Brief Report’ on the public order disturbances in the country and how such activities had been carried out under the name of ‘democratic activities’.¹⁸¹

Tan also emphasised that the oppression of Democracy Wall Movement did not mean the repetition of the mistake made about the Tiananmen Incident, as the two movements were utterly different. The Tiananmen Incident had reflected a ‘spontaneous movement of the masses’, the Democracy Wall Movement was a *“matter of a small number of people, with organisation and planning, who specialise in making trouble and carrying on subversive activities.”* Thus it was clear that the latter had to be curtailed. However, Tan’s speech also revealed that the Standing Committee was not united in its stance on the Democracy Movement. As he argued, some people in the leadership had not yet grasped the danger the situation represented in obstructing the right solution. He also revealed that there had been a politburo meeting a week before where it had been decided to resolve the situation. Tan therefore proposed to assign a place for the Democracy Wall where it would not create disturbance, and take legal and political action against the activists like Wei Jingsheng.¹⁸²

Majorities in the National People’s Congress Standing Committee and the Beijing City Revolutionary Committee wanted to ban all posters, but as Tan’s speech indicated, the Party Central Committee could not agree going this far and ordered only significant restrictions to the facilities where posters could be posted. Consequently, on 6 December, Beijing City authorities announced ‘Temporary

Regulations' concerning the Democracy Wall. Effective from the 8th of December, the rules closed down the Xidan Democracy Wall and moved it from Xidan to a more remote place at the Yuetan (Moon Altar) Park located in the suburbs. Putting up posters anywhere else was now forbidden. Those, who still did not get the message and insisted on their rights, were obliged to register themselves and also their pennames and follow the bureaucratic opening hours at the new location, they were also warned that they would be held legally and politically responsible for their opinions.¹⁸³ These moves by the Beijing City authorities effectively stifled further political debate at the Democracy Wall. Following the central committee's decision, similar restrictions were put into force in other cities e.g. Hangzhou. In Nanjing the right to put up posters was restricted to *danweis* of the persons who still wished to do so.¹⁸⁴

The Democracy Movement activists had seen this coming from the comments of the National People's Congress meeting as published in the press. In an article dated 28 November a writer in *Siwu luntan* noted the National People's Congress' decision to take appropriate 'measures' to prevent the bad elements from using the Democracy Movement for their own purposes. He then mocked the decision by proposing that the delegates of the National People's Congress should come to demolish the Xidan Wall with their own hands, yet still leave democracy untouched.¹⁸⁵ However, sarcasm did not help the Democracy Movement. Indeed, more was yet to come. The writing and publication of wall posters and journals was now made as difficult as legally possible, but it was remained legal – at least on paper.

As a part of the restoration of the normal working methods and procedures of the legal system, Deng Xiaoping had denounced mass-line campaigns, which had been widely used during the Cultural Revolution. As such, he was unwilling to launch any mass campaign against the Democracy Wall Movement. The activists were to be dealt with correctly and at least under the guise of the law. However, if the law happened to protect the activists, it could always be changed. In his speech '*The Present Situation and the Tasks before Us*'¹⁸⁶ at the work conference heading the fifth plenary session of the eleventh Central Committee on 16 January 1980, Deng argued:

“At present some people, especially young people, are sceptical about the socialist system, alleging that socialism is not as good as capitalism. Such ideas must be firmly corrected... Nor can we take lightly the so-called democrats and other persons with ulterior motives who flagrantly oppose the socialist system and Communist Party leadership. Their position is clear. Although they sometimes claim to support Chairman Mao and the Party, they are essentially opposed to the Party leadership and socialism. In reality those people think capitalism is better than socialism... Many of them have simply been led astray and should be educated and brought back to the right path. But we must fully recognize the general tendency of these 'democrats' and not be too naïve about them. In addition, there are anarchists, ultra-individualists and

*so on, who disrupt public order... [Towards those] who prove incorrigible... we must not be tender-hearted.*¹⁸⁷

Deng also noted that some comrades were still soft on such people, but strict measures according to the law should be taken against the ‘remnants of the Gang of Four, counterrevolutionaries and other criminals’ as had already been done in the recent crackdown. Deng also warned that Party members and cadres must not propagate freedom of speech, assembly and association indicating that the counterrevolutionaries would also enjoy the rights or have contacts with them. Without mentioning any specific names, Deng criticised those in the Party who had given support to the democracy activists and demanded that they too should be subjected to disciplinary measures, although this would have included himself just one year before. However, at the same time Deng protected his allies, noting that this criticism did not include those who had connections with the Democracy Movement while ‘doing work on them’.¹⁸⁸

Finally, Deng washed his hands of his initial encouragement of the Democracy Wall Movement the year before claiming that his stance had actually always been the same regarding the Democracy Wall Movement, and denied that any thaw had ever taken place under his leadership:

*“Some people may ask whether we are following a ‘tightening up’ policy again. But since we have never pursued a ‘loosening up’ policy on such matters, naturally there is no question of ‘tightening up’. When did we ever say that we would tolerate the activities of counterrevolutionaries and saboteurs?”*¹⁸⁹

Deng then finalised his attack with a specific suggestion to erase the 45th article from the Constitution. This article contained the ‘four great rights’ that constituted the basis of Maoist ‘extensive democracy’. As Deng now saw it, they had been misused by the democracy activists.¹⁹⁰ Consequently, he noted that the central committee would propose to the National People’s Congress the deletion of the ‘four great rights’ from the constitution. As the consequence, the 14th session of the National People’s Congress’s standing committee took to its task the preparation of the revision of rights in April 1980.¹⁹¹ A press campaign to spread the speech was launched, and the editors of the Democracy Movement journals were made aware of its content by the authorities as far as Guangzhou.¹⁹²

As always, the reasons for Deng’s harsh attack were connected with the continuing power struggle within the Party leadership. In late 1978, Deng had needed popular support in his struggle against the Whateverists, thus had encouraged the Democracy Wall Movement more or less directly. In the spring of 1979, after the failure of the War against Vietnam he came under heavy criticism and had to partly concede to his critics on the Democracy Wall Movement. But when the new emphasis on the four cardinal principles threatened the economic reforms, the campaign was reined in and the second thaw was made possible. In the latter half of 1979 and early 1980, Deng

once again needed support from the conservative old guard in the Party in order to be able to oust the remaining Whateverists from the Party leadership. Silencing the Democracy Wall Movement was apparently not too high a price to pay for this support, especially since there was a clear estrangement between him and the movement on ideological issues. As a *quid pro quo* Deng indeed managed to oust his Whateverists rivals in the 5th Plenum of the 13th Central Committee on 23-29 February 1980 with support from his conservative allies.¹⁹³ However, the reformists also gained something as Hu Yaobang became the acting Party general secretary and Zhao Ziyang took charge of the daily affairs of the state council. This same meeting decided to erase the ‘four great rights’.¹⁹⁴

One reason for the crackdown was the resurgence of violent and disruptive demonstrations and activities by various discontent groups, like the sent-down youth wanting to return to cities, which were reported from provinces. This news could be used to create a sense of urgency for suppression of the Democracy Movement. For example, at the end of November 1979 in the National Public Security Conference in Beijing, Peng Zhen bundled together the social disturbances and ‘anarchism’ and ‘extreme individualism’ amongst the youth and called for measures to be taken to rectify them. Further, the provincial conferences that followed demanded strictness and concentration of strength against elements the seriously disrupted social order.¹⁹⁵

The last major political journal in the Beijing Democracy Movement, *Siwu luntan*, continued publication until March 1980 when it declared that it would cease publication due to ‘legal circumstances’ – referring probably to Deng’s stance on the ‘four great rights’.¹⁹⁶ However, what irritated the journal’s editors was that even in their demise, the journals were not treated equally. Some journals were warned beforehand, but *Siwu luntan* had received no official contact whatsoever, nor had a chance to rectify its act. “*If it were warned, I think Siwu luntan would probably comply*” commented its editors in its March issue 1980 which was meant to be its last.¹⁹⁷ However, Yang Jin, a Beijingers worker, took over the editorship of the journal for two more issues in the autumn of 1980, but publication was finally terminated when both Xu Wenli and Yang Jin were arrested in April 1981. This ended one of the longest running original Democracy Wall Movement journals.¹⁹⁸

Countywide Co-Operation Emerges

As the freeze got deeper in Beijing, the centre of the Democracy Movement’s activities now migrated to a milder climate in south and spread to the provinces from the big cities. In Guangzhou the authorities appear to have been relatively more lenient towards the movement. Here the controls were not so strict and due to proximity of Hong Kong news material was more easily obtainable from foreigners. Hence the prominence of Guangdongese members in the later phase of the countrywide Democracy Movement.¹⁹⁹ The first signs of increasing countrywide co-operation between the activists also emerged and in early 1980 even attempts to

establish countrywide organisations. Even before there had been considerable exchange of articles and visits between the journals, but the Beijing journals had assumed the leading position in these activities. Journals in provinces had followed their writings reprinting them and thus increasing their circulation. However, the exchanges happened both ways as Beijing journals also published articles from the provincial journals, and most often, those from Guangdong.

The first call for national organisation came also from Guangdong. On 10 January 1980, Renmin zhi lu, Shenghuo, and Langhua appealed to all Democracy Movement journals throughout the country to suggest that the journals should present a united front to gain legal acceptance and demand revision of press laws that, as we have seen, were impossible to follow. The journals argued that using ‘guerrilla tactics’ of single publications should cease and activities to this end become more coordinated and that the publication of a national joint journal would be desirable.²⁰⁰ Complaining that the response had been weak and scattered, they wrote another open letter on 16 February stressing that after the Deng’s speech on 16 January, co-operation was needed more than ever.²⁰¹ On 20 May 1980, the editors of eleven different journals, some of which had effectively ceased publishing, circulated an ‘*Open Letter to All Democratic Publications within the Country*’, which contained a call for the restoration of freedoms to the journals and also Liu Qing’s immediate release.²⁰² Therefore, as when the Beijing journals formed the Joint Council after the Beijing authorities issued the ‘Meeting Spirit’ notice in February 1979, oppression was actually needed to create a nationwide organisation, since under duress the journals had to discard their differences and seek strength in unity.

After the freezing spring, the summer of 1980 witnessed once again a thaw in the political atmosphere. On April 18 1980, the Party conservative faction had launched a campaign against the Party reformists under the slogan of ‘promoting proletarian ideology and eliminating bourgeois ideas’ at the All-Military Conference on Political Work, but this time Deng Xiaoping did not follow the campaign. He countered the slogan at the end of May, when he addressed the problem of ‘feudalism’ in the Party as a more serious problem than bourgeois ideas.²⁰³ On August 18, Deng returned to the more reformist themes he had expressed in his speech to the third plenum of the eleventh central committee in December 1978, and the instructions to the Conference on Theory Work in January-March 1979. In his speech to an enlarged meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee entitled ‘*On the Reform of the System of Party and State Leadership*’ Deng indicated that the problems with the Chinese political system were due to historical tradition of feudalism, concentration of power and centralised planning system adopted from Soviet Union in the 50s. He emphasised the need to reform the political system so that the people could effectively manage state affairs, and run enterprises and institutions to enjoy their rights as citizens.²⁰⁴ The speech also warned against the residual forces of the Lin Biao and the Gang of Four clique followers who should have been removed from leading positions. Instead, younger and trained cadres should be promoted and the Party personnel

system should be reformed to benefit the four modernisations.²⁰⁵ Furthermore, Deng observed that bureaucratism was the major problem that impeded modernisation.²⁰⁶

The reforms the speech advocated came to be known as ‘Gengshen reforms’ and regarded as the epitome of Deng Xiaoping’s commitment to political reforms. They aimed at rectification of inner Party work through decentralisation and regularisation of decision making, and the ending of life-long tenure of cadres and favouring technical expertise in promotions. After the cold winter of conservative assault, the Party reformists took the speech as a sign of a chance to promote political reforms once more. The Central Committee held discussions on the matter and when the results of the meeting were reported, Hu Yaobang and many another influential reformists expressed strong support for institutional reforms to eliminate feudalism.²⁰⁷ In the summer and early autumn of 1980 it seemed once more as if the reformists might gain the upper hand in the struggle.

As the result of this thawing political atmosphere, Democracy Movement journals also managed to have a short revival when new activist groups emerged.²⁰⁸ However, it was notable that this happened now outside Beijing and big cities in general, as the new journals appeared even in remote provincial towns like Ningbo in Zhejiang, Wanxian in Sichuan, Hanchuan in Hubei and some others.²⁰⁹ This time the journals also were nearly underground, since they could not be sold publicly and therefore their circulation was more restricted.²¹⁰ Many journals switched to a correspondence form like Wang Xizhe’s *Xueyou tongxin* [Learners’ Correspondence] and Xu Wenli’s *Xuexi tongxin* [Study Bulletin]. Journals indicated on their front pages that they were ‘only for internal circulation and reference.’ However, journals were now also seriously seeking national co-operation. The Guangdong activists took the lead in the process. As indicated in the documents from Xu Wenli’s trial, on 10 – 12 June 1980, Xu Wenli, Wang Xizhe, a Shanghai activist Fu Shenqi and some other activists convened in Beijing to discuss the formation of the ‘Chinese Communist Alliance’ in order to end the dictatorship of one party in China, but felt that more ideological and organisational preparation was needed to realise this. However, they decided to publish *Xuexi tongxin* with Xu Wenli as the editor. It was published in six issues from 1980-1982 with a circulation of several hundred copies throughout China in at least 18 provinces.²¹¹

Nation-wide co-operation was also boosted when Liu Qing was given an administrative sentence of three years at a labour reform camp on 30 July 1980. He was found guilty of creating public disturbance, releasing Wei Jingsheng’s trial transcripts and making a false claim of sick leave to his *danwei*.²¹² As a consequence, the same group of journals that had published an ‘*Open Letter to All Democratic Publications within the Country*’ (numbering now sixteen) formed a ‘National Association to Save Liu Qing’, which formally came into being on 30 August 1980.²¹³ It demanded the immediate release of Liu and compensation for the time he had been detained.²¹⁴ Unsurprisingly, the authorities constantly harassed this organisation and only one day after of the association’s establishment the police

arrested one of its leaders, He Qiu, and three other members who were preparing for its first national assembly Guangzhou.²¹⁵ After two weeks of detention all arrested were released.²¹⁶

On 15 September the National Association to Save Liu Qing turned into the Chinese National Association of the People's Publications (*Zhonghua quanguo minkan xiehui*), with 21 member journals. No general meeting was held to establish the association. The declaration was made possible through private correspondence and smaller representative meetings when those people who had tried to organise the meeting in Guangdong were still in prison. The new association decided to sponsor a new journals entitled Zeren [Duty] with its members taking turns to edit it. When He Qiu was released, Renmin zhi lu took responsibility for the first issue, which came out on 20 September 1980. The journal's editors declared that the Democracy Movement had now started the second long march and through the co-operation of the journals that the previous freeze had not killed it would grow much stronger than it had been in the previous phase of the struggle.²¹⁷ The Guangdongese He Qiu was the leading activist behind the establishment of the Association. However, not all leading activists welcomed it. For example, Wang Xizhe did not join it, and Xu Wenli even denounced it as premature adventurism which would only provoke the authorities, and advocated a more discreet method of using 'study letters' to communicate the movement's message.²¹⁸

One of the main issues on Zeren's agenda was freedom of press and amending the publication laws that were used to suppress the journals. The editorship of Zeren was later rotated to Fu Shenqi in Shanghai who managed to publish the journal until February 1981, when he was arrested in the roundup of the remaining activists of the Democracy Movement.²¹⁹ However, the Association grew to have 30 member organisations and managed to put out 9 issues of Zeren altogether before it was forced to close down.²²⁰ Regional associations of journals were also established, like the East China Unofficial Journals Association, with activists from Hangzhou, Shanghai, and Ningpo, and which managed to publish one issue of Huadong minkan [The People's Journal of East China] in January 1981, in which the authors advocated abolition of one-party rule. In the capital there was reportedly also a Beijing Unofficial Journals Association headed by He Depu, the editor of a journal named Beijing qingnian [Beijing Youth].²²¹

Another factor that contributed to the thaw in the summer of 1980 was the local elections that were conducted throughout China. These were the result of the electoral laws promulgated in June 1979 and gave many Democracy Movement activists a chance to run for a seat at county or lower level. As Fu Shengqi has indicated, also the chance to take part in local elections divided the Democracy Movement. Some activists saw that running for a seat would strengthen the Party rule and that the activists should have concentrated on revealing the hypocrisy of the whole exercise and decided not to run. Others saw it as an opportunity to strengthen the cause of the Democracy Movement as a law abiding movement and choose to

run.²²² In Beida, Wang Juntao and Chen Ziming of Beijing zhi chun and Hu Ping of Wotu ran as candidates.²²³ Other democracy activists known to have taken part in elections in Beijing were Fang Zhiyuan who was from Guangzhou and a liaison activist of Renmin zhi sheng, and Zhang Manling, a female student with a feminist agenda. In the provinces, candidates included Changsha Hunan Teachers' college students Liang Heng and Tao Sen, Xu Bangtai in Shanghai Fudan University, and Xu Zhengyu in Shanghai Teachers College. A worker candidate, Fu Shenqi of Zeren and Minzhu zhi sheng, also took part in elections in Shanghai.²²⁴ Many of the candidates criticised the Party and Marxism in their campaigns and in all these cases their victories were answered with gerrymandering tactics and the authorities' refusal to allow them to assume their posts.²²⁵

The protests, hunger strikes and demonstrations which surrounded the elections added to the conservative argument for the need to strengthen stability and unity and contributed to the decision to launch the final crackdown on the Democracy Movement in late 1980.²²⁶ Therefore, the thaw that the Gengshen reforms and local elections created did not last for long. The background to the proposed reforms has been traced back to the Solidarity movement in Poland that erupted in July 1980. The Gengshen reforms have been seen as a reformist attempt for a pre-emptive move to defuse the situation in China, which highly resembled that of Poland.²²⁷ However, the conservatives could use the Polish situation as a counterargument against the promotion of political reforms. Consequently, after a lot of ideological conflict in late summer 1980 public propagation of the Gengshen reforms was banned after the Polish situation flared up in October, and Hu Qiaomu's letter warned the Party of Polish events repeating in China. As the result, the intellectual atmosphere froze once again and any talk of reforms was put on ice by late 1980.²²⁸

Also the Solidarity movement was conducive to the suppression of the Democracy Movement in China. The remaining Democracy Movement journals usually greeted the Solidarity movement with awe and enthusiasm. What also alarmed the authorities, was that it coincided with the rise in student and labour activism in China. For example, Siwu luntan issued a declaration in its 18th issue in September 1980 (edited by Yang Jing) congratulating the Polish Workers for their success and terming their actions a demonstration of the, "*tremendous power of new class awakening generated by working-class solidarity.*"²²⁹ Activists' involvement in labour issues made them a good scapegoat and target for the conservatives that blamed them for social unrest. Particularly damning seems to have been He Qiu's endorsement of Taiyuan Steelworkers' activism in the first meeting of the All China Unofficial Journals Association.²³⁰ In the early winter of 1980 some 3000 steel workers protested against harsh living conditions in Taiyuan, Sha'anxi. A local Democracy Movement journal, Fengfan [Sailing ship], reported on these activities and took a sympathetic view on them, and claimed that the workers were acted for democracy by relying on their own powers to change matters. The journal also interviewed one of the steel workers' leaders and published the 'Charter of Worker's Rights' from a Polish dissident journal, Robotnik, and the '21 Demands' made by the

Solidarity Movement in Poland. In early 1981 it was reported that in Wuhan small a few students had tried to establish a Polish type free labour union. In Shanghai and Xi'an there were also strikes when workers demanded independent labour unions,²³¹ and in Qingdao a Democracy Movement journal named Zhiyou luntan [Comrade's Forum] spread leaflets in support of the Polish workers' movement.²³²

Students were also restless, for example, in Beijing there was a campaign to draft a new Publications Law by Beijing University students, which some Democracy Movement journals also supported. In Hubei, an attempt to form a nationwide independent student association was made in January 1981 by students of Wuhan University. Further, students from about twenty other universities were also reported to have joined the meeting, in which the establishment of the association was discussed. The authorities promptly denounced this attempt.²³³ Moreover, as before when the Democracy Movement had suffered the crackdowns in March-April and November-December 1979, labour unrest coincided with reports of other disturbances in Chinese society. Numerous cases of bombings, sabotage, and arson were reported in the press from 22 of the 29 provinces and self-governed cities. Although some incidents occurred before December 1980, most of the reported cases were from early 1981, and release of the news was probably also used to justify the oppression by creating an atmosphere of general social instability. These news reports blamed remaining Lin Biao and the Gang of Four clique members and 'counterrevolutionary elements' for disturbances.²³⁴

Such general labelling of course makes it impossible to say with accuracy how much Democracy Movement activists were involved – but which was precisely the intention of such general negative labels. During the autumn-winter 1980-81, numerous labour strikes and demonstrations were also reported in the media. These were based on demands for better salaries due to inflation, but also on dissatisfaction with local elections dominated by the Party organs, a general 'crisis of faith' in the Party, and the Polish example. Demonstrations by students and sent-down youth added to this. For example, students in Beida demonstrated against gerrymandering the local district elections, where Li Shengping, a Democracy Movement activist who had won 70% of votes, was denied his seat at Haidian district people's congress. Student also organised petitions in many cities for the promulgation of new press laws which would make unofficial journals legal.²³⁵ All this could be cited as evidence of social unrest and the Democracy Movement could be connected to it.

The Third Freeze

Repression still actually continued even during the relative revival of the Democracy Movement in late summer 1980. In September 1980, Deng's proposal to delete the 'four great rights' was finally carried out by the 5th National People's Congress, which amended the Constitution in its 3rd session. After this decision the Democracy Wall at the Yuetan Park was closed down and the remaining journals became true

underground journals.²³⁶ This effectively ended the Democracy Wall although the Democracy Movement still continued to exist. As a symbolic end to the original Beijing Democracy Movement journals, Jintian, the moderate literary journal, was finally ordered to cease publication in September 1980. The editors published a correspondence journal named Wenxue ziliao [Literary materials] for three more issues, but in December 1980 the authorities also closed down this activity.²³⁷ When the editors were ordered to cease publication they sent an appeal for help to one hundred well known artists and writers but none replied.²³⁸ Other journals also had problems to print and edit, as they could not sell their issues publicly anymore and official harassment got worse. Zeren reported the hardship of these struggles on its pages.²³⁹

Indeed, the situation in late 1980 did not appear favourable to the Democracy Movement. The elections where the Democracy Movement activists had chosen to run had caused ‘social disruptions’ and the movement had created a national organisation that could be linked with labour unrest at least through its statements. Therefore, apart from liberating the political atmosphere for a brief period, the actual results for the Democracy Movement from the Gengshen reforms and local elections were meagre. On 25 December, Deng Xiaoping once again retreated from his reformist positions and endorsed more conservative views in his speech ‘*Implement the Policy of Readjustment, Ensure Stability and Unity*’. He now argued that democracy without the Party’s leadership and discipline would once again plunge China into anarchy.²⁴⁰ He also noted the rise in the activities of ‘illegal organisations’ that had made ‘unrestrained anti-Party and anti-socialist statements’²⁴¹ and emphasised the need to ‘criticize and oppose the tendency to worship capitalism and bourgeois liberalism’ as well as ‘anarchism and ultra-individualism’.²⁴² Furthermore,

“It has come to our attention that in some places a handful of troublemakers are using methods employed during the “Cultural Revolution” to carry on agitation and create disturbances; some are even clamouring for second a “Cultural Revolution”... A few ringleaders who control illegal organisations and publications are working hand in glove with each other. Anti-Party and Anti-Socialist statements have been published, reactionary leaflets have been distributed and political rumours have been spread.”²⁴³

Deng thus announced the policy of the ‘two illegals’ (*liǎng zuì*) for banning organisations and publications which were not allowed to continue. According to this, state organisations should adopt appropriate laws and degrees to eliminate marches and demonstrations without permission and to: “*forbid different units and localities from clubbing together for harmful purposes and proscribe the activities of illegal organisations and the printing and distribution of illegal publications.*” Although Deng stressed to need to do this within legal framework, the anti-liberal intention of the speech was clear.²⁴⁴ This ‘proposal’ was soon carried out and thus the marginally more liberal phase that followed Deng’s August speech ended.

Deng justified the continuing crackdown as making possible the continuation of efforts to develop socialist democracy, protect the democratic rights of the great majority and dynamism in the country,²⁴⁵ but whereas his words for democracy had created hope in 1978 when the Democracy Movement had first emerged to answer the calls for the emancipation of minds, now they had turned into empty rhetoric. Although by this time Deng was probably quite willing to get rid of the troublesome Democracy Movement that threatened to ally up with workers unrest, he also benefited from the third crackdown. This time the *quid pro quo* behind Deng's siding with the Party conservatives over the issue of the Democracy Movement, was the ouster of Hua Guofeng from the Party chairmanship. This post was now given to Hu Yaobang, while the Central Military Commission was taken over by Deng Xiaoping himself.²⁴⁶ To finalise the transfer of the highest political authority into his and his allies' hands, it was probably worth discarding the Gengshen reforms and siding with the Party conservatives on the ideological struggle over the Democracy Movement once more.

After Deng's speech, the Party proclaimed all the Democracy Movement's journals and their organizations illegal in the Central Directive number 9 titled '*Directive Concerning Illegal Publications, Illegal Organisations and Other Related Problems*' issued on February 20, 1981. It declared that illegal publications and organisations were not allowed anymore and their activities must be suppressed according the law and their leaders punished if there were clear evidence of their anti-Party or anti-socialist stance.²⁴⁷ In February 1981, a new press campaign began against the Democracy Movement. It was now accused of employing Cultural Revolutionary tactics, opposition to the four cardinal principles, and that the activists had created illegal organisations and published illegal publications under the slogan of democracy. As before, its aims were framed as being extreme democracy and individualism, bourgeois liberalisation and outright anarchy.²⁴⁸

The activists' responses to the worsening situation through Autumn-Winter of 1980-81 once more exposed differences within the movement's ranks. On 30 March 1981, a Hebei activist, Wang Yifeng, appealed to 'All Popular Journals and Democratic Warriors in the Country'. He deplored that due to recent political and economic difficulties, ideological differences, and 'certain mistakes', the contradiction between the reformist faction in the Party and the Democracy Movement activists had deepened. In reality he believed that no contradiction existed between the two groups as both supported Marxism and socialism, and strove for a strong and prosperous China, as well as democracy and economic reforms. In order to rectify the situation, the Democracy Movement had to put an end to its internal strife and send groups of activists to local and provincial leaders to explain their stance. A joint petition group of leading activists also had to be sent to Beijing to talk with the leading authorities in order to convince them that the activists were concerned for the whole country, supported Marxism and were for the people's interests.²⁴⁹

No such united action was possible and the Democracy Movement was divided over the issue of how to respond to the crackdown. Some, like Wang Yifeng above, were still seeking the protection of the Party reformist, while others saw that more drastic measures were possibly needed. For example, as noted, in Beijing in June 1980 Xu Wenli, Wang Xizhe and Fu Shenqi had already discussed the possibility of forming a competing Marxist party against the Communist Party.²⁵⁰ In January 1981 three journals in the Yellow River delta, *Minzhu zhi sheng*, *Zhijiang* [Zhi River] and *Feidie* [Flying saucer] edited a joint journal titled *Huadong minkan*. It had a notably non-Marxist agenda and took an independent stance to the 'present government'. On March 8, 1980 three Shanxi activists were given sentences from two to three years for organising a Chinese Democratic Party (*Zhongguo minzhudang*).²⁵¹

Regardless of their response, the central directive no 9 was followed by an arrest wave in April and early May, when most of the remaining Democracy Movement editors were rounded up and jailed. As the result of the arrests over 100 activists were detained.²⁵² This formed the third and final crackdown also on the Beijing Democracy Movement. Although most open activities of the Beijing Democracy Movement ceased in the second crackdown, the editors of the journals still gathered at Xu Wenli's home to discuss the situation. Xu also continued to receive correspondence to other defunct journals outside Beijing and publish his own correspondence journal in co-operation with activists from the provinces.²⁵³ However, relative inaction did not help the remaining editors in Beijing. On April 10, Xu Wenli and Yang Jing were arrested in Beijing. Other arrested included Chen Erjin in Shandong, Fu Shenqi in Shanghai, Zheng Yulin of Wenzhou, Su Feng of Qingdao, and Zhong Yueqiu and He Qiu in Guangzhou, who were planning to come to Beijing on a petition journey to discuss their cases with the authorities. Wang Xizhe was arrested on April 20 and charged with contacting the Trotskyites in Hong Kong. Other well-known activists who were arrested were Huang Xiang, Xu Shuiliang and Sun Weibang. As a consequence, 20 editors of the All China Unofficial Journals Association plus some other known democracy activists, were arrested and imprisoned in April.²⁵⁴

The remaining free activists gathered in Beijing in late March 1981 to develop a common strategy and to celebrate the fifth anniversary of Fifth of April Movement, but more arrests followed. Maybe based on Wang Yifeng's appeal above, the plan had been to go to the capital to clarify their position and seek mutual understanding with the authorities. On this date, several activists convened at Tiananmen Square in order to read aloud poetry dedicated to Zhou Enlai and to democracy. The square was under heavy police surveillance and when a young activist started to hand out leaflets, he was immediately arrested.²⁵⁵ In May 1981, some southern activists still managed to publish a journal entitled *Yuehai yetan* [Canton Sea Night Talks] where a Lin Jianheng denounced the central directive number 9 as a 'thoroughly backward document' which meant taking the fascist road once again and returning to the times of the Gang of Four. He asked: "*Is suppressing the ardent patriotic youth and harming those democratic personages who strive for socialist democracy really the*

way an enlightened ruling party behaves?" and denounced the authorities' regulations as totally illegal and criminal.²⁵⁶ As before, the protest were in vain, and as the result of the arrests the Democracy Movement was now squeezed to limbo.²⁵⁷

As Wei Jingsheng before them, those arrested had a long wait before they were formally tried, and after their trials, the activists received heavy sentences. On 28 May 1982 Wang Xizhe was sentenced to 14 years in prison and a day after, He Qiu received a 10 years term.²⁵⁸ In his trial on 8 June 1982, Xu Wenli was accused of plotting to establish a "Chinese Communist Alliance" with several other Democracy Movement activists and the downfall of one-party dictatorship. He was also found guilty of planning to organise a "Chinese Organisation for Promotion of Democracy", in which he was accused of intending of work not only with mainland China, but also overseas with Hong Kong, Taiwan and other countries. Naturally, this alarmed the authorities, and Xu was branded a counterrevolutionary activist. He was further accused of openly slandering Chinese socialism by stating that it was 'the state of capitalism of privileged bureaucratic autocracy', and that there was the need to 'bring about a second revolution.' Xu Wenli received a 15 year prison sentence.²⁵⁹ Finally, although already sentenced to three years in labour camp, in August 1982 Liu Qing received an additional seven year prison sentence. Also Liu's brother Liu Nianchun and Lu Lin of Tansuo were sentenced to 10 and four years respectively around the same time.²⁶⁰ Nathan also notes that as late as August and October 1983 some 100 000 suspected criminals were arrested all over the county and sent to labour camps in remote areas and their urban residence permits revoked. Many Democracy Movement activists were among those arrested.²⁶¹

In a related development in 1982, the new electoral laws that had allowed the Democracy Movement activists to run for seats in local elections were amended to prevent similar episodes from recurring. Once again, elections were permitted with the same number of candidates as there were seats on the people's congresses, and the candidates had to be recommended by officially sanctioned small organisations, not popular groups as before.²⁶² In this, the new Dengist regime was consistent with its practise of removing those parts of the law which had made the Democracy Movement legal on paper.

This marked the end of the first open phase of the Democracy Movement in Mainland China. The remaining activists either went in exile to gather strength and wait for better days, or remained behind bars, or fell otherwise silent. However, the events that followed during the 80s show how calls for democratic reforms were re-assumed by intellectuals and students, changing the nature of the Democracy Movement from what had largely been a movement of the ex-Red Guards in 1978-1981 to something that was embraced by other strata and generations in Chinese society too. Xu Wenli had already anticipated this development in late 1979, when the Beijing Democracy Movement had entered the second freeze, when he commented to a foreign correspondent on the setbacks:

*“The Democracy Movement will go through a very difficult period of now, a low tide. But it won’t die. Among the intellectuals and young people the democratic idea has been started. It will continue to exist.”*²⁶³

As the 80s would demonstrate, the demands for democratic reforms would just not go away by silencing the Democracy Movement. Indeed, they returned with even more drastic consequences. However, by the spring of 1981, the original Beijing Democracy Movement was effectively silenced and the common fate that its core activists had once shared in demanding political freedom was now shared in imprisonment.

Yet, for what had they done all this? What was so important for the activists that it was worth the risk of being discriminated against at schools and workplaces, sentenced to long prison terms, or even exiled from their home country they so loved, or possibly even worse? Why had social mobilisation and activism been so essential to them? And what had made them feel it could be justified and brought to a victorious end? In short, what was the Democracy Wall Movement all about for its participants?

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

¹ As Stanley Rosen (1985, 3) has noted, the relationship between the Democracy Movement activists and officials was also not antagonistic in Guangzhou, where elements in the both sides also sought to use each other to further their own ends.

² Tang Rouxin’s father was Tang Ke, the minister of energy and an associate of Deng Yingchao. (Hsu 1996, 92).

³ Chen Jinsong 1998, 95-96; Hsu (1996, 45 and 91) adds based on interview with Liu Qing that the Joint Council did not object to its individual members accepting such offers.

⁴ Chen Jinsong 1998, 95-96

⁵ Liu Qing 1983, 60 and 63-64 and 87-89. The interview in Renmin ribao was not published. Liu’s translators give Tang’s name also as Tang Roxin and Rouxin, but the name in pinyin is Tang Ruoxin (唐若昕), Liu Qing: *Wǒ xiàng shèhuì fǎtíng kònggào* [My Accusations against the Courts of Law], CUP 6, 328.

⁶ Hsu 1996, 46

⁷ Ibid., 79-80

⁸ Xu Xiao 1999, p. 391-392. Some official papers, like Anhui wenxue and Shi kan (Poetry Magazine) reprinted material from Jintian. Because of this, Bei Bao decided that the writers must also use their original pennames in official journals.

⁹ Nathan 1985, 42-43

¹⁰ Rosen 1985, 17

¹¹ Liu Qing 1983, 165

¹² *Běijīng Mínhǔ qiáng jìshí* [Record of Beijing Democracy Wall], Qunzhong cankao xiaoxi 3 (2 / 1979), CUP 1, 286

¹³ Wu Wei (Fearless): *Chūnjié shíjiān Rénméng zài Běijīng duō cì jùbànde mínzhǔ tāolùnhuì* [On Several Democratic Meetings Organised By the Human Rights League During the Chinese New Year], Zhongguo renquan 1 / 1979, CUP 2. The meeting was participated by activists from other journals too, e.g. Yang Guang of Tansuo, whose anti-Marxist speech gathered many listeners (Chen Ruoxi 1982, 40 and 45).

¹⁴ RMRB 12.2.1979: *Jiānjué wéihù zhèngchángde shèhuì zhìxù, shēngchǎn, zhìxù gōngzuò zhìxù* [Uphold Normal Order in Society, Production and Work]

¹⁵ *Shì shéi zhìzào shūduān, shì shéi zàochéng èguǒ?* [Who Creates Disturbance, Who Brings About Evil Result?], Tansuo 3, CUP 2 / 1979, 57

- ¹⁶ *Shanghai sì yuè* [Four Months in Shanghai], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 10 / 1979, CUP 14, 85-86
- ¹⁷ McLaren (1980) analyses the Shanghai petitioner movement and its relation to the local Democracy Movement.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 6-7
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 9-11; Nieh Yu-hsi 1979, 1219
- ²⁰ Quoted in McLaren (1980, 10).
- ²¹ The Police Circular (*Gonganju tonggao*) was copied by a Shanghai activist and published in *Kexue minzhu fazhi* in Beijing. Its content was as follows: “*One, demonstrations and assemblies must follow police instructions and must not obstruct traffic. Two: people are not allowed to intercept and attack trains and travel without tickets. Three: people are not allowed to attack army or government organs and companies and danweis, occupy offices and damage public property, vilify cadres and the police, obstruct them in their public duties. Four: people are not allowed to incite the masses, create disturbances, slander and vilification is prohibited. Five: display of opinions in writing is prohibited apart from designated places, any public. Six: compilation, publishing, display or sale of any counterrevolutionary, or immoral material [includes a list of examples] is prohibited.*” The Circular ended with threat of legal consequences if the rules were violated.
- Shanghai sì yuè* [Four Months in Shanghai], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 10 / 1979, CUP 14, 94-95
- ²² McLaren 1980, 13-14; AFP, SWB 1 FE 6039 / BII, 1-2
- ²³ Garside 1981, 251-252
- ²⁴ CA Februar 1979, 87 and März 1979, 180
- ²⁵ *Xiǎopǐn* [Short Stories], *Siwu luntan* 4 (2 / 1979), CUP 4, 84
- ²⁶ Chen Jinsong 1998, 116-117
- ²⁷ *Chúchūāng xiàde “mínzhǔ”* [Showcase “Democracy”], *Tansuo* 5 / 1979, CUP 4, 6
- ²⁸ Liu Qing 1983, 57
- ²⁹ Goodman (1981, 170) gives the time of the split as March and Liu Qing (1983, 57) also affirms suspicion of police ‘secret agents and traitors’ in the ranks of the Democracy Movement.
- ³⁰ Goodman 1981, 112-114; Fraser 1981, 211-213 and 268-270
- ³¹ Liu Qing 1983, 54; Fraser (1980,290-291) cites one such rumour about Fu Yuehua. Allegedly, she had accepted nylon stockings from a foreign diplomat, which supposedly proved that they had a sexual relationship. Such rumours struck many as unfounded, but it made defence of those who were subjected to them harder, which also served to show how the projection of a clean image was important for the Democracy Movement.
- ³² *Lüè lùn wǒguó qúnzhòng mínzhǔ yùndòng fāzhǎn* [On the Development of the Chinese Democracy Movement], *Qunzhong cankao xiaoxi* 6 (5 / 1979), CUP 4, 145-147
- ³³ Ren Wanding: *Tiān’ānmén guǎngchǎng shìjiàn* [The Tiananmen Square Incident], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 4 / 1979, CUP 9, 361-362, the quotation from p. 362
- ³⁴ *Mínzhǔ quánlì bùróng qīnfān* [Appendix Two: People’s Rights Brook No Violation], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 5 / 1979 (15.3.1979), 185; *Shanghai sì yuè* [Four Months in Shanghai], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 10 / 1979, CUP 14, 86-87
- ³⁵ Cao Min: *Xiàndàirén yě yào tòngdǎ luòshuǐgǒu* [Modern People Also Want to Beat Those in Trouble], *Siwu luntan* 1 / 1978, CUP 3, 50-51
- ³⁶ *Zhíde zhùyìde dòngxiàng* [Pay Attention to This Trend], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 2 / 1979, CUP 7, 334-335
- ³⁷ Yang Jisheng 1999, 131-132; The Conference is also described in Goldman 1994, 47-57
- ³⁸ Yan Jiaqi (1992, 46-49); Ruan Ming (1994, 54); Yang Jisheng (1999, 132); and Goldman (1994, 47-57) all deal with the Conference’s agenda.
- ³⁹ Ruan Ming 1994, 8-9
- ⁴⁰ *Xīnwén bàodào* [News Reports] *Beijing zhi chun* 3 (1979), CUP 4, 175
- ⁴¹ Wang Ruoshui in Hsu 1996, 197
- ⁴² Li Honglin 1999, 253-254
- ⁴³ Baum 1996, 77; Hu Qiaomu, who was to become a leader of the conservative faction in the 80s, headed the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and was therefore a leading intellectual figure in ideological matters. He had also served earlier as Mao’s secretary.
- ⁴⁴ Baum 1996, 77-78
- ⁴⁵ Chen Ruoxi 1982, 8-9
- ⁴⁶ Baum 1996, 77 and 80-81
- ⁴⁷ Ruan Ming 1994, 56; It had actually been Deng who had been in operative charge of the purges during the anti-right campaign in 1958.

- ⁴⁸ For the conservatives in Deng's faction, the criticism of the Democracy Movement, and social disturbance associated with it was also a way to attack their theoretical foes like Li Honglin and Yan Jiaqi. Tellingly, Yan Jiaqi was later censored by Hu Qiaomu in October 1979 for his participation in the Democracy Movement, but escaped without serious personal consequences. (Yan Jiaqi 1992, 53-54)
- ⁴⁹ Quoted in Baum (1996, 78) the speech from the 16th of March is unpublished and only press reports of it are available. Li Honglin (1999, 257-260) lets the reader understand that Deng's speeches on the 16th and 30th were the same, but reports on the speech on the 16th seem to indicate much harsher language than in the 30th version that was later reproduced in the Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping.
- ⁵⁰ Li Honglin 1999, 257-260; CA (März 1979, 180) puts the 6000 strong meeting on March 16, but this is incorrect.
- ⁵¹ Deng Xiaoping: *Uphold the Four Cardinal Principles*, Selected Works II, 1979 / 1995, 174-175
- ⁵² Ibid., 182; Democracy Forum was a radical Shanghai group that published a journal titled Minzhu taolun [Democratic discussion] in March 1979 where it denounced all existing forms of socialist governments around the world, especially the one in China (Widor 1987, 95-96).
- ⁵³ Ibid., 182-183
- ⁵⁴ Ibid., 184
- ⁵⁵ Baum 1996, 80-81
- ⁵⁶ Li Honglin 1999, 259
- ⁵⁷ Ibid., 263-268. It was only later in a January 1981 speech in the fifth plenum of the eleventh central committee when Deng Xiaoping affirmed that the four cardinal principles were meant to restrict the emancipation of minds, not other way round when he stated that '*If, like some people who put up big-character posters on the Xidan Wall, a person 'emancipates his mind' by departing from the Four Cardinal Principles, he is actually placing himself in opposition to the Party and the people.*' Deng Xiaoping: *Adhere to Party Line and Improve Work Method*, in Selected Works II 1980 / 1995, 278.
- ⁵⁸ Liu Sheng-chi 1984b, 33
- ⁵⁹ Liu Sheng-chi 1984a, 137
- ⁶⁰ According to his biographer, Wei Jingsheng seems to have been informed beforehand that Deng was about to suppress the Democracy Wall Movement and had tried to persuade the Joint Council to draft a joint statement denouncing Deng's change of mind. As Wei could not reveal his sources, and rumours were unreliable, he was not believed and his proposal was voted down. Wei then decided to act on his own, publishing his denunciation of Deng Xiaoping (Chen Jinsong 1998, 99-100). AFP reported on the speech on 21 March 1979 (CA März 1979, 180).
- ⁶¹ Wei Jingsheng: *Yào mǐnzhǔ háishi yào xīnde dúcái*, Tansuo, Special Issue 1979, CUP 1, 27
- ⁶² Ibid., 27-28
- ⁶³ Wei's criticism was not too welcome at Xidan either. It gathered comments as: "*Pure rubbish!*", "*The Whatever faction will warmly applaud you!*", "*An utterly reactionary poster*", and "*One should discuss freedom in terms that avoid harming society and the Party leadership*" (ICM June 1979, 14-15).
- ⁶⁴ SWB / FE, 6079 / BII, 7-8
- ⁶⁵ SWB / FE 6083 / BII, 1; The full declaration is in Liu Sheng-chi 1984a, 139-140
- ⁶⁶ CA März 1979, 180
- ⁶⁷ Chen Jinsong 1998, 120; Liu Qing gives also a name of a Zhang Wenho of Zhongguo renquan who was arrested in April 1979, (1983, 14 and 111-112), about Chen Lü in p. 45.
- ⁶⁸ News, Siwu luntan 9 (7 / 1979), CUP 6, 59, dated 11.4.1979; Garside 1981, 257; Huang and Seymour (1980, 24) state that this happened at Tiananmen Square, not at Xidan.
- ⁶⁹ CA April 1979, 468; they were released shortly thereafter, but Ren Wanding remained imprisoned (Liu Sheng-chi 1984b, 49).
- ⁷⁰ Liu Sheng-chi 1984b, 49-50; Widor 1981 (I), 412-413
- ⁷¹ *Běn bào jiāng gáibǎn hé gèng gǎi bàomíng bìng juédìng zànshí tíngkǎn qǐshì* [Announcement on the Temporary Suspension of Publication of the Journal Due to Revising Edition and Changing Its Name], Qunzhong cankao xiaoxi 6 (5 / 1979), CUP 4, 143
- ⁷² Compare to the list provided by Widor (1987, 106-107); The announcement of the new association was made in public at the Xidan and could be found in Kexue minzhu fazhi (Jing Zhou: *Kuàibào tōngxùn dì èr* [Express Reports 2], Kexue minzhu fazhi 10 / 1979, CUP 14, 105-106).
- ⁷³ Brodsgaard 1981, 768
- ⁷⁴ Garside 1981, 298; Widor 1987, 19-21
- ⁷⁵ Widor 1987, 19-21

- ⁷⁶ Lu Lin: *Rúicide fāngémíng fēnzǐ –wǒ suǒ liǎojiěde Wei Jingsheng, Yang Guang* [Such Counterrevolutionary Elements –How I See Wei Jingsheng and Yang Guang], Tansuo 4 / 1979, CUP 3, 40-41; About Lu Lin's arrests: Lu Lin: *Dào Bànùqiáo 'zuò kè' -wǒ bèi chuánxùnde qiánqián-hòuhòu* [As a "Guest" at Banbuqiao – The Whole Story of How I Was Subpoenaed], Tansuo 4 / 1979, CUP 3, 24-30; According to Chen Ruoxi (1982, 46) Yang Guang was arrested in Shanghai, but according to Lu Lin's account, this happened in Beijing.
- ⁷⁷ Widor 1981 (II), 22
- ⁷⁸ Nathan 1985, 33; SWB / FE, 6108 / BII, 12; Fraser 1981, 246-247; Baum 1996, 81 and 414; Chen Ruoxi 1982, 19; Soviet broadcasts reported that some 53.200 people had been arrested in the whole country, but this had to be a gross exaggeration (CA April 1979, 468).
- ⁷⁹ *Xiāoxi sān cè* [Three Pieces of News], Siwu luntan 11 (9 / 1979), CUP 7, 8-9
- ⁸⁰ It took place on 29.3.1979 under the pretext of looking for people without a *hukou*. *Qíngkuàng tōngbào* [Status Report], Siwu luntan 8 (6 / 1979), CUP 5, 58-59
- ⁸¹ Liu Qing 1983, 77
- ⁸² RMRB 5.4.1979: *Fāyáng Tiān'ānménde géming jīngshén* [Make the Best of the Revolutionary Spirit of Tiananmen]
- ⁸³ *ibid.*
- ⁸⁴ According to Hsu Hsiang-tao (1996, 97) the targets of the arrests in March-April were decided by the mayor Lin Hujia, but Hsu does not give any sources for this information.
- ⁸⁵ Liu Sheng-chi (1984a, 148-149) cites a very critical poster from Guangdong by 'Zhongguo renquan tongmeng Foshan fenhui' on 1st of April, where Deng Xiaoping was accused of using the Gang of Four methods against the Democracy Movement and using it to his own ends. The poster also demanded 'basic human rights', democracy and freedom vis-à-vis the Party. Such a militant tone was rare in Beijing.
- ⁸⁶ See e.g. *Zàn rénmin mínzhǔ* [Praising the People's Democracy], Kexue minzhu fazhi 7 / 1979 CUP 12, 53
- ⁸⁷ Liu Sheng-chi 1984a, 143
- ⁸⁸ Cited in Huang and Seymour (1980, 24-25)
- ⁸⁹ Nieh Yu-hsi 1979, 1219
- ⁹⁰ Widor (1981 II, 69-73) notes how Beijing zhi chun stopped printing news from other parts of the country and turned more to literature in its 4th and 5th issues. However, from 6th issue in June onward Beijing zhi chun took even more critical stance towards the Party Left and the suppression of the Democracy Movement.
- ⁹¹ Widor 1987, 87-88
- ⁹² An Xiang: *Rénmin gāoxìngde hòu yōulǜ* [The Worry after the People's Joy], Siwu luntan 11 (9 / 1979), CUP 7, 20-21
- ⁹³ Editors: *Jiù "Yào mínzhǔ háishi yào xīn de dúcái" yī wén yǔ tànsuǒ zázhìshè shāngquè* [Reflections on 'Democracy or New Dictatorship' and Tansuo Journal], Siwu luntan 9 (7 / 1979), CUP 6, 28-30
- ⁹⁴ *Sìwǔ lùntán fūzè rén Xu XX* [The Man Behind Siwu luntan Xu XX], Siwu luntan 14 (12 / 1979), CUP 9, 47-48
- ⁹⁵ Zhou Xun: *Mínzhǔ qiáng xiàng héchù qù?* [Where is the Democracy Wall Going?], Siwu luntan 8 (6 / 1979), CUP 5, 43
- ⁹⁶ *Zuìwēng zhī yì* [Ulterior motives], Qiushi 3 / 1979, CUP 6, 156-157
- ⁹⁷ Ruan Ming 1994, 57-58
- ⁹⁸ Li Honglin 1999, 267-268; RMRB 9.5.1979: *Wǒmen jiānchí shénmeyangde shèhuìzhǔyì?* [What Kind of Socialism We Support?]
- ⁹⁹ RMRB 15.5.1979: *Jiānchí yán zhě wúzuì-wénzhě zújiè de yuánzé* [Promote the Principle of Free Speech and Cautious Listening]; RMRB 1.6.1979: *Yào tīng nǐ'ěr zhī yán* [One Has to Also Listen to Unpleasant Things]
- ¹⁰⁰ CA Mai 1979, 546; Nieh 1979, 1220
- ¹⁰¹ Already a few days after the arrest of Wei Jingsheng, the Office of Policy Research on the Central Committee of the Youth League had sent some of its staff members to contact Liu Qing, the Convener of the Joint Council. Those dispatched wished to contact the remaining journals. However, it is unknown how these inquiries turned out and how they influenced the course of events (Hsu 1996, 90).
- ¹⁰² A Wu: *Jì Jīntiān biānjíbùde yīcì shīgē lǎngsòng huì* [The First Poetry and Songs Read-Aloud Meeting of the Jintian Editors Board], Jintian 4 (3 / 1979), CUP 7, 268-270; Liu Hongbin 1999, p. 335
- ¹⁰³ *Guānyú xīnrén wèntí zuò tánhuì* [On the Meeting Concerning the Problem of New Man], Wotu 4-5 / 1979 hekan, CUP 13, 191-193; Chen Ruoxi 1982, 52; Widor (1981, 73) puts the date of the meeting on 18th of June.

- ¹⁰⁴ Baum 1996, 83-84
- ¹⁰⁵ Li Honglin 1999, 256-257
- ¹⁰⁶ Ruan Ming 1994, 58-59
- ¹⁰⁷ Li Honglin 1999, 269
- ¹⁰⁸ The conference was said to had been postponed from April to June-July because of the Leftist ‘adverse current’ discussed above (Baum 1996, 83-86).
- ¹⁰⁹ Su Ming: *Kěnéng fāshēng zài 2000 nián bēijù* [Tragedy That Might Happen in the Year 2000], Beijing zhi chun 5, CUP 6, 131. What the writers did not foresee was that when one nowadays goes to Beijing and visits the Xidan district, people are not seen queuing in front of the Democracy Wall (which has been erased), but at nearby McDonalds. Nevertheless, the prediction has more merits than flaws.
- ¹¹⁰ Chen Erjin: *Làn wúchǎnjiējí mǐnzhǔ mǐnzhǔ géming* [On Proletarian Democratic Revolution], Siwu luntan 10th issue (8 / 1979), June 1979, CUP 1, 55-218
- ¹¹¹ Nathan 1985
- ¹¹² According Merle Goldman the decision to introduce elections might have been the result of the Reformist intellectuals’ pressure in and after the Conference on Theory Work (1994, 60).
- ¹¹³ Ibid., 80; the four great rights (*si dà*) were: 大鸣, *dà míng*, freely speaking out loud, 大放, *dà fang*, free airing of views, 辩论, *biàn lùn*, free debate, 大字报, free use of *dazibaos*. These constituted the core of the constitutional rights the Democracy Movement activists referred to when defending their activities.
- ¹¹⁴ Nieh Yu-hsi 1979, 1220
- ¹¹⁵ *Dúzhě lái xìn* [Letter From A Reader], Yue man lou 3 / 1979, CUP 16, 239
- ¹¹⁶ Widor 1981 (I), 23
- ¹¹⁷ Garside 1981, 260
- ¹¹⁸ *Gǎoyuē* [Notice to Contributors], Hua ci 1 / 1979, CUP 20, 256. The journal was edited by a Nie Baolin.
- ¹¹⁹ The first issue of Bai hua came out on 30 July *Xiāoxi jǐzé* [News], Qiang 1 / 1979, CUP 20, 278-279.
- ¹²⁰ Women 1 / 1979, CUP 12
- ¹²¹ Journal’s correspondence was addressed to a Wang Shuangli. *Zhēngǎo qǐshì* [Announcement to Solicit Contributions], Xin tiandi 1 / 1979, CUP 20, 214
- ¹²² *Fākāncí* [Opening Words], Shidai 1 / 1979, 10.1979, CUP 1, 315
The editor was Wang Zhixin, a worker from Beijing City Chemical Engineering Equipment Factory
- ¹²³ Liu Sheng-chi 1984b, 136-137; Chen Ruoxi 1982, 51, Christiansen 1980, 27
- ¹²⁴ CA Oktober 1979, 1107
- ¹²⁵ *Jiǎnxùn* [News in brief], Jintian 6, 5 / 1979, CUP 8, 269
- ¹²⁶ Widor 1981 (I), 413 the posters are *Guānyú Zhōngguó tóngméng rénquán yǔ Ren Wandìng tóngzhì* [On the Zhongguo renquan tongmeng and Comrade Ren Wandìng], DCDM I 1981, 547-552 and *Guānyú Chen Lǚ tóngzhì* [On Comrade Chen Lǚ], DCDM I 1981, 553-554
- ¹²⁷ CA Oktober 1979, 1107-1108
- ¹²⁸ Hua Yi: *Bā èrbā Xīnhuámén qián qǐngyuàn jìshí* [Records on Presenting Petitions at Xinhuaamen on 28 August], Tansuo 5 / 1979, CUP 4, 56-59 gives a vivid eye-witness description of the demonstration.
- ¹²⁹ *Běijīng mínjiān Xīngxīng měizhān bèi Dōngchéng gōng’ānfēnjú fēifǎ qūdi shíyuè yīrì Běijīng gè mínkān zǔzhī liánhé jǔxíng kàngyìhuì hé yóuxíng* [The First of October Resistance Meeting and Demonstration Organised by the Beijing People’s Journals against the Illegal Banning of the ‘Stars’ Art Exhibition by the Beijing Dongchang Districts’ Police], Siwu luntan 13 (11 / 1979), CUP 8, 69-71; E Fuming 1999, 438
- ¹³⁰ Liu Qing 1983, 144-145; Liu Hongbin 1999, 336-337
- ¹³¹ Li Zong 1993, 125-126
- ¹³² Two last slogans in Liu Qing (1983, 82).
- ¹³³ Tang Xiaodu 1999, 340-355
- ¹³⁴ CA Oktober 1979, 1108
- ¹³⁵ Zou Du: *Yóuxíng hé zuì* [What’s Wrong with Demonstrations], Siwu luntan 14 (12 / 1979), CUP 14, 81-83
- ¹³⁶ Chen Ruoxi 1982, 22,
- ¹³⁷ The demonstrators’ demands concerning the Stars exhibition were actually met and new exhibition was held in the Beihai Park from 23 November to 2 December (Siwu luntan 15 (13 / 1979), December 1979, CUP 10, 41).
- ¹³⁸ Liu Qing 1983, 77 and 80-81

- ¹³⁹ Liu Qing 1983, 77 and 81-82. Also Hu Ping later wrote that in the autumn of 1979 many reform intellectuals tried hard to get the journals legally accepted, but failed because they were too weak in numbers. Hu Ping 1992, 145
- ¹⁴⁰ Hsu 1996, 46-47, the offer was made through Liu Xun, the chairman of the Beijing Association of Artists.
- ¹⁴¹ Widor 1981 (II), 73-74
- ¹⁴² Liu Qing 1983, 77 and 81-82
- ¹⁴³ Baum 1996, 86-87
- ¹⁴⁴ Wang Ruoshui 1994, in Hsu 1996, 107
- ¹⁴⁵ Officially the laws came to force only on the 1st of January 1980, but they were already used in Wei's case as a demonstration of the new regime's reliance on legal system in rejection of 'legal cynicism' of the Cultural Revolution. The impression was rather mixed as the sentence was released two hours *before* the trial ended.
- ¹⁴⁶ GMRB 17.10.1079: *Běijīngshì zhōngjí rénmin fǎyuàn gōngkāi shěnpàn fǎngémìng fàn Wèi Jīngshēng* [Beijing City Middle Court Publicly Tries Wei Jingsheng for Counterrevolutionary Activities]. Wei had originally asked Liu Qing to be his legal counsellor when they had not been able to find a lawyer. As there was no clear legal code whereon to base the defence, Liu turned the request down, but when he later wanted to assume the task it was already too late (Liu Qing 1983, 17-19). In the end, Wei's legal counsellor was a member of the Party, and as the case was Wei vs. the Party, he could not defend Wei as well as he might have done. For his effort he was nevertheless forced to retire after the case (Chen Jinsong 1998, 120-124). Wei's biographer Chen Jinsong (1998, 128) claims that Deng Xiaoping originally planned to give Wei a death sentence, but changed it into 15 years in prison because of international criticism. However, executing Wei would probably have sent a too strong message of approval to the conservatives and the remaining Whateverists and would have alienated the liberals of Deng's faction too much, as it would have meant too obvious a return to the methods of Cultural Revolution that Deng wished to avoid. As a sad sideline to Wei's trial, Yang Guang and Liu Jingsheng of Tansuo both testified against him. Yang was released after his co-operation with the authorities, but was not readmitted to his university. Liu Jingsheng testified that he had stolen a bus for the Tansuo group to go to Tianjin to disseminate the journal's 3rd volume. Yet, after his testimony, he was readmitted back to his *danwei* (Liu Qing 1983, 178; Widor 1981 I, 25).
- ¹⁴⁷ RMRB 8.11.1979: *Rénmín de zuìzhōng cáidìng* [The People's Final Ruling]
- ¹⁴⁸ Christiansen et alii 1980, 27
- ¹⁴⁹ Li Zong 1993, 132
- ¹⁵⁰ A description of the events in Liu Qing (1983, 13-14 and 19-25).
- ¹⁵¹ Chen Jinsong 1998, 126; Qu Leilei had also participated in the Stars exhibition (Liu Qing 1983, 143).
- ¹⁵² Tang Xiaodu 1999, p. 340-355
- ¹⁵³ Neibu cankao 2 / 1979, 25.11.1979, CUP 14, 274; An Yang: *Xīnde shīwù* [New Mistake], Neibu cankao 2 / 1979, CUP 14, 274-275; Liu Qing 1983, 20
- ¹⁵⁴ Qing Shi: Qing Shi: *Liu Qīng jūn jiānjiè* [Mr. Liu Qing in Focus], Siwu luntan 15 (13 / 1979), CUP 10, 17; One of the arrested activists was a Siwu luntan editor Pang Chunqing. He was released on 26 November. But after commented that the police had treated him well, and "*They let me read newspapers.*" (Siwu luntan 15 (13 / 1979), CUP 10, 47). Liu Qing (1983, 23-38) gives an account of the events that led to his arrests.
- ¹⁵⁵ Liu Qing 1983, 34 and 38
- ¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 14
- ¹⁵⁷ Zou Du: *Gōngkāile gōngkāi shēnlǐde Wèi àn jìlù bù wéifǎ* [Publishing the Recordings of Wei's Public Trial Is Not Against the Law], Neibu cankao 2 / 1979, CUP 14, 266-267
- ¹⁵⁸ An Yang: *Xīnde shīwù* [New Mistake], Neibu cankao 2 / 1979, CUP 14, 275
- ¹⁵⁹ Jian Min: *Rèliè qīngzhù chuàngkān yī zhōu nián* [Celebrating Warmly the One Year Anniversary of the Siwu luntan], Siwu luntan 14 (12 / 1979), CUP 9, 38
- ¹⁶⁰ Chen Ruoxi 1982, 22
- ¹⁶¹ GMRB 14.11.1979: *Zhèngzhì wèntí shì kěyǐ tāolunde* [Political Problems Can Be Discussed]
- ¹⁶² Li Honglin 1999, 273-276. As Wang Ruoshui sees it (Hsu 1996, 108) Guo Luoji's article was written well before Wei's sentence, but its publication gave the impression that Renmin ribao was defending Wei. But one can argue that even if the article was written before the sentence, publishing such an article under such conditions was a political statement favouring Wei and the Democracy Movement.
- ¹⁶³ Liu Qing 1983, 61-63; CA November 1979, 1194
- ¹⁶⁴ Widor 1981 (I), 24
- ¹⁶⁵ Tang Xiaodu 1999, 352-353; But Liu Nianchun was an active also in the Joint Council.

- ¹⁶⁶ Although defiant in public, the fear for retribution was felt by the demonstrators, after taking the front row in the demonstration Bei Dao did not dare to go home. He even wrote to his girlfriend a letter of goodbye (Liu Hongbin: 1999, p. 338-339; *Jiǎnxùn* [News in brief], Jintian 6 (5 / 1979), CUP 8, 267).
- ¹⁶⁷ CA November 1979, 1195
- ¹⁶⁸ It was Wang Juntao and Zhou Weimin who had to deliver their self-criticism (Brodsgaard 1981, 766).
- ¹⁶⁹ Widor 1981 (II), 78
- ¹⁷⁰ In his account of the incident Wang insists that the meeting was accidental and that the head of propaganda of Renmin ribao) had called Wang to meet Xu Wenli when he appeared at the office on the 15th of November. Wang nevertheless regarded Siwu luntan as a moderate journal that should have been allowed to exist. Wang Ruoshui in Hsu (1996, 108).
- ¹⁷¹ Wang Ruoshui in Hsu (1996, 108-111). Wang gives an account of the meeting with a leading group that was set up to deal with the incident. Its members were Hu Yaobang, Han Ying, and Han Muzhi. The impression of the group on the Democracy Movement was that it consisted of the youth ‘that just did not listen’ to the older generation and had to be dealt with firmly but through persuasion and education to return to the fold.
- ¹⁷² Wen Qi: *Lùn sānshí nián ái Zhōngguó gōngmín de chūbǎn zìyóu quán* [On the Chinese Citizens’ Freedom of Press during the Past 30 Years], Beijing zhi chun 9 / 1979, DCDM I, 561
- ¹⁷³ Siwu luntan 15 (13 / 1979), December 1979, CUP 10, 41
- ¹⁷⁴ Liu Qing 1983, 87
- ¹⁷⁵ *Zhì Tuánzhōngyāng yánjiūshì yī fēng xìn* [A Letter to the Research Office of the Central Committee of The Chinese Youth League], Neibu cankao 2 / 1979, CUP 14, 272
- ¹⁷⁶ Liu Hongbin 1999, 335-336
- ¹⁷⁷ Deng Xiaoping: *Senior Cadres Should Take the Lead in Maintaining and Enriching the Party’s Fine Traditions*, in Selected Works II 1979 / 1995, 221 and 232
- ¹⁷⁸ Deng Xiaoping: *We Can Develop a Market Economy Under Socialism*, in Selected Works II 1979 / 1995, 236-237, the quotation from p. 237
- ¹⁷⁹ Nieh Yu-hsi 1979, 1222. Deng’s speech does not contain any reference to Wei Jingsheng, but this does not preclude any mention of him in the discussion.
- ¹⁸⁰ ICM May 1980, 3; for critical comments on the Democracy Movement from the Beijing Municipal Revolutionary Committee members, see also ICM (January 1980, 15).
- ¹⁸¹ Ibid., 2
- ¹⁸² Ibid., 3
- ¹⁸³ RMRB 7.12.1979: *Běijīngshì duì zhāngtiē dàzìbào zuò zànxíng guǐdìng* [Beijing City Temporary Regulations Concerning Spreading Posters]; after new posters were banned, the Xidan Wall was washed clean, but because the ink from posters had soaked into the concrete, the city authorities had to erect billboards in front of the wall to hide the remaining of what once was a window of democracy (Nathan 1985, 35).
- ¹⁸⁴ CA / December 1979, 1273-1274
- ¹⁸⁵ Beijing Xuesheng: *Lùn Zhōngguó zhī mǐnzhǔ zài yú qùdiào Mǐnzhǔqiáng de qiáng* [On Chinese Democracy when the Wall Is Removed From Democracy Wall], Neibu cankao 2 / 1979, CUP 14, 278. Also Guangdong journal Renmin zhi sheng criticised the Renmin ribao article, where the National Peoples Congress delegates’ negative comments were published. *Xidan Mǐnzhǔ qiángde lìshǐ gōngjì bùróng fǒudìng* [The Historical Merits of the Xidan Democracy Wall Cannot Be Denied], Renmin zhi sheng 12-13, December 1979, 145- 147
- ¹⁸⁶ According to Chen Ruoxi (1982, 25) Deng now called the Democracy Movement activists ‘people who hold different political views’, which was the translation of ‘dissidents’, a term widely used by Western reporters.
- ¹⁸⁷ Deng Xiaoping: *The Present Situation and the Tasks before Us*, in Selected Works II 1980 / 1995, 251-253
- ¹⁸⁸ This point is noted by Wang Ruoshui in Hsu (1996, 122).
- ¹⁸⁹ Deng: *The Present Situation and the Tasks before Us*, 1980 / 1995, 254
- ¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 257; Deng also renewed his criticism against the *si da* in the speech he gave on 29 February at the fifth plenum of the eleventh central committee: Deng Xiaoping: *Adhere to the Party Line and Improve Methods of Work*, in Selected Works II 1980 / 1995, 275-276
- ¹⁹¹ Brodsgaard 1981, 772

- ¹⁹² This happened in a meeting of the editors of Shenghua, Langhua and Renmin zhi lu with provincial Youth League during the Chinese New Year. The atmosphere of the meeting was reportedly amiable, but the message less so, *Bàodǎo* [Report], Xueyou tongxin 1 / 1980, CUP 14, 302.
- ¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 88-90
- ¹⁹⁴ Peter Schier 1980, 111 and 119-126 (CA Februar 1980)
- ¹⁹⁵ RMRB 9.12.1979: *Dǎjī xíngshì fānzui huódòng zhěngdùn chéngshì shèhuì zhì'ān* [Strike Hard on Criminal Activities Rectify Public Order in Cities]. Disturbances of public order from October 1979 to November 1980 were reported in ICM February 1980, 2: *Rise of Anti-Communist Activities*; ICM March 1980, 13-15.
- ¹⁹⁶ *Zhì dúzhě* [To the Readers], Siwu luntan 17 (2 / 1980), CUP 11, 1-4
- ¹⁹⁷ *Xiāoxi èr cè* [Two Pieces of News], Siwu luntan 17 (2 / 1980), CUP 11, 5-7
- ¹⁹⁸ Chen Ruoxi 1982, 49. One of the central activists in the Siwu luntan, Chen Erjin, moved to Qingdao and continued his activities publishing a journal titled Lilun qi [Theory flag] for two issues in September-November 1980 under the penname of Lu Ji (Widor 1987, 80-81 and 84-85)
- ¹⁹⁹ This has been noted by both Nien Yu-hsi (1979, 1222) and Rosen (1985, 2).
- ²⁰⁰ *Zhì quánguó mǐn kān shū* [To the Nation's People's Publications], Guonei minkan xuanji 2, CUP 20, 146-148
- ²⁰¹ Rosen 1985, 19-20
- ²⁰² The open letter was addressed to the NPC, CCP, the Legal Committee of the NPC and the Supreme Court (Chen Ruoxi 1982, 30).
- ²⁰³ Deng Xiaoping 1980 / 1995: *On the Reform of the System of Party and State Leadership*, SW II, 336-337. The speech also indicates how the slogan 'promoting proletarian ideology and eliminating bourgeois ideas' was connected to economic reforms that were seen by the Party Left as emulating capitalism.
- ²⁰⁴ Deng Xiaoping 1980 / 1995: *On the Reform of the System of Party and State Leadership*, SW II, 321
- ²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 322-324
- ²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 326-328
- ²⁰⁷ Ruan Ming 1994, ch. 6; Baum 1996, 106-107. For Ruan the elimination of feudalism meant reforming ideology and political system based on totalitarianism and despotism.
- ²⁰⁸ Among these were Zhi jiang (Zhi River), published in Hangzhou in August, Feidie (Flying Saucer), published in Ningbo in September, and Shidai (Time), published in Beijing in October. As late as January 1981, Zheli (Philosophy) came out in Beijing (Chen Ruoxi 1982, 27).
- ²⁰⁹ Widor 1987, vii
- ²¹⁰ Nathan 1985, 40
- ²¹¹ *The Criminal Judgement on Xu Wenli by Beijing Municipality Intermediate People's Court*, (AI 1984, 111-113)
- ²¹² CA August 1980, 635. Liu Qing (1983, 113) recalls that he was transferred to the labour camp to serve his sentence on July 21 1980, but the news of this sentence may have been published later.
- ²¹³ Rosen 1985, 26; officially, the reason for the arrest was violation of regulations of visiting and receiving visitors.
- ²¹⁴ *Yíngjiù Liu Qíng quánguó wěiyuánhùi gōnggào* [The Announcement of the National Committee to Rescue Liu Qing], Xin minzhu langchao 1, October 1980, CUP 19, 93
- ²¹⁵ Rosen (1985, 26); officially, the reason for the arrest was violation of regulations of visiting and receiving visitors.
- ²¹⁶ Liu 1983, 65-66; Fraser 1981, 357-358
- ²¹⁷ *Liánhé gōnggào* [Joint Declaration], Zeren 1 / 1980, CUP 18, 158-159; *Xīnwén gōngbào dì- sān hào* [News Bulletin no 1], Zeren 1 / 1980, CUP 18, 171; Chen Ruoxi (1982, 25 and 31) estimates that this was close to the total number of surviving journals at the time.
- ²¹⁸ Widor 1987, 3, 10-11 and 44
- ²¹⁹ Fu Shenqi was a Shanghainese worker and the editor of the Renmin zhi sheng (The Voice of Democracy), which appeared irregularly in Shanghai in 1979-1980.
- ²²⁰ Rosen 1985, 26
- ²²¹ Widor 1987, 143; Baum 1996, 130; Correspondence form was employed by other journals, too (Chen Ruoxi 1982, 26).
- ²²² Fu Shenqi in China Rights Forum (1997)
- ²²³ The Beijing zhi chun group sponsored 9 candidates in all of 12 universities in Beijing at the time (Goldman 1994, 77, about the campaigns 77-82).

- ²²⁴ Munro 1984a, 76-81; About Fu Shengqi and his election campaign also in AI (1984, 34-35).
- ²²⁵ Chen Ruoxi 1982, 27-29; Wu Jianxiang, Wang Min: *Qiánfū-hòujì, mǐnzhǔ wànsuì!* [Advancing Wave upon Wave, Long Live Democracy!], *Zhongguo zhi chun*, November 7 / 1983, 4-5; Baum 1996, 107-110; Black and Munro 1993, 63-73. For Tao Sen's case see AI (1984, 38-41). According to Nathan (1985, 220) there were at least 12 other cases where a known democracy activist run for a seat in the elections.
- ²²⁶ Nathan 1985, 221
- ²²⁷ Baum 1996, 102-104
- ²²⁸ Li Honglin, 288-290
- ²²⁹ Munro 1984a, 93
- ²³⁰ Chen Ruoxi 1982, 34-35
- ²³¹ Munro 1984a, 92; Widor 1987, 105 and 108
- ²³² *Ibid.*, 86
- ²³³ *Ibid.*, 47-48 and 86
- ²³⁴ Schier 1981, 112-115
- ²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 115
- ²³⁶ Baum 1996, 92
- ²³⁷ E Fuming 1999, 448
- ²³⁸ Tang Xiaodu 1999, 354
- ²³⁹ Chen Ruoxi 1982, 32-33
- ²⁴⁰ Deng Xiaoping 1980 / 1995: *Implement the Policy of Readjustment, Ensure Stability and Unity*, SW II, 355
- ²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 360-361
- ²⁴² *Ibid.*, 363
- ²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 364
- ²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 365-366
- ²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 367-368
- ²⁴⁶ CA Januar 1981, 11-12; although the decision was made formally official by the 12th Party Conference in September 1982, Hu Yaobang and Deng began to act in their new positions right away.
- ²⁴⁷ *Directive Concerning Illegal Publications, Illegal Organisations and Other Related Problems*, in *Issues & Studies* 1983 (November), 107-108
- ²⁴⁸ CA Februar 1981, 94
- ²⁴⁹ Wang Yifeng: *Géi quánquó mǐn kān hé mǐnzhǔ zhànshìde hūyù* [Appeal to the All Popular Journals and Democratic Warriors in the Country], *Yuehai yetan* 1, May 1981, CUP 15, 284-285. According to Widor (1987, 29-30) Wang was a factory worker in Qingyuan in Hebei, a market town and a county seat. Wang was a latecomer to the movement making his first appearance in September 1980 *Minzhu zhi sheng*. He also ran for a seat at the county level elections in 1981 on a democratic agenda and finished with second most votes, but was blocked from taking up his seat.
- ²⁵⁰ AI 1984, 111-113
- ²⁵¹ One editor of the Yellow River delta journals was the Shanghai activist Fu Shengqi who had also attended the discussions with Xu Wenli and Wang Xizhe in June 1980. Other editors were from Zhejiang. All in all the journals in the province displayed notably high ability of co-operation with each other (Widor 1987, 105, 134 and 143).
- ²⁵² Liu 1983, 65-66; Baum 1996, 130; Chen Jinsong 1998, 127-128; Chen Ruoxi 1982, 3
- ²⁵³ Butterfield 1982, 415
- ²⁵⁴ Chen Ruoxi 1982, 37; AI 1984, 13; Widor 1987, 21, 70 and 83; CA April 1981, 242-243; their last journal seems to have been *Zeren* in June 1981.
- ²⁵⁵ Chen Rouxi, 38-39; In July arrests of Democracy Movement activists were reported from Nanjing and Hangzhou (CA Juli 1981, 417).
- ²⁵⁶ Lin Jianheng: *Píng Zhōng-Gòng zhōngyāng dì jiǔ hào wénjiàn* [On the Central Document Number 9], *Yuehai yetan* 1, March 1981, CUP 15, 273-274
- ²⁵⁷ The third arrest wave was connected to the more general campaign against 'bourgeois liberalisation' in literary and artistic circles that was sparked of by the Bai Hua incident in April 1981 and lasted to autumn of the same year. Baum (1996, 126-130) on the campaign and its background.
- ²⁵⁸ Rosen 1985, 29-30; AI 1984, 35-38
- ²⁵⁹ AI 1984, 111-113

²⁶⁰ Liu's sentence was given for counterrevolutionary offences and all the three sentences may have been connected to Liu Qing's prison memoirs that had been published abroad (AI 1984, 27-30).

²⁶¹ Nathan 1985, 230

²⁶² Li Fan 2005, 19

²⁶³ Butterfield 1982, 415

5 CHAPTER: Defining the Reasons for the Movement

The earlier chapters have analysed what the Democracy Movement did; with this chapter what it produced is now assessed. As the author argued in the Introduction, social movements usually produce a chain of diagnostic, motivational, and prognostic arguments for the purposes of defining the goals, reasons, and justifications of their movement. This happens by the use of diagnostic and prognostic arguments to define the grievances that cause the mobilisation and ways to improve the situation. Furthermore, there is a distinct need to reason why the movement itself is needed to bringing about the desired reforms, and this is achieved through motivational argumentation on the movement's and its participants' identities, and their role in the society.

Diagnostics occupy a central position in argumentation for the place and role of a social movement in society. The way grievances are defined and explained provides the basis to frame the relevant social actors in the protest and to assign them the necessary attributes and through these motivate the protest. Furthermore, the prognostics of how to ameliorate the grievances also depend largely on the terms how they are defined. Analysis of the Democracy Movement's argumentation begins therefore by dissecting its critique of the status quo in the Chinese society of the late 70s which formed the historical and social backgrounds to the emergence of the movement. This chapter analyses the ways the movement framed bureaucratism / a bureaucratic system and Leftism as the source of its grievances. The influence of the new class theory was clear in the diagnosis, but there were notable differences on how the problem was framed either in class terms, or in more moderate way as a bureaucratic stratum or group that was responsible for grievances and should have been removed from the leadership. The movement also spearheaded its criticism against the personality cult of Chairman Mao as a Leftist method of rule by deception. However, the movement was divided over how far to go in criticising Mao.

Bureaucratism as the Source of Grievances

On the surface the complaints published in the Democracy Movement journals seemed to reveal a bewildering multitude of grievances that ranged from mere boring TV programmes to the wanton actions of individual cadres, and activists' experiences of political exclusion and oppression. Indeed, the Democracy Movement was never an intellectually cohesive movement and it collected together a range of approaches to social analysis and definition of the grievances. However, the movement did share a certain basic understanding on the reasons that had caused it to come into being, even if this understanding left many routes open to define the reforms and needed forms of mobilisation. The consensus was that the root of the

current problems lay in bureaucratism (*guānliáo zhǔyì*) / a bureaucratic system (*guānliáo zhìdù*) that had caused the People's Republic to degenerate into a 'feudal-fascist dictatorship' (*fēngjiàn fǎxī sī dúcái*) under the rule of the Party Left (*zuǒpài, zuǒqīng jīhuì zhǔyì*). The narrative of the rise of the Democracy Movement to oppose this development was central to the justification for the movement. It mainly borrowed its form from of the line struggle between the revisionist and progressive forces that had dominated the explanation of the Cultural Revolution and the Party history. As the mainstream Democracy Movement activists believed, after the liberation, the pragmatic and 'scientific' elements in the Party had represented the interests of the people, but as the Leftists had gradually taken over the Party and the government, a popular movement against them had gradually emerged. The history of the Democracy Movement was therefore offered as a history of struggle between the people and their bureaucratic and leftist oppressors.

Leftism was directly connected to bureaucratism. Sometimes the terms were even used in tandem, as Xiao Ren did who saw that China was ruled by '*Leftist opportunist bureaucrats*'¹, but there was a difference in the concepts. Leftism generally referred to policy lines and ideology advocated by the Party faction led by Lin Biao and the Gang of Four during the Cultural Revolution, and which still continued as 'Whateverism'. Although venomous and evil, it was just the surface. For the Democracy Movement, Leftism served as the intellectual smokescreen in front of bureaucratism which meant the degeneration of the Party and government officialdom to serve its own interests, and to form, in effect, a new privileged class or social stratum. In this, the influence of the new class theory as the source of the diagnostics used by Democracy Movement activists was obvious, and the implications were also clear. If the Cultural Revolution and the Leftist ascendancy were explained as only historical accidents, then to criticise them did not have to lead to the support of political reforms, whereas if structural reasons behind the Leftist rule could be demonstrated, such demands could be justified. The Democracy Movement writers used a considerable amount of energy in trying to analyse what structural reasons were behind Leftism and bureaucratism, and as such also the Democracy Movement.

That there was bureaucratism in China was hardly a new notion. It had been acknowledged as a central problem in all socialist systems long before the Cultural Revolution,² and Mao too had addressed this issue, as some Democracy Movement writers pointed out.³ Deng Xiaoping also mentioned it as one of the central problems blocking the emancipation of minds in his speech at the third plenum of the eleventh central committee.⁴ Going even further in his speech on Gengshen reforms, Deng attributed bureaucratism to high levels of centralisation of economy and politics, 'iron bowls' of the bureaucratic staff, and the lack of administrative rules and regulations. Deng stated that institutional reforms and decentralisation of power were also needed to solve the problem.⁵ This indicated that also he saw that bureaucratism had some systemic reasons behind it, but he and his conservative supporters were not ready to concede that the solution to the problem needed thoroughgoing political

reforms, or that there was such a thing as a bureaucratic class or stratum in the society, but only recurring problems with the cadres' work style, which some institutional reforms could address. Thereby Deng's proposed reforms fell notably short of what the Democracy Movement demanded.

However, some of the reformist intellectuals in the Dengist camp came closer to the moderate Democracy Movement stance on the issue. For example, Wang Ruoshui, the deputy director of Renmin ribao who was sympathetic to the Democracy Movement, took a central role as a protagonist of Marxist humanism, and claimed that ideological, political, economic, and artistic alienation still remained in China and to solve this problem, the Party should have trusted the masses and accepted the Paris Commune type of elections to prevent bureaucratism as well as established a functioning legal system. Furthermore, the Party should have abolished the lifelong cadre employment system. Wang's comments were part of the larger academic debate on alienation and Marxist humanism that sought solutions to the problem of how exploitation still existed in socialist societies despite its economic base (classes) supposedly being removed. Nathan sees that this debate shows how a section of Chinese academic circles accepted the social diagnosis the Democracy Movement offered, at least to some degree. For them the Cultural Revolution, Mao's personality cult, Lin Biao and the Gang of Four, and bureaucratism were also connected with structural reasons in the political system.⁶ Indeed, the mainstream analysis of the sources of bureaucratism in the Democracy Movement came close to some of the reformist intellectual's argumentation, although themes of alienation and Marxist humanism were not central to the journals, as such.⁷ So what was bureaucratism to the Democracy Movement activists?

Faces of Bureaucratism

Most of the Democracy Movement journals and writers identified bureaucratism and feudal fascist dictatorship as the basic problem in Chinese society. Bureaucratism was described as a psychological tendency of the officialdom to crave for power and privilege that made it lose its touch with the people, and then turn into a self-serving ruling stratum or even a class. In this vein, a writer in Siwu luntan described bureaucratism as putting officials' own "*rights first, duties second, personal position first, revolutionary work second, personal interests first and the masses' interests second.*"⁸ One of the most thoroughgoing analyses of bureaucratism was given by Zhou Xun also in Siwu luntan, who argued that bureaucratism had to be carefully studied and analysed in order to resist it. Zhou defined bureaucratism as: "*having an official post as occupation and seizing power as the goal.*"⁹ As he saw it, the Party represented the proletariat and did not want to turn into the people's master. However, a minority of Party members did not adhere to this principle, and separated themselves from the masses. These people believed only in power, and therefore bureaucratism could be called an 'ism'.¹⁰

Zhou saw bureaucratism as a matter of political awareness of officials. The number of bureaucrats was difficult to estimate, because they could hide behind slogans like ‘serving the people’, but it was not small. Dialectically speaking, bureaucratism was directly opposed the people. Indeed, according to Zhou, it was a ‘contradiction with an enemy’. He referred to Mao at this point, who had stated that bureaucratism cannot be made a contradiction within the people, but Zhou was not advocating any political campaigns to that end either. For him the signs of bureaucratism were too many to enumerate, but for example in the economy the officials got rich and treated public property as their own and they squandered the people’s recourses without any control, to be sure. Not all cadres behaved like this, but some certainly did, and remained the source of corruption, squander and waste. Since, the people or collectives did not have power to control them, so bureaucratism had become practically a system of personal control over public property.¹¹

Zhou gave a vivid description of the various forms of bureaucratism: Bureaucrats did not have any principles. “*How much for a principle?*” was all they asked attempting only to protect their own power and positions. They praised those above them and deceived those below and practiced personal tyranny by oppressing the people. Furthermore, they did not fulfil their duties and treated human life as if not worth a straw (*cǎojiān-rénmìng*). Or then they were smooth operators who slickly accumulated power and nurtured *quanxi*-networks, or just neglected their jobs and spent their working time “*drinking tea, smoking and reading newspapers in the office*”. Or then they had lost their fighting spirit, stopped studying and learning and become ignorant and incompetent (*bùxué-wúshù*). Bureaucratism was especially manifest in the way some officials were disgusted with the people, ignoring them and rejecting the masses’ correct opinions, using their ignorance and gangs to protect bureaucrats’ powers. And what could the masses do, if they could not elect or influence them?¹²

According to Zhou, the bureaucratic work style was to rebuke the masses at every turn. They remained remote from the masses and treated them rudely with arrogance (*shèngqì-líng rén*). They brandished big sticks and carried ‘hats’ with them. If the masses complained, they were accused of liberalism (*zìyóuzhǔyì*), not following the leadership, and harbouring dark intentions (*xīnhuáipǒcè*). If the masses’ opinions were critical, they were branded ‘anti-Party, anti-socialism, and counterrevolutionaries’, protecting the leaders’ positions.¹³ In the realm of ideology and consciousness bureaucratism was

“[...] *against change (wángù), conservative (shǒujiù), corrupt (fǔbài), degenerated (tuìhuà-biànzhì), their philosophy is to rely on business capital, enjoy easy and carefree life, idle away one’s time in pleasure-seeking (chīhē-wánlè), putting personal comforts first, they have long since lost their revolutionary fervour, have no ideals or goals...*”¹⁴

Their and their family's positions and privileges was all that mattered to them. And these were only some examples of how bureaucratism manifested itself; it came in many forms and styles. But what united all bureaucrats was their reliance on special privileges, for as Lin Biao had said '*when one has power, one has everything*', power was what they needed to fulfil their desires for money, food and drink, cars, and mistresses. All of them were also afraid of the masses, did not want to listen to its opinions, and regarded democracy as their enemy. When the masses' self-awareness arose though, they would demand democracy and the bureaucrats' days would be over. Therefore, they particularly liked the personality cults and readily used the demands of following the 'great leader' or the Party leadership. Opposing them became opposing the Party leadership, which meant opposing the revolution. The bureaucrats' need to conceal their naked lust for power and privileges was thus believed to be directly behind Leftist ideology.¹⁵

Some writers, like Ai Ziyou in *Kexue minzhu fazhi*, resorted to satirical poetry to describe bureaucratism:

*"Bureaucrats, bureaucrats, your positions are low, your airs are so great,
Bureaucrats, bureaucrats, your positions are low, your powers are so great.
Factory manager sees over many people and whoever irritates him won't be
having fun,
Whoever flatters me and kisses my ass, is in my favours,
Young girls I can pick, no one dares to stop me, I cannot be dismissed,
Visitors bring me gifts, I pocket them all, when I say something, it will be done.
I don't do my duties, I just can read the papers, I have no skills...
Wife and kids have good positions, all my relatives can profit from me.
I smile to my superiors, act arrogantly to my inferiors, frown on men and sneer
at women,
That kind of stuff, bureaucrats, bureaucrats."*¹⁶

Reasons behind Bureaucratism

Andrew J. Nathan has argued that when explaining the ultimate roots of bureaucratism, the Democracy Movement activist "*rejected Mao's theory of a corrupt ruling stratum or class*" and instead returned "*to the theory of cultural backwardness that Liang Qichao had used to explain his 1905 conversion to enlightened dictatorship.*"¹⁷ However, while it is true that most of the Democracy Movement activists also found cultural reasons useful in explaining bureaucratism, it was clear that they endorsed the view that bureaucratism had first and foremost systemic reasons that could only be eradicated through political reforms. Many of them also believed that bureaucrats and Leftists were forming, or already had formed, a new privileged class or stratum in society. Indeed, analysing the structural reasons behind bureaucratism and how to eradicate it occupied a major part in the diagnostic and prognostic argumentation of the movement.

There was a difference in the terms the activists used to discuss the source of their grievances. Using the word bureaucratism to describe the problem was more in line with the Party language, which had recognised this problem long before, when discussing about a bureaucratic class was Rebel Red Guard language that the Party leadership rejected. Thus the difference was that while bureaucratism could be understood as something that *ailed* the party-state, a bureaucratic class could be taken as something that the Party-state *was*. The nature of the conflict was also sensitive, because if the Democracy Movement was seen as the product of an antagonistic contradiction between the people and the bureaucrats, then one logical solution would be violent class struggle, where one class would have perished. Indeed, in the Leftist version of Maoism, violence was the paramount form of class struggle. However, most of the Democracy Movement writers either did not deal with the question of violence, or stated clearly the need to find peaceful ways to solve the contradiction. The reasons for this were not hard to find: many of the activists were sick and tired of violence and 'class struggle' from the Cultural Revolution, and now attacked as superstition the notion of permanent class struggle that had been the centre piece of the Leftist ideology. Furthermore, a notable victory for the Dengists in the third plenum of the eleventh central committee had been the removal of the emphasis on class struggle from its communiqué.¹⁸ Calling for violent struggle would have been a lost cause when the establishment called for stability and unity.

But then, the Democracy Movement activists just could not do without a diagnosis of some sort of contradiction and struggle as the reason for the very existence of the Democracy Movement. History had called upon the Democracy Movement to engage in a struggle against bureaucratism and its Leftist ideology, so struggle they must -but against whom, and how? This was the issue that divided the movement into on the one hand a more moderate mainstream, and on the other of more radical opinions on the extent of bureaucratism.¹⁹ While both lines agreed that bureaucratism was a problem of the cadres work style that was made possible by defects in political system, they disagreed on whether to consider the outcomes in class terms or not. The majority of writers saw that the problem as bureaucratism with the emergence of a bureaucratic stratum, and not of a class, whereas more radical writers saw that the conflict was more severe and could include the whole Party as the antagonist of the people, although they also refrained from open calls for violence.²⁰

In practical terms the difference was more about principle than practise, because activists using both more moderate and radical language agreed on the need for peaceful democratic reforms in order to eradicate bureaucratism. But the language of bureaucratic class set some of the activists, like Chen Erjin, into a more confrontational stance vis-à-vis the Party. This did not come without its own problems, as the notion of a bureaucratic class came awkwardly close to the original Leftist doctrine of permanent class struggle: If there indeed was a bureaucratic class forming, or already in place, in the society, did this not make the Leftist analysis of

the permanent class struggle correct, even if their social analysis and leadership could otherwise be refuted?

Indeed, the Democracy Movement writers had to argue that their identification of the source of the grievances in society, and solutions to them, were fundamentally different than what the Party Left had proposed when it had launched and waged the Cultural Revolution. They argued that they were proposing ways to find peaceful and rational institutional solutions to the contradictions in society, solutions that would be able to do away with the structural causes of bureaucratism and Leftism as its ideology, and that these proposals were the results of the painstaking efforts to see through and refute the Leftist fallacies during the Cultural Revolution.²¹ As such, too strong emphasis on the class nature of the conflict was not suitable. Furthermore, for the Movement's mainstream, the tactical situation did not require stress on class struggle against the bureaucratic class, but popular contributions to the debate on political reforms. However, when the suppression got worse in the late 1979 – early 1980 even some mainstream writers hinted that the 'volcano' of the people's discontent could still erupt, and the struggle might change its nature, if the opportunity to reach peaceful solutions was missed.²²

The majority of the Democracy Movement writers were part of to the moderate mainstream on this issue, and evaded the question on whether the contradiction between the people and the bureaucrats had a class nature. For example, Xiao Zhu argued in *Qimeng*, that the Cultural Revolution had been claimed to be a class struggle, but that in class struggle, one class should win and the other lose and be eliminated. But then who had won in the Cultural Revolution? As Xiao argued, the reasons for class struggle had already disappeared after 1956, and its banner had only been used to suppress dissent and cause great tragedies. The most pressing problem at the moment was the contradiction between democracy and bureaucracy and between legality and unlawfulness. The 'Democracy and Human Rights Movement' received its significance from them. Indeed, as Xiao held it, Mao Zedong's theory of class struggle had been mistaken and should be abandoned, and true democracy and legality be established in place.²³ Therefore, while retaining the conflict between the people and bureaucracy as the most important issue to be solved, and the purpose behind the Democracy Movement, Xiao evaded calling it a class struggle.

Another example of attributing bureaucratism to structural reasons, without referring to class, was given by Hu Ping in *Wotu*. For him it was the greatest tragedy in contemporary history that socialism had not produced democratic forms of government. As he saw it, the reason for this was that when the new government had been created in China, it had initially corresponded to the people's interests, and under these conditions the people had believed that this power did not then need limits. They had regarded any opposition to this government as opposition to the people, which had given the centralised government a sacred nature. Those opposing it were regarded as not being of the people. Argued Hu:

“Under this condition the government assumed human character [embodying] people’s will and the individuals who actually form the people become only things. In other words, the government became the people, and the people became something that definitely was not the people, if their and the government’s opinions failed to meet each other in a ‘holy place for the people’, then the people would be taken as the guilty one in the crime of the people opposing the people.”²⁴

Based on this logic, a government that was originally created to serve the interest of the people could go against its original nature. Having unlimited powers, the rulers had to decay, believing that they were infallible, which just made them fail all the more. Today, reasoned Hu, such unlimited powers were a strong temptation to the careerists, creating personal lust for power and great risks. As the people could not resist it, power became increasingly separated from them and became an alienated force, whereby careerist occupation of government became a necessary trend and resulted in dictatorship created from a government that originally served the people.²⁵

Yu Ren also offered a variation on the theme of the moral deterioration of officialdom that was caused by systemic reasons, without referring to a distinct bureaucratic class. He argued in *Siwu luntan*, that the emergence of bureaucratism was the result of weak economic transformation after the liberation and small peasant consciousness that ailed the cadres. Bureaucrats with small peasant background had brought small peasant consciousness in politics with them. Because workers formed only a minority of the total Chinese workforce, small peasant features had also come to dominate production relations. As Yu saw it, according to Marx the small peasant influence in politics meant attitudes which accepted the politics of command. This influence had led to the strengthening of the administrative powers of the government. This bureaucratic impulse also influenced the Party, which had been the reason for the growing criticisms of bureaucratism already in the 1950s domestically and internationally. Yet, at the same time the Party could not prevent becoming the bearer of the state power as it had been made an integral part of the state (*guójiāhuà*). When the Party silenced outer-Party and intra-Party critics and opinions in the campaigns of 1957 and 1959, the economic distortion had influenced the exercise of political power and resulted in bureaucratism and growing centralisation of power in the hands of the Party.²⁶ For Yu Ren then, bureaucratism was therefore caused by the political system that had allowed small peasant consciousness to take hold of the Party.

Further, many writers in Beijing *zhi chun* used mainstream language when discussing bureaucratism. They also emphasised the role of a backward economy which could not support an advanced socialist democracy as one reason for the problem, but this was usually only left to a general assertion, as most interest in the journal was given to culture and political superstructure and not to the economy. As Gao Jimin reasoned discussing the Soviet Union in the journal (but directing his words to China) the basic problem with the political system there was that cadres

were appointed from above, and not elected by the people, which caused moral deterioration. He argued:

“As the Party and state cadres stand on this old foundation [of hierarchical bureaucracy], then according to existing real laws [that guide] consciousness, the old basis gradually has changed their thinking and consciousness and their revolutionary character, and following this development, numbers have changed the quality and a great group (yī dà pī) of new bureaucrats has emerged.”²⁷

Gao Jimin saw that beginning with Stalin, it had been the low levels of understanding the Marxist state theory that had led to adoption of the hierarchical cadre system in the socialist world. It had also led to the situation where bureaucrats were opposed through bureaucratic system of purges, but this method had just worsened matters. China also had repeated Stalin’s mistakes. Those who did not recognise that the disasters that China had gone through were due to a bureaucratic system, not only supported it, but also deified the Gang of Four and advocated historical idealism.²⁸ Gao Jimin showed, how the problem could be defined in systemic terms without referring to class and the use of terms such as a ‘bureaucratic group’ (yī dà pī) or a ‘clique’ (jítuán) instead.

Some writers preferred to refer to a bureaucratic ‘stratum’ (jīcéng) instead of ‘class’. For example, Gao Shan who wrote to Zhongguo renquan, argued that although the immediate events that had led to the loss of socialist democracy had happened from 1957 onwards, the structural reasons conducive to the loss had already been created in 1949, when a centralised Stalinist state had been established. He saw that this had been understandable in 1949 when China was an extremely backward nation with its society in chaos and economy on the verge of collapse. A large landowner class which resisted liberation of the peasants still existed, as did the old officials who had lost their positions and harboured ill will in collusion with foreign capitalists, aimed at harming the new state. For these reasons, China had had to rely on a centralised state guidance on the road to economic modernisation. Similar highly centralised systems had been adopted in Soviet Union under Stalinism and many newly independent African states. However, although necessary when it had been created, the problem with the centralist system was that it had allowed quantity to turn into quality during the 30 years. The autocratic system had allowed leaders to grab power for themselves and deteriorate, and following this the ruling stratum had become bureaucratic. This in turn had caused growing contradiction with the people, which had come out the last time in the Fifth of April Movement.²⁹ To use ‘stratum’, instead of ‘class’, moderated the stance, but referring to the Fifth of April Movement showed that also Gao saw the contradiction as potentially antagonist.

The activists who endorsed more the radical line and regarded the contradiction as a class struggle were in the minority, but included, for example, Sun Feng in Kexue

minzhu fazhi, who argued that there was still class struggle and it was ‘*not in the cake, but in the pan*’ i.e. between the people and officials, and not within the people.³⁰ In Qimeng, Huang Xiang saw that the contradiction between the Leftists and the Democracy Movement was antagonistic, i.e. it could not be resolved peacefully. As he argued, Lin Biao’s and the Gang of Four’s extreme Leftism was not a ‘problem of consciousness’, but a ‘contradiction between enemies’ the opposite being pragmatic scientific socialism.³¹ For Huang the Democracy Movement clearly represented the latter.

Some writers came closer to the original Radical Red Guards’ new class theory and discussed bureaucratism in class terms, like Wang Changmin in Kexue minzhu fazhi. Wang also attributed bureaucratism to the privileges that rulers enjoyed in socialist society. However, he called the problem a bureaucratic class within the Party. As Wang argued, to discover what created classes one had to get to the roots of their origin, which Wang traced all the way back to clan societies and the way leaders had become separated from the workers and used their position to exploit those below them. Wang called this bureaucratism or revisionism, which was the earliest point in time that any Democracy Movement writer had located its origins. Wang called the exploiters in the leadership the ‘bureaucrat class’, and those that led the working class and progression of society, the ‘leading echelon’. The class division, and thereby contradiction, remained the same in more complex societies, which Wang discussed at length. Reaching a socialist society, the most important contradiction was that between its officials belonging to the bureaucrat class and the people.³²

As Wang saw it, the only thing that still caused differing social positions in a socialist society was the division of labour. The most important difference was that between the officials and the people, i.e. the rulers and the ruled. Rulers had the power to suppress, for the needs of management of the economy and solving the contradictions in society, and their ability to use power had serious consequences. As noted earlier, a section of the leaders belonged to the working class as its leading echelon, another to the bureaucratic class. Wang now defined the line between the two:

“The difference is not in their position, but in their different moral standards, competence and working methods and their utility to the society.”³³

Therefore, Wang maintained that authority position was not the most important factor in determining in which of the categories a leader belonged, but the way the position was used:

“In short: the most important contradiction in society is that between the social nature of the public responsibilities and respective monopoly nature of the power to manage it, the contradiction between the bureaucratic class and the working class is its class manifestation.”³⁴

Those who laboured to produce goods to maintain life were of the working class, and those who used the public power of management to oppress and exploit or damage social classes were of the bureaucratic class. If, in a socialist society, the leading position of the working class was completely lost to the bureaucratic class, society changed into a bureaucratic society.³⁵

Wang also brought the contradiction between productive forces and political superstructure into his analysis (see further in chapter 8). As he argued, the meaning of class struggle was to protect development of productive forces and progress. When the superstructure hindered the development of productive forces, struggle for production became a part of class struggle. After the establishment of a socialist society and abolition of the capitalist class, the most important class struggle lay between the working class and the sprouting bureaucratic class. However, Wang made an important reservation when he stated that: “*but it is not an antagonist contradiction, it can be solved using socialist institutions.*” This said, the contradiction had grown worse and more urgent of late, which had been the result of inadequate ways to solve it.³⁶ Wang’s theorising actually left open a risk that the whole Party could be usurped by the bureaucratic class, and therefore become the target of (class) struggle. However, like other Democracy Movement writers, Wang stressed that the peaceful resolution to the contradiction between the people and the bureaucrats through institutions, was the main rationale of democratic reforms.

As Wang reasoned, when the problem was this contradiction between the people and the bureaucrats, one could not “*use the method where the leaders monopolise all government power and dictatorship acts arbitrarily, [but] the only way is to use the combined system of democracy and laws.*” Laws would limit powers and were the prerequisite of democracy. “*Laws without democracy is dictatorship, democracy without laws is anarchism,*” stated Wang. Put together these would protect each other from the extremes and solve the contradictions that arose in socialist society, especially that between the people and the bureaucrats. “*Using laws protects the achievements of revolution; using democracy continues to advance it.*” Using them together would create a ‘good cycle’ that would be hard to reverse. In a system with complete socialist laws and socialist democracy, the people’s basic rights would be protected and the necessary powers of the leaders would be restricted. All parasites and counterrevolutionaries, as well as bureaucrats and revisionists, would be exposed, and dealt with properly according to their nature.³⁷ As the contradiction between the people and the bureaucrats lessened through these reforms, the superstructure would also begin to increasingly promote economic development. It would also guard against the re-emergence of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four types of leaders. Wang also saw that it was possible to gradually abolish the whole division of labour that produced bureaucrats and finally realise ‘beautiful communism’.³⁸

Another example of the radical line was provided by Chen Erjin who wrote to Siwu luntan. He held that there existed a real threat of revisionist class restoration and that the Democracy Movement was a continuation of the proletarian revolution against

the privileged bureaucratic class.³⁹ In his article, Chen Erjin offered a treatise on structural reasons behind what he called revisionism, but what was essentially what other writers called bureaucratism. Chen was actually careful to make the Soviet Union the target of his analysis, but he warned that if the political system was not reformed, Chinese society would also begin to resemble the Soviet system and develop a bureaucratic class. However, at the time, the use of substitute targets in political criticism was a common method in China, and his fierce attack on revisionism could not have been mistaken as anything other than criticism of the state of Chinese society.⁴⁰

Chen started with the statement that in all earlier social systems man had exploited and oppressed others and that such a situation had now also developed under socialism. Chen called this a ‘revisionist socialist’ system (*xiūzhèngzhǔyì shèhuìzhǔyì*), and saw that it was practised in the Soviet Union and other revisionist countries, and that it now also threatened China. The special feature of a revisionist system was that a bureaucratic monopolistic class had the control of the means of production in it, which nominally belonged to the workers, but had in practise been turned into the private property of bureaucrats. This occurred because of high concentration of political and economic power into same hands. The system was disguised as public ownership, but in it the bureaucrats allocated the people’s ‘blood and sweat’ among themselves. They created privileged rights and pursued the exploitation of the people. This exploitation employed deception (*qīpiàn*) and coercion (*qiángzhì*) as its tools and actually even made capitalism pale in comparison with it.⁴¹

Chen Erjin held that, socialist labour and the special privileges of the bureaucrats were deeply contradictory. Revisionism was built on a system where labourers were unable to sell their own work, but bureaucrats allocated it, which labourers had to slavishly obey. Thus workers were once more alienated from capital and transformed back into the means of production and thus once more exploited and left without any human rights.⁴² Revisionist politics had no pleasant names to call it by, but could only be labelled as ‘sham government’, or fascist politics. It resulted in an extremely cruel dictatorship, which used deification of the Party and terror to suppress criticism, as well as the persecution of yesterday’s classes to hide today’s true classes. And revisionism used the smokescreen of ‘communist theory’ to hide its true nature. It:

“Criticises others for their base character to hide its own base character, [and uses] the beautiful expressions of socialism to hide its hideous character, because this kind of politics is the politics of fascist and deceptive oligarchs...”⁴³

What’s more, *“Murdering people and telling lies is the basic nature of revisionist fascist oligarchic sham politics, its essence is social fascism.”⁴⁴* This kind of government could not hide its true nature, as the inner cleavages and clashes between

factions within it could not be prevented. Furthermore, it created vast discontent, as Chen put it: “*The revisionist government lies on the mountain of people’s revolution containing lava.*” As the power struggles within the bureaucratic class were certain to spill over into the rest of society and combine with the forces of resistance and contradictions which had constantly been increasing, revisionism was unable to neither avoid the situation nor resolve it. Indeed, it contained within itself the contradictions which led to fierce struggles that repeated itself about every ten years.⁴⁵

The origins of revisionism were in class struggle, which Chen saw as the motivating force in history. Revisionism developed from the economic base of society after it had moved to public ownership; as such it did not only signify ‘restoration of capitalism’. Capitalist and revisionist methods of exploitation were actually very different. The society that was created after transferring to public ownership was not socialist, but had dual nature. It was in a transitional stage between socialism and revisionism. Such a society was not socialist, but a system of ‘crossroads socialism’ (*chālù shèhuìzhǔyì*) and exhibited a basic contradiction between high-level unification of the economy and politics through public ownership, and the monopolisation of power by a (bureaucratic) minority which decided on how the economy was run.⁴⁶

As Chen reasoned, consolidation and monopolisation of power by a small minority had been necessary when the Communist Party had come to power after the revolution. It was also economically necessary for development in the first phase of socialist revolution. But under it, the managers had developed independence from worker’s supervision and gained privileges. It was all based on natural division of labour, yet it could become the source of severe exploitation. Chen quoted Engels as a proof of this “*Once the ruling class gains power, it sacrifices the interests of the labour and begins to consolidate its position and starts to exploit it.*”⁴⁷ The tendency to satisfy special interests formed the material force that intensified the problems and contradictions in society. It was especially acute in crossroads socialism, and created a great corrosive force in society. In a situation of centralised politics and economy, public ownership and a minority monopoly on power, these forces were as corrosive as acid: “*Very obviously, the people who consolidate power in the hands of minority have jumped into the especially corrosive H₂SO₄.*”⁴⁸ The means to consolidate power in the hands of a minority were appointing cadres from above (*rènmìngzhì*), hierarchy (*děngjízhì*), autonomy of the state, and the deification of the Party.⁴⁹

As the result, Chen argued that: “*the Communist Party has changed its nature.*” It had become a ruling Party in a centralised state and under the conditions described above the risk of ‘sugar coated bullets’ had become acute.⁵⁰ The basis of power had changed from possession of capital to possession of political power and special privileges. This situation where only cadre position guaranteed the opportunity to enjoy privileges had:

“...[M]ade all those bedbugs that try to suck the blood of society to try every means to infiltrate the Party... These opportunists with nasty character, vulgar methods, coveting official rank and salary, wishing to suck blood, regard entering the Party as a stepping stone to becoming officials in order to seek honour and riches, they praise the Party loudly, declaring support for it with two arms, catering to the local Party organizations’ appetite, donning the various proper clothes with right colours, entered in great numbers into the communist Party.”⁵¹

Now the Party had developed what Chen called cancer cells (*áixìbāo*), i.e. a revisionist faction that had been created within the Party, although it was not a faction for the restoration of capitalism as such. The development of this faction had been directly connected to the transformation of the Party into a ruling Party and it becoming an integral part of the state and this was a trend that was just increasing daily damaging the Party’s fighting strength and its political essence. The Party had a cancerous threat of being turned into a fascistic Party.⁵²

Chen went onto describe the enslavement involved in the labour system. This had changed the class characters into a very simple form: managers and producers. This was totally contrary to the ideal Marx’s classless society, and the situation could not be solved through reforms or meditation. Indeed, a new proletarian revolution was needed to break the shackles of the new bureaucratic privileged class, as the only other possibility would have been to strengthen power of the new exploiting class.⁵³ However, as China had not totally turned to resemble the system in the Soviet Union yet, this development could be prevented through institutional reforms which allowed popular control of bureaucracy, including the creation of a second communist party as a counter-force to the existing one. Chen’s diagnosis, which saw the social conflict severe and becoming possibly even more so, therefore led to a more oppositional position to the Party many of the other writers of the Democracy Movement mainstream.⁵⁴

It is interesting to note that many of those activists in the Democracy Movement who defined the conflict in class terms came from a radical Red Guard background, like Chen Erjin, Huang Xiang, and Liu Guokai. The Cultural Revolution background thus still influenced their position during the Democracy Movement. However, radical analysis could also exclude reference to class, as Wei Jingsheng’s case showed. His diagnosis differed notably from the rest of the movement, when he defined the basic contradiction that gave the rise to the Democracy Movement in terms of individuals struggling together for freedom and personal happiness against dictatorship. Thus he did not identify the basic contradiction in Chinese society as being that between bureaucratism / a bureaucratic class or Leftism and the people, but as the struggle between totalitarianism and democracy. The influence of the theory of a new class he had endorsed during the Cultural Revolution, was nevertheless also evident in his diagnosis in the way he saw the contradiction between the rulers and the ruled as the basic source of grievances. Further, as his autobiography shows, also he saw these

rulers as bureaucrats.⁵⁵ However, Wei was also one of the few activists who used this notion to discard the value of Marxism altogether, seeing that the Party was effectively an opposing force to the people and Marxism was its way to deceive the people.⁵⁶ As with Chen Erjin, a more confrontational diagnosis of the situation therefore led Wei to a more oppositional stance to the Party.

The case of Zhongguo Renquan also demonstrated the way in which the contradiction was defined as important for the Democracy Movement groups. When Chen Lü's minority faction broke away from the Zhongguo renquan tongmeng, it issued a declaration in which it denounced the rival faction as the 'abolitionists of the Democracy Movement', meaning that the line they were taking would lead to the abolition of the movement. Chen Lü's faction listed eleven reasons for these accusations, of which one was that Ren Wanding's faction denied: "*that the entrenched faction with special bureaucratic privileges is the obstacle on the way to progress of socialism; indeed they deny the existence of this faction.*" Furthermore, they 'prettified' the Soviet Union treating it as a 'socialist country', not as an empire of bureaucratic class, and did not dare to criticise the Party and its leaders and make a materialist historical analysis of it.⁵⁷ Chen Lü's faction was willing to try to mobilise the petitioners to support the Democracy Movement and took a more hostile stance to the Party in general. The references above suggest that this was also based on the way Chen Lü defined the movement's antagonists in more severe terms than did Ren Wanding's faction.⁵⁸

Defining the Connection between Leftism and Bureaucratism

Democracy Movement writers argued that bureaucratism, Leftism, and feudal fascist dictatorship were all closely connected. The same systemic reason that caused bureaucratism, namely the lack of popular supervision of officialdom, made it tempting for careerists (*yěxīnjiā*) and conspirators (*yīnmóujiā*) to enter the Party and seek leadership positions in it. As the mainstream Democracy Movement narrative went, these forces had usurped the power in the Party and turned proletarian class democracy into feudal fascist dictatorship during the reign of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four. For example, Siwu luntan writers saw that after 30 years of socialist construction, China had not become any wealthier, but stayed poor because 'Leftist opportunist bureaucrats' had ruled the country propagating historical idealism (*wéixīn shiguān*), used tyranny to destroy prosperity, and damaged the people's material interests.⁵⁹ Li Yizhe also made clear the connection between bureaucratism and Leftism when discussing the Gang of Four:

"The Gang of Four were not really representatives of opposition to the right, but the representatives of the bad and harmful careerist elements that had gradually formed within the Party and bureaucracy. They were not the creators of the 'poison of the Gang of Four', but its collectors and advocates; they were

not the origin of the poisonous water, but the filthy foam on the turbid water of society.”⁶⁰

Lu Yao also argued in the January 1979 issue of *Siwu luntan*, that the reign of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four and the Cultural Revolution had had their structural reasons which had to be analysed. He asked, was it really so that the rule of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four did not have anything to do with the:

“maladies in our socialist system, imperfections of the proletarian class dictatorship, the incompleteness of democratic system, legal system, and the lack of understanding of the above problems in our Party and especially in its high echelons and their lack of self-awareness?”⁶¹

Who could say that the past ten years had just been a nightmare to which no one wanted to return anymore, a mistake and quirk in history, asked Lu, and added:

“One has to say that the cases of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four are the natural results of the whole history of China, especially the 17 years preceding the Cultural Revolution and development of socialism, therefore it was an expression of necessity. If this fact is denied, then it will be impossible to protect against the re-emergence of cases like Lin Biao and the Gang of Four.”⁶²

Lu argued that socialism had to be understood as a process, and only by solving the current problems its development would be possible. Furthermore, if contradictions in society were not solved, the progress of socialism would be harmed.⁶³ Such arguments naturally opened the way to discuss political reforms.

Huang Xiang summarised the reasons of the Leftists’ ability to rise to power and rule through deception and suppression in *Qimeng*. According to him, these reasons were: the lack of democratic spirit in the Party and society, concentration of power in the hands of one leader, an incomplete socialist legal system with no protection for inner and outer Party democracy, low scientific level of the people, vestiges of feudalism, small producer mentality, peasant consciousness and a narrow national consciousness as well as the influence of ‘one person’s’ moral character, nature, breadth of mind, moods, outlook, cultural attainments, and idiosyncrasies. This last naturally referred to Mao and his personality cult.⁶⁴ Huang’s list contained both cultural and structural reasons and could be regarded as a good summary of the reasons offered in the *Democracy Movement* journals for the Leftists’ ability to rise to power.

That *Whateverism* was only a continuation of Leftism and bureaucrats trying to hold on their powers, was also made clear. As Hou Ming argued in *Kexue minzhu*, the Chinese had begun to realise that the doctrine of ‘the two whatevers’ was the stumbling block to development. Some also said that the doctrine and Lin Biao’s

assertion that ‘every word of Chairman Mao is true’ were very similar. Now Wang Dongxing headed the Whateverists and followed the ideas of Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan (who were members of the Gang of Four). The Whateverists’ ‘Right deviation extreme left thinking’ was therefore same thinking as Lin Biao and the Gang of Four’s had been.⁶⁵ That Whateverism was only a form of deception which served the Leftist rulers, was also succinctly put in a short article criticising Wang Dongxing. The writer accused Wang of being a member of a ‘two faced faction’, meaning that although he said that he was protecting Chairman Mao’s words, he actually only protected his own privileges.⁶⁶ This, of course, was what Leftism was considered to be all about.

Rule of Deception

Leftist ideology was seen as a distortion of original Marxism which served as a smokescreen hiding the ugly face of bureaucratism, while supported feudal fascist dictatorship. The Democracy Movement activists believed that bureaucratism had its objective structural causes in Chinese economic backwardness and the Stalinist political system, but in Marxist theory, such structural causes must always be manifested in people’s consciousness. For the Democracy Movement activists therefore it was no coincidence that bureaucratic rulers had created a false Leftist consciousness to serve their purpose. Such false consciousness was fundamentally opposed to the interests of the people, and therefore it was natural that the Democracy Movement saw refutation of it as one of its main tasks. As the consequence, much of the criticism of bureaucratism, Leftism, Lin Biao and the Gang of Four and their feudal fascist rule, concentrated on the way they had ruled through deception. The major issues were their false interpretation of Marxism, and particularly the personality cult (*gèrén míxìn*) of Chairman Mao. One of the most commonly used terms to describe this Leftist ideology was superstition (*míxìn*), although other descriptive terms like ‘new idiotism’ (*xīn méngmèi zhǔyì*) were also used for it.⁶⁷

The rule of deception involved the diversion of the people’s attention away from the essentials. As the editors of *Minzhu yu shidai* saw it, for example, in the past twenty years the political speculators (*tóujīshāng*) had entered high posts in the Party and government by use of the influence of feudalism, along with the innocence of certain leaders, as well as ideological mistakes as their stepping stones. In effect, these ‘speculators’ had organised a counterrevolutionary clique, and orchestrated the tragedy of the restoration of feudalism. By use of oppression and deception of the people, they had demanded unquestioned obedience, attacked the old revolutionary cadres and intellectuals, set up a great inquisition harming those upright cadres who had not agreed to go with them, and lethally injuring the society and its revolutionary elements, as well as development of productive forces.⁶⁸

Beijing zhi chun's writers could also state that official superstitions had made people lose their ability for independent thinking, and silenced their voices declaring that *'superstition is the shadow of dictatorship!'*⁶⁹ If the four modernisations were to be achieved, superstitions had to be discarded. Leftism as an evil ideology was also attacked head-on by Bu Shuming (penname of Yan Jiaqi) in Beijing zhi chun. Yan equated Leftism practised by the Gang of Four and Lin Biao during the Cultural Revolution to religion. He assigned all the imaginary evils of old religions to this 'modern religion' including the persecution of non-believers, ignorance, hostility to science and practise, discord creation and social unrest, etc. As Yan saw it, in the Middle Ages priests and monks of the old religion had had many privileges as well as morally degenerate, dissipated and shameless, and sunken deep into corruption. Their occupation had been to create disputes, incite hatred and descent the people into blood. All this because prosperity could cause people lose their interest in religion. The 'modern religion' had continued the same practises. Jiang Qing with her followers and Lin Biao had been like a priest-queen with her bishops and priests. All of them had been corrupt and rotten, usurping their powers, swallowing society's riches. For this they had instigated struggles within the people, splitting them up.⁷⁰

According to Yan, the old religion had opposed science and practise, since these could expose the emptiness of religious systems and awaken the people's pride so that they would not meekly obey their old masters anymore. Both Marx and Engels had been scientists, and this modern religion had turned their science into religion. Lin and Jiang had acted like sages and saviours of the people, without whom the people would have been doomed into ignorance. They had replaced all sciences with their own 'modern theology' cum religion. They had become far more than simply inheritors of a feudal dictatorship – they had developed it further. Now that they were gone, the Chinese could realise that democracy and socialist science were equally important. Declared Yan Jiaqi: *"Let us throw the Gang of Four's modern religion and the old religion together in the dustbin of history."*⁷¹

Qun Sheng of Qiushi bao also made the nature of Leftist deception very clear in his call for strengthening ideological work under the new conditions. As he saw it, during the Cultural Revolution various adventurers had risen to the political stage creating ideological chaos and confusion in a great many people's minds. Lin Biao's and the Gang of Four's counterrevolutionary ideology had been like this, as it had caused true ideological work to suffer harm and suppression:

*"Lin Biao and the Gang of Four were careerists and conspirators, they did not understand the theory of revolution, their so-called theory was a creation of conspirators for the needs of deception."*⁷²

Instead, true revolutionary theory required painstaking scientific work and was never finished, and it could and should be reversed through practical experiences. Qun called on his generation to grasp this task and establish a true socialist democracy to make it possible.⁷³

Qimeng invoked fierce images of struggle in its call against Lin Biao and the Gang of Four's deception. A central figure in the journal and later in Jiedong, Li Jiahua, saw that there was an invisible 'spiritual struggle' going on, fought 'on paper with letters, colours and voices'. This same kind of warfare was waged by all dictatorships in order to annihilate all those who hoped, demanded, or dreamed of beautiful ideals and prevent resistance against dictatorship by the people who still silently upheld and spread the latent potentiality of the people to defy it. Apart from some very democratic countries, most peoples still suffered from this kind of immaterial warfare, and under Lin Biao and the Gang of Four this had reached unparalleled levels in China. The Leftists had employed dictatorship, using various means in the struggle like criticism, self-criticism, brain washing, and various '*strange and treacherous diabolic methods of attack*', and further they had also used the childish Red Guards in unjustifiable and senseless struggles to incite the people against each other, and attack everything everywhere including democracy, human rights, and liberty. Like many other writers, Li described the misery during the Cultural Revolution in colourful ways, and declared that although the perpetrators were now gone, their influence still lingered on, so it had to be thoroughly expunged.⁷⁴

Huang Xiang of Qimeng also saw that opposition to the capitalist roaders in the Party had been the Leftists' way to spread stupidity, superstitions and deception, which had to be exposed, criticised, and struggled against.⁷⁵ In Qunzhong cankao Wei Ping likened the Leftists to the inquisition, and declared that the people had to be on guard against those who were still attempting to revive Leftist ideology and assemble mental shackles and create prisons in opposition to those who had ideals and integrity.⁷⁶ This last was direct allusion to the on going struggle between the Democracy Movement and the Party Left and the Conservatives and the movement's enlightenment role in it.

The Question of Chairman Mao's Reassessment

Democracy Movement criticism of the Cultural Revolution has to be seen in the context of the official Leftist line about the revolution, which held it had been a success since it had removed the danger of capitalist restoration and cemented the Mao Zedong line in the Party. The Democracy Movement activists' arguments concerning the Cultural Revolution, and the social situation in China in general, were directed to refute this claim. According to them, it was precisely during that time when the new bureaucratic class, or stratum, had usurped and entrenched its power through deception and oppression. This deception was exercised through the distortion and perversion of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong thought, making it serve only the power of the bureaucrats and the Leftists. The personality cult of Chairman Mao had been its epitome and even after his death, the Leftists still tried to maintain the power and monopolise ideological authority in society through

Chairman Mao's prestige. Refutation of this claim was the central mission of the Democracy Movement.

As discussed in chapter 2, one use of the Mao cult had been to make the youth subservient to the Party and had been especially used by the Party Left to instigate struggles during the Cultural Revolution Proper when criticising Mao was considered as the worst possible offence. Anti-Mao accusation was the ultimate way to silence political adversaries and, critics and there were many infamous cases death sentences under the accusation of 'opposing Chairman Mao', like Yu Luoke and Zhang Zhixin, who were adopted as martyrs by the Democracy Movement (see chapter 6). Even after the Gang of Four had been toppled, there were still cases of executions of those accused of the similar crimes.⁷⁷ To criticise Chairman Mao was therefore still sensitive and possibly dangerous. Yet it was also equally necessary, as the authority of the Whateverists relied on the personality cult.

During the summer of 1978, the pragmatic faction began its emancipation of minds campaign against the personality cult of Mao Zedong and 'modern superstition' of the Party Left. However, criticism in the official media largely avoided attacking too harshly the person of Mao Zedong.⁷⁸ Instead, it directed the criticism against Lin Biao and the Gang of Four, and accused them of distorting Mao Zedong thought in order to use it to their own evil ends.⁷⁹ In the Conference on Theory Work in early 1979, Chairman Mao's personality cult and nascent attempts to build a similar cult for Chairman Hua were also criticised. As Wang Ruoshui reportedly stated in the conference, "*the biggest lesson of the Cultural Revolution was to learn to oppose personality cult.*"⁸⁰

The Democracy Movement took up the call to emancipate minds and echoed the reformist argumentation against Leftist dogma. Here the assessment of the historical role of the late Chairman Mao was of paramount importance and, as it turned out, some of the Democracy Movement activists also carried it beyond the limits acceptable to the most of the Party leaders. Mao was the most sensitive figure of all and even in the Democracy Movement journals he was actually given a rare honour of being something other than simply either a good or bad historical character, unlike other individuals discussed. In the few articles where Chairman Mao was discussed, he was usually given the 30 / 70 % assessment of his mistakes and achievements. To fully criticise Mao, or to clearly implicate him with leftism, was still dangerous and was thus usually made in the form of questions and not direct accusations. Mao's early years were also almost unanimously praised. Further, the official parameters within which the criticism could occur were still quite narrow, which may not be incidental in that most of those journals crossed the line, as did *Zhongguo renquan*, *Qunzhong cankao* and *Qimeng*, which found themselves in trouble in March-April 1979.

The sensitivity of direct criticism of the late chairman was shown in the way that most of the journals stayed silent about Mao's role in the reign of Leftism, and only

indirectly criticised him through criticism of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four. Even those journals which clearly criticised Mao, did not always mention him by name. For example, *Zhongguo renquan* declared in the 19 Points that to write ‘one person’s’ ideas into constitution and the Party charter was absurd and against the freedom of speech and thought. It was a sign of feudalism and harmed the people. Indeed, *Zhongguo renquan meng* demanded that:

*“The people want to uproot the superstition of deification and idol worship for good. Change the Crystal Palace [of Dragon King] to the place of remembrance, build a memorial hall for Zhou Enlai... Liberate beliefs from superstition.”*⁸¹

The Crystal Palace of the Dragon King obviously referred to the brand new Mausoleum of the late chairman at Tiananmen Square, but Mao’s name was never mentioned explicitly by *Zhongguo renquan*.

Most of the direct criticism – and defence – of Mao is found in *Kexue minzhu fazhi*, which published more articles to this end than the rest of the journals put together.⁸² For example, a writer under the penname Ai Yu Kua (Love and Praise) summarised the popular discomfort with Mao’s relationship with the Party Left. As he (or she) saw it, history and the people would be Mao Zedong’s judges. He had had great wisdom, but also great shortcomings. The Chinese could remember his early years with warm feelings, but later he succumbed to flattery and allowed Lin Biao and others to usurp power in the Party. Finally he had begun to believe that he was infallible and taken over the Party Centre. This had destroyed democracy in the Party and its collective leadership. During the Cultural Revolution the flattery of ‘demon monsters’ had alienated him and he had stopped listening to the people. This was because of the wall the Gang of Four had built between Chairman Mao and the people. But Mao was also to blame, as he had allowed this to happen.⁸³

The writer stated that the people had heard enough lies, and now it was the time to let them hear the truth and use practise to find it out: *“No more protecting leaders’ prestige by making absurd the truth and lectures the experience. This cannot be done, no! [We] cannot let the ossified words become the People’s Republic’s holy constitution.”* The Chinese were still not allowed to talk about their own experiences on proletarian dictatorship, e.g. how the Cultural Revolution could drag on for ten years under such ‘bastards’ and how to assess Chairman Mao. The writer also denied that his *dazibao* was an attempt to slander Mao Zedong, but rather was to clarify his historical merits and shortcomings thus ‘washing his banner clean’ and removing sludge from his thoughts to make them shine brighter.⁸⁴ This just underlined the sensitivity of the issue.

Another *dazibao* dated 22 December 1978 and signed by a ‘Beijing Road Construction Worker’ continued with same questions. According to its writer, after the reversal of the Fifth of April Movement verdict a great question was whether

Chairman Mao had made mistakes and how he should be assessed. The issue was important because, as the writer explained, it: “*seems that the superstitions, personality cult and deification of the leader propagated by Lin Biao and the Gang of Four still binds people’s minds, particularly the cadres.*”⁸⁵ Mao Zedong was a great figure in Chinese history, but had also made mistakes, which should also be discussed. The questions that bothered the Chinese were how Lin Biao had been able to ascend to power, how Mao did not know Jiang Qing’s personal history, how Deng Xiaoping could be purged without Mao’s support, and how could the Tiananmen Incident become counterrevolutionary?⁸⁶ Argued the writer,

*“We all say that we believe in Marxism, good, let us grasp the spirit of materialism for real, tell the masses what the truth really is like, and let us not be fooled anymore! Do not deceive the masses! Do not distort history! History cannot be raped! We say Chairman Mao was a man, not a god. We think that the time to assess him correctly is here!”*⁸⁷

According to the writer, Mao had to be assessed based on the facts and principle of ‘one divides into two’. Cadres and people had to be allowed to speak the truth, otherwise freedom of speech and democracy were only empty words and the so called liberation of minds could not succeed. The importance of the assessment of Mao as a precondition of enlightenment and political reforms, was made clear:

*“China has just entered a new phase in historical development, and stands at a crossroads. Where should it go? The people are thinking hard about this. If there is no great spiritual revolution, if there is no true liberation of minds, China’s four modernisations cannot be achieved and socialist revolution cannot achieve victory. Great revolutionary spirit must guide great social revolution, and precede a great economic revolution.”*⁸⁸

As the writer saw it, the Chinese were ready for such a spiritual revolution. He urged the readers to ask themselves, when had the Marxists been afraid of the masses and prevented them talk about their shortcomings? They had to let the people speak freely because:

*“If you let the people speak freely, heaven will not fall down and you will not come down from power. You do not want to let the people speak freely? Then you will eventually lose your power. Historical dialectics works like this!”*⁸⁹

The Beijing Road Construction Worker thus linked the Democracy Movement directly to the emancipation of minds from the personality cult of Mao and making modernisation possible.⁹⁰

Another fierce critic of Mao Zedong and his legacy was Li Ping, whose ‘Open Letter to Vice-Premier Deng’ was dated 18 January 1979 and published in *Kexue minzhu fazhi*. This letter serves as another excellent example of how the personality cult and

assessment of Chairman Mao's historical role was seen as connected closely to the fate of the modernisations and the Democracy Movement. Li praised Deng at the beginning of his letter, but pointed out that the decision to assess Mao's historical achievements and shortcoming had to be made before indecision began to harm modernisation policies. The first issue was Mao's relation to the Gang of Four: had Mao not sided with the Gang of Four when he saw that the core of politics was class struggle and proletarian dictatorship? Without class struggle, how could the Gang of Four have acted beyond the law? Li Ping stated that the reason for the Gang of Four's rise to power, and ability to behave as they did, had been the result of Chairman Mao's shortcomings, but that the Party Centre was perpetuating the absurd logic of placing all blame on the Gang of Four but all praise on Chairman Mao.⁹¹

For Li Ping, the issue was not only Mao's relation to the Gang of Four but also that the Leftist dogma of Mao's achievements had downplayed the role of the people in history. Thus, the question was whether the makers of history were the people, or Mao. Li Ping disagreed with those who saw that without the leadership of Mao, the Party would have lost its revolutionary struggle. In fact, argued Li, the reason for defeat of the Guomindang was that Mao had *not* yet achieved supreme power. If he had, and had behaved as he did during the Cultural Revolution, how could the Party have won the struggle? It was the people and their struggle and sacrifice that achieved this victory. *"I think that without Chairman Mao, China would not have ended up as it is today!"* In the early struggle he might have had positive contributions, but how could the retardation of Chinese society in the past ten years not be his fault?⁹² This served as an argument for a popular movement like the Democracy Movement.

Li also tackled the issue of whether the reassessment of Chairman Mao could affect stability and unity. He saw that such fear was unnecessary. Indeed, the Chinese were living on a volcano and the old way of basing stability and unity on feudal superstition would just not do anymore. This just incubated catastrophe which was alarming. As Lenin had said, if the people could not liberate their minds, they remained forever the sacrificial lambs of the rulers. Accordingly Mao's mistakes should be judged as 70 % wrong, 30 % right, Li reasoned.⁹³ Li also argued that the reassessment was essential for progress, liberation and democratic revolution. The reassessment would strengthen the popular support of the Party Centre, and bring with it genuine unity and stability in one or two years. Importantly it would lead to a situation, where:

"[...] thinking would smash its confines, the people's minds would be genuinely liberated, the confusion would be cleared, democratisation with the four modernisations promoted, and the citizens rights turned from word to reality, popular elections that follow the people's will, representatives that work for the people, the slaves of society would turn into electors, because of this social transformation, the people would finally be able to tell the truth, enthusiasm would redouble, people could finally struggle for the future, go through fire

*and water and the peoples' understanding as being the masters of society would speed up the four modernisations."*⁹⁴

Li was not the only one to discuss Mao's fallacies to justify a call for reforms.⁹⁵ Although his views were, in many respects, more outspoken when compared to other critics of Mao Zedong in the Democracy Movement, they all shared the same demand; that of reassessment of Mao's historical role and his personality cult. It was not so much about clarifying Mao's historical record, but in rather breaking down his personality cult and thereby the authority of the Party Left that relied on it. To make Mao fallible, even historically unnecessary, reaffirmed that the people were the sole authority in history and that a popular movement like the Democracy Movement therefore possessed more authority than any other figure, ideology, or organisation. However, as noted, Li Ping's comments were an extreme example and the writer was only one of the few who addressed the problem of assessing Mao Zedong squarely. The rest of the writers in journals complained about the exactly the same things but under terms of 'superstition' and attacks against Lin Biao and the Gang of Four, however, they usually omitted Mao from their criticism or only slightly criticised him.⁹⁶ This was obviously safer, as Lin Biao and the Gang of Four had been under official assault since 1976 (Lin Biao of course earlier), whereas Mao Zedong had only been officially criticised since the summer of 1978. There was not an official verdict on him, and so the Party Left could still use his authority to silence its critics.

Nevertheless, criticism of Mao represented the enlightened awareness the Democracy Movement activists saw themselves as possessing, and the way how spreading critical awareness on Mao's personality cult was regarded as a key part of the Movement's enlightenment mission aimed at the exposure and eradication of Leftist intellectual authority. The desire expunge the personality cult was also expressed through poetry. As a writer under the name Xin Chen wrote in February 1979, in a poem entitled 'The Dead Shall Not Oppress the Living':

*"Superstition in one man makes the people perish,
The leaders are men, not gods.
The road of blindly worshipping,
Ten years of tears of blood and hatred.*

*When in power Lin Biao sought for basis,
The Four Harms had their reason.
Dehuai's true words brought him injury,
So many unjust victims groan underneath the grass.*

*The hearts of the people are on move,
The bureaucrats instigate chaos one after another.
The lesson of history must be recalled,
The dead shall not oppress the living."*⁹⁷

Aversion to Mao could also be seen in other writings of the Democracy Movement activists. Direct quotations of length from Mao were rare, and activists, if mentioned him at all, usually stuck to one-liners from him that suited their argumentation. To be sure, there was indeed enough material of Mao's sayings around to support nearly whatever the writers wanted to argue, but as an icon of the Left, the late Chairman was not really the ideal source for Democracy Movement activists – after all it was the Leftist intellectual authority the activists wanted to get rid of.

Even as it was, criticism of Mao's personality cult and the Cultural Revolution was stronger in the Democracy Movement than the reformist leadership was ready to accept. In Deng Xiaoping's speech to the third plenum of the eleventh central committee, he noted that Mao Zedong had made mistakes and should be judged scientifically and in historical perspective, but Deng still purported that the Mao Zedong thought was the 'highest intellectual treasure of our Party.'⁹⁸ While this was clearly more rhetoric than real commitment to Maoist dogma that Deng Xiaoping was that time undoing, he was wary of proceeding too far too soon in the process, and thus provide ammunition to his opponents. Deng Xiaoping's caution on the criticism of Mao in the Democracy Movement was also noted in his speech on 25 December 1980 where he warned that "*to exaggerate under sway of emotion Comrade Mao's mistakes can only mar the image of the Party and country, impair prestige of the Party and the socialist system and undermine the unity of the Party, the army and our people of all nationalities.*"⁹⁹ Clearly, there was a limit to criticism of Mao's mistakes which many Democracy Movement activists crossed. However, only denial of the validity of Leftist dogma and the claim that only one person or faction really understood Marxism, was required to allow reassessment of the whole political system. In the narrative the Democracy Movement reconstructed about itself, the emergence of the Democracy Movement was closely connected to emergence of those who had realised this. To this narrative we turn next.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

¹ Xiao Ren: *Xiǎo hé yǔ dà hé* [Small Rivers and Big River], Siwu luntan 6 (4 / 1979), CUP 1, 43

² Walder 1991, 54

³ Mao Zedong: *Fǎndù guānliáozhūyì mìnglǐngzhūyì hé wéifǎ-luànjì* [Oppose Bureaucratism, Commandism and Violating Law and Discipline], Qunzhong cankao xiaoxi 3 (2 / 1979), CUP 1, 281-282

⁴ Deng Xiaoping: *Emancipate the Minds...*, 1978 / 1995, 151

⁵ Deng Xiaoping 1980 / 1995: *On the Reform of the System of Party and State Leadership*, SW II, 326-328

⁶ Nathan 1985, 97-101

⁷ See the section 'Learning from the East European Examples' in chapter 10.

⁸ *Rénmín qúnzhòngde zhīqǐng quán* [The People's Right to Know the Facts], Siwu luntan 11 (9 / 1979), CUP 7, 32-33

⁹ Zhou Xun: *Lùn guānliáozhūyì (yī)* [On Bureaucratism (one)], Siwu luntan 13 (11 / 1979), CUP 8, 62

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 62-63

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 64-65

¹² *Ibid.*, 64

¹³ *Ibid.*, 64

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 64-65

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 65

¹⁶ Ai Ziyou: *Cì guānliáo* [Irritating the Bureaucrats], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 10 / 1979, CUP 14, 72

¹⁷ Nathan 1985, 85

¹⁸ Yang 1999, 144

¹⁹ Here once more we meet the problem of labelling the different lines represented in the Democracy Movement. The moderate mainstream regarded itself as the 'middle' in the struggle against the Leftist and the Rightists in society and even in the Democracy Movement, and the more radical line in it was also labelled as 'rightists' by the regime. However, as both lines represented variations in socialist democracy, and not two different sets of democracy, the author calls the lines mainstream and radical. This division is not the same as the classical, eclectic and anti-Marxist categories discussed in chapter 9 and 10 regarding the reforms the activists proposed, although some activists taking more radical line had more non- or anti-Marxist opinions, as well.

²⁰ Many of these divisions were also noted in a Qishi article commenting on the differences in the Democracy Movement. As the writer saw it, the journals could not reach consensus on the issue of how to call the conflict. Some comrades thought that Chairman Mao's advice on the matter had been unclear: how could there be continuous revolution under proletarian rule that was a result of such a revolution? Some people also thought that this principle had been used, or even conceived, by the Gang of Four to instigate the campaigns that harmed the people and the Party. Some saw that class struggle should wither away as socialism proceeded. And some saw that class struggle, or struggle under a different title, still persisted. Ke Lin: *Dāngqián lǐlùnjiè dòngtài zōngshù* [A Summary of Contemporary Theoretical Trends], *Qishi* (Beijing guangbo xueyuan) 1 / 1979, CUP 9, 182-183

²¹ The need to find peaceful solutions to the problems that had caused the Cultural Revolution, namely bureaucratism, was also argued by many other Chinese who did not participate in the Democracy Movement (Fraser 1980, 295). Posters also appeared where the notion of class struggle was defended at the Democracy Wall. However, they were rare in journals and only printed in *Kexue minzhu fazhi*. See e.g. *Wómende kànfǎ hé hūyù* [Our Opinion and Appeal], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 5 / 1979, CUP 10, 153.

²² Gao Jimin: *Jiānchí Mǎkèsīzhǔyìde guójiā lǐlùn zǒu Bǎilí Gōngshè mínzhǔ zhìdùde dàolù* [Support the Marxist State Theory, Take the Road to the Paris Commune Type of Democracy] *Beijing zhi chun* 7 / 1979, CUP 8, 103

²³ Xiao Zhu: *Wénhuà géming yú jiējí dòuzhēng* [The Cultural Revolution and Class Struggle], *Qimeng* 1, 1 / 1979 (Beijing), CUP 3, 90-94

²⁴ He Bian: *Lǎn yánlùn zìyóu* [On Freedom of Speech], *Wotu tekan* 2.4.1979, CUP 12, 95-96

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 96

²⁶ Yu Ren: *Liè lùn jīnrì zhī Sì wǔ yùndòng* [Briefly on Today's 'Fifth of April Movement'], *Siwu luntan* 6 (4 / 1979), CUP 1, 32-37

²⁷ Gao Jimin: *Jiānchí Mǎkèsīzhǔyìde guójiā lǐlùn zǒu Bǎilí Gōngshè mínzhǔ zhìdùde dàolù* [Support the Marxist State Theory, Take the Road to the Paris Commune Type of Democracy] *Beijing zhi chun* 7 / 1979, CUP 8, 95-96; Similar analysis was offered by Li Yizhe *Li Yizhe fāngwèn jì* [Special Interview with the "Li Yizhe"], *Beijing zhi chun* 4 / 1979, CUP 5, 119-123

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 96

²⁹ Gao Shan: *Mínzhǔyùndòngde lìshǐ gēnjù hé lǐlùn gēnjù* [Historical and Theoretical Reasons for the Democracy Movement], *Zhongguo renquan* 3b / 1979, CUP 3, 273-274

³⁰ Sun Feng: *Zhì Hua Guafeng Dèng Xiǎopíng tóngzhìde gōngkāi xìn* [An Open Letter to Comrades Hua Guofeng and Deng Xiaoping], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 14 / 1979, CUP 16, 96-97. Sun Feng was the penname of a Qingdao activist Sun Weibang, who edited the journal called *Hailanghua* [Sea Spray].

³¹ Huang Xiang: *Lùn lìshǐ rénwù duì lìshǐde zuòyòng yú zuòyòng fānzuooyong* [The Positive and Negative Sides of Great Historical Figures], *Qimeng cóngkān zhi si* [Qimeng Collection 4] (Guiyang), CUP 3, 132. Similar sentiments could be found in some *dazibaos* at Xidan Wall. See e.g. Tong Nianzhou: *Rèliè huānhū gēi Tiān'ānmén shìjiàn píngfǎn zhāoxuě* [Hail the Decision to Reverse the Tiananmen Incident Verdict], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 2 / 1979, CUP 7, 332-333.

³² Wang Changmin: *Shìlùn jiējí qǐyuán hé shèhuìzhǔyì shèhuìde zhǔyào máodùn* [On the Origins of the Classes and the Important Contradictions in a Socialist Society], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 8 / 1979, CUP 13, 27-35

³³ *Ibid.*, 35-37, the quotation from p. 38

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 38

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 38

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 39

- ³⁷ Ibid., 41
- ³⁸ Ibid., 42-43
- ³⁹ Chen Erjin: *Lùn wúchǎnjiējí mǐnzhǔ géming* [On Proletarian Democratic Revolution], Siwu luntan 10 (8 / 1979), CUP 1, 57
- ⁴⁰ Here the author disagrees with Munro (1984b) who sees that Chen's criticism was about the Soviet Union, which was used as a warning example for China and that his essay was originally a plea to Chairman Mao to arrest the similar development in China through institutional reforms. While this is how Chen offered his analysis, the essay would have been hardly interesting for many Chinese if it would have described things that had only happened in the Soviet Union –especially when many other Democracy Movement writers believed that similar developments had already taken place in China. Brodsgaard (1981, 753) points out that 'On Socialist Democracy' by Li Yizhe also used the Soviet Union as a substitute when they warned about future 'capitalist restoration', while at the same time talked about 'feudal autocracy stubbornly entrenched in all domains of superstructure...' in China.
- ⁴¹ Chen Erjin: *Lùn wúchǎnjiējí mǐnzhǔ mǐnzhǔ géming*, 83-84
- ⁴² Ibid., 84-85
- ⁴³ Ibid., 85
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., 86
- ⁴⁵ Ibid., 86
- ⁴⁶ Ibid., 92-94
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., 99-102, the quotation from p. 101-102
- ⁴⁸ Ibid., 102
- ⁴⁹ Ibid., 103-110
- ⁵⁰ Ibid., 111
- ⁵¹ Ibid., 112
- ⁵² Ibid., 113
- ⁵³ Ibid., 113-120
- ⁵⁴ Chen may even have argued for popular mobilisation against the Party in his original essay, but as Munro (1984b) pointed out, the Siwu luntan editors erased the chapter discussing this possibility in Chen's article before publishing it.
- ⁵⁵ Wei Jingsheng 1998, 243-248
- ⁵⁶ See Jin Sheng ('The Voice of Today' alias Wei Jingsheng): *Xù dì wǔ gè xiàndàihuà -mǐnzhǔ jí qítā* [The Fifth Modernisation –Democracy and Others], Tansuo 1 / 1979, CUP 1
- ⁵⁷ *Lùn rénquán yùndòng yǔ mǐnzhǔ yùndòng de qǔxiāopài* [On the Abolitionists of the Human Rights and Democracy Movement], DCDM I 1981, 541
- ⁵⁸ However, it was not true regarding all members of the Ren Wandong faction. As seen above, Gao Shan, who was one of the faction's members, did define the antagonists of the Democracy Movement as a bureaucratic privileged stratum.
- ⁵⁹ Xiao Ren: *Xiǎo hé yǔ dà hé* [Small Rivers and Big River], Siwu luntan 6 (4 / 1979), CUP 1, 43-44
- ⁶⁰ Li Yizhe: *Jī gè cōngmíng rén de mèngyì* [Somniloquy of a Few Clever Men], Kexue minzhu fazhi 5 / 1979, CUP 10, 155
- ⁶¹ Lu Yao: *Shèhuìzhǔyì shìyī gè guòchéng* [Socialism Is a Process], Siwu luntan 15 (13 / 1979), CUP 10, 33-35, the quotation from p. 35
- ⁶² Ibid., 35
- ⁶³ Ibid., 35-38
- ⁶⁴ Huang Xiang: *Lùn lìshǐ rénwù duì lìshǐde zuòyòng yǔ zuòyòng fǎ zuòyòng* [The Positive and Negative Sides of Great Historical Figures], *Qimeng cóngkān zhī sì* [Qimeng Collection 4] (Guiyang), CUP 3, 133-134
- ⁶⁵ Hou Ming: *Sìwǔ yùndòng yǔ fánshìpài* [Fifth of April Movement And the Whateverists], Kexue minzhu fazhi 16 / 1979, CUP 17, 70
- ⁶⁶ Su Fei: *Wang Dongxing shì fánshìpài?* [Is Wang Dongxing a Whateverist?], Kexue minzhu fazhi 15 / 1979, CUP 17, 9
- ⁶⁷ *Gānyù shēnghuó shì zuòjiāde shénshèng zérèn* [To Delve into Life Is the Sacred Duty of Writers], Beijing zhi chun 7 / 1979, CUP 8, 130
- ⁶⁸ *Lùn mǐnzhǔ yǔ jiànguó* [On Democracy and Establishing a Country], Minzhu yu Shidai 1, CUP 2, 219-223
- ⁶⁹ Min Tao: *Zhou Enlai jīngshén wànsuì!* [Long live the spirit of Zhou Enlai!], Beijingzhi Chun 1 / 1979, CUP 3, 282

- ⁷⁰ Bu Shuming: *Xiàndài zōngjiàode mijué* [The Mystery of Modern Religion], Beijingzhi Chun 1 / 1979, CUP 3, 312-315
- ⁷¹ Ibid., 313-315
- ⁷² Qun Sheng: *Xīn shíqī yào dàdà lìlùn gōngzuò* [The Need to Strengthen Ideological Work in the New Era], Qiu Shi bao 1 / 1979, , CUP 1, 258
- ⁷³ Ibid., 258-259
- ⁷⁴ Li Jiahua: *Píng Huǒshén jiāoxiǎngqǔ* [On the Goddess of Fire Symphony], Qimeng 2 (1 / 1979), CUP 3, 67-69
- ⁷⁵ Huang Xiang: *Lùn lìshǐ rénwù duì lìshǐde zuòyòng yú zuòyòng fǎ zuòyòng* [The Positive and Negative Sides of Great Historical Figures], Qimeng cóngkān zhi si [Qimeng Collection 4] (Guiyang), CUP 3, 129-130
- ⁷⁶ Wei Ping: *Wénzìyù jìshí* [Records of Literary Inquisition], Qunzhong cankao xiaoxi 5 (4 / 1979), CUP 3, 213-215
- ⁷⁷ Li Honglin 1999, 229
- ⁷⁸ At this point, the official Party assessment on the historical role of Chairman Mao during and preceding the Cultural Revolution was still forthcoming and only finally issued in 1981.
- ⁷⁹ According Li Honglin (1999, 232) one of the main points in the emancipation of minds campaign was that leaders were to be regarded as people, not gods, and that all superstitions had to be eradicated, including the personality cult of Chairman Mao.
- ⁸⁰ Ibid., 250-251
- ⁸¹ *Zhongguo rénquán xuānyán -shíjiǔ tiáo* [Declaration of Chinese Human Rights –19 Points], Zhongguo renquan 1 / 1979, CUP 2, 187
- ⁸² Kexue minzhu fazhi also published posters that opposed attacks on the prestige of Mao. This was actually one of the few debates on one issue where the parties were named and issues debated openly within the Democracy Wall Movement that was reported in journals. For posters supporting Mao see e.g. *Xiàng Qiméng fǎnjī* [Beating Back Qimeng], Kexue minzhu fazhi 7 / 1979, CUP 12, 13-15; *Wóménde kàn fǎ hé hūyù* [Our Opinion and Appeal], Kexue minzhu fazhi 5 / 1979, CUP 10, 151-154 and *Bó Qiméngde tiǎozhàn* [Refuting the Qimeng’s Challenge], Kexue minzhu fazhi 7 / 1979, CUP 12, 18-19, the dazibao is dated ‘1970/1/26’, but presumably this is an error. Witnessing the early dazibaos for and against Mao, Garside (1981, 212-218) noted that those defending the late Chairman were usually regarded as rather non-innovative sloganeering, whereas those critical received big attention from the crowds.
- ⁸³ *Ai yǔ kuā* [Love and Praise], Kexue minzhu fazhi 1 / 1979, CUP 6, 263-264
- ⁸⁴ Ibid., 264-265
- ⁸⁵ *Jiěfàng sīxiǎng biànmíng zhēnlǐ* [Distinguishing the Truth and Liberating Minds], Kexue minzhu fazhi 1 / 1979, CUP 6, 280
- ⁸⁶ Ibid., 280-281
- ⁸⁷ Ibid., 281
- ⁸⁸ Ibid., 281-282
- ⁸⁹ Ibid., 282
- ⁹⁰ The same writer also made one of the most direct attacks on Mao in a dazibao published in Kexue minzhu fazhi accusing Mao of personally leading the Cultural Revolution and choosing the wrong persons as his aides, causing the disaster. Beijing yi ge tielu gongren: *Yě tán xiàndàihuà* [On Modernisations], Kexue minzhu fazhi 3 / 1979, CUP 8, 283-285
- ⁹¹ Li Ping: *Zhì Dèng fùzhūrèn zhūxí yī fēng gōngkāixìn* [An Open Letter to Vice Chairman Deng], Kexue minzhu fazhi 3 / 1979, CUP 8, 289-292
- ⁹² Ibid., 293-295
- ⁹³ Ibid., 295-296, this was a reverse figure to the oft cited 30 % / 70 % that the Party also adopted later.
- ⁹⁴ Ibid., 297
- ⁹⁵ See e.g. *Yíngjiē Zǔguó měihǎode chūntiān* [Welcome the Beautiful Spring of Fatherland], Kexue minzhu fazhi 5 / 1979, CUP 10, 124-125; One of the most elaborative accounts denouncing Chairman Mao’s leading role in the Cultural Revolution and his personality cult was given by Hua Chuan, who also gave a rare positive assessment of Khrushchev and his de-Stalinisation campaign in the Soviet Union. As Hua saw it, the motive behind the Cultural Revolution had been to protect Mao’s system of personal dictatorship. Hua Chuan’s writing skills and theoretical knowledge indicated that he was very probably a member of the intelligentsia who, like the rest of the Democracy Movement, had developed serious misgivings with the

Party Left, Mao, and the Cultural Revolution. Hua Chuan: *Wénhuà dàgémìngde lìshǐ zuòyòng* [The Historical Role of the Great Cultural Revolution], Kexue minzhu fazhi 11 / 1979, CUP 15, 7-13.

⁹⁶ An example of a position that did not totally reject Mao, but still criticised his personality cult was given by Bi Dan: *Mínzhǔ qiáng zònghéng tǎn* [Survey of the Democracy Wall], Kexue minzhu fazhi 15 / 1979, CUP 17, 24-29

⁹⁷ Xin Chen: *Mò ràng sǐrén yā huórén* [The Dead Shall Not Oppress the Living], Kexue minzhu fazhi 12 / 1979, CUP 15, 61

⁹⁸ Deng Xiaoping: *Emancipate the Mind...* 1978 / 1995, 158-159

⁹⁹ Deng Xiaoping: *Implement the Policy of Readjustment, Ensure Stability and Unity*, in Selected Works II 1980 / 1995, 361

6 CHAPTER: Narratives of the Emergence of the Democracy Movement

Reconstructing its own past is an important means of defining a social movement's place in society and such (re)constructions are also always part of and inform movement's diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framings.¹ In the Democracy Movement, the narrative of its emergence was offered as a one of how socialist democracy had degenerated into a feudal fascist dictatorship after 1949 and how popular resistance to it had emerged.² The historical roots of this development were sometimes dated quite far aback, both in Chinese history and the history of the world socialist movement, but usually the accounts relied on the grand narrative of line struggle in the Party history between progressive and feudal camps. The Democracy Movement's narrative strategy was to connect the movement to the still unfolding revolution in Chinese society, and to demonstrate that it took the side of the people in it. Narrating how the Cultural Revolution and the Fifth of April Movement had marked the development and emergence of enlightened youth that continued its activities in the Democracy Movement, was central to this strategy and is analysed in this chapter.

What the Democracy Movement activist offered was effectively a counter-narrative to that of the Leftist version of the Party history. As the Leftists held it, the 17 years before the Cultural Revolution had followed the revisionist line and only the 10 years of the Cultural Revolution had been truly proletarian. The Leftist ascendancy to power was offered as a process whereby the Left had saved China from revisionism. According to this, Liu Shaoqi and his followers had tried to take the Party to the right through policies aimed at a mixed capitalist-socialist economy, and building up democratic institutions in order to reduce class struggle. Further, the intellectuals who had demanded freedom of speech in 1957, had manifested this erroneous line, as well as the Lushan conference of 1959 and the Peng Dehuai incident. Naturally enough, these rightists had also opposed the Cultural Revolution, which, nevertheless, had corrected the situation.³ The Democracy Movement activists retained the structure of this narrative, but reversed the progressive and revisionist roles various persons and factions had in it. Naturally enough, the Democracy Movement writers were not the only ones trying to reverse accounts of recent history. For the Dengists, the Cultural Revolution had been a Leftist deviation and that the 17 years before it had demonstrated attempts to stay on the correct course.⁴ However, what the Democracy Movement activists did to this counter-narrative was to incorporate the emergence of the Democracy Movement into it.

Ascendancy of the Left

In March 1979, a commentator in a student journal *Qiushi* perceptively summarised the nature of the ongoing debate about the role of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four in the Cultural Revolution, stating that some writers in the Democracy Movement thought that after 1949 the road taken in Chinese politics had committed the mistake of blindly and idealistically neglecting reality. This had been especially demonstrated in the Leftist line after 1958. According to the writer, those taking this stand in journals usually listed facts and took standpoints to show that not only had the Gang of Four been a product of this general line, but also that its evil nature would lead to the destruction of the Party and the state. Moreover, the eradication of the Gang of Four alone had not been enough; the facts from the last 30 years had to be analysed to show the origins, development, and danger of the Leftist line in general.⁵ What the *Qiushi* article referred to, was the Democracy Movement journals' attempts to explain and expound the reasons behind bureaucratism and Leftism in the history of the PRC and thereby show the historical roots of the Democracy Movement.

In general there were two types of narratives in the journals regarding the line struggle. In the long version, it was seen as old as the world socialist movement, while in the short version, the emergence of the Democracy Movement was connected more closely to the recent struggles in the Chinese Communist Party. However, regardless of where the writers dated the line struggle as starting, they all were united on the importance of three events which marked the ascendancy of the Left: the 1957 anti-right campaign, the Lushan conference in 1959 and the Cultural Revolution which had destroyed inner and outer Party democracy. The two versions showed how some writers tried to establish the Democracy Movement as the heir of the original world socialist movement which had now turned into a movement for democracy under socialism, while others made it a popular part of the anti-Left campaign by the Dengist faction.

An example of the longer version was offered by the editors of *Minzhu yu shidai*, who connected the Democracy Movement's struggle to those popular struggles in Chinese history beginning with the first Opium War. As they saw it, the conditions of outer aggression and inner disunity had made all earlier democratic movements unsuccessful in Chinese history. Thus, after liberation, there still remained the need to undergo cultural, economic and political revolution. This required raising the ideological level of the people to liberate them from ignorance and feudalism's mental chains, secondly to turn individual property into public property and thirdly, democratic reforms which would allow the people to become masters of the state. As the writers saw it, in the beginning of the socialist construction period, the economic revolution had been comparatively successful. However, on the democratic front the story had been different. After the Lushan conference of 1959 and the Cultural Revolution that followed it, Kang Sheng, Lin Biao and the Gang of Four had created devices for controlling inner and outer Party thinking, suppressing the whole country and thus restoring feudal tyranny. This had left deep scars in people's minds killing

the sprouts of democracy. Furthermore, the cultural level of the Chinese had remained too low because China had carried the 'tail of feudalism' when she had entered socialism. Many old ways of thinking, old culture and outdated notions still influenced its politics. The editors saw that without an extensive Democracy Movement these mental vestiges could not be expunged and fulfilment of the task of economic and political revolutions was not possible.⁶ The enlightenment task of the revolutionaries was thus reaffirmed to also belong to the Democracy Movement alongside its task of carrying out historically necessary political reforms and undoing the harm the Leftist reign had inflicted on the Chinese.

Chen Erjin also used the argument for a longer historical line struggle when he saw in Siwu luntan that revisionism had already been revisionism in its original meaning in the beginning of the development of Marxism and international communism. During the early revolutionary struggle the question had been how the proletariat could acquire state power. At that time, revisionism had been considered treason against the original revolutionary theory of Marxism. It had been the line of peaceful evolution and class co-existence, instead of class struggle, and the notion that 'movement was more important than the goal'. After the victory of the revolution in China, the different lines had been manifested in the questions of how to consolidate centralised power, and eliminate exploitative mechanisms in society. At the moment the criterion of revisionism was the attitude towards Marxist state theory. Those that either ignored or distorted it were revisionists, who could be found in an extremely vicious bureaucratic special privileged class, which Chen accused of murdering Marxism and turning the system of public ownership into a new exploitative system that *'ate people without even spitting their bones out.'*⁷

For Chen, to resist revisionism had always been the sacred duty of all Marxists and workers of the world. The degeneration of the Soviet Union into revisionism had given the Chinese a good lesson and bestowed them the duty to resist against it. Chairman Mao had led the theoretical struggle against the Soviet Union and revisionism in China in the Cultural Revolution, and his call to resist revisionism especially in the Party Centre, had aroused the people and taught them a practical lesson in the struggle.⁸ For Chen Erjin the struggle against false-Marxists had therefore been going on long before it had been manifested in the Cultural Revolution and the Chinese could still use the more valuable aspects of Mao Zedong's later thought on resisting revisionism in the Democracy Movement which was thereby a part of this longer chain of struggles.

A variation of the shorter version of line struggle was offered by Huang Xiang of Qimeng who attacked the personality cult of Mao and the Leftist line it represented. As Huang Xiang saw it, after the liberation the two lines had always been present in the various political campaigns and incidents, but opposition to the rightist deviations, opportunism, factions, or theory had always been stronger than opposition to the Left. Both were harmful to the cause of revolution, but only one side had been emphasised giving the Leftists the upper hand. The opportunist Leftist

line had been excessive and demanded the status of the only true revolutionary, correct and progressive line. This had harmed the cause of the Party, country, and the people.⁹

Huang saw that the degeneration of people's democracy into a feudal fascist dictatorship had begun in 1957, when the boundary between the true and false, right and wrong, truth and lies had become blurred making after the anti-right campaign which made it the first anti-democracy campaign in the modern Chinese history which had its primary victims outside the Party. As the experiences of the anti-right campaign had not been correctly summarised, the Leftist line had strongly continued in the campaign to establish the people's communes, the Great Leap Forward and the Lushan conference, and finally in the Cultural Revolution and the rule of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four. The 1959 anti-rightist campaign within the Party against Peng Dehuai and his alleged followers, had been an anti-democratic movement within the Party. Its victims were those in the Party whose views differed from those of the Leader, whose name was not mentioned, but whose identity could not be mistaken. Indeed, Huang put blame for the loss of inner and outer Party democracy squarely on Mao's shoulders, when he stated that the reason for the treatment of the intellectuals in 1957 and the old cadres in 1959 had been that 'one historical personage' eliminated all dissent towards him.¹⁰ The way Huang pointed his criticism directly at Mao Zedong, was atypical for most of the Democracy Movement's writers, who preferred to criticise Lin Biao and the Gang of Four and the Party Left for the same mistakes. That such criticism was ultimately aimed at Mao was clear, yet it could be denied if it ever became necessary.

As Huang argued, the anti-right campaign and 'anti-right faction campaign' had thus been manifestations of the baneful influence of Leftism that grew strong since it was not opposed and eradicated in due time. This development had marked the descent into feudal fascist dictatorship during the Cultural Revolution, which had began under the slogan of '*defending against and opposing revisionism*', but ended up in creating feudalism anew. Huang summarised the developments during the Cultural Revolution as follows:

*"[When] We say that the Cultural Revolution [lasted] ten years, [we are saying that] great restoration of feudalism [lasted] ten years, dictatorship and tyranny [lasted] ten years, people's disaster [lasted] ten years, national catastrophe [lasted] ten years, the great flood, storm and performance of Leftist thinking [lasted] ten years. It was the last period of the maturation of modern feudal dictatorship in China, and the 1957 anti-right struggle was the beginning of this modern feudal dictatorship."*¹¹

Like Huang, most writers who dealt with the historical background of Leftist rule and degeneration of socialist democracy, agreed that the anti-right campaign in 1957-58 had been the beginning of the end of outer Party democracy. It was also generally seen as the beginning of the Leftists' rise to power which led to the Cultural

Revolution.¹² Oddly, however, although line struggle was seen to have existed throughout the history of the world socialist movement, and bureaucratism was attributed to a Stalinist political system, the dating of the beginning of the decay in inner and outer Party democracy in China was never given as before 1957.¹³ For example, the events in the Yan'an rectification campaign in the 1940's, or during the land reform and *san-fan* and *su-fan* campaigns in the early 1950's which also witnessed considerable oppression and unlawful persecution of their victims, were not mentioned by any of the writers. This probably indicates how these years were generally regarded as an era of righteous revolutionary struggle and pragmatic rule respectively. To analyse them critically would have required implicating also the pragmatic faction, or even the whole Party, as an undemocratic force.

The time frame offered by the writers who discussed the historical roots of the Democracy Movement is revealing in one other aspect, too. As noted in the introduction, some earlier studies, and even later democracy movement's writings, have seen the Democracy Wall Movement as the continuation of the demands for human rights and democracy in the hundred flowers campaign of 1957. However, there is no indication that the Democracy Movement writers were largely aware of the content of these demands, or at least, they did not refer to them. However, they were aware of the negative impact of the anti-right campaign for outer Party democracy in general. The events in 1957 and 1958 thus affected their argumentation, but there is little direct evidence that this was the result of intellectual transfer from the earlier generation, rather than of marking an important point in the historical narrative to justify the Democracy Movement.

The Rise of Popular Resistance

The Democracy Movement was framed as the antithesis of bureaucratism and Leftism. When the rise of bureaucratism or a bureaucratic class was perceived as a historically necessary outcome of a feudal past and a Stalinist political system and Leftism as its manifestation on a superstructure of ideas, the Democracy Movement was deemed as their popular negation, whose first signs had emerged during the Cultural Revolution. As the consequence, much of the Democracy Movement writings that dealt with the movement's own history, focused on the rising social conflict between the bureaucrats / Leftists and the people and the emerging popular consciousness of the nature of this struggle, which was termed as 'learning from practise'. This was probably partly because the Democracy Movement as such did not have much of an independent history to speak of, whereas the grievances behind it could trace a longer record and could be used to construct a more imposing identity for the Democracy Movement.

In their narratives the activists generalised their own experiences during the Cultural Revolution proper and the Gang of Four period as the process of the Democracy Movement in making. The Cultural Revolution was regarded as a concrete

demonstration of the disastrous nature of Leftist / bureaucratic / revisionist rule, and therefore the natural cause of popular discontent. But it was also a source of popular enlightenment, as it constituted political ‘practise’ (*shíjiàn*) which true Marxists needed in order to verify or falsify ideas. Obviously, the Cultural Revolution had falsified the Leftist ideology and its right to rule, as it had been overwhelmingly against the interests of the people. For most of the activists, the Democracy Movement’s intellectual justification was based on two fairly simple realisations brought to them by this practise: the need, firstly, to propagate the correct -for most of them Marxist- social analysis in order to fight against the rule of deception by the Party Left, including the personality cult of Chairman Mao, and thereby to create intellectual conditions conducive to political reforms, and secondly, through the help of this, to create rational political institutions as guarantees of socialist democracy as a means to eradicate bureaucratism and realise the revolution’s original promise of democracy. As the Democracy Movement participants claimed, these realisations had been the results of the Cultural Revolution and the Fifth of April Movement that had followed it.

A good example of this enlightenment argument was presented by Liu Guokai, who saw that the Cultural Revolution had caused popular enlightenment on four different areas: first, it had offered people an opportunity to exercise their democratic rights to realise the rights given in the Constitution in part, such as the freedom of speech, publication, assembly, and demonstration. Second, the people had gained a deeper understanding of the regime exposing underhand dealings of many cadres who appeared so revolutionary on outside. Third, the Cultural Revolution had shown people Mao in a different light. By the summer of 1968, and the campaign to ‘clean class ranks’ and the sending down of students and cadres to the countryside, many people had no longer been deceived, and had seen the realities of Mao’s policies. Just as important was that when many had realised the true face of Mao, they no more worshipped and loved him, or were willing to be used by him. In the end, Mao’s attempt to establish absolute personal authority through the Cultural Revolution failed, argued Liu. The fourth kind of enlightenment for Liu was the emergence of the ‘ultra-left thinking’ i.e. the ideas of a new bureaucratic class, that spread wide and far even if, in themselves, the groups were short lived.¹⁴

Liu’s essay was actually a rare case of explicitly attributing the enlightenment to Rebel Red Guards, and even it was not written in Beijing, where Democracy Movement writers mostly avoided discussing directly their connection to the Red Guards. Another (and rather late) exception was Xiao Ping in Yecao in 1983, who developed an argument on the Red Guard generation activists as the ‘second democratic generation’ in the People’s Republic. As he argued, the first generation had been the intellectuals and university students, who had demanded democratic reforms in 1957. In this, Xiao Ping’s essay was rare in the way it connected the events in 1957 to the Democracy Movement as its direct antecedent, and not merely as an occasion when ‘outer Party democracy’ had been silenced, as had many other Democracy Movement writers stated. Xiao Ping also openly discussed the Red

Guard background of the Democracy Movement activists stating that it was an undeniable fact that all well-known democracy activists, whether imprisoned or not, and whether they were in China or overseas, all had the common history as Red Guards. Indeed, this was their foremost specific feature as democratic warriors.¹⁵ Argued Xiao Ping:

“Our democratic warriors do not have to hide their Red Guards background, or regret it; it is what we must be proud of. Today we have the courage to continue the struggle against communist bureaucrats and this courage has its roots in the spirit of Red Guards rebellion.”¹⁶

The article was written as late as 1983, and showed how by this time some of the activists had really began to reconstruct the history of the Democracy Movement as being separate from the Communist history writing of line struggles. The early 80s also witnessed the reactivation of the ‘first generation’ of democratic activist who were older intellectuals, e.g. Liu Binyan, and there appears to have developed a schism over how to conduct the Democracy Movement between the two generations. This required defence of the credentials of the latter Democracy Wall Movement generation which usually lacked formal education compared to the older democratic advocates. In Xiao Ping’s essay, this was done by emphasising the vigour and enlightenment gained through their personal experiences by the second generation when compared to the first one. Further, the attacks on the Democracy Movement in the press for employing Cultural Revolutionary tactics and wishing for a new Cultural Revolution too, as well as the negative official assessment of the Red Guards, probably contributed to the essay.¹⁷ Both Xiao Ping and the Beijing Democracy Wall Movement writers shared the notion of the Cultural Revolution as an enlightening experience which gave rise to the Democracy Movement. However, in 1978-1981 the Beijing Democracy Movement activists seem to have still been reluctant to state in unequivocal terms that they were former Red Guards, and indebted to the Cultural Revolution in many ways, even if this was clear from all their writings about ‘enlightenment’ during that time.

What also had made the Cultural Revolution an awakening experience were its concrete results. A writer in Qimeng, named Xiao Zhu, offered a good summary of the way the Democracy Movement activists saw these results: The Cultural Revolution had brought the Chinese economy to the brink of collapse and a great many cadres had been struggled against, purged, removed from their posts, imprisoned, even killed, and their families, those under their command, workmates, and other people from ‘the nine degrees of kinship’ had been implicated with them. The youth and intellectuals had been sent down in tens of millions. To the peasants they had mostly been unwelcome, and now the cities could not take them back, which was one of the main reasons of social instability. Millions of false, unjust and wrongful cases had created human losses in countless families, breaking them up and creating hundreds of thousands of petitioners. Science, education and arts had atrophied for ten years, causing a whole generation to lose its chance to receive an

education and creating a gap in succession of intellectual ranks which led to backwardness in science and research. Even national defence had become hollow, and the level of the PLA weaponry obsolete. The realm of thought and ideology had become intolerably confused; social virtues had disappeared and crime rates constantly rose.¹⁸ As a list of the actual results of the Cultural Revolution, Xiao Zhu's article was not unique, as almost anyone in the Democracy Movement writing about the Cultural Revolution listed similar evil consequences caused under Leftist rule.¹⁹ However, these tragic results also created the need for the Democracy Movement.

Therefore, in a very similar way to the parallel revolution thesis about the Cultural Revolution in chapter 2, the Democracy Movement's journals argued that the Cultural Revolution had had a dual nature: It had been an era of great chaos and suffering, but had also been a great historical phase in a materialistic sense, an inevitable result of social contradictions, that had taught the people many important lessons in politics, and provided the basis for the Democracy Movement. This latter aspect allowed the activists to connect their movement to the laws of historical progress as they understood them. Accordingly, those people who had penetrated through the Leftist smokescreen which hid the bureaucratic feudal fascist dictatorship, and realised where their real interests lay, had to lead the rest of the people in the struggle against it. This in turn accorded with the Marxist notion that world history was that of class struggle of the oppressed against their oppressors. Being enlightened on the true nature of the Leftist rule during the Cultural Revolution had thus bestowed the Democracy Movement activists with their historical right for activism and the actual birth of the Democracy Movement could therefore be located in the experience of the Cultural Revolution. As has been explained, this indeed had been the actual political background of most of the Democracy Movement activists who now argued that their experiences had major and, indeed historical, significance for China and the revolution.

What the Democracy Movement activists did when invoking the language of learning from the practise of the Cultural Revolution was, of course, to take advantage of the Dengists' demands to study the Cultural Revolution based on the principle of 'practise is the sole criterion of truth' for the movement's own ends.²⁰ For both groups it meant refutation of the Leftist rule, but for the Democracy Movement it was also a way to demonstrate its own necessity and desirability as a dialectical opposite and antithesis to the Leftists. To expound its past was therefore an important aspect to legitimate the Democracy Movement, and connect its diagnosis to its motivational argumentation. This can be seen in how journals dedicated considerable attention to discuss the movement's past. As the editors of *Minzhu yu shidai* stated; "*In order to expound the meaning of the Democracy Movement one must explain the origins of its rise.*"²¹ Similar reasoning was evident in Gao Shan in *Zhongguo renquan*, who declared:

"At the moment we all know clearly that if we cannot clarify the historical, practical and theoretical aspects of reasons of the birth, existence, and

development of the [Democracy] Movement and if we, based on this, cannot analyse accurately the Democracy Movement's direction, duties, and programme, then we cannot say we are working for the people, cannot argue out the enemy, cannot make the Democracy Movement grasp the weapon that most scientific theories provide.”²²

In Siwu luntan, Zhou Xun gave an example of a systematic materialistic analysis of the emergence of the Democracy Wall Movement, and its close relation to the Cultural Revolution. Zhou defined democracy as a state where the ‘*masses are the masters of their own affairs*’ (*dāngjiā-zuòzhǔ*), and saw that only in socialism, could people become their own masters. It was also a historically necessary phase in the development of mankind. Zhou argued that the demand for democracy was already a great historical tide that could not be resisted. All those who could be called revolutionaries demanded that the people had to make their choice between correct and incorrect alternatives²³ -i.e. between democracy and dictatorship.

As Zhou saw it, one reason for the necessity for the expansion of socialist democracy, was the historical experience of the people during the Cultural Revolution, and the rise of correct consciousness it had created, as Zhou argued:

“... under socialism according to Marxism ‘the people are the only creators of history’, this principle of historical materialism has increasingly entered people’s hearts becoming the leading ideology of the masses. Especially after the experiences of the Cultural Revolution movement and the negative example of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four and the people’s bitter experiences, they deeply realised that such disasters may happen if the people are not the real masters [of society], [this caused] the consciousness of the masses to take a great leap forward and provided the ideological basis for expanded democracy. Therefore, the demand for expanded democracy is already an irreversible historical tide, and those who cannot see this are politically blind.”²⁴

The historical necessity of the Democracy Movement followed from this process. Historical necessity of expanded democracy under socialism had to be turned into historical reality, which “*requires self-conscious work from the people*”.²⁵ This also was the essential difference between natural and social laws, argued Zhou, as natural laws worked without people’s participation, but social laws needed self-conscious participation from people:

“Therefore, democracy cannot be separated from the need of the masses’ self-awareness, this is the great liberation of minds, without it, democracy cannot be achieved, [because] if democracy were bestowed, it would be meaningless.”²⁶

The necessary condition for the realisation of democracy was political awareness of the masses. If this condition was not fulfilled, democracy could not be established. Therefore, it was clear that while Zhou saw that the Cultural Revolution had enlightened some people, it had also demonstrated how much the rest of the Chinese still lacked the ability of independent thinking. Those people who did not demand democracy were used to being servants so that even if one bestowed democracy on them, they would only feel clueless and distracted.²⁷ Thus in order to realise the progress of history, the Democracy Movement had to create the consciousness that the people required to hold democracy and appreciate its value.²⁸ The Cultural Revolution, or more precisely the enlightenment it brought with it, had therefore been precious indeed for the activists, but it now needed to be expanded to cover the entire masses.

For many, the lessons learned in the Cultural Revolution had been political. As Xu Shu of the Siwu luntan argued, the Cultural Revolution taught the people shun chaos and favour stable socialist democracy:

“...the experiences and lessons from the Cultural Revolution do not make the people in the whole country wish for extreme democracy, anarchism, and complete civil war, [they have now] started to learn the correct method of practising democracy and the importance of legality, [and they] especially wish for stability and unity, also in a vivid and vigorous political situation, to perfect the reform and achieve the four modernisations. This kind of will is decisive.”²⁹

The notion that the emergence of the Democracy Movement reflected the longer struggle between Leftist tyranny and democracy could also be found in an article in Siwu luntan by Kang Zhou who saw that public opinion that had been suppressed during the past years was now surging to the surface like a flooding river. It alarmed some official-masters but also some good people, who thought that open discussion restriction was a good thing. But, as Kang argued, “*all must think a bit, isn't this enthusiastic surge the result of years of obstruction that Lin Biao and the Gang of Four employed to create the chaos of the Cultural Revolution?*” Indeed, such a flow would not have been possible, if there had not been the ‘great restrictions on free speech’ in 1957 and if the people would have been free to voice their opinions, ideas and democratic demands in the first place. Therefore, the present surge in demands for democracy could not be surprising. If free speech was limited again and tyranny returned, the result would have been the ‘repentance of a historical tragedy’.³⁰ Thus, once more, the Democracy Movement was represented as a historical necessity.

Chen Erjin also represented the Cultural Revolution as a period of learning:

“The Proletarian Cultural Revolution greatly aroused, taught, and trained the Chinese people and enabled them to accumulate personal political experiences and lessons of resisting revisionism [. It] nurtured a group that was devoted to resist revisionism and in the course of doing so smashed the ideological

shackles of the Chinese people, made the Chinese move from the deification and superstition to tangible experiences, the great task of resisting revisionism through the proletarian Cultural Revolution smashed solid ice, showed the direction of resistance, thereby placing the Chinese proletarian revolution at the outpost of the international communist movement's fight against revisionism [and] to the utmost peak of socialist revolution.”³¹

For Chen, as the result of the Cultural Revolution, China was the guarding outpost against revisionism, yet evidently still also suffered from it.³² Still, Chen argued that under Mao, China had guarded against revisionism, and should revisionists gain power, they would not have an easy time. Due to the experiences and lessons of the ten years of the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese people had a new class-consciousness, knew of the changes in class relations and could detect the new revisionists.³³ Other Democracy Movement writers were much less willing to attribute to Mao any of their enlightenment or Cultural Revolution much success, but their message was still the same: the Cultural Revolution experience had created the Democracy Movement.

Chen Erjin saw that Socialist revolution had two phases, dictated by the productive forces and relations: the transformation of first the economic base into public ownership, and second the political superstructure, i.e. proletarian revolution. As he argued, the first stage of the latter phase had begun in 1966, when the Cultural Revolution had been launched.³⁴ The whole project to establish socialist democracy was therefore in effect continuing the process of socialist revolution. Chen's discussion of the significance of the Cultural Revolution also demonstrated the perception of the ten years as a source of great enlightenment necessary for second phase of revolution that would realise socialist democracy. As Chen saw it, to 'guard against revisionism' during the Cultural Revolution had actually been a movement to realise socialist revolution for real, to continue revolution on the basis of the first stage. Quoting Marx, Chen pointed out that a political superstructure that did not fit a socialist economy had to be transformed. The Cultural Revolution was a product of some personal whim, but the beginning of this transformation. It had also helped the people to understand the contradictions that still existed in the society, but it had not had the power to eradicate the bureaucratic privileged class, as it had only been directed against the symptoms, and not the source of the disease. In fact, politics during the Cultural Revolution had been directed under a small group of privileged monopoly bureaucrats. So, while the Cultural Revolution had represented the democratic wishes of the people and workers, it had been unable to change the superstructure.³⁵

For Chen, the final task of the Cultural Revolution was that power should be genuinely transferred to the people, and not the state and military machinery so that power concentrated in the hands of a coercive monopolistic minority. Socialist revolution had to be taken to the second phase so that the old state and military machine had to be smashed along with the system of a minority coercively using

monopolistic powers.³⁶ Economic transformation of the Chinese society had already been achieved and the concomitant ideological transformation had its basis in Marxism, experiences of the October revolution, and the Cultural Revolution, all of which had liberated Chinese thought and brought awareness of the need to realise the second phase of socialist revolution. Declared Chen: “*The proletariat has not received enlightenment from reading or propaganda, but has firmly grasped the truth from its own political experiences...*”³⁷

Huang Xiang probably summarised the dual nature of the Cultural Revolution in the most direct manner of any writers in the Democracy Movement’s journals, when he wrote that:

*“About the Cultural Revolution that lasted for ten years, we should also treat it with the same approach of ‘one divides into two’, if we say that its positive effect was to awaken and educate one generation, and produce a generation of awoken and reflective people in China, and that through the Cultural Revolution the true opposition to the revolution was uncovered – the Gang of Four; the Cultural Revolution negative side was then the dilation of ambitions for political power, restoration of modern feudalism...”*³⁸

What was important in the Cultural Revolution was that not only did it offer an experience of the practise of Leftist rule, but also that it showed the people that Marxism could be used without orders from above, and that even Mao Zedong thought could be criticised. As previously analysed on the personality cult, this was a central issue in the Cultural Revolution enlightenment. Yu Fan stated this succinctly in *Zhongguo renquan*: “*Does mankind have a theory that guides it progress? Yes, it is dialectical materialism. It cannot die when some great man dies.*”³⁹ This was the second realisation during the Cultural Revolution that most of the Democracy Movement writers shared: materialism and Marxism could be used to analyse the state of Chinese society without Chairman Mao or the Leftists telling how to do it.

To this end, and to challenge the growing criticism of the Democracy Movement, in March 1979, Zheng Ming reconstructed in Beijing *zhi chun* a historical counterargument on the spiritual development of the youth during the Cultural Revolution. As he saw it, during the Cultural Revolution the naïve and unspoiled (*tiānzhēn-wúxié*) youth had been used by others and deceived in taking the road of evil (*qítú*) in politics. This had been shameful to the youth, but the responsibility lay on the shoulders of the old cadres, who had used the youth. However, for the youth, the Cultural Revolution had also been a time of enlightenment:

“[D]uring the ‘reign of terror’ of the Cultural Revolution, the youth saw through and rejected the false Marxism of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four, [after they] personally experienced the extremely sad tragedy, the youth raised themselves for the correct understanding of Marxism and its demands. Today’s youth is the awoken generation [juéxǐng yīdài], it is a generation that is

concerned about the nation and the people [yōuguó-yōumín.] Fooled time and time again, they have learned to doubt and analyse... they want to judge based on the facts, study based on practise, to not be credulous and follow blindly [the leaders]; Feeling strenuously around [kūkū mōsuo] in the dark for ten years, they realised the value of the truth. In a single day [they started to] firmly believe in the road of scientific socialism, they do not hesitate to defy the law and to use their young blood and bodies to spread progress.”⁴⁰

In the article, the whole justification for social activism was linked to the progressive nature and advanced consciousness of the youth that was the result of the Cultural Revolution and a historical continuation of the May Fourth Movement’s call for enlightenment.⁴¹ A writer in the Qunzhong cankao also affirmed the enlightenment side of the Cultural Revolution in the following way:

“The achievement of the Cultural Revolution was that it trained the Chinese people. The long social chaos, mental torment, poverty-stricken living conditions, all kinds of disasters and political frauds aroused one billion people to demand [that they can] decide the future of the Eastern parts of the World, stability and unity and establishing modern China with popular democracy.”⁴²

The argument for the Democracy Movement’s enlightened background was also used to discredit Leftism in the article ‘History Cannot Be Severed’ by Yi Ma in Beijing zhi chun. As the writer argued, popular support for the Leftists during the Cultural Revolution had been the result of their spread of superstition before it. However, the opposition to their doctrine of class struggle also grew out of the experiences of the Cultural Revolution. Therefore, it had been a process of self-education for the Red Guards, who now carried this struggle through the Fifth of April Movement to the Democracy Wall Movement. They had realised that it was not some individual bureaucrats that counted, but the system. The Cultural Revolutionary experience was presented as follows:

“Youth that did not understand the truth about the calamities of many years put the blame completely on bureaucrats close to them and entrusted their hopes to the higher level ‘complete authority’. They demanded socialist vitality and honesty and did their best to smash bureaucratism’s yoke, and give free rein to their own wisdom and wit... The Red Guards of those years are the representatives of this. During the Cultural Revolution the people educated themselves. From the experiences in their lives they came up with the profound conclusions that the new bigwigs are 100 times more evil than the old ones, the 11 years were not like the 17 years, the return of feudalism is a more real danger than the restoration of “capitalism” and merely opposing the “corrupt cadres” could not solve the hidden malaise in the society, and the crazy superstitions and anarchism were not the solutions to bureaucratism and special privileges, only socialist democracy and legality could bring about the

Four modernisations in China, and a bright future where the people are their own masters.”⁴³

Similar affirmations of the Cultural Revolution as an enlightenment experience for the Red Guards generation could also be found in other journals,⁴⁴ but not surprisingly, the results of enlightenment were seen less admiring of Marxism in Tansuo, than in other journals.⁴⁵ Wei Jingsheng saw that democratic struggle had played a part in the Cultural Revolution, but that it had been too weak at the time to make the difference when most of the people still followed tyrants superstitiously and were used as their tools.⁴⁶ Wotu also gave an account of struggle and enlightenment process in its opening words. As its editors argued,

“For so many years, the revolutionary forces struggling for people’s democracy have struggled and measured their strength against the counterrevolutionary feudal fascist forces in a deadly fight, so many fearless warriors! Raising their voices and surging forward for science, democracy and light...”⁴⁷

However, their strength had not been enough under the tyranny of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four. During the Fifth of April Movement, the democratic warriors under the banner of science and democracy had still been ‘encircled and suppressed’. Fortunately, these tyrants were removed under the leadership of Chairman Hua. But the editors argued that this all had made people to ask:

“What are the shortcomings that make our republic to be like a young girl that is raped by demon kings time and time again? What kind of ignorance makes this nation of 800 million people tolerate the deception of some immaculately dressed wretches swaggering around the town? What kind of transgression makes this kind of destruction of civilisation and human nature possible, in the world of the 70’s in the 20th century? What kind of measures could prevent this kind of tragedy from happening ever again? Gradually a realisation of the truth, paid in blood, has emerged in the people’s minds. That our republic lacks the pillar of people’s democracy, modern superstition has for a long time buried the origin of all maladies under disaster, [of itself], without democracy, there is no way of having science, without science, democracy is only empty words, without these twins, stability and unity as well as the four modernisations, cannot be acquired.”⁴⁸

Wotu summarised the way the Democracy Movement activists wanted to present the significance their enlightenment. They also directly connected it to the Fifth of April Movement which played a further important part in the narrative of the emergence of the Democracy Movement.

From the Cultural Revolution to the Fifth of April Movement

The Democracy Movement activists presented the Cultural Revolution as a historical lesson and a source of enlightenment concerning the evil nature of Leftist rule and bureaucratism. However, most of the Democracy Movement writers were rather vague regarding the relation between the Cultural Revolution and the Democracy Movement. For them, the Cultural Revolution had served as the basis of enlightenment for the people, but the actual refinement of it into the Democracy Movement had only come with the Fifth of April Movement, which provided almost a creation myth for the movement proper.

The Fifth of April Movement had been directed against the Party Left and approved by the Party Centre, which made it the perfect beginning for the Democracy Movement. Countless poems, articles, etc. eulogising the Fifth of April Movement appeared in the journals and at the Xidan Wall. The perceived connection between the Fifth of April Movement and the Democracy Movement was so evident and repeated *ad nauseam*, that it is impossible to list all here. As the Siwu luntan editors stated it, the Democracy Wall had been established with the blood of its predecessors in the Fifth of April Movement and the revolutionary spirit of the youth that still stood 'tall as a mountain'.⁴⁹ The direct connection between the Cultural Revolution, the Fifth of April Movement and the Democracy Wall Movement was also made clear by, for example, Lan Sheng in Siwu luntan, who saw that the reign of the Gang of Four during the Cultural Revolution had made the people to realise the need of change, even if the same rule had made them cautious of publicly discussing their opinions. However:

“The Gang of Four could only temporarily limit the movement of people’s mouths, and definitely could not restrict them from using their minds! After all, the people are looking for the truth! Was not the 1976 Tiananmen Square the best possible test site [to express] popular opinion? Was not the tidal wave of the Fifth of April Movement unstoppable? The Great Fifth of April Movement made people reach enlightenment on that the constitution has to be implemented in practise and democracy has to be honoured, only then can the four modernisations be realised, and only when the people have democracy can the “maggots that harm the people” be terminated!”⁵⁰

The Siwu luntan’s commemoration issue of the Fifth of April Movement in June 1979 also contained a lot of articles on the assessment of its relation to the Democracy Movement. For example, Chun Feng described the situation that had led to the Fifth of April Movement, and finally to the Democracy Movement, as a result of the enlightenment gained from the Cultural Revolution in a way shared by many other authors above:

“The youth that had grown up in the midst of distorting turbulent winds, thought: is this really our revolutionary ideal? The thoughtful Chinese finally

*came to the conclusion: No! We will not tolerate this situation! We want democracy, 'four modernisations', light, and progress!"*⁵¹

As Chun Feng argued, the masses had shown these feelings at Tiananmen Square. They had gone there in great numbers and good order and, Chun Feng asked: “*Didn't this profoundly demonstrate the extent of inner power and self-awareness of the Chinese people? Wasn't this a 'public opinion poll' [mínyì cèyàn]?*” The panic-stricken Gang of Four had tried to suppress the people with ‘white terror’, but had been unsuccessful in the long run. The day had entered Chinese history forever. And Chun summarised: “*That the 'Gang of Four' could stay in power and wantonly rule socialist China for the ten years showed us that socialism cannot do without democracy and legality!*” Without these, the people could do nothing against misguided leadership. Although, some people believed that the Fifth of April Movement had now reached its goals and could now be ended, this was not the case, since at that time, both democracy and legality remained weak.⁵² Therefore the Democracy Movement had to continue its mission.

The same themes of the Democracy Wall Movement continuing the unfinished business of the Fifth of April Movement, and that it was the result of popular enlightenment during the Cultural Revolution, were echoed elsewhere in Siwu luntan. As an anonymous columnist wrote in its July issue, feudal ideas still existed in society and in the minds of people and manifested themselves in many aspects of life. Furthermore, “*feudalist thinking has gradually donned the dress of socialism and even communism, starting to oppose real socialism.*”⁵³ The writer then argued that the Fifth of April Movement was the result of the masses realising their experiences of the past ten years and seeing through the Marxist facade and into the concealed feudal core of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four rule. The people had raised the banner of science, democracy, and socialism and oppression which followed the Fifth of April Movement could not expunge these ideas from their minds. But it was still necessary to imbue the people with democratic progressive and scientific thinking.⁵⁴

The writer further argued that the task of the Fifth of April Movement had not been fulfilled when the Gang of Four had been arrested, nor had it only been a single event in history, for it had its historical mission, and as long as this remained unfinished, it would not step down from the platform of history. Its political mission was accomplished with the arrest of the Gang of Four, but its task still remained in political ideology and inner Party struggle against the Leftist opportunists.⁵⁵ This also accorded with those tasks laid out in the third plenum of the eleventh central committee. Indeed, with the use of the newly proclaimed four cardinal principles as the criteria, the editors proclaimed that the Democracy Movement had already achieved some good results.

“We have had a brilliant role in strengthening the Party leadership, consolidating proletarian dictatorship, and made great political and

ideological preparations for advancing on the socialist road and the four modernisations.”⁵⁶

The way this commentator employed the four cardinal principles to defend the Democracy Movement was rare. In general, the principles were not referred to, or discussed at length in the journals. However, the writer in Siwu luntan showed how fluid they could be in the hands of the movement’s mainstream. As it accepted the Party leadership and Marxism, it could live with them – if they were interpreted in a way that was subjugated to the enlightenment and political reform missions of the Democracy Movement. Writing in June 1979, this was still open, and the reformist faction in Deng’s administration also argued that the principles were subject to the principle of practise is the sole criterion of truth. It was only the crackdown in late 1979-early 1980 which demonstrated that the conservative use of the criteria would prevail.

For the Minzhu yu shidai editors too, the Fifth of April Movement had manifested historical laws. As they argued, society wanted progress, and all those who used violence against this progress would perish. In the April of 1976, a popular movement to protect Zhou Enlai and oppose the Gang of Four, demanding democracy and opposing tyranny, had spontaneously erupted. This movement had demonstrated the heartfelt wishes and the power of the people and declared a death sentence on the feudal clique in the Party leadership. At the same time, it had reflected the mainstream of history marking the beginning of Chinese Democracy Movement in a new form. *“This mainstream of history is to develop democracy, protect people’s rights, promote the establishment of a democratic country, which no man can stop.”⁵⁷* Here too, the common way to describe the Democracy Movement as an unstoppable tide was clear.

To note that the Fifth of April Movement had been a spontaneous movement was also important, because the conservative Dengists were claiming that it had occurred under the leadership of the Party. If this were so, what had followed the Fifth of April Movement would also have had to occur under its leadership. Indeed, the idea that the May Fourth Movement could have been anything but spontaneous was never discussed in the journals. For them, it had been the violent genesis of the Democracy Movement proper, with all the ingredients of an enlightenment movement suddenly emerging on the national scene. As a writer in Yuanshangcao [Grass of the Plain] argued:

“The eruption of the Fifth of April Movement made the minds and awareness of people change in a leap, they understood that the teachings that they had earlier held as the truth, were deception; they understood that the destiny they thought they had seized into their own hands was actually in the hands of the scum of the earth; they understood that to let other people represent their thinking is not the same as to use their own brains... Never have there been

saviours or saint-kings who could have created happiness and prosperity for mankind, only the people can do it themselves."⁵⁸

The writers urged that the Chinese had to persist with the task of creating a new democratic and modernised China, taking the road that the Fifth of April Movement led them.⁵⁹

The historical roots of the Democracy Wall Movement were also discussed by the 'Fifth of April Movement Warriors', who were interviewed for Beijing zhi chun's special issue commemorating the Fifth of April Movement. These interviews also discussed the Movement's pedigree. As the editors stated, the 'Chinese Socialist Democratic Movement' was born under the white terror of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four's feudal-fascistic dictatorship, and had developed through hardship from the Fifth of April Movement to the Democracy Wall. The editor of Kexue minzhu fazhi, Gong Nianzhou, saw a similar connection between the two movements. According to him, after reflection on the lessons of the Fifth of April Movement, the people's consciousness had grown, and under its inspiration, they had established the Democracy Wall and raised the banner of scientific democracy.⁶⁰ Argued Gong Nianzhou:

*"We maintain the following: the great Democracy Wall is the continuation of the Fifth of April Movement's great pioneering work, it is the sign of [how] the people have become mature and self-aware. The Democracy Wall has arisen as a necessary precondition to remove the obstacles in front of the four modernisations."*⁶¹

Many other writers in Kexue minzhu fazhi also saw a direct connection between the Cultural Revolution, the Fifth of April Movement and the Democracy Movement. As a 'Co-Warrior in the Masses' stated it in December 1978, the Democracy Movement continued the struggle of the Fifth of April Movement:

*"During the Cultural Revolution the revolutionary enthusiasm of the youth was used improperly by many people who deceived the whole nation and made it stupid in order to achieve certain dark ends. At present the youth that has grown up is starting to grasp the meaning of the past over ten years gradually in its entirety. They realised that heavy immaterial chains have been imposed over their bodies. [They are] Like fierce tigers and lions in an iron cage, impatiently pacing around, looking for the road to freedom."*⁶²

As this writer argued, under these circumstances the Fifth of April Movement had been like a bright light that had pierced through the dark night shining into the hearts of the youth. They had gathered together and used their energy to raise cries that had reverberated through the world: "*we want scientific Marxism, we do not want feudalism! We want socialist democracy; we do not want fascist dictatorship.*" The spillage of the blood of the youth woke up millions of silent people to leave them

with the new realisation that only a united people can be their own saviour.⁶³ In a poem entitled 'Before Spring' another writer declared that,

*“The Chinese nation has gone through so much hardship,
Now the people want to speak out.
Smash the mental shackles restricting people’s minds,
Things must be studied through practise.
We urgently rush to raise our voices,
Wake the people, who contently lull drunken in the pleasant flavours of easiness,
For the democracy of the Chinese people,
Do not pity one’s young blood, go to irrigate the tender sprouts of Chinese nation,
Be not afraid to go in jail for democracy of the Chinese people,
Because without popular democracy,
The four modernisations are just empty talk,
The Youth should organise itself,
Shatter the cage,
Smash the chains,
Liberate minds,
The Fifth of April Movement was just the beginning...
Welcome spring in full blossom,
To continue for the years to come.”⁶⁴*

Another poem proclaimed that:

*“Twenty years, almost twenty years,
We have taken the wrong road,
We have gone through so much experience,
We have welcomed many perilous storms,
The people advance history,
History teaches the people!”⁶⁵*

Of note though, in the historical narratives that the Democracy Movement activists (re)constructed of their own past, was how little it directly referred to the obvious fact that most of its activists were ex-Red Guards and that many of their diagnostic tools were influenced by the social analysis originally developed by the Radical Red Guards, Liu Guokai and Xiao Ping who were analysed above being notable exceptions. It must be assumed that this was a conscious choice on the part of the writers not to dwell in detail on what happened in 1966-1969. When the Red Guards were referred to in the accounts at all, they were typically described as having basically acted for the right reasons, but being deceived and manipulated otherwise.⁶⁶ The problem with the Red Guards movement was, that it had largely been conducted under the wrong leadership and towards false goals, even if it had included some realisation of the need for critical thinking and true democracy that the activists referred to as enlightenment through practice. The Democracy Movement was its continuation, but it also portrayed itself as being a major advance on the Red Guards. This time there was no manipulation of the activists, and the phoney Marxist Leftist

rule for ten years had taught them recognition of the true enemies of the people. So although the Red Guards had earlier marched under wrong banners, the Fifth of April Movement had demonstrated how they had been able to see through the Leftist deception. The Tiananmen demonstrations represented a break with the activists' Cultural Revolutionary of deception, which probably was main reason why demonstrations occupied such a dominant position in the Democracy Movement argumentation.

A Continuation of the May Fourth Movement?

Some of those writers who saw that there was a longer history of struggles behind the Democracy Movement also saw the Fifth of April Movement as a continuation of the historical popular struggle for democracy that had been brought to China by the Fourth of May Movement in 1919. In a sense, the torch of enlightenment had not been lit the for first time during the Cultural Revolution, but had been in fact passed on. As a commentator in Siwu luntan argued:

“To say it in one sentence: the present Fifth of April Movement wants to draw political inspiration from the historical experience of the May Fourth Movement, take the correct road, and go together with the practical experience gained from the Chinese revolution, the old revolutionaries and the great masses, to realise the great task of the big transformation. Otherwise it will all come to naught.”⁶⁷

Another writer in Siwu luntan argued that the Fifth of April Movement had continued the May Fourth Movement and that both manifested the same historical necessity:

“The Fifth of April Movement was a great struggle for science, democracy, and socialism and against the feudal forces. From the point of view of the history of opposing feudalism, the Fifth of April Movement was a continuation of the May Fourth Movement of 1919. From this perspective one can understand that the Fifth of April Movement is the reflection of the necessity of social progress, demanded by history.”⁶⁸

A writer in Yuanshangcao declared that:

“The May Fourth Movement in 1919 began the first page in modern Chinese history, the Fifth of April Movement thoroughly and uncompromisingly opposed the strong reactionary politics, demanded democracy and progress, as well as science to mark the beginning in the new chapter of entering modern society. This is exactly the goal that the reactionaries have strangled for time after time in Chinese history after the Opium War.”⁶⁹

Interviewed by Beijing zhi chun, a Wang Lei gave what was probably one of the broadest analyses of the intellectual background of the Democracy Wall Movement:

“The Fifth of April movement was a continuation of the Fourth of May Movement. The Democracy Wall is the continuation of the Fifth of April movement. Nevertheless, the Fifth of April movement did not end with the toppling of the Gang of Four. The Whateverists have inherited the mantle of the Gang of Four. From the beginning, the Democracy Wall Movement has been spearheaded against the Whateverists criticising and exposing them. Because our country does not have a perfect (wánshàn) political system, it has become the soil in which the careerist can flourish and multiply.”⁷⁰

A writer in Zhongguo renquan also saw the Democracy Movement as a genuine continuation of human rights movements in Chinese history when he stated: *“The Human Rights Movement is not a new movement in China. Sun Zhongshan’s republican revolution was a human rights revolution. The May Fourth Movement was a Human Rights Movement.”* Indeed, the decades of democratic revolution were decades of a human rights liberation movement too. The Tiananmen Incident had also been part of this struggle, and the Democracy Movement continued it.⁷¹ Citing Mao, Zhongguo renquan also stated: *“Today’s Democracy Movement is the continuation of the historical Democracy Movements in China.”⁷²* For Zhongguo renquan showing the historical pedigree of its demands was especially important, as its emphasis on human rights was more problematic than mere calls for a return to the original Marxist state theory and socialist democracy in it that many other Democracy Movement activists advocated.

That the activists compared the Democracy Movement to the May Fourth Movement and saw themselves continuing its mission, was also due to the fact that May Fourth Movement was seen as an important event in communist historiography of a popular movement that had opposed feudalism in the bourgeois period. Many writers saw that little had changed since, and therefore the Democracy Wall Movement continued the very same task that The May Fourth Movement had endowed the progressive forces with in Chinese society. As Bi Dan argued in *Kexue minzhu fazhi*, the May Fourth Movement’s slogan of ‘science and democracy’ was still so fresh because the Chinese had been suffering from ‘ignorance and dictatorship’ under Lin and Jiang, both of whom had wanted feudal ‘slave-ism’. The mission of the Chinese revolution against feudalism had not been accomplished, and thus the Chinese now needed a new May Fourth Movement against feudalism.⁷³

Nevertheless, most writers, who mentioned the May Fourth Movement, did so usually only in passing. For most of the Democracy Movement activists the promise of real enlightenment was in the scientific Marxism and socialist democracy it promised, and the May Fourth Movement represented the earlier bourgeois era which did not make for a good creation myth. Yet, notwithstanding this historical limitation, it still served as an early landmark in the popular struggle against

feudalism, which the Democracy Movement continued. The Democracy Movement activists realised that this struggle now took place under socialism, which had changed the struggle's contents accordingly. For them the May Fourth Movement had represented a call for popular democracy in a bourgeois form, and the Democracy Movement had updated this struggle's goal to a socialist democracy. The way in which the May Fourth Movement was connected to the Fifth of April Movement and Democracy Movement was therefore informed by the Marxist perception of world history. Popular resistance against tyranny and feudalism is what united the two movements.⁷⁴

The status of the Fifth of April Movement was very different though. It was obviously important for the activists because it had been approved by the Party as 'completely revolutionary'. Such an endorsement was something that the mainstream of the Democracy Movement was desperate to secure for itself. Linking the Fifth of April Movement to the Democracy Movement was not implausible by any means. Many Democracy Movement activists had taken part in the Fifth of April Movement, and as explained in chapter 2, the Democracy Wall Movement had been preceded by numerous signs of popular discontent against the Party Left and their suppression of the Fifth of April Movement demanding reversal of its verdict. Only when this verdict was reversed in November 1978, did the Democracy Movement begin properly. It followed that, in the eyes of the activists, endorsement from Deng Xiaoping of the Democracy Movement was a logical and necessary step, as he had endorsed the Fifth of April Movement. In the end, it was not forthcoming, as Deng had a fundamentally different view of the Fifth of April Movement's significance.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, acting as the historical antithesis of feudalism provided the basis to construct the Movement's collective identities.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 6

¹ Hunt et al 1994, 195

² Munro (1984a, 46-47) argues that at the beginning of the movement, activists produced little of their own in regard of the analysis to the reasons for the Cultural Revolution and the history of the PRC, seeing that the Cultural Revolution was a man-made tragedy and did not reflect any deeper social contradictions. Only Chen Erjin's essay On Proletarian Democratic Revolution in June 1979 prompted a break with the official notion by arguing that the Cultural Revolution was a consequence of the previous 17 years. However, analyses of the longer roots of the Cultural Revolution and the Democracy Movement were offered well before Chen Erjin's essay in other journals and very few writers actually argued that the Cultural Revolution was only a man-made disaster without any structural reasons behind it.

³ Garside 1982, 16-17; CA März 1979, 179

⁴ How to explain recent history was naturally an important part of the Dengist attack on the Whateverists. For example, the Conference on Theory Work decided that Chairman Mao had taken the wrong line from 1957 on, when he had committed an ultra-Leftist error. This formulation was also later to be found in the Resolution on Certain Questions (Li Honglin 1999, 249-250).

⁵ Ke Lin: *Dāngqián lǐlùnjiè dòngtài zōngshù* [A Summary of Contemporary Theoretical Trends], Qiushi (Beijing *guangbo xueyuan*) 1 / 1979, CUP 9, 182 This Qiushi [Seeking Truth] was different to Qiushi [Harvest] that a group of Democracy Movement activists published. It was a school journal of the *Beijing guangbo xueyuan*, or the School of Journalism. Its articles were commentaries on the Democracy Movement,

not so much political essays in themselves. To have journals with similar titles was not uncommon in the Democracy Movement.

⁶ *Lùn mínzhǔ yǔ jiànguó* [On Democracy and Establishing a Country], *Minzhu yu Shidai* 1, CUP 2, 220-222

⁷ Chen Erjin: *Lùn wúchǎnjiējí mǐnzhǔ mǐnzhǔ géming*, 88

⁸ *Ibid.*, 88-91

⁹ Huang Xiang: *Lùn lǐshǐ rénwù duì lǐshǐde zuòyòng yǔ zuòyòng fǎnzuooyong* [The Positive and Negative Sides of Great Historical Figures], *Qimeng cóngkān zhi si* [Qimeng Collection 4] (Guiyang), CUP 3, 121

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 123-125

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 130-132, the quotation from p. 131-132

¹² Apart from the articles cited above this idea could be found for example in Zheng Hao: *Zhōngguó géming de liángxīn - Péng Déhuái* [The Conscience of the Chinese Revolution - Peng Dehuai], *Beijing zhi chun* 5, CUP 6, 100-101 and Xiao Zhu: *Wénhuà géming yǔ jiējí dòuzhēng* [The Cultural Revolution and Class Struggle], *Qimeng* 1, 1 / 1979 (Beijing), CUP 3, 89-94; Yi Ma: *Nán yǐ gēduànde lìshǐ* [History Cannot Be Severed], *Beijing zhi chun* 4 / 1979, CUP 5, 126-130

¹³ To be sure, in some articles signs of the incorrect Leftist line were found from the very beginning of the Party, but the first signs of degeneration of outer and inner democracy were still traced to 1957-1958. See for example, Yi Ma: *Nán yǐ gēduànde lìshǐ* [History Cannot Be Severed], *Beijing zhi chun* 4 / 1979, CUP 5, 126-130

¹⁴ Liu Guokai, *Wénhuà géming jiǎnxī*, 235-240

¹⁵ Xiao Ping: *Zhōngguó Mǐnzhǔ yùndòng...*, *Yecao* 1 / 1983, CUP 19, 239

¹⁶ Xiao Ping: *Zhōngguó Mǐnzhǔ yùndòng...*, *Yecao* 2 / 1983, CUP 19, 255

¹⁷ Xiao Ping: *Zhōngguó Mǐnzhǔ yùndòng...*, *Yecao* 1 / 1983, CUP 19, 235-240 and *Yecao* 2 / 1983, CUP 19, 253-259

¹⁸ Xiao Zhu: *Wénhuà géming yǔ jiējí dòuzhēng* [The Cultural Revolution and Class Struggle], *Qimeng* 1, 1 / 1979 (Beijing), CUP 3, 89

¹⁹ E.g. Wang Juntao: *Shìxī zuòqīng jīhuìzhǔyìde jiējí dòuzhēng lǐlùn* [On Testing the Left Opportunist Theory of Class Struggle], *Beijing zhi chun* 3 / 1979, CUP 4, 163

²⁰ On the importance of this issue in the power struggle see Ma Licheng and Qi Lingjun 1998, 49-54

²¹ *Lùn mínzhǔ yǔ jiànguó* [On Democracy and Establishing a Country], *Minzhu yu Shidai* 1, CUP 2, 219; also Xiao Ping: *Zhōngguó Mǐnzhǔ yùndòng...* *Yecao* 1 / 1983, CUP 19, 235, argued like this.

²² Gao Shan: *Mǐnzhǔ yùndòngde lìshǐ gēnjù hé lǐlùn gēnjù* [Historical and Theoretical Reasons of the Democracy Movement], *Zhongguo renquan* 3b / 1979, CUP 3, 269

²³ Zhou Xun: *Mǐnzhǔqiáng xiàng héchù qù - jiān lùn shèhuìzhǔyì mǐnzhǔ* [Where is the Democracy Wall Going - On Socialism and Democracy], *Siwu luntan* 8 (6 / 1979), CUP 5, 37-38

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 38

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 38

²⁶ Zhou Xun: *Mǐnzhǔqiáng xiàng héchù qù*, 39

²⁷ Zhou was not the only one arguing like this, see e.g. *Rèliè zhīchí yī jiǔ q bā èrshíyī rì rénmin wànsuì yī wénde fābiào* [Warmly Support the Publication of the 21.12. Article 'Long Live the People'], *Siwu luntan* 2 / 1978, CUP 3, 54

²⁸ Zhou Xun: *Mǐnzhǔqiáng xiàng héchù qù*, 40

²⁹ Xu Shu: *Zhōngguó dāngdài shèhuì biàngé zhī tán (yī)* [Shallow Investigation on the Transformation of Contemporary Chinese Society (I)], *Siwu luntan* 4 (2 / 1979), CUP 4, 90-92

³⁰ Kang Zhou, Rou Gang: *Yánlùn dà fāng* [Restricting Open Discussion], *Siwu luntan* 6 (4 / 1979), CUP 1, 38

³¹ Chen Erjin: *Lùn wúchǎnjiējí mǐnzhǔ mǐnzhǔ géming* [On Proletarian Democratic Revolution], *Siwu luntan* 10 (8 / 1979), CUP 1, 91

³² *Ibid.*, 91-92

³³ *Ibid.*, 125-126. As noted above, Chen's article was originally written in 1974 when Chairman Mao was still alive, and using his slogan 'defending against revisionism, opposing revisionism' was used throughout Chen's treatise. Originally revisionism had meant the line of the 'capitalist roaders' of the Liu-Deng faction which the Cultural Revolution aimed to purge. In Chen Erjin's and other Democracy Movement activists' usage, it became synonymous with bureaucratism and leftism.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 133-134

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 134-136; these paragraphs demonstrated how even Chen vacillated on his assessment of the Cultural Revolution as either a success or a failure.

- ³⁶ Ibid., 137-138; Chen's concern with the military had already been shared by the Leftist Red Guards, who saw that control of the military by the people, not the bureaucrats, was one of the necessary preconditions to create popular rule based on Paris Commune model. The events in 1967-68 when China was brought, in effect, under military control must have contributed to this emphasis. See Mehnert (1969, 88-90).
- ³⁷ Ibid., 138-139
- ³⁸ Huang Xiang: *Lùn lishǐ rénwù duì lishǐde zuòyòng yú zuòyòng fǎ zuòyòng* [The Positive and Negative Sides of Great Historical Figures], *Qimeng cóngkān zhī sì* [Qimeng Collection 4] (Guiyang), CUP 3, 129. In some articles the beginning of realisation of the true nature of the Cultural Revolution was located more exactly in the Lin Biao Incident 1971, as in Yu Fan: *Guānyú Zhōngguó shèhuì wèntíde zìwèn zìdá* [Questions and Answers to Chinese Social Problems], *Zhongguo renquan* 2 / 1979, CUP 3, 221
- ³⁹ Ibid., 221
- ⁴⁰ Zheng Ming: *Shéi shì hài qúnde ma?* [Who Harms the Masses], *Beijing zhi chun* 6 / 1979, CUP 7, 95
- ⁴¹ Ibid., 94-98
- ⁴² Yan X: *Běijīng, Mínhǔ qiáng jìshì* [Record of Beijing Democracy Wall], *Quanzhong cankao xiaoxi* 3, 2 / 1979, 3.2.1.1979, CUP 1, 287
- ⁴³ Yi Ma: *Nán yǐ gēduànde lishǐ* [History Cannot Be Severed], *Beijing zhi chun* 4 / 1979, CUP 5, 133
- ⁴⁴ A lengthy, and somewhat idiosyncratic, summary of the perceived reasons behind the Cultural Revolution and its relation to the Democracy Movement was also given in Hua Chuan: *Wénhuà géming pōuxī* [Analysis of the Cultural Revolution], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 11 / 1979, CUP 15. Similar argument from Hua could be found in Hua Chuan: *Duì fǎn xiū fáng xiū lichǎngde tànlùn* [Exploring the Position of Opposing and Resisting Revisionism], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 11 / 1979, CUP 15, 3.
- ⁴⁵ See e.g. *Xiàngěi nǐ qīngniánde gònghéguó* [Presenting for You –The Republic of the Youth], *Tansuo* 5 / 1979, CUP 4, 2;
- ⁴⁶ Wei Jingsheng (Jin Sheng): *Xù dì wǔ gè xiàndàihuà -mínhǔ jí qítā* [Continuing the Fifth Modernisation – Democracy and Others], *Tansuo* 1 / 1979, CUP 1, 10-11
- ⁴⁷ *Kāifāng ba -rénmín mínzhǔde xiānhuā* [Let the Flowers of People's Democracy Blossom], *Wotu* 1 / 1979 (October 1979 reprint), CUP 10, 191-192
- ⁴⁸ Ibid., 191-192
- ⁴⁹ *Pinglunyuán* [Commentator]: *Mínhǔ qiáng xiànshíde yìyì hé dāngqián shīmìng* [The Real Meaning of Democracy Wall and Present Mission] *Siwu luntan* 1 / 1978, CUP 3, 46-47
- ⁵⁰ Lan Sheng: *Lùn 'Mínhǔ qiáng'* [On The Democracy Wall], *Siwu luntan* 5 (3 / 1979), CUP 2, 88
- ⁵¹ Chun Feng: *Jìniàn sìwǔ shíxiàn sìhuà -wěidàde sìwǔ yùndòng píngfǎn hòu* [Commemorating the Fifth of April Movement -The First Anniversary Commemoration Day of the Great Fifth of April Movement], *Siwu luntan* 8 (6 / 1979), CUP 5, 31
- ⁵² Ibid., 32-33, the quotations from p. 32
- ⁵³ *Wěidàde qǐshì* [Great Enlightenment / Inspiration], *Siwu luntan* 9 (7 / 1979), CUP 6, 1-2
- ⁵⁴ Ibid., the quotation from p. 3
- ⁵⁵ Ibid., 3
- ⁵⁶ Ibid., 3-4, the quotation from p. 4
- ⁵⁷ *Lùn mínzhǔ yǔ jiànguó* [On Democracy and Establishing a Country], *Minzhu yu Shidai* 1, CUP 2, 219
- ⁵⁸ *Nù cóng xiōngyì huà lièhuǒ làngqǐ shīwén fā hào gē* [Burning Anger, Swelling Songs and Poems], *Yuanshangcao* 2 / 1979, CUP 3, 318
- ⁵⁹ Ibid., 319
- ⁶⁰ *Sìwǔ zhànshì tǎn mínzhǔ -fǎngwèn jìyào* [The Tiananmen Incident Heroes Talk about Democracy – Summary of Interviews], *Beijing zhi chun* 4, CUP 5, 93 Similar reasoning could be found in Gong's article *Gong Nianzhou: Zhēngwén qǐshì* [Zhiwen Announcement] *Beijing zhi chun* 1 / 1979, CUP 3, 322-323
- ⁶¹ Gong Nianzhou: *Xiě zài qiánmiàn* [Writing in Front], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 2 / 1979, CUP 7, 281
- ⁶² *Qúnzhòng lái xìn xuǎn* [Assorted Letters from Readers], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 2 / 1979, CUP 7, 345
- ⁶³ Ibid., 346; other similar articles in *Kexue minzhu fazhi* were Cui Huiji: *Qǐlái, Zhōnghuá mínzúde zǐsūn* [Rise Up, Descendants of the Chinese Nation], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 5 / 1979, 174-175 and Bi Dan: *Mínhǔ qiáng zònghéng tǎn* [Survey of the Democracy Wall], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 15 / 1979, CUP 17, 14-39.
- ⁶⁴ *Chūntiān zhī qián* [Before Spring], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 1 / 1979, CUP 6, 254
- ⁶⁵ Nian Penggong: *Zhēnshíde xíngxiàng* [Authentic Image], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 2 / 1979, CUP 7, 311
- ⁶⁶ E.g. *Yíngjiē Zūguó měihǎode chūntiān* [Welcome the Beautiful Spring of Fatherland], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 5 / 1979, CUP 10, 125; One of the few exceptions was Liu Guokai (*Wénhuà géming jiǎnxī* [A Brief Analysis of the Cultural Revolution],” *Renmin zhi sheng*, 2nd special issue, December 1980, CUP 17, 91-244).

⁶⁷ *Pinglunyuán* [Commentator]: *Mínzhǔ qiáng xiànshíde yìyì hé dāngqián shìmìng* [The Real Meaning of Democracy Wall and Present Mission] *Siwu luntan* 1 / 1978, CUP 3, 47

⁶⁸ *Wěidàde qǐshì* [Great Enlightenment / Inspiration], *Siwu luntan* 9 (7 / 1979), CUP 6, 1-2

⁶⁹ *Nù cóng xiōngyì huà lièhuǒ làngqǐ shīwén fā hào gē* [Burning Anger, Swelling Songs and Poems], *Yuanshangcao* 2 / 1979, CUP 3, 319

⁷⁰ Wang Lei in *Siwǔ zhànshì tǎn mínzhǔ -fāngwèn jìyào* [The Tiananmen Incident Heroes Talk about Democracy –Summary of Interviews], *Beijing zhi chun* 4, CUP 5, 94-95

⁷¹ *Rén quán, yùndòng de yìyì hé dāngqián de rènwu* [The Meaning and Future Mission of the Human Rights Movement], *Zhongguo renquan* 1 / 1979, CUP 2, 192-193

⁷² Mao Zedong: *Xīn mínzhǔ zhǔyìde xiànzhèng* [Constitution of New Democracy], *Zhongguo renquan* 1 / 1979, CUP 2, 210- 211, the quotation from 208

⁷³ Bi Dan: *Mínzhǔ qiáng zònghéng tǎn* [Survey of the Democracy Wall], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 15 / 1979, CUP 17, 38

⁷⁴ The only writer who came even close to using the May Fourth Movement sources in the Beijing Democracy Movement was Hu Ping, who occasionally quoted Liang Qichao, yet even he was from an intellectual generation that had preceded the movement.

⁷⁵ The last issue was demonstrated, for example, in a Nanfang Ribao article on 1 June 1979 wherein the editor noted sharply that the Fifth of April Movement had not been not a spontaneous movement, but led by the people educated by the Party and thus not estranged from the Party leadership. According to Rosen (1985, 17) this was directed to Wang Xizhe's opinions which saw the Fifth of April Movement as an independent popular movement. As explained above, this view was shared and used generally in the Beijing Democracy Movement.

7 CHAPTER: The Movement's Collective Identities

The previous chapter has analysed how the Democracy Movement diagnosed the political system that produced bureaucratism and Leftism as *the* sources of their grievances. In its activists' opinion, the Democracy Movement was a movement for those who believed eradication of Leftist-bureaucratic rule was necessary to end the abusive government, prevent the repentance of Leftist rule similar to the rule of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four, and so enable the promise of socialist democracy to be realised. Narratives of how the movement's activists had reached awareness through practical lessons and seen through the Leftist deception during the Cultural Revolution were therefore central to the way in which the systemic grievance was connected to the emergence of the Democracy Movement. This narrative rendered the struggle as one between people with progressive Marxist awareness, and those with reactionary false consciousness, and those whose interests the latter served. Through it, the Democracy Movement activists could offer materialist explanations as to why a social movement was necessary. Based on this diagnosis of the underlying social contradictions that gave rise to the Democracy Movement, it was presented as a historically necessary manifestation of the people's interests against its oppressors. This became the cornerstone of the movement's identity constructions and the framings of the movement's protagonist, antagonist, and audiences, as well as its individual participants' identities.

This chapter now analyses the ways in which the Democracy Movement activists constructed and used collective identities to argue for their movement. As explained in the introduction, collective identities are essential to justify social movements and thereby provide both motivation for the movement's participants and defence against its adversaries. As explained below, the Democracy Movement activists constructed three distinct identities for their movement: i.e. the revolutionary progressive vanguard, enlighteners, and socialist citizens. The identity of their adversaries, the Party Left and bureaucratism, were conversely framed as feudal fascists and usurpers. All these identities were constructed so that the activists could claim that their movement was a historically necessary element in the still unfolding Chinese revolution. However, there was tension between the Movement and the Party which these identities could not totally alleviate. Furthermore, the movement itself was divided over the issue of its relationship to the Party, forming moderate and radical camps which proposed different variations to these identities. These identities are analysed below in more detail.

The Vanguard of the People

Various movements (*yùndòng*) occupy a central position in the Marxist reading of history, and accordingly they have been regarded as important in modern Chinese

intellectual history too.¹ In Marxism, movements are outcomes and conduits of social forces that follow materialistic laws. The people (*rénmín*), or the masses (*qúnzhòng*), create history and make it progress towards higher forms of social organisation. The Revolution in 1949 had been the result of a movement where the masses had struggled against their oppressors, but the process still continued as society was still moving towards socialism and ultimately communism. The Democracy Movement's collective identities were based on linking the Democracy Movement to this revolutionary process which was still unfolding in Chinese history. On a very general level, the arguments for necessity and desirability of the Democracy Movement were therefore based on the notion of mankind's development towards the ultimate goal of communism, wherein democratic institutions would play a decisive role. As the activists argued, the Democracy Movement provided the agent for this historical change and the movement's mission was to effect it through enlightenment, education, and the representation of the masses and their interests.

As seen above, the line struggle in the Party between the progressive and reactionary lines was framed as the manifestation of popular struggle against feudalism and bureaucratism. To view politics as a struggle between two lines was nothing new for the Chinese, and the Democracy Movement activists had grown up in a political culture where factional struggle in the Party was constantly addressed as a more or less fatal line struggle over the future of the revolution.² As the Democracy Movement activists saw themselves taking part in this struggle on the side of the people and the historically progressive forces in the Party, it was natural that they represented themselves as the revolutionary vanguard on a mission from history. For example, in Qimeng, a writer argued that history progressed through the power of the people which the Democracy Wall manifested in its struggle for a complete reform of the political system, and for democracy and human rights which was "*the mission that history bestows on the vigorous youth, and the mission of the times bestowed on every democratic warrior and the people.*"³

Therefore, the Democracy Movement defined its protagonist base -its supporters- in no lesser terms than 'the people'. When, for example, in January 1979 seven journals in the capital issued the joint declaration asserting that they were 'run by the people', it was not just a statement of an innocent demographical fact, but signified a demand for political respect and legal protection.⁴ The activist groups publishing the journals believed that their role as the vanguard endowed them with the role of acting as popular mouthpieces. As Beijing zhi chun declared, the people wanted democracy, which was the irresistible trend of history, and the Chinese, who had been baptized in the Fifth of April Movement, welcomed Beijing zhi chun with its unyielding fighting spirit.⁵ Like Qimeng, Beijing zhi chun was thus represented as a champion of the people and the correct line in history. Also the most radical of the Beijing Democracy Movement journals, Tansuo, defined its role in the language that it shared with the rest of the journals. As its editors proclaimed, Tansuo: "*...takes as its basic line to become one of the representatives in expressing the voice of the common people in its hardship and the quest to search the reasons for China's*

backwardness...”⁶ Similarly, Wei Jingsheng used the rhetoric of the Democracy Movement as the manifestation of historical forces as defence during his trial on charges of being a counterrevolutionary:

*“Revolution is to follow the tidal wave of historical development, and to stand on the top of this wave struggling against everything old and conservative that stands in the way of historical development.”*⁷

For Wei, the Democracy Movement was the high tide of history, and those opposed to it were the real counterrevolutionaries. Therefore, he argued, Tansuo and his articles in it were clearly revolutionary.⁸

Siwu luntan’s editors argued that history had pushed them to the platform of political struggle, and they had answered its call.⁹ Siwu luntan’s task was to: *“Draw mankind to progress in history.”*¹⁰ Historical necessity also endowed the movement with a vanguard role, as a letter to Siwu luntan from Qingdao stated:

*“...history has its laws of self-development, which cannot be changed by anyone. They [the Leftists] cannot change China’s course of going through the gates of civilization. However, this goal requires the courageous struggle and sacrifice of many people with lofty ideals to lead it to the road of democracy, it needs a group of people to lead the way, and this people are we.”*¹¹

Or, as Zhou Xun argued in Siwu luntan, historical necessity of expanded democracy under socialism had to be turned into historical reality, which *“requires self-conscious work from the people.”*¹² Obviously, the Democracy Movement were these people.

In another Siwu luntan article, a writer compared the Democracy Movement to the Hungarian and Czechoslovakian uprisings in 1956 and 1968, and noted that the central reason behind the Prague Spring had been the emergence of a new bureaucratic class and the need of the proletarian state to defend against it. That they were continuing the same resistance also showed the Democracy Movement activists’ socialist credentials. Indeed, as a Czech author had pointed out, only true communists could reform communism – if the reformers did not believe in it, they would not bother. Consequently, the perseverance of the Democracy Movement journals even under suppression showed that they were the true believers who cared for communism and thus truly spoke for the people. Therefore the writer argued:

*“This opportunity that history offers is hard to come by, it has been made possible by the sacrifice and struggle of our vast masses against resistance and persecution. To forego this opportunity would not only be a pity, it would be a sin.”*¹³

In general, the demand for democratic reforms and opposition to Leftism was described as an unstoppable tidal wave (*cháo*) to underline the Democracy Movement's historical necessity.¹⁴ All journals affirmed that history was guided by the interests of the people, and that these interests had to find a way to be expressed in public to influence politics. This was a historical inevitability (*bìránxìng*) and when the journals assumed their task of representing the true interests of the people, they were just manifestations of this law. It followed that 'history' and the task it bestowed on the journals, was often used as shorthand argument for a Marxist understanding of how social forces worked. In their editors' argumentation, the journals were just an inevitability. *Minzhu yu shidai* demonstrated this in its Opening Words, where according to its editors, the journal was published to reflect the heartfelt wishes (*xīnshēng*) of the people who wanted democracy:

*"History progresses, societies develop. Under the new historical conditions, the people's demand for democracy and establishment of a democratic country has become an irresistible tide."*¹⁵

As the editors argued, the Democracy Movement was a force 'no man can stop', indeed:

*"The people themselves have risen in a spontaneous popular movement to demand democracy, establishment of democratic country, and human rights, that they have not enjoyed before. It can be said that the emergence of this movement means return [guīsù] to the mainstream of history and the necessity of historical progress."*¹⁶

A similar interpretation of the situation was also presented by a writer in another journal, *Zhongguo renquan*:

*"We can only have this one conviction: that the Democracy Movement accords with the progressive direction of history, its existence is imperative, it represents people's interests, and because of this it shall achieve victory."*¹⁷

Kexue minzhu fazhi declared that:

*"The Democracy Movement is a great irresistible historical tide that evolves according to the [demand of] the times and will inevitably do so more as the people came to know this great newly born thing... If one disregards this great revolutionary popular movement, one will receive the condemnation of history!"*¹⁸

A literary journal, *Shidai*, also proclaimed its task in its opening words with a similar sense of historical duty. According to it, China was on the verge of great changes and many social contradictions had forcefully risen to the surface. These had to be solved and could not prevent social development.

“The Giant of the East has to rise up. Xidan Democracy Wall has a role in this historical change, because it abundantly reflects the people’s voice, wishes, demands, and demonstrates the wisdom and strength of the people, and also abundantly reveals social contradictions and maladies.”¹⁹

Therefore, the best and the worst of the people could be found at the Democracy Wall, but the editors were sure that the glorious Xidan Democracy Wall would enter the history books for its contributions to the people. Perhaps one of the most lyrical expressions of the journals’ historical mission and relationship to the people was given in the opening words of Qiu Shi, which declared:

“Our motherland has nurtured us, [we have] grown big suckling the breast milk of our people, we are still just small sprouts, but we will grow strong on the rich soil and will result in a plentiful and substantial harvest, which has grown on the fertile lands of China, belongs to the people, and will become a ‘good thing’ that will allay the people’s hunger.”²⁰

Qiu Shi wanted to provide the spiritual food to the people’s needs and remove the distortions from arts and literature to face life, truth, and the great masses of labouring people, and thereby to constitute the echo of the times that earnestly reflected feelings of the people.²¹ Another small journal, Xin tiandi, declared in its opening words that:

“This journal has been published to stand on the side of the people forever, drawing its nutrition from the people, wishing to represent its demands and voice. It wants to strive for the four modernisations and to earnestly build up democracy and the legal system. It hopes that the people will supervise, help, and guide it. Our journal Xin tiandi is dedicated to open up the thoughts and ideas, life and material, spirit and knowledge of the people.”²²

In a dazibao published in Kexue minzhu fazhi a writer declared that it:

“can be predicted that the great tide of the Chinese People’s Popular Democracy Movement will shatter all the forces that are against it, and no walls opposing it will be left standing in the rapid stream. A truly democratic home country will be established in a very short time, the will of the millions of people cannot be resisted!”²³

The Democracy Movement therefore made a case for itself as a vanguard movement representing the people’s interests, while still being of the people at the same time. However, as its vanguard, the movement also had its responsibilities to the people’s intellectual welfare and development. This was shown in its activists’ second proclaimed identity; as enlighteners.

The Enlighteners

Acting as the vanguard of the people required that the Democracy Movement's relationship to its protagonists was framed in a dual way. While representing those people with political awareness, the movement also had to enlighten those sections of the masses that still suffered from the 'modern superstition' of Leftist ideology. This naturally accorded with the emancipation of minds campaign which was going on simultaneously, and inspired the Democracy Movement activists. The enlightenment role was already explicit in the calls to eliminate the 'modern superstition' of Mao's personality cult, as analysed above, but it was also expressed in the journals in more general terms. True to its name, Qimeng especially emphasised the enlightenment role of the Democracy Movement. As Huang Xiang formulated the journal's mission citing Molière:

*"This [enlightenment] is the duty of all warriors of wisdom. People who have most wisdom and education should be intimately familiar with this duty and spare no efforts in this great task to liberate the people everywhere from superstitions, wake up and look upon the coercion of despots of this world with hatred and scorn, wake the people to discard their intolerable chains put on them by tyrants."*²⁴

An early *dazibao* reprinted in Siwu luntan also made the enlightenment role of the Democracy Wall Movement participants clear, addressing the Chinese youth, it argued that it was the youth which had to continue the struggle and create its own happiness. It stated:

*"You should become the providers and participants of the new enlightenment and movement for the liberation of minds; you should be the heroes who smash the old thinking, old knowledge, [and become] the creators of a new history for our people, the ones who realise these new tasks with enthusiasm."*²⁵

The editors of *Minzhu yu shidai* also argued that social revolution could not succeed without rapidly solving the backwardness of people's thinking. Usual political campaigns and suppression of free thinking were unable to achieve this. They argued: *"Therefore, at present we need to launch a Democracy Movement of people, educating themselves and letting the people themselves liberate their minds."*²⁶ *Wotu* also expressed its mission in the terms of enlightenment and progress:

"...The duty of this journal is to expose darkness and praise the light, explore the truth, to smash the shackles that have chained the minds of our people for thousands of years, to create together with the people a new national philosophy, new national culture, new national spirit, and make China take the road of scientific socialism, increase the process of modernisation, step to the

front row of world development, so we will not disappoint the demands and wishes the world bestows on us.”²⁷

This enlightenment role accorded with the activists’ shared awareness that they had seen through the Leftist deception. However, like that of youthful vanguard, this identity was by definition elitist. It set the movement above from its supporters, the masses, as the activists presumed a mentally superior position over those to be enlightened, and therefore implicitly made conversion and acquisition of high political awareness a precondition for joining the movement. Although the rhetoric of enlightenment in the journals never revealed it, this in effect made the representatives of the masses their superiors. However, there was also the third role identity that the Democracy Movement journals attributed to themselves which was more equalitarian in its implications, that of socialist citizens.

Socialist Citizens

The third collective identity was developed by emphasis on the movement’s activists’ role as citizens making use of their legal rights. As Hua Chuan saw it in Kexue minzhu fazhi:

“China is a socialist country, its political powers belong to the people; if socialist democracy is fully implemented in China, it means that every citizen has the right to openly criticize all national and Party leaders, not only to criticize, but judge them according to the facts.”²⁸

For Hua, the Democracy Movement and its journals were progressive elements in the exercise of their rights as socialist citizens. Similar arguments were voiced by other authors. Zhou Xun, for example, argued in Siwu luntan, that citizen’s rights in the constitution of the freedom of speech, publication and association had to be realised in order to realise popular supervision of the Party through the masses’ publications. If this was considered bourgeois freedom of news, why then, he asked, were the rights written in a proletarian constitution in the first place?²⁹ After resuming its publication in October 1979, Tansuo also argued that it based its activities firmly on constitutional rights of citizens.³⁰ The exercise of legal rights was also directly connected to the Democracy Movement’s progressive historical role. As Siwu luntan already asserted in its opening comments:

“Siwu luntan wants to exercise the rights of supervision and management that the constitution grants to the people, and to remake the constitution from a piece of paper into a really existing basis of our society... Only this suits the high tide of progress of the world.”³¹

The editors in Kexue minzhu fazhi brought together the identities of Marxist vanguard and citizens when describing the Democracy Wall:

*“Here [at the Democracy Wall] many outstanding pieces of work have been published; the voice of what is happening has been heard all over the world. This is a great victory to Marxism and Mao Zedong thought, [it shows how] the self-aware great masses exercise their constitutional rights [as] the extremely vigorous embodiment of the holy and inviolable democratic rights.”*³²

One of the writers who also brought together the identities of the vanguard, citizens and enlighteners, was Hu Ping. As he argued in November 1979, in an elaborate defence of Democracy Movement’s journals the fate of the journals was not only about themselves but also the fate of democracy and legality in the whole country. He saw that under socialism, people’s journals were not only possible, but that they had to exist. Although the official press was largely in the hands of good people, there were no guarantees that this would always remain so. Instead, they could be usurped by bad people and thus their ability to always represent the proletariat could be questioned.³³

Hu defended the journals on the basis that the Party policy line and directives were all something that should be permitted to follow, and achieve through their own behaviour. The journals carried out the ‘hundred schools contending and hundred flowers blooming’ policy, to promote the development of the Chinese socialist culture, and so should not be given the ‘hat’ of ‘not wanting Party leadership.’ Hu also pointed out that the freedom of speech and freedom of publication were both protected by the constitution and use of them was completely appropriate as these were the basic rights that had resulted from the revolutionary struggle that the people had won under the leadership of the Party. Therefore when; *“the people want to use their own citizen’s rights, it is totally irrelevant that they do not want the Party leadership to rein them in.”*³⁴

According to Hu, the journals were also a tool to effect the people maturity:

*“The Chinese people, including the youth, have great political awareness and ability to tell right from wrong as well as revolutionary enthusiasm and sense of historical duty after having repeatedly reflected on the teaching of the Party and the experiences in struggle. To publish journals of likeminded people is one of their ways to show concern for the fate of their country, support socialist democracy and promote the four modernisations. We should take this as a positive sign.”*³⁵

The Democracy Movement was therefore portrayed as a movement of progressive Marxists who acted as the vanguard of the people who were represented and enlightened by it, while being at the same time citizens who exercised their rights. Each of these role identities had slightly different function in the defence of the movement. The identity talk of a citizens’ movement, mostly served a function in defence of the movement’s activities through identifying them with the Dengists’ call

for the return to socialist legality. Identity talk about the movement of the vanguard and enlighteners served more mobilization needs, as well as the rhetorical function of providing the movement's demands with gravity vis-à-vis the Party. However, these identities were not contradictory. After the years of Leftist dictatorship, to act as citizens *was* progressive for the activists, and the future socialist democracy was deemed to need active citizens who exercised their legal rights. Indeed, as the Movement's arguments implied, its victory over the Party Leftists and bureaucrats would both require and create active socialist citizenry. However, although the identity of socialist citizens was generally accepted, the fragmentation of the Democracy Movement was notable in the ways its camps framed its antagonists, and the relationship to the Party.

The Antagonists

The mainstream of the Democracy Movement activists framed the Party Left and bureaucratism as its antagonist forces in society, the source of all its grievances. The way in which the struggle between the two was defined in Manichean terms, was illustrated by a writer in Taolun:

*“The Chinese Democracy Movement that represents the revolutionary demands of the great masses to completely eradicate the system of feudal dictatorship and to develop productive forces, also represents the struggle to death against the revisionist and corrupt Whateverists who try to restore feudalism. This is a struggle between light and darkness....”*³⁶

Similar framing was used by three Guangdongese journals in January 1980 in their declaration to all journals to urge a united struggle for freedom of publication by all Democracy Movement journals. They asked why the journals faced such nation-wide suppression:

*“Is this because the journals are illegal? Is it because the people do not welcome our journals? Is it because ‘a small minority of shameless people’ are ‘causing disturbances’? No! Absolutely not! This is a struggle to death between new and old. It is about a savage counter attack and suppression of new things by the evil forces of the old.”*³⁷

As explained, the Democracy Movement mainstream agreed that the undemocratic political system made it possible for ‘careerists’ and ‘conspirators’ to infiltrate the state and the Party, and turn them into tools of their own power. Lin Biao and the Gang of Four had epitomized this development, and the Leftist dogma of perpetual class struggle and the personality cult of Mao had been devised to deceive the people. The feudal fascist dictatorship had been both morally degenerate and unscientific. The Leftist-bureaucratic antagonist was thus framed as the antithesis of the Democracy Movement. The Democracy Movement participant's militant

collective identity in opposition to the Party Left was also demonstrated in the name they called themselves as ‘democratic warriors’ (*mínzhǔ zhànshì*).³⁸

As the mainstream of the Democracy Movement saw it, these warriors were battling on the right side of the history which the Party should have also occupied. The historically necessary Party was therefore framed as the second support base of the Democracy Movement, while its Leftist forces were its antagonists. However, the position of acting as the vanguard of the people clearly created overlapping identities for the Party and the Democracy Movement. This aspect was also not missed by the Democracy Movement activists, many of whom saw the movement as a continuation of the revolutionary process in Chinese history. As seen in their diagnostics, they argued that the Party needed popular support in order to remove the Leftist and bureaucratic elements that had derailed democratic progress after the liberation. The issue was not to carry out a revolution against the Party, but how to direct it to take the correct way for reforms. However, when the Democracy Movement journals claimed that they were also of the people and reflected their opinions, they encroached on the realm which the Party had virtually monopolized in Chinese society. This made their relationship to the Party problematic and thus several mainstream journals tried to clarify it.

The mainstream Democracy Movement position was that it and its journals acted as intermediaries between the Party and the people.³⁹ On a more theoretical level, a Siwu luntan writer saw the relationship as that of dialectical unity of opposites (*duìlì tǒngyī*). This was, of course, the basic Marxist principle of the way in which all matters were seen to evolve in the universe. But as Siwu luntan writers saw it, it had been absent in Chinese politics, where no unofficial publications had been allowed before.⁴⁰ As a Siwu luntan editor argued, journals were the correct way to express popular feelings and opinions to the Party and government. Their purpose was to enliven the political life in China in accordance with the Marxist view of the dialectical unity of opposites and the notion that these opposites could only develop through struggle. This was called ‘mutual supervision and urging’ (*hùxiāng dūcù*) between the people and the Party.⁴¹ The journals were close, yet separate, from the Party providing it with the required counterpart in the unity. In another article a Siwu luntan writer stated the journal’s relationship to the Party in a more definitive way: the journals were a way to realise the rights in the constitution. The journals were useful, because they performed popular supervision of the Party, which the Party media did not.⁴²

This view meant that Siwu luntan, like many other journals, would have preferred official endorsement from the Party, and not total subjugation to it.⁴³ The sensitivity of the Democracy Movement’s relationship to the Party was also illustrated in the significance the activists attributed to the Fifth of April Movement as a spontaneous movement. This interpretation was in many respects different from the official line. This was well illustrated in the article written by An Yang in Siwu luntan, who commented on the article in Renmin ribao on 21 December 1978 entitled ‘*Long Live*

the People – Tiananmen Square Revolutionary Movement'.⁴⁴ An Yang found unacceptable the Renmin ribao's writer's claim that if the unified Party Centre under centralist democracy did not lead the people in democratic struggle, the danger of the influence of wrong, non-proletarian, ideas in the people would be strong, and would lead them to peril. Acceptance of such a view would naturally jeopardise the chance of a popular movement against the Party Left.⁴⁵

An Yang further argued that history had demonstrated how wrong Renmin ribao was. The Party Centre had issued the ban to go to the Tiananmen Square in Qingming 1976, purged Deng Xiaoping, and discredited the Fifth of April Movement. "*No matter if all the people realised it or not, it [the Fifth of April Movement] was directed against the present Party Centre*", because it had opposed the masses and the ranks and file of the Party. The Party Centre was a concrete thing with its members and if any of these cadres who decided on the oppressive Party policies during the Fifth of April Movement were still in power, they should leave the Party Centre or imprisoned, otherwise they would oppose the will of the people. The article made it clear that the activists regarded an independent Democracy Movement as necessary at least as long as the wrong people occupied the Party leadership. Indeed:

*"They used to say: 'No Communist Party, no New China. Now it should be said: We have now New China, we should have New Communist Party!' This is, [I am] afraid, the one very precious lesson the Fifth of April Movement gave us?"*⁴⁶

Similar sentiments could be found in Qunzhong cankao where a reader named Yu Yaoji wrote a letter arguing that all the true revolutions in history had been radical. Now,

*"Some people say that if the central authorities had not reversed the Tiananmen Incident verdict, the Democracy Wall Movement would not have started in Beijing. I do not agree. I think the central authorities are nothing extraordinary. Only the people are great; the central authorities are not so great."*⁴⁷

Interestingly, some Siwu luntan writers also discussed the journals' emergence under the terms of what seemed like civil society making progress and asserting itself. An unnamed writer in August argued that the people were now freer to ask questions and seek the truth than they were three years ago. The writer affirmed that this accorded with historical materialism and stated that: "*This is progress, and it is not given to us by some saviour, it is gained by us*",⁴⁸ and asserted that 'civil society' (*rénmín shèhuì*) had taken a step forward under the Democracy Wall Movement. The task of the Democracy Wall Movement was to criticise the situation if the socialism practised ever became separated from its actual nature.⁴⁹ The editors of Siwu luntan also expressed similar sentiment in an article written in December 1979 under the worsening freeze:

*“Perhaps we should not have promoted an independent democracy movement, but to work within danweis and write to official papers ... Oh, if it just could have been so! But in a society that is seriously ill with bureaucratism and strictly regimented, it is important that those who have the courage, take up the responsibility of fighting against the bureaucracy and organise social forces freely...”*⁵⁰

As the writers saw it, the journals should have been given room to thrive and that the Party should have taken the Democracy Movement’s side, and not the other way round.

Of all the Beijing Democracy Movement journals, Qunzhong cankao was the one that was most willing to establish an institutional relationship with the Party as demonstrated by its proposal to the central authorities to establish a “*democratic party faction under the name of Association for Democracy and Four Modernisations (Mínzhǔ yǔ sìhuà xiéhuì)*”. This proposal included the rules of the organisation, according to which, the Democratic Party Faction’s purpose was to serve “*under the Party leadership to aim at nurturing and developing democratic warriors and educating management personnel on all levels.*”⁵¹ Its guiding principles were to be Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong thought, which nevertheless it could rectify if necessary. Further, its principles were the ‘three fundamental principles’,⁵² democracy and centralism, and the ‘three great winds’.⁵³ In a formulation that clarified the Democracy Movement’s internal division at the time, the proposal was said to promote democracy and oppose ‘anarchy and democratic individualism’. The Association’s duties included education and public debates, propaganda, inspection and analysis, and supervision of the Party. Therefore, it “*controlled the Party and co-existed*” with the Party.⁵⁴

Qunzhong cankao also advocated this line in another article where the writer argued that the Democracy Movement’s direction was to develop under the accurate guidance of the Party, yet at the same time it was to serve as its mirror, “*whose slashes the Party could not avoid*”. However, as the writer argued, using the language of a historical tide familiar from other journals, if the Party tried to block the swelling of the Democracy Movement, should the embankments collapse it ran the risk of flooding the whole country. Instead, the Party should have guided the flow of the surge because: “*This is the duty the history bestows on the Party.*”⁵⁵

Qunzhong cankao made two other proposals on that the Party should publish a journal like Qunzhong cankao entitled ‘Reference News of Popular Opinion’ (*Minyi cankao bao*), and let the opinions from the left, the centre, and the right be voiced in it, and let the people to learn about the true situation and problems in the country. Secondly, the Party should establish ‘democratic factions’ (*mínzhǔ pài*) at all levels of the government and the Party, i.e. the very Association for Democracy and Four Modernisations introduced above. Qunzhong cankao writers argued that as the Party

had its links to the youth through the Youth League, women through the women's associations, and workers through labour unions, etc., then why could it not have a Democratic Faction as its link to the Democracy Movement? The Party and the Democracy Movement would then contend with each other within this framework. In this way the Party would not have to be concerned about the Democracy Movement harming stability and unity and would gain a 'positive factor' under its leadership.⁵⁶

The members of the Li Yizhe group saw that there should also be an organisational connection between the Party and the Democracy Movement journals. According to them, the journals should act together and elect a joint editorial board for a certain term. This editorial board could have an official representative from the Party responsible for giving the official press inside information on the Democracy Movement, reporting to the government, making proposals to the journals and supervising them, so that they would not break laws and regulations, reveal state secrets, publish personal attacks or pornography, and be prevented from becoming a way to profit for some individuals. At the same time the government should provide the journals with printing utilities, paper, offices, etc.⁵⁷ However, in another interview, also Li Yizhe made it clear that the journals had the right to openly criticise every leader in the Party. As they argued in February 1979:

“From the Party Chairman to a common cadre, all should be subjected to criticism and supervision without the obligation of the people to love and support them. If someone gets the people's support and love, it is because he is able to advance the people's interests and prosperity as well as doing his job well. If someone hurts and violates the interests of the people and doesn't do his job well, the people have the right to remove him from the post.”⁵⁸

This mainstream Democracy Movement activists' claim that they were taking the side of the progressive faction in the Party, nevertheless meant that they reserved to themselves the right to decide which individual leaders belonged to it. As such the mainstream of the Democracy Movement placed itself above the Party members, while affirming the leadership of the Party in general. In this they resembled what Andrew G. Walder has called 'heterodox Rebel Red Guards', whom he compares in turn to Protestant Reformers with their idea to separate the holy body of the Christian congregation from Papal corruption. In the same way, the heterodox Rebel Red Guards had tried to separate the spirit of the Party – Mao Zedong thought – from its worldly existence, and criticise its individual members and practises.⁵⁹ In a very similar manner the mainstream of the Democracy Movement separated the historically necessary Party from the existing corrupt Party. What was very telling in this respect was the way in which some journals discussed the eventuality should the Party not heed their advice on democratic reforms. Only then might a real opposition, a true dissident force, emerge in society. As Siwu luntan stated in March 1980:

“Ultimately a latent 'anti-government force', 'dissident movement', or 'human rights movement', can really emerge in China, this would be detrimental to the

*country and the people. If the development continues it will be the root of even greater instability and disunity.*⁶⁰

Other writers referred to this scenario with metaphors such as collapsing river embankments,⁶¹ a volcano awaiting eruption,⁶² or a rerun of a fierce revolution.⁶³ However, some activists would have liked these predictions to come true sooner rather than later.

The Problem of Opposition to the Party

Reaching agreement over the core framings on the movement's antagonists and protagonists was a major source of disagreement within the Democracy Movement. Unlike its mainstream, the movement's radical wing was willing to frame the whole Party as the antagonist. The Joint Council underwent long discussions before it could reach an agreement that the Council, and thereby the core of the Beijing Democracy Movement, did not aim at the destruction of the Party, but offered the people an open channel to express their opinions and supervise the Party. This, the majority believed, was best served by independent journals which supported the reformist forces in the Party. More radical figures, like Wei Jingsheng and Yang Jing of Tansuo, disagreed with this, but followed the majority decision.⁶⁴

Signs of similar dissent were also apparent in other places. As Robin Munro notes, Chen Erjin's long essay 'On Proletarian Democratic Revolution' in the tenth issue of *Siwu luntan* included references to a second Communist Party as a counter force to the existing one. However, chapter in Chen's original essay in which the second party was discussed in detail was deleted by *Siwu luntan* editors as too sensitive and, as Munro states, one may assume that the deleted parts included discussion of how such a second party would have been brought about and therefore a 'minimal programme' on formation of a political party of its own by the Democracy Movement.⁶⁵ That the *Siwu luntan* editors did this just illustrated how such notion of forming a competing party against the Communist Party was against the mainstream definition of the movement's collective identity of not taking an oppositional stance vis-à-vis the Party.

The Democracy Movement's relation to the Party also caused internal splits in journals. In *Zhongguo renquan tongmeng* one factor contributing to such a split was that Ren Wanding wanted to seek official recognition for the League from the National People's Congress, thus forming a party of its own.⁶⁶ The Jiedong Society which separated from Qimeng demanded, *inter alia*, competitive multi-Party system and was notably anti-Marxist,⁶⁷ like Tansuo. On the other hand, Jintian was even split over its editor's decision to join the Joint Council in February 1979, when parts of the Jintian group wanted to have nothing to do with a political movement.⁶⁸ Acting outside the Party, let alone opposing it, was a radical notion to many activists and needed careful justification. The framing of the relation between the Party and the

Democracy Movement was therefore a complex issue, but the moderate mainstream collective identity made a movement acceptable for larger groups of people than the radical one.

The movement was also divided over the issue of how exactly the Democracy Movement should work with the masses. Should it be to organise the masses and provide them with more affirmative leadership in their struggle against the bureaucrats and Leftists, or just enlighten them and represent their opinions? The writers in journals appear to have been quite aware that a true popular movement needed mass support and that this had to be achieved through active work. This was argued in an article ‘On Difficulties’ in Siwu luntan’s October issue 1979, which came out under worsening political climate and increasing repression. Here the writer was afraid that there was not enough power for political reform, but noted that the activists should not confuse the Democracy Movement’s power with the power of the people:

“We just have to propagate [our views], call the masses to come to our help in thousands in our common great revolutionary cause, to help and promote the strong political reforms by the government; this is totally possible and ought to happen. One must realise that the right cause cannot be resisted when a popular movement is set in motion, no power can stop the mighty torrent of democracy, history cannot be changed according to some individuals’ wills. But at the same time historical experience tells us that if important reforms do not have mass movement [behind them] and the ideological groundwork done beforehand and [if they] merely rely on promulgating statutes they cannot succeed.”⁶⁹

However, the formulation in Siwu luntan also revealed a somewhat blind reliance on historical inevitability of the Democracy Movement, and avoided the issue of whether it should have engaged in active member recruitment and mobilisation, to create a mass movement in concrete terms. This aspect was touched upon in a letter from a reader signed a ‘Shanghai Worker’ in Kexue minzhu fazhi, who argued that through the journals one could nurture and forge the core personnel, gather forces, and establish robust foundations to organise the masses following the example of how Lenin had organised the Russian Socialist Party beginning with the journal ‘Comet’. Thus:

“If we could really organise a popular organisation to struggle for democracy it would be so excellent. During the Fifth of April Movement we did not have any organisation and so we were defeated, the struggle of tens of thousands of revolutionaries did not have a common direction...”⁷⁰

However, such letters were lonely voices in the Beijing Democracy Movement. Apart from setting up their own groups and a loose joint organisation, the Democracy Movement activists were, by and large, not deliberating on the

organisation of a proper popular mass movement independent of and even in opposition to the Party and providing it with leadership. Apart from the daunting logistical and organisational demands and political risk involved in such a task, the reason for this lay in the acceptance of the Party's leading position in the society. As the mainstream of the Democracy Movement participants saw it, the Democracy Movement was directed against the Party Left, not the historically necessary organisation of the Party as such. Forming an organisation aimed at mass mobilisation could have signalled a different posture and most of the Democracy Movement activists were not up to the organisation of a second Party – at least not as yet. Even the need to form a loose national organisation was only driven home in 1980, when the official repression forced the journals into nationwide co-operation. In *Kexue minzhu fazhi* a writer under name Bi Dan, summarised the relationship between the people and the journals succinctly, characterising that they were the 'mouth and tongue of the people' and fulfilled the role in the line struggle to "*propagate the people, educate the people, and attack the enemy.*"⁷¹ But not assuming the leadership of the people on their own.

However, many Beijing journals also witnessed internal splits over the issue of mobilisation of mass support. As Claude Widor saw it, the Democracy Movement had moderate and radical lines on mobilisation of petitioners. For example, a founding member of *Siwu luntan*, Zhou Nan, broke away from the journal and published a *dazibao* arguing for mobilising petitioners on Xidan Wall.⁷² Tansuo and Chen Lü faction in the *Zhongguo renquan* also belonged to those who were in favour of the Democracy Movement mobilising peasants and petitioners, while others did not support this view.⁷³ It can therefore be argued that the Beijing Democracy Movement activists could agree only on the minimum definition of their collective identity, as those who opposed the Party Left and bureaucratism (even if also here their views of the severity of this problem varied), and represented the enlightened sectors of the people, and citizens who exercised their legal rights, but anything that would have led to an organisational confrontation with the Party was beyond the movement's participants' capability to agree upon. The problem was, in a way, temporarily solved when the first crackdown hit more radical groups the hardest and the Democracy Movement became dominated by more moderate views. After this, even those journals which previously did not participate in the Joint Council, *Beijing zhi chun* and *Wotu*, activated in co-operation.

These differences between the journals made the movement weaker in the face of suppression and their inability to mobilise the masses was noted by many writers. Some writers also tried reconcile their differences by emphasising what the journals had in common. For example, when the journals finally established nation-wide co-operation under the Chinese National Association of the People's Publications on 15 September 1980, one of the central activists in the process, He Qiu, did not deny that there were disagreements, even deep ones, within the Democracy Movement, but argued that instead they should concentrate on what united them: scientific approach and the desire to see reforms advance. Indeed: "*All the people who wish to see*

reforms and social progress are our close comrades and friends.”⁷⁴ As He Qiu argued, the two forces that blocked the road to economic development and reforms were the bureaucratic system and the masses who had lost confidence and enthusiasm in politics. All top-down measures were powerless against them, so instead:

*“Only the extensively developed Democracy Movement can force the ossified bureaucrats to sober up or relinquish their power and only the extensively developed Democracy Movement can fully arouse the confidence and enthusiasm of the masses, in other words, only the extensively developed Democracy Movement can make Chinese reforms and progress achieve positive results.”*⁷⁵

He Qiu’s formulations also showed how only a very general definition of the Democracy Movement’s collective identity as a progressive vanguard acting against bureaucratism could keep its participant groups together. The differences also came out when the Democracy Movement had to defend itself from its adversaries and the misperceptions of foreigners.

Refuting Unwanted Labels

One of the major functions of the Democracy Movement’s progressive collective identity was to thwart the criticism and altercasting by the Party Left and conservatives, who labelled the movement as representing ‘bourgeois liberalization’, and being organised by elements who were ‘anti-Party’ and ‘anti-Marxist’, ‘harbouring ulterior motives’, ‘counterrevolutionaries’, ‘representing only a small minority of the people’, ‘anarchists’, ‘ultra-individualists’, and ‘dissidents’ or even as ‘those who were wished for the return of the Gang of Four’.⁷⁶ They also defended the suppression of the Democracy Wall as ‘protecting citizens’ democratic rights and social order’ which implied that the activists were harming them.⁷⁷ Perhaps the best examples of what the activists were rhetorically up against, was given in the ‘Directive No 9’ in February 1981, which heralded the third crackdown on the Democracy Movement. This stated that the activist groups:

*“...are seducing, deceiving, bewitching, and inciting a minority of politically naïve and inexperienced young people in order to achieve their evil political ends. They ignore the interests of the state and the nation and are only afraid that the world is not in chaos. They conspire together, hold secret meetings, and establish local and national organisations. They have adopted the tactics of using legal forms to screen their illegal activities, and they wave the banners of ‘democracy’, ‘freedom’, ‘human rights’ and ‘reform’ while pursuing activities which oppose the Party and socialism.”*⁷⁸

Acceptance of any of these labels would clearly have severely damaged the legitimacy of the Democracy Movement and therefore had to be promptly rejected or defused. However, the division in the movement made the defence strategies vary, as was demonstrated when the movement had to defend itself against the first crackdown in March-April 1979. At the extreme of opinions, Wei Jingsheng's views on democracy were dismissed as anarchism and extreme individualism, and his criticism of Deng Xiaoping met with furious denunciation. For example, one poster supported the activities of the Beijing authorities on the grounds that the Party Centre was not opposed to democracy through its actions, but simply protecting the healthy development of democracy by removal of those 'causing trouble and disturbance'. What these elements advocated was not democracy, but anarchy, damage to stability and unity, and end of the four modernisations. Indeed, 'they deserved punishment'.⁷⁹ Other *dazibaos* joined the denunciation of the movement's radical wing as 'anarchist' and advocating 'extreme democracy',⁸⁰ or even saw that Wei's comments came out of the garbage bin of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four.⁸¹

However, such *dazibaos* were published only in *Kexue minzhu fazhi*. The mainstream of journals adopted the strategy of distancing themselves from the movement's radical wing, while still defending its own positions against the crackdown. For example *Beijing zhi chun* saw it take the same line with the Party Centre and made a clear distinction between it and the 'anarchists'. According to it, these individuals had not studied socialism and did not understand what socialist democracy was about advocating anarchism and confusing everything. All those who saw the Party leadership and the masses as opposing one other or emphasised one over another, had to be opposed. Nevertheless, the writers saw that a bigger threat still were the *Whateverists*, who schemed to smother socialist democracy in its cradle, although the *Beijing zhi chun* was also confident that neither of the groups would be able to turn the wheels of history off their track.⁸² Chen Ziming and Liu Di of *Beijing zhi chun* also agreed on the analysis that the basic social split lay as between the anarchists, the mainstream Democracy Movement with the reformists in the Party, and the *Whateverists*.⁸³ Geng Nianzhou of the *Kexue minzhu fazhi* also saw that such tripartite division existed.⁸⁴

However, to distance the mainstream from its radical wing, also meant partial acceptance of criticism. Some writers were unwilling to accept this and turned from defence to attack arguing that the crackdown and the press campaign against the Democracy Movement showed the strength of the *Whateverist* forces which had to be opposed. As a writer in a *Kexue minzhu fazhi* argued, the official press slandered the Democracy Movement activists when it labelled them all counterrevolutionaries and members of criminal elements. Echoing the crude Red Guards language that prevailed during the Cultural Revolution proper,⁸⁵ the writer likened the comments in the official press to: "*crap coming from the buttocks of the masters, treating others rudely through arrogance, all the time using bureaucratic tones, smelling terribly, making people mad.*"⁸⁶ In June, Bi Dan denounced the crackdown in *Kexue minzhu fazhi* by stating that:

“The remaining Gang of Four cronies and people who don’t reveal their true intentions and wield police batons and benefit from it, must not be allowed to use the base methods of propagating the [four cardinal] principles to attack the popular movement and democracy calling it unlawful behaviour.”⁸⁷

He also accused that the crackdown is:

“[A] counterattack by those who are using the feudal fascism and slavism of Lin and Jiang towards people who explore matters [tàn suǒ, but this was not a name of the journal here, although it may have referred to it] and revolutionary people who demand democracy and the four modernisations. They try to continue employing the base method of using the distorted thoughts of Mao Zedong to suppress the people and make them stupid.”⁸⁸

These responses showed that part of the mainstream of the Democracy Movement had no intention of accepting any parts of their adversaries’ labelling. Indeed, they had to be refuted at any cost, and apply the adversaries with labels instead. Here, the collective identity of the movement as a popular vanguard was very important, as it made clear the credentials of the movement. As a writer in *Kexue minzhu fazhi* argued, the calls for stability and unity against the Democracy Movement were sophistry which hid wrongful and reactionary schemes of the Whateverists through distortion and defilement. If the government trusted the people and their ability to tell right from wrong, it should allow the people to express their views. *“We believe that the truth is in our hands – in the hands of politically aware Chinese people!”* argued the writer.⁸⁹

When the crackdown’s first shock had worn off in June 1979, Beijing *zhi chun* also carried articles more critical of the authorities. A writer named Zheng Ming, argued that the four cardinal principles made sense, but what surprised him, was that the same people who had benefited from the Gang of Four and continued to employ feudal-fascist methods, also supported these principles on the surface. They now tried to negate the third plenum of the eleventh central committee decisions on ideological work and brand young people as counter-revolutionaries, attempting to smear the youth as the captives of capitalist ideological trends, and as “black sheep (*hàiqúnzhī mǎ*)” harming the four modernisations.⁹⁰

The three identities of vanguard, enlighteners and citizens also had their role in the inner split of the movement. The identity of (socialist) citizens who exercised their legal rights was the most general of these in its scope, and referred to the activities of the whole movement, whereas the contents of the identities of the progressive vanguard and enlighteners was contested. While everybody could agree on the citizens-in-making identity, the rift between its Marxist mainstream and the radical wing within the movement meant that the nature of the vanguard and enlightenment had different meanings for the participants – the banners of democracy were either

red or white, so to speak. As the consequence, the mainstream tried to marginalise the radicals to the more general identity of citizens and truth-seeking youth, who had their freedom of speech, but for some reason had lost their way, yet retained for itself the historical right to leading the movement through the mastering of scientific Marxism.⁹¹ For the radical wing, the mainstream also had its freedom of speech, but was still under the spell of deceptive Marxism, and in order to become truly popular, it should have discarded all theories that supported any forms of dictatorship.⁹²

Foreigners as the Neutral Audience

The Democracy Movement also attracted wide attention from foreign observers. For many it gave the first real opportunity to peak behind the façade of the workers' paradise and get to know Chinese people with their worries and dreams. The Democracy Movement also provided good news as for many observers it marked a dissident movement with demands which resonated well in the West, i.e. democracy and human rights. It was no surprise that many foreign correspondents and diplomats found their way to the Democracy Wall and to the journals' offices. Both sides tried to benefit from these contacts, although the risks in such encounters were unbalanced. The Democracy Movement activists could, and were, persecuted for their contacts with foreigners, while the worst that could happen to correspondents was ejection from the country.

The benefit of contact with foreigners was that it acted as a two way channel of information. It could increase the activists' understanding and knowledge of the workings of Western political systems, and could be used to summon support from international opinion, as well as a source for information about China itself.⁹³ But they could also act as channels of information within China. Their reports to their overseas newspapers were translated and beamed back through the BBC, Voice of America, and other foreign radio stations that were widely followed in China where the authorities no longer interfered with foreign broadcasts after Mao's death.⁹⁴ Further, some activists assumed that the Democracy Movement's arguments would get a better hearing in the leadership if reported in the Party's internal press. As Liu Qing described this, when told to foreign correspondents and then disseminated in the Party through the *neibu* press like the Reference News, it was as if the news would "*cross the ocean and become gold-plated.*"⁹⁵ For these reasons, and for the basic curiosity of meeting people from countries which the Leftist had previously portrayed as the source of all evils, the journals were generally willing to receive foreign reporters and students as their guests, but usually arranged the meetings in public, so that no one could accuse them of clandestine activities with foreigner – although to no avail.⁹⁶ In this the activist took a calculated risk, but it also fit with their self-image of openness and willingness to learn from the West.

For the Democracy Movement, foreigners formed what could be termed a neutral audience as discussed in the introduction. I.e. the foreigners were not directly

involved in the conflict, but they render the movement some assistance, as well as cause some troubles. That the movement did not frame any other group as a neutral audience was logical, as the movement's support base, the people, was basically too large to leave anyone, except the real revisionist and unpatriotic elements, out of the definition in China. In general, the activists' attitude to foreigners varied from non-antagonist detachment to positive engagement. As a sign of the latter, a poster argued: "*Foreigners... who care about the democratic movement and show sympathy and real interest are the true friends of the Chinese people... we thank them from the bottom of our heart.*"⁹⁷ Among those groups which were most willing to learn from the West and desired engagement with it, were Zhongguo renquan group and Qimeng, as their open letters President Carter illustrated.⁹⁸

However, as the activists saw it, the foreigners also made many mistakes when reporting on the Democracy Movement. Some did not regard this too serious,⁹⁹ but others felt that these mistakes had to be corrected. It has been noted in social movement research literature that in general there are four ways to respond to outsiders' comments on movements: seeing them either as incorrect or as misunderstandings based on flawed impressions related to the commentators' ability to comprehend the movement. They can also be taken as reinforcements of identity avowals, or, in the last case, activists may even accept criticism.¹⁰⁰ In the Democracy Movement the first two responses at least were used. This was shown in the way the movement's writers responded to being termed 'dissidents' in the foreign press. The issue was taken up by Siwu luntan and Beijing zhi chun, which both directly denounced this identity label. To call the Democracy Movement activists dissidents was a direct attack on their progressive Marxist identity and had to be refuted.

In this regard the Siwu luntan's editors felt that their self-perception greatly differed from the Western reporters' perception. They stated that those who claimed that Chinese youth wanted Western freedoms and a Western political system did not understand China, and that the Democracy Movement activists were different from the Soviet dissidents in their social background and education. They were not highly educated intellectuals, but ordinary workers, who belonged to the lower echelons of the people, and did not know and understand the human rights concepts and theory very well.¹⁰¹ As the editors also strongly maintained, the activists were not dissidents. For example, an article in the Baltimore Sun in which it was stated that the journals were a branch of political power (*yīzhī lìliang*) in China, had astonished the editors. Furthermore, the reporter had labelled them as 'dissidents' (*chí bùtóng zhèngjiànzhě*). The editors refuted this by stating that:

"We are not dissidents. We struggle for communism which realises elimination of exploitation, oppression, inequality, and provides freedom for all. We do this under the guidance of Marxism, to establish democratic socialism, legality, and a modernized strong and prosperous country. Thinking about the Democracy Movement as a dissident movement or making groundless accusations that they

‘oppose socialism’ and strive for capitalist class democracy in this movement, is inaccurate. We are a part of the people, not a separate branch of power.’¹⁰²

Accordingly, Siwu luntan regarded the Boston Sun’s article as: “trumped up charges and slander”.¹⁰³ Similar refutation of the label of dissident can be found in Beijing zhi chun’s interview with the Li Yizhe group, whose members Wang Xizhe and Li Zhengtian refuted the claim that they formed an opposition faction and were dissidents.¹⁰⁴ These examples and statements indicated how the mainstream of the Beijing Democracy Movement believed that the notion of dissidence was contrary to its progressive Marxist collective identity. The same identities were also reinforced on an individual level, where other revolutionary attributes were also added to the Democracy Movement and its participants.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 7

¹ *Yùndòng* (运动) means both a popular movement, which is a collective expression of political demands, and campaign, which is an activity directed from above against some persons or towards some political goals. Movements, like the Cultural Revolution, may begin as campaigns. For the logic of campaigns in Chinese politics, see Lieberthal (1995, 64-65). In China the concept of movement was created at the turn of the 20th century by critical intellectuals who wished to see China move into modernity. This moving, and getting society into motion, was given the name *yùndòng*. More or less explicitly, it was the intelligentsia that was to be the movers that set the motion going and guided it. This notion also perfectly fitted the Marxist-Leninist notion of a vanguard of the people leading the rest in the revolution. The identity of the vanguard and enlighteners, that the Democracy Movement activists also drew on, could therefore be said to have longer intellectual tradition behind it, although the activists framed it mostly in distinctly Marxist terms.

² Garside 1981, 3

³ Zhang Yuan: *Shì kēxué shèhuìzhūyì ma?* [Is This Scientific Socialism?], *Qimeng* 2 (Beijing) 1979, March 1979, CUP 1, 251

⁴ *Liánhé shēngmíng* [Joint Declaration] *Tansuo* 2 / 1979, CUP 2, 24; see also *Gěi Sìwǔ lùntán biānjíbùde xìn èr fēng* [Two Letters to the Siwu luntan’s editors], *Siwu luntan* 13 (11 / 1979), CUP 8, 83-84; Burns (1983, 37) has rightly noted that ‘one of the most striking similarities of the unofficial publications was their claim to be speaking for ‘the people’. Guang Lei (1996, 2) notes that in the Democracy Wall Movement’s main journals *Tansuo*, *Siwu luntan* and *Beijing zhi chun* the word *rénmín* (the people) was the second most used concept, having the frequency of 153, 226 and 247 times in each respectively. Of the studied concepts, only the word *mínzhǔ* (democracy) was used more often.

⁵ *Fā kān cí* [Opening Words], *Beijing zhi chun* 1 / 1979, CUP 3, 279

⁶ *Fā kān shēngmíng* [Inauguration Words], *Tansuo* 1 / 1979, CUP 1, 1

⁷ *Wèi Jīngshēng zìwǒ biànhùcí* [Wei Jingsheng’s Plea for Innocence], *Siwu luntan* 14 (12 / 1979), CUP 9, 86

⁸ *Ibid.*, 86-87

⁹ *Zhì dúzhě* [To Readers], *Siwu luntan* 4 (2 / 1979), CUP 4, 77

¹⁰ *Siwu luntan zhāngchéng* [Rules of the Siwu luntan], *Siwu luntan* 11 (9 / 1979), CUP 7, 2

¹¹ *Qingdao Sun Feng tóngzhì lái xìn zhāiyào* [Summary of the Letter from Sun Feng of Qingdao], *Siwu luntan* 9 (7 / 1979), CUP 6, 54

¹² Zhou Xun: *Mínzhǔqiáng xiàng héchù qù*, 38

¹³ *Shíjù hé wǒmende rènsì* [The Current Political Situation in Our Reckoning], *Siwu luntan* 15 (13 / 1979), CUP 10, 8-10, the quotation from p. 10

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 10; see also Zhou Xun: *Mínzhǔqiáng xiàng héchù qù - jiān lùn shèhuìzhūyì mínzhǔ* [Where is the Democracy Wall Going –On Socialism and Democracy], *Siwu luntan* 8 (6 / 1979), CUP 5, 38

¹⁵ *Fā kān cí* [Opening Words], *Minzhu yu shidai* 1, CUP 2, 217-218

¹⁶ *Lùn mínzhǔ yǔ jiànguó* [On Democracy and State Building], *Minzhu yu shidai* 1, CUP 2, 220

¹⁷ See e.g. Gao Shan: *Mínzhǔ yùndòngde lìshǐ gēnjù hé lǐlùn gēnjù* [Historical and Theoretical Reasons of the Democracy Movement], *Zhongguo renquan* 3b / 1979, CUP 3, 278

- ¹⁸ *Qiányán* [Foreword], Kexue minzhu fazhi 1 / 1979, CUP 6, 239
- ¹⁹ *Fā kān cí* [Opening Words], Shidai 1 / 1979, CUP 1, 315
- ²⁰ *Fā kān cí* [Opening Words], Qiu shi 1 / 1979, CUP 4, 211-212, the quotation from p. 211
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 212
- ²² *Xiě zài qiánbian* [Writing Ahead], Xin tiandi 1 / 1979, CUP 20, 196
- ²³ *Beijingde dàzìbào* [Beijing's Dazibaos], Kexue minzhu fazhi 15 / 1979, CUP 17, 46
- ²⁴ *Qiányán* [Forewords], Qimeng 2, 1 / 1978, CUP 3, 62
- ²⁵ *Záǎn* [Random Thoughts], Siwu luntan 14 (12 / 1979), CUP 9, 37
- ²⁶ *Lùn mínzǔ yǔ jiànguó* [On Democracy and Establishing a Country], Minzhu yu Shidai 1, 222
- ²⁷ *Fakan qishi* [Declaration of Publication], Wotu tekan 2.4.1979, CUP 12, 119
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 29
- ²⁹ See e.g. Zhou Xun: *Mínzhǔqiáng xiàng héchù qù* [Where is the Democracy Wall Going?], Siwu luntan 8 (6 / 1979), CUP 5, 45-46
- ³⁰ *Fùkān shēngmíng* [Opening Words for Reissue of the Journal], Tansuo 4 / 1979, CUP 3, 1-2
- ³¹ *Fā kān cí* [Opening Words], Siwu luntan 1 / 1978 in CUP 3: 45-46
- ³² *Zhēngwén qǐshì* [Soliciting Articles], Kexue minzhu fazhi 1 / 1979, CUP 6, 285
- ³³ He Bian: *Shìlùn tóngren kānwù* [On Publications of the Likeminded People], Wotu zengkan 3 / 1979, CUP 13, 226-227
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 228
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, 234
- ³⁶ Cong Zhen: *Jiàoxunde lishǐ hé lishǐde jiàoxun* [How and What History Teaches], Taolun 1 / 1979, CUP 18, 149
- ³⁷ *Zhì quánguó mín kān shū* [To the Nation's People's Publications], Guonei Minkan Xuanji 2 / 1980, CUP 20, 147
- ³⁸ Chen Ruoxi 1982, 70. Chen notes that also the terms 'democratic activists' and 'socialist democrats' were used by them, but the Beijing Democracy Movement's journals did not use these terms for the activists in 1978-1980, and thus they may be of later development.
- ³⁹ Editors: *Xiàng zhōngyāng tí sān diǎn zhòngdà jiànyì* [Three Important Proposals for the Central Authorities], Qunzhong cankao xiaoxi, fakanhao 1 / 1978, CUP 2, 156
- ⁴⁰ *Fā kān cí* [Opening Words], Siwu luntan 1 / 1978, CUP 3, 45-46
- ⁴¹ *Wu si luntan fūzérén Xu XX* [The Man Behind Siwu luntan Xu XX], Siwu luntan 14 (11 / 1979), CUP 9, 39-40
- ⁴² Zhou Xun: *Mínzhǔ qiáng xiàng hé chù qù* [Where is the Democracy Wall Going?], Siwu luntan 8 (6 / 1979), CUP 5, 45-46
- ⁴³ This was shown in applications for official approval; an example of such attempt at registration in Siwu luntan 5th issue, 10.2. (3 / 1979), CUP 2, 117
- ⁴⁴ RMRB 21.12.1978: *Rénmín wànsuì!*
- ⁴⁵ An Yang: *Rénmín wànsuì zhìyí* [Challenge to the 'Long Live the People'], Siwu luntan 3 (1 / 1979), CUP 4, 67-70
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 68-69, the quotation from p. 69
- ⁴⁷ Yu Yaoji: *Jīliè géming wànsuì* [Long Live the Fierce Revolution], Qunzhong cankao xiaoxi 6 (5 / 1979), CUP 4, 152
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 18
- ⁴⁹ *Mínzhǔ yǔ jìnbù* [Democracy and Progress], Siwu luntan 11 (9 / 1979), CUP 7, 17-19
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 11-12
- ⁵¹ *Mínzhǔ yǔ sìhuà xiéhuì zhāngchéng* [The Rules of the Association for Democracy and Four Modernisations], Qunzhong cankao xiaoxi 6 (5 / 1979), CUP 4, 141-142
- ⁵² These were the principles to identify those who 'took the capitalist road' in the Party set by Hua Guofeng after overthrowing the Gang of Four: 1) To practise Marxism-Leninism, not revisionism, 2) uniting, not splitting, and 3) to be open and above board, to not get involved in intrigues and conspiracies. Originally the principles were from Mao Zedong, who had formulated them against Lin Biao in 1971.
- ⁵³ These were: Close relations with the people as well as between theory and practise, and criticism and self-criticism.
- ⁵⁴ *Mínzhǔ yǔ sìhuà xiéhuì zhāngchéng*, Qunzhong cankao xiaoxi 6, CUP 4, 141
- ⁵⁵ *Lüèlun wōguó qúnzhòng mínzǔ yùndòngde fāzhǎn* [On the Development of Chinese Masses' Democratic Movement], Qunzhong cankao xiaoxi 6 (5 / 1979), CUP 4, 147-149, the quotation from p. 148

⁵⁶ Ibid., 148

⁵⁷ Li Yizhe: *Jī gè cōngmíng rén de mèngyì* [Somniloquy of a Few Clever Men], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 5 / 1979, CUP 10, 160. Zhou Xun also proposed that the Party should relocate the Democracy Wall from Xidan to some other place with more room, for example to Zhongshan Park or to the Workers' Cultural Palace and provide facilities to its organisations. The admission tickets for audience would have cost only 2 fen.

Mínzhǔqiáng xiàng héchù qù [Where is the Democracy Wall Going?], *Siwu luntan* 8 (6 / 1979) in CUP 5, 45

⁵⁸ *Li Yizhe fāngwèn jì* [Special Interview with the "Li Yizhe"], *Beijing zhi chun* 4 / 1979, CUP 5, 123

⁵⁹ 1991, 57

⁶⁰ *Zōnghé xiāoxi* [News Digest], *Siwu luntan* 17 (2 / 1980), CUP 11, 29-31, the quotation from p. 31

⁶¹ *Lüèlùn wǒguó qúnzhòng mínzhǔ yùndòngde fāzhǎn* [On the Development of Chinese Masses' Democratic Movement], *Qunzhong cankao xiaoxi* 6 (5 / 1979), CUP 4, 148; He Bian: *Lùn yánlùn zìyóu* [On Freedom of Speech], *Wotu tekan* 2.4.1979, CUP 12, 94

⁶² Li Ping: *Zhì Dèng fùzhǔrèn zhūxí yī fēng gōngkāixìn* [An Open Letter to Vice Chairman Deng], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 3 / 1979, CUP 8, 295; Cui Huaji: *Shànghǎi tōngxùn* [News from Shanghai], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 13 / 1979, CUP 16, 52; Chen Erjin: *Lùn wúchǎnjiējí mínzhǔ mínzhǔ géming* [On Proletarian Democratic Revolution], *Siwu luntan* 10 (8 / 1979), CUP 1, 86

⁶³ Gao Jimin: *Jiānchí Mǎkèsīzhǔyìde guójiā lǐlùn zǒu Bǎilí Gōngshè mínzhǔ zhìdùde dàolù* [Support the Marxist State Theory, Take the Road to the Paris Commune Type of Democracy] *Beijing zhi chun* 7 / 1979, CUP 8, 103

⁶⁴ Li Zong 1993, 121-122, Li bases this information on an interview with Liu Qing.

⁶⁵ Munro 1984b, 28-29. As chapter 13 is missing in Chen Erjin's essay, this is speculation, but his essay did include the notion of a second communist party and as Munro also notes, the later articles that can be attributed to Chen in the Democracy Movement also support this assumption.

⁶⁶ Widor 1981 I, 21-22

⁶⁷ *Jiědòngshè shēngmíng* [Thaw Declaration], *Jiedong* 1 / 1979, CUP 20, 289-290

⁶⁸ Tang Xiaodu 1999, 344-346

⁶⁹ Anhui Zhou Qi: *Tán 'nán'* [On Difficulties], *Siwu luntan* 13 (11 / 1979), CUP 8, 60

⁷⁰ *Zǔguó gè dì lái xìn zhāidēng* [Collection of Letter From the Whole Nation], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 3 / 1979, CUP 8, 332-333

⁷¹ Bi Dan: *Mínzhǔ qiáng zònghéng tán* [Survey of the Democracy Wall], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 15 / 1979, CUP 17, 35

⁷² Widor 1981 (I), 31-32

⁷³ Widor 1981 (I), 21-22

⁷⁴ *Xīnwén gōngbào dì-yī hào* [News Bulletin no 1], *Zeren* 1 / 1980, CUP 18, 164

⁷⁵ Ibid., 162

⁷⁶ See e.g. Deng Xiaoping, "Uphold the Four Cardinal Principles" in *SWDX* II, 1979 / 1995, 182-184; Deng Xiaoping, "The Present Situation and the Tasks before Us" in *SWDX* II 1980 / 1995, 251-253; Deng Xiaoping, "Implement the Policy of Readjustment, Ensure Stability and Unity" in *SWDX* II 1980 / 1995, 363-365; Liu Qing (1983, 159-173) on refutation of such 'hats'.

⁷⁷ *RMRB* 7.12.1979 *Běijīngshì duì zhāngtiē dàzìbào zuò zàn xíng guǎdìng* [Beijing City Temporary Regulations Concerning the Spread of Posters]

⁷⁸ *Directive Concerning Illegal Publications, Illegal Organisations and Other Related Problems*, in *Issues & Studies* 1983 (November), 106

⁷⁹ *Láixìn xuǎn dēng* [Selected Letter from Readers], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 7 / 1979, CUP 12, 65-66. Similar argumentation was also found in *Zài zhì tànsuǒ jī jù huà* [A Little More about Tansuo], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 8 / 1979, CUP 13, 25-26

⁸⁰ *Dèng Xiǎopíng tóngzhì gōngzuò wèi dǎng wèi mǐn guāngmíng lěilù* [Comrade Deng Xiaoping's Work for the Party and the People Is Brilliant, Just and Honourable], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 9 / 1979, CUP 14, 30-31

⁸¹ Chun Feng: *Duì Deng Xiaoping píngjià* [Appraisal of Deng Xiaoping], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 8 / 1979, CUP 13, 57

⁸² These references were never direct, but can be imputed from their timing. See e.g. From a commentator: *Jìxù dòuzhēng yíngjiē guāngmíng* [Continue the Struggle, Welcome the Light], *Beijing zhi chun* 4 / 1979, CUP 5, 92-93

⁸³ *Siwu Zhànshì tán mínzhǔ* [The Fifth of April Movement Warriors on Democracy] *Beijing zhi chun* 4 / 1979, CUP 5, 100 and 102

- ⁸⁴ Geng Nianzhou: *Qiányán* [Foreword (typo in CUP for the last character)], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 4 / 1979, CUP 9, 286
- ⁸⁵ On this, see Perry and Li Xun (2003).
- ⁸⁶ Lin Niaoming: *Xiàng Chén Fúhàn tóngzhì qiújiào* [Asking for Advice from Comrade Chen Fuhun], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 10 / 1979, CUP 14, 75-79 the quotation from p. 75; see also Hua Chuan: *Shèhuìzhūyì rénmin dāngjiā-zuòzhǔ* [Socialism –the People in Charge of Affairs], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 13 / 1979, CUP 16, 22-24
- ⁸⁷ Bi Dan: *Mínzhǔ qiáng zònghéng tǎn* [Survey of the Democracy Wall], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 15 / 1979, CUP, 33
- ⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 33-34
- ⁸⁹ Qi Tian: *Jiēshì hé tiǎozhàn* [Announcement and Challenge to Battle], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 8 / 1979, CUP 13, 18
- ⁹⁰ Zheng Ming: *Shéi shì hài qúnzhǒng ma?* [Who Harms the Masses?] *Beijing zhi chun* 6 / 1979, CUP 7, 94-95
- ⁹¹ See e.g. *Lùn mínzhǔ yǔ jiànguó* [On Democracy and Establishing a Country], *Minzhu yu Shidai* 1, CUP 2, 223; Bianjibu wenzhang: *Shíshì-qíúshì, jiānchí yuánzé* [Seek Truth from Facts, Persist in the Principle], *Beijing zhi chun* 9 / 1979, DCDM I, 571-575.
- ⁹² *Fā kān shēngmíng* [Inauguration Declaration], *Tansuo* 1 / 1979, CUP 1, 1; Wei Jingsheng: *Rénquán píngděng yǔ mínzhǔ* [Human rights, Equality and Democracy], *Tansuo* 3 / 1979, CUP 2, 47-49; *Wèi Jīngshēng zǐwǒ biànhùcí* [Wei Jingsheng's Plea for Innocence], *Siwu luntan* 14 (12 / 1979), CUP 9, 88-89
- ⁹³ The last, for example, was illustrated by how *Tansuo* published a report on Chinese political prisoners from Amnesty International, which the journal's editors had acquired from a foreign correspondent in February 1979. When Xu Wenli was arrested, the police found numerous issues of Hong Kong left wing journals in his house (AI 1984, 26, 114-115).
- ⁹⁴ Butterfield 1982, 410; Fraser 1980, 240 and 309; Garside 1981, 234
- ⁹⁵ Liu Qing 1983, 82-83
- ⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 84-86
- ⁹⁷ Cited in Huang and Seymour (1980, 21-22).
- ⁹⁸ Gong Min: *Zhì Kate zǒngtǒng* [To the President Carter], *Qimeng* 3, 1.1.1979 (biānwěihuì, editorial board edition, Beijing), DCDM II, 633-643
- ⁹⁹ Zhou Xun: *Mínzhǔqiáng xiàng héchù qù* [Where is the Democracy Wall Going?], *Siwu luntan* 8 (6 / 1979), CUP 5, 44-45
- ¹⁰⁰ Hunt et al 1994, 201-203
- ¹⁰¹ *Wu si luntan fūzérén Xu XX*, *Siwu luntan* 14, CUP 9, 44
- ¹⁰² Editors: *Guānyú Měiguó Bā'ěrdìmó tàiyáng bào zhù Huá jìzhě Maike'er Pakesi yī zé bàodǎode shēngmíng* [Announcement about the U.S. Baltimore Sun Report], *Siwu luntan* 15 (13 / 1979), CUP 10, 18
- ¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 19
- ¹⁰⁴ *Li Yizhe fāngwèn jì* [Special Interview with the "Li Yizhe"], *Beijing zhi chun* 4 / 1979, CUP 5, 121

8 CHAPTER: Individual Identities

Social movements' collective identities have always had implications for their individual participants' identities, as the movements proceed to converge their participants' identities with the collective identities – and generally are quite successful in process. As some students of social movements assert, transforming the participants' identities is often a primary movement goal and participation usually achieves this.¹ Furthermore, framings in all identity fields always include assertions on the nature of actors' consciousness and moral character.² This could also be observed in the Democracy Movement. While the Marxist materialistic perception of history largely supplied the Democracy Movement activists with the theory to explain and justify the general historical and social role of the Democracy Movement, it also influenced the framework through which the participants examined individual activists and their adversaries. In short, individual actors' identities – or at least their images – converged into the movement's collective identities. Individual activists also had to prove that they were in the vanguard of the revolution. Here various notions related to progressive political awareness and morality were employed by them.

Classical Marxism, political awareness (or class consciousness) is considered the notion that connects individuals to the development of history, and determines their roles as progressive or revisionist.³ The forces of production determine production relations which then create ideologies that support them and thus determine individuals' consciousness. However, individual variations are possible as an individual's consciousness can be true or false, following the distortions in understanding of their true class-based interests. Only when these interests are correctly understood can an individual play a progressive (or revisionist) role in history. A similar way to understand individuals' roles in history was also apparent in Democracy Movement argumentation.

Huang Xiang's article in Qimeng provides a good illustration of the Marxist scheme that was used to assess individuals in the Democracy Movement. As he wrote, historical figures had to be appraised according to their behaviour and its social results. There were four degrees of historical greatness whereby individuals could be ranked from total greatness to absolute criminality. Totally great individuals were those rare creators, who solved social problems and guided the path society took in history and as such, their actions accorded with the demands of history and the aspirations of the people. In the other categories the ability of individuals to follow these principles was less than perfect, until the fourth category which was occupied by criminals like Lin Biao and the Gang of Four.⁴ Huang Xiang's scheme was, in essence, this crude general, if not universal, measure of individual worth employed in the Democracy Movement. Here history was presented as the merciless judge of man and his actions, and the people's ability to fulfil the criteria of history was attributed

to their political awareness and moral character. In general, in the Democracy Movement's journals there were four distinct groups of people whose individual characters were assessed in this vein viz: the activists, the good cadres, the martyrs, and the antagonists of the Democracy Movement, the bad cadres.

The Participants

As noted, an individual's political awareness and morality were seen to connect one's behaviour to the laws of history and thus to determine one's role in history. It therefore followed that individual activists were predominantly discussed through statements on their political awareness and morality. When defending the movement the descriptions the activists gave on themselves emphasised their moral purity, patriotism, and sincere search for the truth. As a Siwu luntan writer declared in November 1979:

“Obviously, whether they [visitors] come to the Democracy Wall to express opinions, to discuss matters or explain the people's feelings, all of them have investigated, studied and thought deeply [about matters], a great majority of them has a sincere attitude and come [to the Wall] because they care deeply for China; they are not “full stomach idlers”, “trouble makers”, “newly born careerists” or “as yet non-captured anti-Party, anti-revolutionary, anti-socialist elements”. They are anonymous innovators, the nucleus of democratic elements, good daughters and sons of the Chinese nation, pioneering heroes in creating a new world.”⁵

Such praise for the moral and intellectual merits of the Democracy Movement's participants as a collective was not rare. Kexue minzhu fazhi used similar language about the people coming to the Democracy Wall:

“Those who have thought hard about the meanings of the struggles of the Cultural Revolution and the great Fifth of April Movement have achieved outstanding self-awareness and can tell the difference between true and false. They have continued and developed the revolutionary spirit of the Fifth of April Movement, held high the banners of science and democracy and have read the Democracy Wall.”⁶

Another Kexue minzhu fazhi writer, Bi Dan, provided a good self-characterisation of the Democracy Wall Movement activists in the journal's June 1979 issue. Drawing on the image of enlightened vanguard, Bi argued that the mainstay of the Democracy Movement were those people, who had realised the light of the progress of democracy and the necessity of its victory. They understood the risks in this struggle, but still struggled on. Most had suffered under Lin and Jiang's fascist terror, but now:

“Using historical materialism and dialectics as weapons in the struggle, they have insight into the maladies of society and realise the direction of the development of history. They have guts and brains, are brave and wise. They went through the storm of the Fifth of April Movement. They have utter devotion to the Party and the people. The struggle against the fascist tyranny of Lin and Jiang has created a great many of this kind of heroic people. They have the courage to tell the truth, bravely to propose solutions to problems based on facts. They dare to storm the deep places that make people terrified by sight. Analyse, taunt and attack thoroughly the modern superstition and worship, those bad habits of bureaucracy that die hard, classes with special privileges, various maladies in society, and various strange phenomena in the country.”⁷

In particular Bi Dan argued that those who attacked the Whateverists were indeed the “best of the boys and girls of the Chinese nation.” The scars left by the Leftists’ chains could still be seen on their hands and feet, but they were already struggling on. They carried the wishes and interest of the people with them and showed true heroism:

“They do not care how dangerous the environment is and how hard the situation is, they all continue struggling to the end for the wishes of the people. They forget food and sleep, unceasingly writing, copying, carving, printing, and after all that, they weather the conditions going to the streets to put up their posters.”⁸

In conclusion, Bi was certain that the thinkers, scientists, poets and writers of the 21st century would come from the ranks of the Democracy Movement, and only the running dogs of Lin and Jiang would oppose the cause of democracy.⁹

The editors of a mostly literary journal Yuanshangcao also used vivid language to explain their enthusiastic historical mission and position to their readers, as they dedicated their journal “to the fatherland and the people”, and declared:

“Because we are young, we do not lack ardent enthusiasm which holds deep love and hate that makes one gnash one’s teeth. We intensely love our fatherland and the people, and hate as intensely the scum like the Gang of Four, cruel and rotten and wasted reactionary forces.”¹⁰

As can be easily seen, all of the passages cited above were collective in their nature referred to the Democracy Movement participants in plural. In fact, the rule seems to have been that the activists avoided mentioning themselves individually. When rare exceptions to this rule occurred, it was usually either by someone from ‘the masses’, who wrote a letter to a journal praising some activist, or when individual activists were criticized from outside and had to be defended. However, when the free and living members of the Democracy Movement were exceptionally discussed, they

were often offered as models for the rest of the movement's participants to emulate. An example of this could be found in *Kexue minzhu fazhi*, where of an activist-poet named Jia Xindan was introduced to the readers. The journal editor Gong Nianzhou stated that:

*“Jia Xindan is a singer who works for the people, first and foremost he is a warrior, carrying the responsibilities of a combatant, standing in the first row of the progress of times, singing the songs of the people, crying the cries of the people.”*¹¹

Jia's activism actually had longer historical roots as he had already taken the side of Premier Zhou during the 'criticise Lin and Zhou' campaign. For this he had been sentenced to labour reform for a year and 'oppressed' in the following years until he was rehabilitated in 1978. This experience had expanded his political vision, deepened his thought, and connected him more closely to the joys and sorrows of the era, imbuing his poems with a deep social meaning, as:

*“Love for the premier, esteem for the brave sons and daughters of the Fifth of April Movement, thirst for revolution, demand for democracy and liberty, deep hatred of the wounds inflicted by the feudal fascist white terror of the Gang of Four, all of these swelling rivers gush in the ocean of his poetry.”*¹²

Gong saw that there were thousands of fearless warrior poets like Jia Xindan in China dealing with their enemy the Gang of Four. For Gong the fact that determination and rage produced poets was 'historical dialectics'. I.e., it manifested the historical forces at work.¹³ Jia Xindan also offered a rare personal memoir of intellectual growth and enlightenment during the Cultural Revolution, with excerpts from his diary, published in *Kexue minzhu fazhi* along with his poems. In a passage originally written in February 1974, Jia described the place he had been sent down to as the 'edge of the world'. Jia implored why had 'he' (referring to Mao) urged the people to be brave, sincere and loyal, seek the truth and expose lies, but then rewarded this with cruel punishments. Frustration and anguish for the domestic exile was clear in Jia's text:

*“You say the people should seek the truth, but those who turn these words into action are treated as criminals. You say the laws give us freedom, but when I exercise these freedoms, you send me into exile... oh...”*¹⁴

In a second passage Jia revealed his determination to oppose the powers that be:

*“As a prisoner without freedom, I think deeply, pondering, analysing, judging, - what are life and society? What are science and truth? What are democracy and progress? For many years I have been lost in the fog of deception, unable to reach the condition of 'great detachment and enlightenment'. My hands are empty, but I will not leave the pursuit of truth unfinished!”*¹⁵

Jia wrote about his dedication to reach the truth, at all costs. As he declared, the truth would be revealed eventually, even if some of the warriors had to die for it, including him.¹⁶ His message was about demonstrating an unyielding fighting spirit and sense of righteousness under oppression. It was published as it represented the same unyielding spirit to seek truth and oppose Leftist oppression that the Democracy Wall activists wished to portray in its activists.

Kexue minzhu fazhi was the only journal in the Beijing Democracy Movement that printed relatively many letters which praised the work of its editor, Gong Nianzhou. One of the letters likened Gong to a ‘flower of democracy’ that would make the garden of socialism flourishing and even compared him to Zhou Enlai in his moral character and duties. It stated: “*He is working for the history, for the children, for the new Long March!*”¹⁷ Another letter proclaimed:

*“From the bottom of my heart I thank Gong Nianzhou, you are doing a great job for the people, developing along experiences, the true communists and those common people who uphold righteousness, as well as the great masses, will support your task.”*¹⁸

Yet another letter praised Gong:

*“Comrade Geng Nianzhou: Thank you all, you are on the mission of the people, for China, for the World, for today, for tomorrow; you assume bravely the duty of history [dānzi, lit. carrying pole and load], the cause of the people cannot be defeated. [We] hope you will advance and are not taken aback, always struggle on, persist to the end. The people believe in you, support you, the people and you go together!”*¹⁹

However, apart from Kexue minzhu fazhi, only a few Democracy Movement journals’ published letters where the personalities of their activists were discussed. The rule prohibiting discussion on individual members was well demonstrated when, as a rare exception, the chief editor of Qunzhong cankao Xia Xunjian was praised in an open letter to the journal. According the writer, Xia had been a ‘student’ for thirty years and had already published two articles on computer science and the trends of modern technology. Furthermore, he was said to be: “*sturdy as an iron man in his work*”. After his graduation he had suffered the loss of his job and done temporary work. While working in a factory he had once been in a situation where he had almost had to sacrifice his life for the sake of production. Therefore, one could say that he was a diligent and hardworking man. Now he had become a democratic warrior and the writers thought that others could learn from his moral character.²⁰

However, a letter from a Beijing student to the next issue of Qunzhong cankao showed how such praise of a personal moral character and accomplishments of a free member of the Democracy Movement was considered a breach of the unwritten rules

when the writer stated that the self-praise for Xia Xunjian in the journal had not been a very good idea. The Chinese had heard enough of individuals being praised during the past twenty years. As the writer saw it, the revolutionaries, as he called the Democracy Movement activists, should maintain a low profile and let history judge them.²¹

Other breaches of this code became apparent when internal discord developed within the activist groups. Sometimes such processes were not painless and personal accusations and slander was thrown at each side of the disputes. The case involving Zhongguo renquan was brought to general attention in the “Inside Circular 2” on March 1, 1979 where the executive committee of the Zhongguo renquanmeng condemned splitters as; “*harming the truth, the majority [rule] and not having courage to state their opinions.*” The splitters had used the name of the Zhongguo renquanmeng for their own purposes, unconcerned about the League’s interests or the safety of the Democracy Movement in Beijing in general. Instead they had openly promoted the split at the Democracy Wall.²² As the Circular argued, to use the good name of the Zhongguo renquan group to promote their own views was a sign of the problems with the splitters’ moral character. The splitters were engaged in slander and

“The way they specialise in the shameful behaviour of personal attacks shows how they have completely lost the moral character suitable for democratic warriors. These persons’ poisonous desires should be revealed as treason against the Democracy Movement.”²³

The splitters had used unfounded claims to accuse someone to be from the ‘KGB’ in the group and demanded freedom of expression, but denied it from others and lacked organisational discipline. Further, they even could not write their own material, but put their names to texts written by others which referred to the Zhongguo renquan group’s 19 points ‘Declaration of Chinese Human Rights’. Furthermore, they only wanted personal fame and attacked Ren Wanding, who was the chief editor of the journal.²⁴ The six members who remained from the ten people, who had made up the original executive committee, denounced the splitters’ actions. Indeed, their actions; “*not only show the extremely shameful treason of the splitters towards the Democracy Movement, but it reveals their disgraceful selfishness.*”²⁵ Yet still, for the health of the young Democracy Movement, the executive committee showed its forgiveness and decided not to dismiss the splitter group from Zhongguo renquan group’s ranks as yet.

The way in which the Circular accused the splitters of poisonous desires, selfishness, and a lack of credentials becoming to democracy warriors, revealed of how the Democracy Movement was perceived as to be acting on high moral grounds where individual aspirations had to be put aside and subjected the interests of the collective. Only morally flawless, sincere, and self-sacrificial people could assume the position of the vanguard to promote socialist revolution and the interests of the people. Here

the resonant ideals of revolutionary self-sacrifice and selflessness supplied the rules whereby the individual members of the movement were judged. As such these values drew heavily on the way the Red Guards generation had been taught to think about social activism.²⁶

To discuss the significance of the Cultural Revolution in personal terms was also rare,²⁷ but when this occurred, the enlightenment side was emphasised as in this early dazibao by Lü Po:

“When the Cultural Revolution began, I threw myself into it with all my youth and the ardent fervour there was. Because of my naivety, I lacked the ability to tell the difference between raising the banner of revolution and counterrevolution. As the result the keen efforts I took to be revolutionary were against the revolutionary cause of the people. When I think back now, I feel bad. [But] I do not regret it. Because growing up is a process [of learning], but I do feel sorry for the mistakes I committed. I condemn myself, but I have turned this condemnation into an urge to constantly raise the level of my understanding. I currently use the political awareness which has been bought with a great price.”²⁸

Joining the Democracy Movement could also be described as an enlightenment experience. In Kexue minzhu fazhi, a student from Nanning, Guangxi, wrote about their spiritual development connecting it to the experience of his generation in general. He was an ordinary university student, and a so called ‘ardent youth’ (*rèxué qīngnián*), who earlier had been innocent and childish even so that any independent and serious thinking about complex social problems had been hard for him before the smashing of the Gang of Four. However, when the gang had been toppled, everything had changed for him:

“...When the Gang of Four was smashed, it was like waking from a dream, an ignorant mind was finally enlightened, these two years and rapidly changing social life made me rethink many issues! I began to think that the Gang of Four had destroyed our entire generation, made it a sacrificed generation, but then in the course of deepening the exposure and criticism of the Gang of Four, the Tiananmen Incident verdict was thoroughly reversed and especially from that moment when the people who had gathered in the front of Tiananmen raised for the first time the call for democracy, science, and legality as well as resistance to feudalism and fascist dictatorship ... This moved my heart forcefully! I had to seriously revise my biased view. Our generation is not a sacrificed generation, it is a generation that has total awareness; if we want to be true Chinese youth, we have to care about the fate of the whole country and the nation, we must shoulder the sacred duty of the historical mission to resist feudalism, dictatorship and ignorance! We must liberate our minds from prisons! Only thus can China have hope, the nation progress, and our people have a brilliant future!”²⁹

Participation in the Democracy Wall Movement was also presented as a moral choice between an easy life or a commitment to the fatherland. As a writer of a dazibao asked in Kexue minzhu fazhi:

“Some people worry: Making such disturbance! This affects ‘stability and unity’! [But] When I get off the work, I will not go to see a movie or to a restaurant, I care for the nation’s destiny (and, as a Chinese citizen, my own), I want to discuss national issues – is this really influencing ‘stability and unity?’”³⁰

In Beijing zhi chun, Chen Zimin described his participation in activities at Tiananmen Square during the Fifth of April Movement 1976 in similar moral terms. For him participation in the movement had been a moral choice between helping the people to advance the truth or letting it be. The latter would have been an easier but not the right path to take. Participation in the Fifth of April Movement was an occasion where one had to choose between the truth and lies and the same struggle was still going on: forces that opposed legality and democracy still existed in society and if these were not struggled against, the four modernisations would be in danger.³¹

Those occasions when personal points of view were used more commonly, could be found in poetry and short stories. These poems also presented how the revolutionary ideals, moral purity, and ardent love for China were attributed to Democracy Movement activists. A female writer Shuang Ping in Yuanshangcao March issue 1979 gave an example of this. The writer was introduced as a 20 year old worker from Beijing, who had not written poems before. Now she had abandoned her comforts and special privileges in order to enter the mainstream of the people and to dedicate herself to the truth. The editors therefore wished that she would become a voice of the people. She wrote:

*“I am as innocent and pure as he,
Once I also wanted beautiful life,
Like he, I used to be diligent in my studies,
Wishing to contribute my artistic talents to China.
I also were like him, a true believer,
I did not think
That the idols of my worship
Would throw me into the vortex of despair. ...*

*Piety, after all wasted efforts, self-awareness,
Purity that is changed profoundly in creation,
The complex struggle taught us to reflect:
Cast aside the heavy burden of superstition!
Let us face the life,
As I begin new exploration,
I remember him – Ya Se,
Like him I abandon the cheap comforts,*

*And I find in the people,
The steel and fire to obliterate the shackles!
With the sword I peel off the sham appearances,
With burning flames I set on fire the disguised hideousness,
Following the source of passed-away years,
Let the practise test their accomplishments!*

*I will always be like this,
To a life with a steadfast conviction,
Not letting any man,
Humiliate my great nation,
Desecrate my,
Scar-faced China,
this, this is me
A common worker in her youth,
Ya Se of modern China!"³²*

In this poem Shuang Ping described herself as originally an innocent true believer, i.e. she had not been spoiled by selfish desires or mistaken ideas. She had wanted to contribute her talents to China, but the years of Leftist rule had led to the loss of the truth and righteousness in public life. She, however, had remained loyal to her true beliefs, and continued to struggle for them under the severe conditions. It had been this struggle that had taught her to cast aside the mental chains and see through the Leftist superstitions and charade. And she was sure that the people would follow her when they tested the Leftist teachings in practise. This all was to protect China from humiliation and who could be a better revolutionary warrior to undertake such a task than a young common worker? Interestingly, the character that Shuang Ping referred to in the poem, Ya Se, was the main character in a novel *Niumeng*, or 'Gadfly', which had been influential in the upbringing of the Cultural Revolution generation, providing it with a model of an exemplary revolutionary, patriot, and brave warrior against feudalism.

As a fictitious character, Ya Se was a foreigner, but otherwise foreign examples were only seldom mentioned as worthy of emulation. However, when this happened, the model was lofty indeed, as in Siwu luntan, when a writer saw Albert Einstein as the model of the Democracy Movement's activists.³³ He was not alone, as the Qiushi Bao also published a short biographical article on Einstein's life and achievements.³⁴ It was one hundred years anniversary of his birth, and tellingly, only *he* could serve as an icon for the Democracy Movement as *the* natural scientist in world history.

The unwritten rule to not mention individual activists also meant that the Democracy Movement did not promote any paramount leaders from among itself. Clearly, the journals' editors were regarded as important people, but no leadership cult, or even notable public emphasis on their role, was developed – apart from Gong Nianzhou perhaps; but then praise for him was conspicuous precisely because such articles

were absent in other journals. This was probably much related to the traumatic experiences of the personality cult of Mao during the Cultural Revolution, but also to the fact that the journals wanted to appear as equal and collectivistic magazines. Further, their role of acting as intermediaries between the people and the Party could have been jeopardized if leadership figures within the movement were emphasized. Furthermore, it may have signified fear of suppression and the fact that the journal groups were not harmonious. Demands for supreme leadership within the movement, would probably not have been easily accepted by activists who had lived through the Cultural Revolution and of whom some had developed an 'ultra-democratic' attitude to collective action, which had made many of them averse to accept leadership without consent. Non emphasis of leaders was considered democratic after the Cultural Revolution.

The manner in which activism in the Democracy Movement was discussed also borrowed heavily from another template of political activism which was familiar to the Democracy Movement activists. Political activists (*jījífènzǐ*) were an essential factor in of the way the Party ruled China. They were the youth who competed to become full members of the Party some day. Their role required acceptance of the Party's ethical and utopian teachings and judging their activities through these values. The activists' role was to serve to implement Party policies at the grass-roots level as the vanguard of the revolution. The problem of self-interest was also present in this kind of political activism, as membership of these organisations (like the Youth League) obviously could generate material benefits for individuals. The problem of phoney activism motivated by personal in therefore existed, and forced the activists to constantly be ready to prove their credentials. The activists were expected to steel themselves against the lure of self-interest and preserve their righteous commitment to the cause and the masses.³⁵ Although the Democracy Movement had abandoned belief in truths from above, its activists still drew to this model of political activism which its members had learned from their childhood.

Arrested Activists

Individual members of the Democracy Movement did come into focus in journals when some of the activists were arrested. The most notable of the cases were Fu Yuehua, Wei Jingsheng, Ren Wanding and Liu Qing. The defence of the arrested activists usually included reference to constitutional citizen's rights and other laws that were supposed to protect Chinese citizens from officials' abuses.³⁶ However, their defence was also based on their moral character and political awareness, as demonstrated in Tansuo, which defended the arrested most vocally:

“Wei Jingsheng, Fu Yuehua, Ren Wanding,... These high level thinkers and the people's heroes who have the courage to face squarely the human lives dripping with blood, with bright banners, not fearing to hold high the banner of

*democracy and struggle for the people, article by article drove out evil and ushered in good by strong words dissecting society's crucial points.*³⁷

Fu Yuehua was defended on the grounds that she had written a dazibao on her unjust case in 1977, partly because of her livelihood, but also because she wanted to show her political loyalty and how she believed in the Party, and had no criminal intentions. If the concerned authorities had done their job properly, the situation would not have developed as it had, argued her defenders. But the system still used lies and base means as tools of deception, and Fu had been its victim.³⁸ Ren Wanding was also described as a person, who worked around the clock (even forgetting to eat) when the people urged and supported him in his work for human rights in China.³⁹

To say that the arrested activists' motives were pure, was to inform they did not deserve to be accused of counterrevolutionary activities, but on the contrary that they were worthy warriors of the Democracy Movement who struggled for the people. The Tansuo writers also employed the martyrdom of Zhang Zhixin (see further below) in their defence of Wei Jingsheng. In its fourth issue, Wei Jingsheng was compared to Zhang Zhixin's case:

*"His [Wei's] and Zhang Zhixin's beliefs are different, but the spirit of pursuing and protecting the truth are the same, these kinds of youth are the precious resource of our nation; to harm them is criminal."*⁴⁰

Beijing zhi chun also defended Wei and others arrested with a mixture of legal and moral arguments. Here also a citizen's identity was used in the defence of the movement. In an article after the March-April 1979 arrests, a writer argued that some youth did not understand Marxism and had therefore proposed naïve political ideas, thus mistaken ideas should be criticised, but they should be helped as most of them had also strongly opposed Lin Biao's and the Gang of Four's feudal fascism and promoted the prosperity of their home country. Some of them had used the capitalist "human rights" terminology, but still opposed private property and simply wanted to realise citizens' constitutional basic rights. Although their language sometimes had been aggravated and they had criticised the Party and socialism, they were still of the people and should therefore be protected by the law. Besides:

*"Everyone who has personally sought the truth knows that the youth who have sincerely searched for the truth and gone astray should not be likened to the counterrevolutionaries who have lost their ideals and just roam around."*⁴¹

Zheng argued for leniency and compassion in dealing with those young activists who had been misdirected and erred on ideological front. Indeed; *"The true black sheep are those who lay prone at worship in front of the feudal tyrannical dictatorship's bureaucratism."*⁴² This referred to the low moral character of the antagonists of the Democracy Movement. The argument of moral purity and political awareness thus permeated the defence of the arrested activists: their sincerity in the search for the

truth had to be tolerated, even if they erred in the process and strayed out from the correct Marxist path. It was the lack of the same sincerity, which made the Leftists the true 'black sheep' and enemies of the people, as well as the greatest threat to historical progress and revolution.

Martyrs

The political persecutions during the Cultural Revolution and the campaigns before it had produced innumerable unjust, false, and wrongful cases. Petitioners were those people who sought to redress their unjust cases, and the Democracy Movement openly took their side in the struggle. Moreover, the Democracy Movement journals also adopted some of the victims of these unjust cases as their martyrs. Two most notable of them were Zhang Zhixin and Yu Luohe, both of whom had been persecuted to death during the Cultural Revolution for 'opposing Chairman Mao'. Their sentences were based on their written criticism of the Leftist leaders and their dogma. The Democracy Movement activists also presented their cases as the first signs of the then nascent Democracy Movement. What made these martyrs especially relevant was that they were officially being rehabilitated and held as worth emulation in the emancipation of minds campaign. To claim to follow their example and possess the same qualities, and even mission, with them could prove that the Democracy Movement deserved officially accepted revolutionary status. Under the growing oppression and the arrests after March-April 1979, this was also what the activists needed.

The most celebrated of the martyrs was Zhang Zhixin, a female Party member who had had the courage to stand up during the heydays of the Cultural Revolution and denounce the Leftist theory of class struggle. Most of the Democracy Movement's journals published long articles and poems about her, and in late 1979, even a journal dedicated entirely to her memory appeared in Beijing.⁴³ Indeed, her gruesome case did not lack anything to make her a solid martyr, and when it was first published in the official press during the early summer of 1979,⁴⁴ Siwu luntan took up her case as an example of the Democracy Wall Movement spirit, and an a person who stood on the right side of history. Addressing its article to the Central Committee of the Party, Siwu luntan writers argued that Zhang's struggle for truth under oppression was an example of revolutionary thinking and character of 'putting the people's interest above all' which everybody should learn from.⁴⁵ The example of her spirit was seen as significant in the work to eradicate the influences of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four from the Party. As a writer in Siwu luntan declared; "*Zhang Zhixin answered us in practise the great question of how to be a communist in a socialist society.*"⁴⁶ Clearly, this also was what the Democracy Movement activists argued they were doing too.

The September issue of Beijing zhi chun also discussed Zhang Zhixin at length. Her own writings from the Cultural Revolution were published,⁴⁷ and her moral strength

in resisting the personality cult of Chairman Mao was praised.⁴⁸ Zhang was also discussed in similar terms in other articles in *Siwu luntan*.⁴⁹ Declared one writer:

*“All those who work for the Democracy Movement forgetting themselves should always bear in mind that Zhang Zhixin is struggling together with us! All who struggle for the Democracy Wall are really studying her actual behaviour.”*⁵⁰

The symbolic value of Zhang Zhixin was also demonstrated when the editors of the first *Zeren* used her authority to defend the remaining journals and their co-operation in September 1980:

*“The journals are the mouthpieces of the Democracy Movement, they are the vanguard of the Democracy Movement and every journal has more influence than Zhang Zhixin. The journals that appear all over the country are like thousands and thousands of Zhang Zhixins contributing themselves to the reform of Chinese society; the present generation is not a stupid and blind generation, it is a generation that struggles...”*⁵¹

A poem by Liang Xin in *Baihua* illustrated how Zhang had demonstrated erstwhile moral character in the line struggle, and portrayed her as an example of a heroic democracy warrior under the Leftist rule. Similarities with Shuang Ping's poem above were also clear:

*“You,
The strong revolutionary, Zhang Zhixin,
In the hearts of nine hundred million people,
You fulfil the criteria of a revolutionary,
The people think of you:
Zhang Zhixin is a good daughter of the people,
You: not only were you innocent,
You made the heroic sacrifice and died a brave death in the struggle against the counterrevolutionaries! ...
Strong revolutionary, Zhang Zhixin,
Your brave sacrifice,
Showed that under the dark oppression lived the people that will not yield!
Your brave sacrifice,
Polished the eyes of the millions,
Made them able to see clearly the viciousness and darkness of the evil forces!
Made them able to appreciate the brave greatness and purity of the people!
Made them able to realise that in the chaos of the campaigns,
Vile characters are shameless and base.
Your brave sacrifice,
Awoke all revolutionaries,
Only with socialist legality and democracy,
Can there be real socialism and revolution!”*⁵²

Greatly idealised as a model character, Zhang was so offered as an example in the present struggle. In the fashion of many other personal accounts, Zhang was assessed according to her moral character and political awareness. Naturally then, when discussing Zhang and her opposition to Leftism, the activists also made a case for themselves. They claimed to follow her example and to oppose them would mean to risk the same mistake that her evil opponents had done before. In fact, it was useful to have a martyr for the Democracy Movement and Zhang, if anyone, served as that purpose well.

Another martyr figure was Yu Luohe, who had also been an early critic, and victim, of the Leftists during the Cultural Revolution. In October 1979 Siwu luntan published a previously suppressed article from martyr Yu.⁵³ The editors hoped that his unjust case would also be rectified as soon as possible. As they saw it, he had been the first person who had fought against the Leftists, so; *“he was the forerunner of the Chinese movement for the liberation of minds in 30 years, a model for the Chinese youth.”*⁵⁴ Siwu luntan also published a martyr story on Yu written by his sister Yu Loujin.⁵⁵ In this story, Yu’s moral character was praised for love of the Party and socialism, patriotism, faith in communism, dialectics and historical materialism, as well as the way he; *“self-consciously demanded of himself that he would become a proletarian class revolutionary soldier.”* According to his sister, Yu had wished to turn himself into a perfect and outstanding person to put all his energies into work, and to contribute to the fatherland in the scientific field. His strength had been continuous own study and reflection on matters to late into the night; *“Without independent thinking, there would have been no Yu Luohe.”*⁵⁶ Yu’s sister also revealed how his diaries demonstrated his dedication to dialectics. Five days before his arrest in early March 1967 after long solitary reflection he had confessed to his family that he had done and said many things that were: *“not according to the people’s interest”*, which moved his parents.⁵⁷ Yu had loved the Party and socialism so much that he had even reported transgressions of his own mother to the authorities during the *san-fan* campaign in the early 50s. He once wrote in his diary:

*“If I were to deceive myself or give up the search for truth in external matters, it would be the most tragic thing in my life. I want to be a faithful follower of Marxist-Leninism and contribute to the Communist cause!”*⁵⁸

Siwu luntan also reprinted and analysed Yu’s article *‘On the Theory of Class Origin’*⁵⁹, and the journal paid more attention to Yu Luohe than to Zhang Zhixin. However, on balance, Zhang was the patron saint of most of the other journals. Yet, what united both the martyrs was their moral purity, unselfishness, and devotion to the cause of the people, plus knowledge of Marxism and quest for the truth, as well as their opposition to the lies of the Leftists. These martyrs had taken a stand against Leftism during the Cultural Revolution and thus demonstrated their position on the right side of history. This was also the side the Democracy Movement participants

claimed to stand on too and therefore they invoked the imagery of the heroic martyrdom of Yu and Zhang as their predecessors. The martyrs were also considered as paragons of enlightenment and thus important targets to identify with in the complex struggle against the false Marxists. These characteristics that were attributed to Yu and Zhang and the Democracy Movement activists, were also largely the same that the good cadres were also given.

Good Cadres

While the Democracy Movement journals were reluctant to refer to individual members of the movement, there were others whose historical roles could be assessed as a part of dismantlement of the Leftist's legitimacy. One comparatively large category were, what this author here terms as 'good cadre' (*lǎo gàn bù*) and 'bad cadre' articles. Good cadres were, without exception, past or present members of the Dengist / pragmatic faction like Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiaoping, Peng Zhen, Peng Dehuai, Chen Yun, Hu Yaobang, etc.⁶⁰ So called bad cadres belonged to the Whateverist-Leftist faction, of which some obvious members were Lin Biao, the members of the Gang of Four (viz: Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan, and Wang Hongwen), Kang Sheng, Wang Dongxing, and others. Commemorating the good cadres in the Democracy Movement journals had two functions. On the one hand, it showed the side the journals themselves took in the power struggle,⁶¹ and on the other hand, it was indented to undermine the legitimacy of the Leftist rule. The good cadre narratives showed the ideal content of moral and personal qualities that socialist rulers should possess. The bad cadre articles showed the lack of these qualities in bureaucrats and members of the Leftist faction. They also related the undesirable social consequences of Leftist rule to these moral qualities.

Some writers also expressed hope for rule by good cadres. For example, a Neng Zheng wrote in *Qiushi bao* about how in the olden times people placed their trust in good officials, and how today, people still did the same with their unjust cases. Indeed, this writer argued that if the cadres were loyal to the principle of respect for the law and followed the interests of the people, they would greatly contribute to democracy and establishment of legal order.⁶² Nevertheless, this kind of argumentation, i.e. to seek a solution to social problems from the individual characteristics of rulers, was at the same time considered problematic and criticised elsewhere in the journals as a feudal method of political thought. Indeed, most writers dismissed the notion of reliance on good cadres alone, as false, and even harmful. As they saw it, the problem with the traditional Chinese political thought had been such reliance and emphasis on the moral character of rulers. This had been one important reason why the old feudal values had been able to retain such a hold on the minds of the masses. Such notions had to be eradicated and institutional solutions given priority in people's minds.⁶³ For this kind of argumentation Wei Jingsheng provided a good example from the famous historical novel 'The Water

Margin'. He argued that although the heroes in the novel had struggled for equality, they had not understood that:

*“The struggle for human rights is continuous and cannot be completed once and for all; furthermore they concentrated on those rulers who harmed the people, corrupt officials or the emperor, and not on abolishing the conditions that allowed harm of people possible – the despotic social system. Therefore many Chinese are accustomed to thinking that the result of the political struggle is change of the rulers. Now this notion must be changed.”*⁶⁴

Some writers were also aware of the danger of over praise of individual leaders, as this could have moved the focus away from political reforms and come too close to the personality cult that they were trying to remove. For example, Xu Shu of Siwu luntan used the late premier Zhou Enlai as an example of how good cadres alone could not make the centralist system work. Xu first praised Zhou's moral character to heaven: *“During his long revolutionary career he developed the exceptional [or superman] vitality (chāorén jīnglì), wisdom and talent, winning universal praise (yǒukǒu-jīēbēi) known to everyone,”* but then asked reason to why even such a praiseworthy person had been unable to turn the tide during the years of the ‘four pests at rampage’? He had been able to rescue some cadres, but still many innocent people had suffered. The reasons given were institutional which therefore downplayed Zhou's personal influence over the events.⁶⁵ Similar reasoning could be found from Liu Qing in Siwu luntan.⁶⁶

However, it was rare to use Zhou Enlai in such a negative example, after all, he was the most commemorated figure in the journals. This was not only due to his idealised popular reputation, but because the Fifth of April Movement was considered a direct result of commemorating his memory as a good cadre. He was presented as an almost saint-like figure and his sage-like powers were presented as due to his ability to represent the hopes and wishes of hundreds of millions of people. Indeed, he was the ‘people's premier’.⁶⁷ The idealised qualities attributed to the late premier Zhou represented the correct morality and consciousness required from cadres: he was seen to have advocated a scientific approach to all problems and matters, a model of socialist democratic thought, totally integrated with the masses, attuned to their voice, sincerely caring for them and recognising its authority. Some writers further argued, his spirit was actually embodied in the Democracy Wall Movement, which was fulfilling its eternal project for mankind and history.⁶⁸ Others saw that he had been the leader of the correct side in the line struggle and thus the champion of the people and democracy.⁶⁹ Occasionally, Zhou's worship in the journals even seemed to approach a form of personality cult in its own right.

The admiration and identification of Zhou Enlai with the right line that represented the people's interests and inspired them in their democratic struggle in the Party was also presented in numerous poems, which were printed in considerably great numbers in most journals. As one dazibao in Kexue minzhu fazhi, signed by a ‘Good

Children of the Premier', and dated on the anniversary of his death on 8 January 1979, put it:

*“Dreaming about the Premier,
He and I,
The premier takes my hand,
Saying in a soft voice:
“Child,
You have to study well,
To dedicate your energies to the modernisation of fatherland,
To build socialism,
To realise revolution!”
I look at the Premier,
My eyes filled with tears,
Premier, Premier, Great Premier!
You spared no effort to serve the people,
After you are gone,
Rest peacefully! Premier,
To protect the fate of the fatherland, we recognise that
We'll shoulder the heavy responsibility to build our fatherland,
We'll carry out your wishes,
Raising high the banner of revolution,
Oh, Premier,
You will always be with us.”*⁷⁰

The way the Democracy Movement was portrayed as a movement of the followers of the near super-man Zhou was, as with the martyrs, naturally another case of the projection of the moral qualities of a revered model to the whole movement. Another good cadre, especially praised in Beijing zhi chun, was Peng Zhen, the former Mayor of Beijing, who had been purged at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. In an article in Beijing zhi chun, Li Ying described Peng Zhen's moral character as righteous, vigorous, able to solve difficult problems, courageous to voice his opinions out aloud and tell the truth, and to carry responsibility. He was also held up as an advocate for socialist democracy, rule by law, human equality, and equality before the law. Indeed, under his leadership the city government had been run with people with ability and integrity, like Wu Han, another famous official purged at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. Indeed, it had been his prudence in work and decency that had led him into conflict with Chairman Mao and Kang Sheng, Jiang Qing, and others who had framed him as a counterrevolutionary rightist.⁷¹

These good moral qualities and political awareness of the leading persons were directly connected to a good result from ruling. It followed that there could be no legitimacy to lead if these characters were absent and these same abilities were therefore displayed as anathema to the Leftists. This was shown also in articles which urged the rehabilitation of Liu Shaoqi⁷² and Chen Yun⁷³ who were portrayed as

prudent, pragmatic, incorrupt, unselfish, as well as truthful to their word, communism and the people's interests. Chen Yun was also compared to Kang Sheng and Lin Biao who naturally lacked all these credentials. Hu Yaobang was also praised as compassionate to the people and their problems, 'doing solid work', detesting phoney (*kōngtǒu*) government and class struggle, and having the honesty to admit the gloomy side of reality. The people knew he loved science, talked about democracy and wanted to realise the four modernisations.⁷⁴

Another good cadre naturally was Peng Dehuai, whose letter to Chairman Mao at the Lushan conference in 1959 was reprinted in Beijing *zhi chun* to illustrate an example of his sincerity in office (*zhēnhuà*),⁷⁵ and Qunzhong *cankao* also printed excerpts from his trial at the hands of the Red Guards.⁷⁶ Peng Dehuai was also commemorated in many other articles and poems, like that with a telling title '*The Conscience of the Chinese Revolution – Peng Dehuai*',⁷⁷ where Peng's character was seen as a source of inspiration in the democratic struggle. He was naturally praised as a virtuous person, who had struggled his whole life for the people, loyal and upright, honest in the performance of his official duties, and his behaviour at the Lushan conference was praised as well as his fight against the Leftists.⁷⁸ Admiration for his moral character and Marxist credentials were even expressed as follows:

*"The people are calling: "Where are You?" But he is gone, went to see Marx with a clear conscience / Where after reporting / You get eternal peace."*⁷⁹

As though good Marxists could even get their rewards in an afterlife in a socialist Heaven from Karl Marx! No matter, Peng Dehuai was a natural choice to celebrate, as he had opposed Chairman Mao's Leftist policies in the late 50s and was posthumously rehabilitated by the third plenum of the eleventh central committee. Which was officially celebrated in Beijing on 24 December 1979.⁸⁰

Even Chairman Hua was praised in some poems⁸¹, but was not a central character in the journals, either because his background was awkward, or in deference to his post. Some of his praise also seems to have been totally misplaced, as Hua was sometimes equated with the practice faction. Chen Ruoxi also reports about posters where Hua was criticised,⁸² but probably for the same reasons these did not end up in the Democracy Movement's journals. In general the good officials that were chosen to be celebrated in the journals, were from the pragmatic faction and their moral characteristics were deemed worth emulation. Establishment of such associations also obviously served to demonstrate the progressive and revolutionary credentials of the Democracy Movement activists themselves. However, the opposite was true with their antagonists, the 'bad cadres'.

Bad Cadres

Almost all journals also published articles and poems about ‘bad cadres’, but Beijing zhi chun, Siwu luntan and Kexue minzhu fazhi were the most active in this. If the martyrs and good cadres were praised for their historical roles, high morals and unselfish dedication to the revolution, the Party and the people, their adversaries were found wanting in all of these characteristics. In a very Manichean manner, they were portrayed as evil and wicked people without any good qualities, influenced by vestiges of feudal and fascist thinking, and who only sought selfish gains and pleasures. Derogatory labels like ‘masters’ (*lǎoye*), ‘careerists’, and ‘conspirators’ were used in the journals to describe the Leftist officials. Unsurprisingly, Lin Biao and the Gang of Four group were portrayed as the ultimate evil, and particularly Jiang Qing was criticised for her moral degeneracy time and time again in prose and poetry.⁸³ One such poem was tellingly entitled: *‘The Poetic Documents Solemnly Dedicated to Your Majesty the Biggest Shameless Whore in Chinese History – Empress Jiang Qing’*.⁸⁴ Other poems called her and other members of the Gang of Four, for example, ‘demons’ (*yāo*).⁸⁵

The moral shortcomings of other Leftist cadres were also flaunted. In the poems by Qin Chi of Qiushi, the bad cadres were labelled as ‘thieves’ (*zéi*). In addition to this, they all had other negative labels attributed to them – viz: deceivers, careerists, counterrevolutionaries, anti-Party elements, oppressors of the people, etc.⁸⁶ i.e. many same labels that were put on the Democracy Movement activists by the Party Left. For example, an anonymous writer criticised Kang Sheng, who had died in 1975, under very telling titles: *‘Who Was the Big Traitor in the Party?’*⁸⁷ and *‘Kang Sheng Was a Demon, Not a Human Being’*.⁸⁸ The historical leaders of the enemies of the Democracy Movement were therefore literally demonised. This, of course, had also been a usual practise during the Cultural Revolution.

Wang Dongxing, Mao’s personal secretary and the then leader of the Whateverist faction, was also portrayed as outright selfish, uncaring and power-hungry – an evil man, who had opposed the reversal of the Tiananmen Incident verdict and was behind the doctrine of ‘whateverism’ and therefore belonged to the *“rubbish bin of the history”*.⁸⁹ That he had ordered a large new building to be constructed in Zhongnanhai for his private use was repeatedly criticised in the journals.⁹⁰ This information of construction also showed how Beijing zhi chun and Kexue minzhu fazhi were used in the power struggle. In a Beijing zhi chun article, Kang Sheng and Wang Dongxing were seen to have almost everything in common. As Li Ying argued, Kang had been similar to the ‘brownnose Wang Dongxing’ in uncountable ways. Indeed, Leftism opportunism had been greatly due to Kang Sheng’s ‘intellectual authority’ and now his personal secretary Li Xin was accused of being behind ‘whateverism’.⁹¹ Since Wang Dongxing was also accused of being behind the doctrine, the collaboration of those bad cadres was clear to the writers and proved Whateverism’s evil origins.⁹²

Criticisms of Wang Dongxing were clearly made to undermine the Leftist and Whateverists' moral credentials as successors of correct Mao Zedong thought. For example, a poster dated November 1979 criticised, *inter alia*, Wang Dongxing for being a follower of Lin Biao, the Gang of Four and Kang Sheng, as well as for acting against Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping, blocking the four modernisations and harming the people. He was seen to instigate chaos, be an opportunist without any virtue acting against the truth and practise and suppressing the revolution and murdering people. Consequently, it was essential he be ousted from the government.⁹³ As such, it is easy to determine that such posters and articles were probably the aspect even the Dengist conservatives welcomed most in the Democracy Wall Movement.⁹⁴

Complaints about the bad cadres could be profound or pettier. For example, Xiao Huangfeng in a short story described how a high city cadre jumped the queue in a shop. The people cursed the cadre behind his back accusing him of being 'without conscience'.⁹⁵ More damaging to the authorities were personal accounts of *yuan'an*, or wrongful cases, which were narratives of persecution and injustice visited upon individuals during the Cultural Revolution, and presented by petitioners at the Democracy Wall, usually as the last resort when the petition offices in the capital had refused petitioners.⁹⁶ The Democracy Movement journals did not print many of these accounts thus keeping a certain distance from the petitioner movement. Possible this was due to the number of unjust cases which, to be sure, was daunting as the journals could never have coped with publishing them all anyway. These could also have taken attention away from political reforms the movement demanded.

Identities and Motivation

The Democracy Movement was a complex social movement. As a movement its activities were centred on journals run by activist groups that only had loose co-operation with each other and no united organisation to speak of. Therefore, it did not offer its participants any single organisational entity to join, nor could it act in a united manner *vis-à-vis* its antagonists, nor speak with one voice. David Goodman has summarised this situation aptly noting that, for the most part; "*the Democracy Movement existed more abstractedly in the minds of activists as a social movement in which they were participating.*"⁹⁷ However, it was precisely as a rhetorical construction, that the Democracy Movement could become much more significant than it ever could have in organisational terms. Activists publishing journals and writing *dazibaos* needed to show, as much as convince themselves about, the necessity and desirability of their activism, and this could only happen through constructing them as a part of a larger and historically necessary movement. Activist groups required something much larger than they ever could be alone as their *raison d'être*. Reasoning that there was indeed a popular movement, with shared background and identity, was therefore essential.

The functions of the Democracy Movement's identity constructions were therefore many: constructing themselves as the historically progressive part of the people could legitimate the Democracy Movement as a social actor, create a following and support for it, increase the gravity of its demands, place its adversaries in a disadvantageous position on moral and rational fronts, as well as to generate unity in the ways to understand the nature of its members' activities so that they could cooperate and be co-ordinated. Collective and individual identities also defined the terms of membership in the movement, and thereby also limited access in it from unwanted elements. Once made public in the journals, these identity constructions became the terms of activism of which people could respond to, embrace, redefine, or reject.

The activists also realised that their strength lay in numbers and that the presentation of united front was essential. However, this was complicated by the fact that some of the activist groups hardly tolerated each other. Under these circumstances, only a very general definition of the movement's collective identity could bring together people with so many different views of the purpose of their collective action in the first place. The Democracy Movement activists could agree on their collective identities as a progressive movement of the popular vanguard, enlighteners and citizens, who were against the bureaucratism and the Party Left, but beyond this there were different identities in the movement's mainstream and its more radical journals; the identities of the various journals⁹⁸ and of individual activists, that reflected the tensions within and without the movement.

In their identity construction the resonant values that the Democracy Movement activists drew heavily on were the Marxist explanations of social movements as conduits of popular interests which guided history and the communist lore of revolutionary heroism. Making their collective action a part of the greater narrative of unfolding revolution in China and line struggles in the Party, the Democracy Movement activists also employed the same framing technique that the Red Guards had used, claiming to be on the progressive side of the struggle and identifying themselves with *the* revolution and *the* masses, and declaring their enemies to be the enemies of these things.⁹⁹ The influence of the way social activism had been framed in the Cultural Revolution therefore also continued in the Democracy Movement's motivational framings, which were also strongly influenced by the new class diagnostics. These influences were also visible in the Movement's prognostics, which we turn to analyse next.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 8

¹ Polletta and Jasper 2001, 296

² Hunt et alii 1994, 192-194

³ Similar notions of how to make individual consciousness serve society was already a main theme in classical Chinese political philosophy. Also here Chinese intellectual tradition could be seen entering the

- Democracy Movement's argumentation. The way in which early Chinese Marxism was influenced by Confucianism is discussed, for example, in Metzger (1977) and Woei Lien Chong (1997).
- ⁴ Huang Xiang: *Lùn lishǐ rénwù duì lishǐde zuòyòng yǔ zuòyòng fǎn zuòyòng* [The Positive and Negative Sides of Great Historical Figures], *Qimeng cóngkān zhi si* [Qimeng Collection 4] (Guiyang), CUP 3, 119-120
- ⁵ Pinglunyuán [Commentator]: *Mínzhǔ qiángde xiànsǐ yìyì hé dāngqián shǐmìng* [The Real Meaning of the Democracy Wall and Its Present Mission] *Siwu luntan* 1 / 1978, CUP 3, 46-47
- ⁶ *Zhēngwén qǐshì* [Soliciting Articles], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 1 / 1979, CUP 6, 285
- ⁷ Bi Dan: *Mínzhǔ qiáng zònghéngtan* [Survey of the Democracy Wall], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 15 / 1979, CUP 17, 21
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 22
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, 22
- ¹⁰ *Fā kān cí* [Opening Words], *Yuanshangcao* 1 / 1979, 1.3.1979, CUP 13, 295
- ¹¹ Gong Nianzhou: *Méiyǒu kǔ guò cháng yè de rén bùzǔ wèi yǔ rensheng* [Those Who Have Not Cried into the Long Night Should Not Talk about Life], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* –Jia Xindan zhuANJI 6 / 1979, CUP 11, 124. Similar praise for a poet-activist, named Sun Zhengyi, is found in Gu Qu: *Shī rú qí rén* [A Poet Like This], *Qishi* 1 / 1979, CUP 4, 213-214.
- ¹² Gong Nianzhou: *Méiyǒu kǔ guò ...*, 124
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 125
- ¹⁴ Jia Xindan: *Wén-shǐ shūzhá* [Letter on History of Literature], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* –Jia Xindan zhuANJI 6 / 1979, CUP 11, 257-258, the quotation from p. 258
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 258
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 258-259
- ¹⁷ *Qúnzhòng lái xìn xuǎn* [Assorted Letters from Readers], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 2 / 1979, CUP 7, 344
- ¹⁸ *Dúzhě píng kān – Qúnzhòng shìshì zhēnzhèngde yīngxióng* [Comments from the Readers –the Masses Are the True Hero], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 2 / 1979, CUP 7, 354
- ¹⁹ *Zǔguó gè dì lái xìn zhāidēng* [Collection of Letters From The Whole Nation], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 3 / 1979, CUP 8, 340
- ²⁰ *Xīnnián jìshū* [A New Year's Letter], *Qunzhong cankao xiaoxi* 2 (1 / 1979), CUP 2, 170
- ²¹ *Dàjiā píng bào* [Readers' Comments on the Journal], *Qunzhong cankao xiaoxi* 3 (2 / 1979), CUP 1, 302-303
- ²² *Zhōngguó Rénquán méng zhíxíng wěiyuánhùi guānyú shǎoshù rénrén gōngkāi fēnlì lìnglì tóngméng de juéyì* [Chinese Human Rights League's Executive Committee's Decision of the on the Minority Splitters], *Neibu jianbao* 2 / 1979, CUP 3, 243-245. The splitters declaration that caused this decision also contained a strong moral denunciation of their opponents as 'abolitionists' of the movement, who had 'sneaked' into it for personal gain and to create trouble. *Lùn rénquán yùndòng yǔ mínzhǔ yùndòng de qūxiāopài* [On the Abolitionists of the Human Rights and Democracy Movement], *DCDM* I 1981, 540-541
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 244
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, 244
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 245
- ²⁶ Of these values see (Yang 2000, 391).
- ²⁷ Even Liu Guokai did not write his long essay *Wénhuà géming jiǎnxī* [A Brief Analysis of the Cultural Revolution], *Renmin zhe sheng*, 2nd Special Issue December 1980, CUP 17, 91-244 in first person, although his personal experiences as a Radical Red Guard clearly informed the whole text.
- ²⁸ *Zhì Zong Fuxian bing Shanghai wénhuàgōng gōngrén yú Wú shēng chù jùzǔ quánǐ tóngzhimende yī fēng gōngkāixìn* [An Open Letter to Zong Fuxian and All Shanghai Culture Palace's Workers in the 'Where Silence Reigns' Drama Group], *Minzhu qiang* 1 (December 1978), *DCDM* I, 369
- ²⁹ *Lái xìn xuǎn dēng* [Selected Letter from Readers], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 7 / 1979, CUP 12, 62-63, the quotation from p. 63
- ³⁰ Beijing yi ge tielu gognren: *Ye tan xiandaihua* [On Modernisations], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 3 / 1979, CUP 8, 285
- ³¹ Chen Ziming: *Sìwǔ yùndòng huíyìlù – yǒngyuǎn zhǔnbèi jiēshòu shídàide kāoyàn* [The Fifth of April Movement's Memoirs -Always Be Prepared to Accept the Trial of the Time], *Beijingzhi Chun* 1 / 1979, CUP 3, 300-303
- ³² Shuang Ping: *Juéwùde Ya Se* [The Self-Conscious Ya Se], *Yuanshangcao* 2 / 1979, CUP 13, 329-330; Ya Se was also used s a pseudonym, see Ya Se: *Shēngmìng* [Life], *Yuanshangcao* 1 / 1979, CUP 13, 298-302

- ³³ *Ai Yin Si Dan jiyu womende weida qishi* [The Great Inspiration Einstein Gives Us],” *Siwu luntan* 6 (4 / 1979), CUP 1, 31
- ³⁴ Ai Ke: *Weidade kexuejia -Ai Yin Si Dan jieshao* [Introducing a Great Scientist –Einstein], *Qiushi bao* 5 / 1979, CUP 2, 143-145. Notably, Einstein was also a role model during the Tiananmen demonstrations 1989.
- ³⁵ Anita Chan 1985, 6-7
- ³⁶ Renquan Falizu: *Fu Yuehua shijian jujing shi zenme huishi* [What Exactly Happened In Fu Yuehua’s Case], *Zhongguo renquan* 2 / 1979, CUP 3, 233-235
- ³⁷ *Duzhe lai xin* [Letters from Readers], *Tansuo* 5 / 1979, CUP 4, 32-33; Similar defence in Lu Lin: *Rucide fangeming fenzi –wo suo liaojiede* Wei Jingsheng, Yang Guang” [Such Counterrevolutionary Elements – How I See Wei Jingsheng and Yang Guang], *Tansuo* 4 / 1979, CUP 3, 37-42
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 236-237
- ³⁹ *Guanyu Zhongguo tongmeng renquan yu Ren Wandong tongzhi* [On the Zhongguo renquan tongmeng and Comrade Ren Wandong], DCDM I 1981, 550
- ⁴⁰ Chong Ming: *Guanyu Wei Jingsheng de duihua* [Dialogue on Wei Jingsheng], *Tansuo* 4 / 1979, CUP 3, 44
- ⁴¹ Zheng Ming: *Shei shi hai qinde ma?* [Who Harms the Masses?], *Beijing zhi chun* 6 / 1979, CUP 7, 95-96, the quotation from p. 96
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, 97
- ⁴³ *Zhixin* 1 / 1979, CUP 16, 273-312, the journal was edited by a group called Zhixin Poetry Society (Zhixin Shishe) and was based on a compilation of the over 6000 letters the relatives of Zhang Zhixin had received.
- ⁴⁴ GMRB 5.6.1979: *Yi fen xue xiède baogào*. Zhang had been arrested for her criticism and tortured in jail. Her throat was slit to prevent her from shouting counterrevolutionary slogans before she was executed by a firing squad. Her body was sold to a university medical school for training purposes.
- ⁴⁵ *Zhi Zhong-Gong Zhongyāngde jianyi shu* [A Proposal to the Central Committee of Chinese Communist Party], *Siwu luntan* 11 (9 / 1979), CUP 7, 6. That *Siwu luntan* regarded Zhang as their model was well demonstrated by the fact that the same phrase was used in the rules of *Siwu luntan*.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁷ Zhang Zhixin: *Wode guāndiān bù biàn* [My Stand Will not Change], *Beijingzhi Chun* 8 / 1979, CUP 9, 95-108
- ⁴⁸ *Zhang Zhixin -Fāndui gèrén chóngbàide xiānfēng zhànshì* [Zhang Zhixin –The Vanguard Warrior of Opposing Personality Cult], *Beijing zhi chun* 8 / 1979, CUP 9, 109-110; Shi Ming: *Rénmín de nǚ’ér* [The People’s Daughter], *Beijing zhi chun* 8 / 1979, CUP 9, 111-123
- ⁴⁹ Zou Du: *Zhang Zhixin lièshì lieshi hé dǎng* [Zhang Zhixin’s Martyrdom and the Party], *Siwu luntan* 11 (9 / 1979), , CUP 7, 10-13
- ⁵⁰ Sun Feng wenzhai: *Dú Zhang Zhixin shì yǒugǎn* [Feelings from Reading about the Achievements of Zhang Zhixin], *Siwu luntan* 11 (9 / 1979), CUP 7, 15
- ⁵¹ *Xīnwén gōngbào dì-yī hào* [News Bulletin no 1], *Zeren* 1 / 1980, CUP 18, 163
- ⁵² Liang Xin: *Gémíngde qiángzhě –Zhang Zhixin* [Strong Revolutionary –Zhang Zhixin], *Baihua* 1 / 1979, CUP 13, 356-359
- ⁵³ Nathan (1985, 18) believes that the article showed that *Siwu luntan* had some inside information on Dengist faction’s intentions. The official rehabilitation of Yu Luohe took place about one year after the article in the *Siwu luntan*.
- ⁵⁴ *Zhōnghuá mínzúde hǎo érzi Yu Luohe yǒngchū-bùxiǔ* [The Great Son of the Chinese Yu Luohe Is Immortal], *Siwu luntan* 13 (11 / 1979), October 1979, CUP 8, 1-2
- ⁵⁵ Yu Loujin: *Wode gēge Yu Luohe* [My Big Brother Yu Luohe], *Siwu luntan* 13 (11 / 1979), CUP 8, 22-37
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 27
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 32
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 34
- ⁵⁹ Shi Huasheng: *Yi fen gōngrén wèi Mǎkèsīzhūyìzhěde lǐlùn wénxiàn* [Theoretical Documents of a Worker Marxist], *Siwu luntan* 13 (11 / 1979), CUP 8, 3-6; Yu Luohe: *Chūshēnlùn* [‘On the Theory of Class Origin’], *Siwu luntan* 13th issue (10 / 1979), October 1979, CUP 8, 7-21
- ⁶⁰ Others included, for example, He Long, Chen Lao and Tao Zhu see e.g. Zheng Ming: *Mínyì* [Popular Will], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 1 / 1979, CUP 6, 244
- ⁶¹ It also demonstrated some journal’s, like *Beijing zhi chun*’s, closeness to the reformers. The personal details of many leaders were so closely guarded that access to them could be acquired only through Party and government sources which had the access to leaders’ personal files (Nathan 1985, 19).

- ⁶² Neng Zheng: *Qúnzhòng xīwàng yǒu xīn shídàide Bao qīngtiān* [The Masses Yearn for Modern Good Official Bao], *Qiusi Bao* 8 / 1979, CUP 3, 20.5.1979, 186 similar poster could be found in Kexue minzhu fazhi Lu Ming: *Bao qīngtiān nǐ zài nǎlǐ?* [Good Official Bao, Where Art Thou?], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 1 / 1979, CUP 6, 255-256, but these were rare exceptions in the journals. There were more of these on the democracy walls, but these were usually written by petitioners, who sought help for personal grievances.
- ⁶³ See e.g. Zhou Xun: *Mínzhǔqiáng xiàng héchù qù - jiān lùn shèhuìzhǔyì mínzhǔ* [Where is the Democracy Wall Going –On Socialism and Democracy], *Siwu luntan* 8 (6 / 1979), CUP 5, 39 and Lü Min: *Zài lùn fèichú děngjí shòuzhíde guānlíáo'tǐzhì* [On the Abolition of the Hierarchical Bureaucratic System], *Beijing zhi chun* 3 / 1979, CUP 4, 190
- ⁶⁴ Jin Sheng: *Zài xù dì wǔ gè xiàndàihuà* [More on “The Fifth Modernisation”], *Tansuo* 2 / 1979 (29.1.1979), CUP 2, 8
- ⁶⁵ Xu Shu: *Cóng Zhou Enlai wǎnnián zāoyù kàn chēdǐ shèhuì biàngéde bìyàoxìng* [The Necessity of Thorough Social Transformation as Judged from the Late Years of Zhou Enlai], *Siwu luntan* 3 (1 / 1979), CUP 4, 63-64
- ⁶⁶ Liu Qing: *Yě cóng zōnglǐde zāoyù, tán tǐzhì gǎigéde bìxū* [More on the Hardship of Premier Zhou and the Necessity for Structural Reform], *Siwu luntan* 3 (1 / 1979), CUP 4, 71
- ⁶⁷ Min Tao: *Zhou Enlai jīngshén wànsuì!* [Long Live the Spirit of Zhou Enlai!], *Beijingzhi Chun* 1 / 1979, CUP 3, 282; similar praise in Shan Shi: *Zhou Enlaide... āi sòng rénmínde zōnglǐ* [Zhou Enlai's... Mourn and Praise People' Premier] *Beijingzhi Chun* 1 / 1979, CUP 3, 283
- ⁶⁸ Min Tao: 282; Similar praise in Shan Shi 283
- ⁶⁹ Wu Wen: *Mínzhǔ shēnpàn dúcái* [Democracy Brings Dictatorship to Trial], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 3 / 1979, CUP 8, 317-318. See also Zhu Qing: *Tóngbāomen, xǐnglái!* [Compatriots, Awake!], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 5 / 1979, CUP 10, 182
- ⁷⁰ *Mènglǐ xiǎng zōnglǐ* [Dreaming about the Premier], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 5 / 1979, CUP 10, 118
- ⁷¹ Li Ying: *Peng Zhen tóngzhì Běijīng rénmín pàn nín zǎo huílai!* [Comrade Peng Zhen: the People of Beijing Look Forward to Seeing You Return Soon!] *Beijing zhi chun* 1 / 1979, CUP 3, 287-289. Li Ying also praised Peng in *Peng dà bózi de zāoyù* [The Bitter Experiences of Peng the Neck], *Beijingzhi Chun* 2 / 1979, CUP 2, 265- 266. It is noteworthy that the Beijing zhi chun's tone on Peng Zhen changed markedly in the summer 1979, when the journal demanded Peng respect the people's democratic rights when drafting the new electoral law for the National People's Congress. Wang Lishan: *Zhì Peng Zhen tóngzhìde yī fēng xìn* [A Letter to Comrade Peng Zheng], *Beijing zhi chun* 6 / 1979, CUP 7, 101-106. The later tone of voice seems to have been more on the mark as it was under Peng who headed the National People's Congress Standing Committee and its newly established Work Committee for Legal Affairs and was responsible for supervising the legal system when the Democracy Movement activists were one by one arrested and their journals silenced. Nevertheless, he is said to have also been initially sympathetic to the Democracy Wall (Hsu 1996, 65-66 and 87).
- ⁷² Qi Dai: *Yīngdǎng chóngxīn píngjià Shaoqi tóngzhì* [Reassess Comrade Shaoqi], *Beijing zhi chun* 2 / 1979, CUP 2, 243-245
- ⁷³ *Shíshì-qiúshìde biǎoshuài Chen Yun* [The Example of Seeking Truth from Fact –Chen Yun], *Beijing zhi chun* 2 / 1979, CUP 2 260-262
- ⁷⁴ Zhi Jing: *Pochu “xiandai mihua” yongtu –Hu Yaobang* [The Hero of Destroying “Modern Superstition” – Hu Yaobang], *Beijing zhi chun* 3 / 1979 CUP 4, 165-166
- ⁷⁵ *Beijing zhi chun* 4 / 1979, CUP 5, 114-119
- ⁷⁶ *Hóngwèibīng shēnxùn Peng Dehuai tóngzhì jìlù* [Records of the Red Guards' 'Trial' of Comrade Peng Dehuai], *Qunzhong cankao xiaoxi* 5 (4 / 1979), CUP 3, 204
- ⁷⁷ Zheng Hao: *Zhōngguó gémingde liángxīn –Peng Dehuai* [The Conscience of the Chinese Revolution – Peng Dehuai], *Beijing zhi chun* 5, CUP 6, 97
- ⁷⁸ Song Peng: *Huáiniàn* [Cherishing the Memory], *Qunzhong cankao xiaoxi* 5 (4 / 1979), CUP 3, 205; Song Dehuai: *Huáiniàn Peng Dehuai* [Remembering Peng Dehuai], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 1 / 1979, CUP 6, 270-271
- ⁷⁹ *Huáiniàn Peng lǎozōng* [Remembering the Old Soldier Peng], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 7 / 1979, CUP 12, 4
- ⁸⁰ Nieh Yu-hsi 1979, 1218
- ⁸¹ E.g. *Qiusi* 1 / 1979, CUP 4, 220
- ⁸² Chen Ruoxi 1982, 12-13
- ⁸³ Zhai Bian: *Hànfù Jiang Qīng* [Jiang Qing -the Shrewish Woman], *Siwu luntan* 11 (9 / 1979), CUP 7, 37-40

- ⁸⁴ Jia Xindan: *Jīn jiāng cí shī xiàngěi Zhōngguó lìshǐ shàng dāngzhī-wúkuài de tóuhào biǎozī Jiang Qing nǚhuáng bìxià*, Kexue minzhu fazhi –Jia Xindan zhuanti 6 / 1979, 232
- ⁸⁵ *Zàngē chàng gěi Jiang māma* [Praising Mother Jiang in a Song], Kexue minzhu fazhi –Jia Xindan zhuanti 6 / 1979, 238-239
- ⁸⁶ Qiushi 1 / 1979, CUP 4, 218-220. They were: Lin [Biao] Zei, Kang [Sheng] Zei, Chen [Boda] Zei, Zhang [Chunqiao] Zei, Jiang [Qing] Zei, Xie [Fuzhi] Zei, Yao [Wenyuan] Zei, and Wang [Hongwen] Zei.
- ⁸⁷ *Shéi shì Dǎngnèide dàjiān?* Beijing zhi chun 1 / 1979, CUP 3, 322-323
- ⁸⁸ Li Ying: *Kang Sheng shì guǐ bù shì rén* [Kang Sheng Was a Demon, Not a Human Being], Beijing zhi chun 3 / 1979 CUP 4, 204. Denunciation of Kang Sheng in Beijing zhi chun, like the other leading Leftist personalities, was part of their denunciation in the Party as described by Byron and Pack (1992, 22-23).
- ⁸⁹ Li Ying: *Wang Dongxing - jīnrì Wèi Zhongxian?* [Wang Dongxing –Today’s Wei Zongxian?], Beijing zhi chun 3 / 1979, CUP 4, 168-172
- ⁹⁰ See e.g. *Rénmín de xuèhàn bùróng huīhuò* [People’s Sweat and Toil Does Not Brook Waste], Beijing zhi chun 3 / 1979 CUP 4, 176
- ⁹¹ Li Ying, *Kang Sheng shì guǐ bù shì rén*, 209
- ⁹² Similar argument of the continuation of false Marxism of extreme Leftism in whateverism can be found in Han Zhixiong: *Siwu zhànshì tán mínzhǔ* [The Tiananmen Incident Heroes Talk about Democracy], Beijing zhi chun 4 / 1979, CUP 5, 103 and Hou Ming: *Siwu yùndòng yǔ fánshìpài* [Fifth of April Movement And the Whateverists], Kexue minzhu fazhi 16 / 1979, CUP 17, 70.
- ⁹³ *Fēi shuō bù xíng* [Don’t Say It’s Not Alright], Kexue minzhu fazhi 1 / 1979, CUP 6, 241
- ⁹⁴ Another category of articles where a narrative strategy of creating and rejecting the legitimacy of the rule of certain leading personalities can be found in personal histories, which Beijing zhi chun published especially, see e.g. Li Ying, *Kang Sheng shì guǐ bù shì rén*, Beijing zhi chun 3 / 1979 CUP 4, 204-210 and *Shaoqi tóngzhì xiǎozhuàn* [Profile of Comrade Shaoqi], Kexue minzhu fazhi 4 / 1979, CUP 9, 306-310.
- ⁹⁵ Xiao Huangfeng: *Jiāsāirzhě* [Cutting the Line] Beijing zhi chun 1 / 1979, CUP 3, 303
- ⁹⁶ See e.g. Li Ying: *Zhè zhǒng shì bù zhǔn zài fāshēng* [This Kind of Thing Must Not Happen Again], Beijing zhi chun 5, CUP 6, 109-112
- ⁹⁷ Goodman 1981, 3-4
- ⁹⁸ Liu Sheng-chi (1984b, 195) has argued that the journals also saw the Democracy Movement in different lights: For Zhongguo renquan, the Democracy Movement was a human rights movement; for Qimeng, it was an enlightenment movement; for Jintian, a literary movement; for Tansuo, a radical revolutionary movement, while other journals like Siwu luntan and Qunzhong cankao were moderates and reformists. While these differences of emphases existed, the collective identities of the *whole* movement were generally agreed in these journals as a progressive vanguard, enlighteners, and citizens while they emphasised different matters in their own activities.
- ⁹⁹ Mehnert 1969, 47

9 CHAPTER: Engaging Democratic Theory

The last two chapters will analyse the prognostic aspect of the Democracy Movement's argumentation, i.e. how the movement's activists defined its goals. For social movements, prognostic arguments are, in many ways, the logical conclusion in a chain that begins with diagnostic and motivational arguments. It has been shown how the mainstream of the Democracy Movement connected the rise of the Leftism and bureaucratism in the Party with the emergence of the Democracy Movement. In their analysis, this development supplied the thesis and antithesis, whose contradiction fuelled the progress of history towards democratic socialism. Democracy could therefore be taken as the forthcoming result, the synthesis, of this dialectical relationship. Through it, China would rid itself of its backward political superstructure, and progress towards a system where the whole body politics and economy were run and managed by workers and peasants, the people. As with the diagnostic and motivational arguments the Democracy Movement activists used, their prognostics revealed intellectual allegiance to Radical Red Guard's thought and the 'new intellectual trends' developed during the Cultural Revolution, but remarkable developments in the argumentation and acquisition of new ideas on democracy both from Marxist classics and the liberal Western democracies were also demonstrated.

The influence of Radical Red Guard's thought could be seen in many places: First, many of the Democracy Movement activists were ex-Rebel Red Guards and there were even some cases where their arguments from the Gang of Four period, as with the writings of the Li Yizhe group, were republished. Many other articles in the Democracy Movement journals were also dated between 1970 and 1976, which showed a temporary connection with the Gang of Four period. Most important, however, was the ideological affinity between the argumentations from the two periods concerning systemic reasons for bureaucratism. This demonstrated how those activists who came from conservative Red Guards background had also come to accept the Radical Red Guards social analysis as principally correct. Most Democracy Movement activists regarded democracy as a means to bring an end to the conflict between bureaucrats and the Leftists and the people. Moreover, they regarded the establishment of democratic institutions as the necessary precondition for the transition from the early stages of socialism into full socialism and, finally, communism. However, the actual nature of the future democratic institutions was also a major source of disagreement within the movement. To be sure, there was a lot of room to manoeuvre within the framework of socialist democracy, and it proved a remarkably flexible notion in the hands of individual Democracy Movement participants. Both the proposed institutional reforms and their intellectual sources were diverse, ranging from the Marxist classics to Western liberal thought and personal idiosyncrasies of the activists.

In this and the following chapter the analysis of the chain of diagnostic, motivational, and prognostic arguments in the Democracy Movement journals is completed with analysis of the democratic reforms the activists envisioned. It is argued here that the activists used three different types of arguments when discussing democratic reforms viz: orthodox, eclectic, and anti-Marxist. This chapter deals with the first type of argument whereby Marxist classics by Marx, Engels, and Lenin were used to define and defend democratic reforms and refute the Party Left. Chapter 10 analyses the two other approaches that moved beyond strictly Marxist confines towards ideas and notions developed in liberal democratic theory, such as human rights. The overarching theme of all, however, is to demonstrate how all three approaches saw themselves as offering variations in the same theme of how to bring about socialist democracy and link it into Marxism – or, alternatively, how to be rid of Marxism, while still constructing socialist democracy, as in the case of Wei Jingsheng.

Marxist State Theory as a Defence to Democratic Reforms

As noted in the introduction, all previous research on the Democracy Wall Movement has noted the dominance of Marxist discourse in its argumentation, but it has not yet been analysed in any systematic way. As argued here, understanding the democratic reforms proposed by the Democracy Movement as *variations in socialist democracy* offers a better way to understand what the democratic activists demanded and why Marxism was so prevalent in their argumentation. Indeed, the majority of the Democracy Movement activists saw that their various proposals of how to reach socialist democracy were their contributions to Marxism. While writing in the labour camp after his arrest, Liu Qing succinctly summarised this:

“The task of the young people of this generation is not to forsake socialism, but to perfect socialism and struggle against those non-socialist [people who] force their will on the society.”¹

The first major line of argumentation for democratic reform was offered by those who used orthodox, or classical, Marxist state theory to justify and define democratic reforms. They engaged and refuted the Leftist doctrines of continuous class struggle, primacy of developing productive forces over reforming political institutions, and regarding democracy as only a means to an end in constructing socialism. They also defined the envisioned socialist democracy in the terms of the model provided by the Paris Commune.

Democracy and the Withering Away of Classes

Much of the mainstream Democracy Movement arguments for democratic reforms were aimed at refuting some, or all, of these Leftist doctrines and to show their fallacies from what the activists regarded as the correct Marxist point of view.² Apart

from the personality cult of Mao, as previously analysed, the central target of this criticism was the Leftist doctrine of taking class struggle as the key in politics. During 1974-75, the debate over the nature of socialism in China had peaked, and the result had been that China at the time was in a transition stage between capitalism and communism known as proletarian dictatorship. As the Leftists had held, at that stage, the features of both communist and capitalist economic systems still existed in society and were in contradiction with each other. This created the threat of capitalist restoration in the Party, leading to the conclusion that class struggle still continued and could worsen from time to time.³ The Leftists maintained that although the Cultural Revolution had mainly solved the problem of revisionism, the remaining class contradictions warranted continuous class struggle to uphold the dictatorship of the proletariat. The mainstream Democracy Movement saw this as a serious distortion of the original Marxist state theory, enabling the Leftists to justify continuous political oppression to support their rule.

Rejection of continuous class struggle seems to have also been the way through which many activists had reached the conclusion of the need for democratic reforms, long before the Democracy Movement. This was particularly revealed in the articles that had been written in the earlier half of the 70s and reprinted (usually somewhat edited) in the Democracy Movement's journals. They also demonstrated how the new intellectual trend and the theory of a new class had not been the only theoretical tools available to refute the Leftist rule at the time, or how these were further developed by reference to the Marxist classics. One of the best examples of such an article, and of the whole range of the Leftist notions the Democracy Movement attacked, was provided in *Taolun* in autumn of 1979 by Xu Shuiliang, an activist from Nanjing, who had been persecuted for his anti-Left posters during the Gang of Four period. According to the editors' note, Xu's text had originally been written in prison and the article was based on a *dazibao* in Nanjing in 1975, but the authors had partly rewritten it, as their theoretical knowledge had increased when the situation had developed.⁴

In an account that echoed the Democracy Movement's criticism of the Leftist rule through deception, Xu argued that the Leftists had committed mistakes on 11 different theoretical points. These included the theories of: 'Genius', that a leader decides all, the 'Follower' [Lin Biao], taking capitalist road, taking politics as the key, policy line as the key, and 'having one law' as well as confusing the dialectical method. In social theory they had opposed Marxist class struggle theory and advocated perpetual class struggle, and done nothing to reduce class struggle. Instead, they had maintained the class divisions under socialism in order to split popular opinion and to make upholding class struggle long-lasting and appear justified, when it had actually only been created to protect their own special privileges and to give theoretical grounds for their dictatorship. They had also promoted feudalism and opposed scientific socialism. In production they had advocated that politics and human will not productive forces determine all. This had damaged production and development of production skills. In economics they had

opposed material incentives and advocated spiritual ones hindering development. In politics they had advocated ‘total dictatorship’ creating fascism and tyranny. In practise they had promoted an; “*extreme right line under the guise of extreme ‘left’*”.⁵

Xu also revealed something about the intellectual change he had undergone during the 70s. Originally he had believed in the Leftist doctrines of continuous class struggle, but in 1973 realised that the class struggle theory of the time was incorrect. And in the following years he had tried to correct these errors through accurate application of Marxism. He recalled how idea that socialism equalled a classless society had struck him in 1976 when the Gang of Four had promoted its campaign of a grasping class struggle against the rightist deviation and Deng Xiaoping. After he had understood this he had begun to promote the view that; “*there is no class struggle*” and “*socialist revolution is not simply about eliminating classes, it is about eradicating the soil where classes grow*”. He also cited Marx as the source of this belief.⁶

According to Xu, Marx, Engels and Lenin had all pointed out that in socialism classes would wither away, and that society that would be build up on this would be the first phase of a classless communist society. Lenin particularly described this in the fifth chapter of his ‘State and Revolution’, with its transition phases. Of these the first phase was proletarian dictatorship and the second socialism, where classes had disappeared and only a small minority of dangerous elements needed to be suppressed. In this phase, the state would also begin to wither away and, when completed, society would reach communism. It was mistaken to think that transition from socialism to communism required continuous revolution. In reality, socialism was included in Communism and had no classes, as Marx and Lenin had pointed out.⁷ Xu saw that persistence with class struggle while these classes were anyway withering away was as revisionist as ignoring class struggle when it existed. The results of this were evident from the Cultural Revolution, i.e. great chaos, civil war and ‘total dictatorship’ leading to fascist dictatorship. He cited Marx as a proof that the classes were based only on the development of productive forces, and that class struggle would lead to proletarian dictatorship, which in turn would lead to the withering away of classes and toward a classless society. Lin Biao and the Gang of Four had distorted all this, but practise had demonstrated how their doctrine was bankrupt.⁸

Xu argued that Lin Biao and the Gang of Four’s theories were counterrevolutionary because when they grasped class struggle where it did not exist, they struggled against the people. Xu saw that Soviet revisionism arouse because that they had not allowed the state to wither away, but contrarily made it stronger, creating a bureaucratic class. He also refuted the Leftist notion that class was about ideology. As Lenin had noted, in class analysis, the most important thing was economic analysis, then political and only lastly, cultural.⁹ In order to achieve the classless society which socialism encompassed, the Chinese had to

“self-awarely construct production relations and superstructure that fits the classless society, and gradually abolish the inappropriate production relations and superstructure which are based on class society. Today and in the future we must gradually recreate our state so that it is organised by whole the people and managed by them all...”¹⁰

For Xu, like many other Democracy Movement writers, this meant democratic reforms according to the model of Paris Commune. Xu’s narrative demonstrated the way some Democracy Movement writers had come to realise the need for democratic reforms through the need to refute Leftist doctrines during the Gang of Four period. The fact that much of the mainstream Democracy Movement’s argumentation on the democratic reforms relied on the notion of progressing towards a classless society in socialism, and the necessity for democratic institutions in this process as explicit refutations of the Leftist doctrine of continuous class struggle, suggests that many other writers had also gone through a similar intellectual process as Xu Shuiliang had.¹¹

Huang Xiang connected the permanent class struggle to Lin Biao and the Gang of Four rule’s of deception, arguing that even if the objective bases for classes had disappeared with the abolition of private property, the doctrine of class struggle had been invoked in order to conceal Lin Biao’s and the Gang of Four’s ‘drive for power’:

“They became alienated from social reality creating an artificial concept of classes in order to promote class struggle and hide their drive for power, deceived the people. As they saw it, ‘class struggle’ was everywhere, the ‘new trends of class struggle’ evolved all the time, in their minds there were ‘enemies with wrong thoughts’ everywhere. They managed to mess up people’s minds and protect their fierce tyranny.”¹²

During the Cultural Revolution and misuse of the legal system, deceptive class analysis had made it possible to persecute those people with different thoughts, so that the use of any rights, such as the freedom of speech, could be labelled counterrevolutionary. Therefore, argued Huang Xiang, legal guarantees for these rights were now needed, to end the Leftist distortions.¹³

As the Democracy Movement writers therefore maintained, this Leftist distortion of class theory had also led to distortion of Marx’s original state theory through emphasis on the state’s coercive capabilities, but downplaying the withering away aspect. As Hui Jun argued in Qiushi bao, when the people seized power, the state’s repressive function towards them had to end. To protect the interests of the people, everything in the old state system that harmed them had to be destroyed. This occurred through the people’s democratic rights which transformed the power in the economy and state machinery into the hands of the great masses. In the same process the state had to start to gradually wither away. When the bad influence of the old

society and oppressors was eradicated, the people would voluntarily and self-consciously follow the new rules. At that moment the withering away of the state would be completed. Leaders would still exist in production, but state power would have disappeared and lower leaders would be unable to use oppressive powers. This was also the objective in the revolution: “*All real revolutionaries have the same goal: to struggle for the creation of conditions where complete abolition of the state is possible.*”¹⁴ For many writers in the Democracy Movement this still was the purpose of their struggle for democracy.

According to Hui Jun, Lin Biao’s rule and ideas had been the exact opposite of this model. Lin had emphasised the primacy of state power which had been totally counterrevolutionary and led to the destruction of socialist legal order under his followers’ fascistic rule. It had allowed all levels of government to turn into mini kingdoms and the efforts of the pioneers and the people to establish beautiful socialist ideals had been wasted so that; “*At that moment, a dark counterrevolutionary old society could re-shroud the whole of China, and the great masses had suffered under small cliques’ cruel fascistic tyranny that reeked of blood.*”¹⁵ Hui Jun’s article was also interesting because it was purported to have been originally written in 1972, which explained why it concentrated on criticising Lin Biao. The Gang of Four reference in the article had clearly been added later, although its main points were probably original. Like Xu Shuiliangs’ essay above, or Chen Erjin’s ‘On Proletarian Democratic Revolution’,¹⁶ it indicated how the theoretical resistance to Leftist dogma of class struggle had developed in the early 70s as criticism of their doctrine of permanent class struggle under socialism. Here the original Marxist state theory was the key source in criticism.

The key to refuting the doctrine of continuous class struggle was therefore to argue that during the transition to socialism and communism, class contradictions were in fact lessening and not worsening. Under lessening class contradictions, establishment of democratic institutions, and not violent class struggle and mass line campaigns, would effect the necessary peaceful change in the political system and eliminate bureaucratism and / or the bureaucratic class. The source of the notion of the withering away of classes was promptly located in the Marxist classics, which former Red Guards had, in many cases, had the opportunity to read after being sent down into the countryside. Not only did they give the Democracy Movement activists the theoretical tools to refute Leftist doctrine, but they also provided one possible model for a future socialist democracy. The mainstream Democracy Movement reform proposals therefore offered peaceful solutions out of the dilemma of class struggle, yet still maintaining that a contradiction existed between the people and the bureaucrats.

The Contradiction between Productive Forces and Political Superstructure

Another fallacy the Democracy Movement writers found in Leftist rule was that bureaucratism made economic development impossible. As many of the writers argued, the superstructure (Stalinist political system) and production relations (centralised industrial management under public ownership) had come to obstruct productive forces which otherwise had huge potential for development under socialism. The communiqué of the third plenum of the eleventh central committee also referred to the need to transform the superstructure to correspond to developing productive forces,¹⁷ but, using classical arguments, the Democracy Movement writers made much more than just referred to this need. Indeed, for them, political democracy and popular management of economy were required to solve this contradiction, and allow the economy to release its full potential which was also required for the gradual withering away of both the classes and the state.

Many writers made a distinction between productive relations – which basically meant industrial relations and management – and superstructure, which meant the political system in general. Both were structural factors which had to be reformed to fit them into the progressive socialist economic system, i.e. public ownership of the means of production. For the mainstream Democracy Movement activist, democratic reforms therefore had three levels: the political superstructure and economic management system, both of which were important, and the intellectual sphere, which their enlightenment identity referred to. Of these, the Beijing zhi chun especially emphasised the industrial management system more than other journals, which focused more on political superstructure, while all the journals discussed how democracy required popular enlightenment. Emphasis on the connection between production and democratic reforms was, of course, also relevant since many writers wanted to show how democracy was the necessary condition for success in the modernisation policies Deng Xiaoping had re-launched. That many activists had worker backgrounds may also have been relevant in this.

For example, according to Fan Quan in *Qiushi bao*, the exploitative classes of capitalists and landowners had been abolished in China, and a state where labour rewarded itself had been created. So, why then, was it a lie that China did not have social contradictions? Fan argued that at the moment, the most important contradiction was that between true and false socialism. Practice had shown that false socialism had been unable to make speedy development of productive forces possible; instead, false socialism had damaged them severely, and its superstructure had had no positive influence in the development of a socialist economic base. As Fan reasoned, contradictions within socialism could nevertheless be solved since in socialism the people could rationally direct social forces to serve everybody, like make the production relationship to fit the productive forces, and thus guarantee their constant development.¹⁸

For Fan, promotion of correct socialism meant promotion of creativity and activity in the people by joining the task of socialist construction, protecting their rights to be the masters of society, and preventing re-usurpation of the Party, and state leadership by the careerists and conspirators. Socialist legality and democracy had to be strengthened which meant protecting people's personal and democratic rights, as well as other rights. Fan saw that the constitution was the embodiment of the will of the people, but Lin Biao and the Gang of Four had negated its rights with their mad revolutionary campaigns.¹⁹ Using the familiar lesson-argument Fan argued:

“The lesson from the painful experiences is that only by protecting the masses’ personal, democratic and all other rights, can true socialism achieve victory in China, and the realisation of socialist modernisation be possible as well as communism!”²⁰

For Fan Quan at least, then, modernisation meant a leap towards communism, and not the specific four point economic policy of Deng Xiaoping's faction. Political reforms that would transform Chinese society from the proletarian class dictatorship to socialism were a necessary precondition to reach this goal. Although not defining the final goal of reforms as communism as often as Qiushi Bao did, other journals did share the view that political reforms were needed to enable economic development rather than vice versa.

For example, using a similar structural argument, Yu Ren of Siwu luntan saw that the problems in Chinese society were the results of the development where a centralised political system had become the main burden on economic development. Yu Ren offered his view as criticism of the 8th Party conference's analysis in 1962 of the state of Chinese society, where the main contradiction was declared to be between backward production forces and progressive production relations. Yu turned this upside down, arguing that the main contradiction lay between potentially progressive productive forces and backward production relations which the political superstructure perpetuated. As Yu saw it, after the liberation the economic system had supposedly become based on social ownership (*quánmín suǒyǒuzhì*), but in practise it had become a system of state ownership (*guójiā suǒyǒuzhì*). During the reconstruction period, the political system had aided the economy to develop rapidly, but soon this development had run out of steam, as the production relations had begun to obstruct it.²¹

As Yu continued, in a socialist society the workers – not only a minority of their representatives – should assume the power in economic decision making, but the structure of workers' state should also begin to wither away immediately from its establishment. Although this was a necessary development on the route to socialism, the problem was that it had not occurred in China. The real managers of the socialist society under the state-owned economy had, in fact, assumed the running of the country from the workers and non-workers. This situation had been consolidated in the past 30 years, and had made the workers' and peasants' position very limited.

According to Marxist theory the withering away of the state should have begun with the economy, where the management of production should have been gradually switched to workers' self-managed collectives. However, under the actual circumstances in China, the state and the Party had become united in all but name and the workers' management of economy had not been realised. If the workers' state did not wither away, it would become a state as all others, where large bureaucracies; "*had the power, but could not handle matters*".²²

Basing his argument on Engels, Yu maintained that the state structure had to change when the society changed. Further, socialist societies developed contradictions and power struggles, but they nevertheless followed the historical logic that Marx had revealed and analysed. Entrenched bureaucratism had made the struggle fierce in China, and when the Party had become part of the state, it had also become bureaucratized and class conflict crept into the Party. Therefore, argued Yu, reforms were required to correct the situation and initiate the withering away of oppressive state apparatus, by transfer of effective power into the workers' hands.²³ Yu was not the only one who argued that the view that China had backward productive forces, yet advanced production relations, and therefore had to concentrate on developing the economy, was fundamentally flawed. The acceptance of such a view would, of course, have undermined the arguments for democratic reforms and the Democracy Movement itself. Similar arguments on how democratic reforms would make the superstructure fit the economic potential, was advanced by many other writers in *Siwu luntan*, *Beijing zhi chun*, *Qiushi bao* and other journals.²⁴

Democracy as a Means to End or a Goal in Itself?

Some earlier researchers have seen that the Democracy Movement activists emphasised the instrumental nature of democratic reforms.²⁵ As the Democracy Movement arguments on how to solve the contradiction between the productive forces and political superstructure show, one of the central arguments in the Democracy Movement journals was that modernisation policies needed democracy to succeed. Even Wei Jingsheng made this connection clear when he called democracy the 'fifth modernisation'. In this the activists could follow the official press which emphasised the need for democracy and legality as necessary preconditions to the four modernisations. However, the relationship between modernisation policies and democratisation was not seen problem free, since the Maoist legacy had led many people to regard democracy only as a means to end. Unlike the issues of class struggle and development of productive forces, the answer to this problem was not readily available in Marxist classics, and those activists who addressed it were divided over the issue. Thus some defended the limited Maoist view of democracy as a means to end, while others defended it as a goal in itself, through emphasis on the promise of the total liberation of man as reasoned in original Marxism.

Here the issue was whether the Democracy Movement actually represented struggle for the four modernisations, or if it was a result of an independent historical force for the liberation of the masses, that just coincided with and supported the modernisation policies, or perhaps both. The issue was quite fundamental for, if democratic struggle was about mankind's struggle for freedom from oppression, then democracy could not be a dispensable instrument in some lesser economic policy – however welcome the four modernisations were, as such. In other words, the issue was of whether achievement of democracy (and thereby having the Democracy Movement) took precedence over the four modernisations. As previously explained, many writers argued that democracy was needed to advance the material interests of the people, but this was a weak defence of socialist democracy in itself – for what if some other form of government could create the same result?

The issue did not follow any clearly defined lines between the journals and both opinions could be found in same journals. For example, in *Siwu luntan*, Zhou Xun²⁶ asserted that; “*Democracy is not the goal, but a means to end (shǒuduàn)*”. For Zhou, the ultimate goal for the Chinese was the four modernisations, and socialist democracy was a precondition to them. Socialist democracy and the four modernisations were inseparable because democracy would allow the people to utilise their energies and initiative to the full to construct socialism, which the bureaucratic form of management did not allow.²⁷ Lan Sheng was another *Siwu luntan* writer who regarded democracy as the best means to modernisation. As he wrote in February 1979, the people wanted ‘*Socialist democracy or popular (bǎixìng) democracy*’, because of its social and economic consequences:

*“The people at the Democracy Wall want ‘democracy’, but this is not the final goal, the people want, that through it China goes through transformation, and becomes strong and prosperous (qiǎng- fù) quickly. This is the first mission of the Democracy Wall, and it is its soul; if it gets separated from this point, the Democracy Wall is not worth a penny!”*²⁸

An unnamed writer who wrote to *Siwu luntan*'s March issue also saw that democracy had its historical and economical limitations, and it was not the goal in itself, but instead, speedy realisation of the four modernisations was the goal. Only after the realisation of these modernisations first, could a higher-level democracy be established.²⁹ Some *dazibaos* reprinted in *Kexue minzhu fazhi* also revealed an instrumental way to define the meaning of democracy. In one poster, a writer attacked *Qimeng* for its criticism of Mao and claimed that the proletariat needed its own leaders to consolidate proletarian dictatorship, as well as Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong thought, to guide it under the new historical situation of realising the four modernisations and finally to reach the great consensus (*dàtóng*) of humankind in communism. Argued the writer:

“The gentlemen of Qimeng, we are not doltish weaklings, we do not need your ‘enlightenment’, we know how to protect the truth and the banner [of Mao

Zedong thought], *we do not accept the 'democracy' and 'liberty' you so lavishly praise. Because democracy and freedom are produced by classes and are the tools to consolidate class dominance, and not goals in themselves.*"³⁰

Some other posters also revealed a similar limited way of adjudging democracy as only free speech and participation in political debate, but not in any institutional form. An example of this line of argumentation was given by a writer named Wei Min, who argued that Chairman Mao had correctly stated it that democracy was only a means to end. Democracy, freedom and human rights, but also dictatorship and struggle which suppressed them, were means to ends, continuation of politics. The people could use these to acquire freedom, and tyrants to strangle them.³¹ At the time the youth vigorously demanded democracy, which was fine, but they had forgotten that democracy was only means to end, not a goal:

*"The goal is to make people's lives better, serve the interest of all people... Democracy is naturally needed, dictatorship is also needed, (without dictatorship how can we deal with the bandits, hoodlums, and scum that follow the Gang of Four and threaten the people), but it must be the people's democracy, the people's dictatorship, serving the interest of the people, and definitely not those of a small minority of a privileged stratum..."*³²

According to this writer, the youth had to bear this in mind when they mobilised people and aroused their enthusiasm, and to keep in mind the lessons of history: had not the Fourth of May Movement been very democratic? Students had organised and printed journals, but what had been the result? And what of 1957, and 1966? Argued Wei:

*"If we do not draw lessons from these bloody examples and if [the Democracy Movement does] not unite with the strength of the people constantly attracting new forces, and remains only a wall full of slogans, pathetic words on the paper, attending to trifles but neglecting the essential, bookish debate, it will just harm the country, and the democracy in front of our eyes can be lost again; very probably some people will even die at the beloved Democracy Wall!"*³³ [However,] *If a revolutionary movement and the interests of 900 million people were closely linked, what force could not be defeated?"*³⁴

For Wei Min then, democracy equalled popular participation and struggle, but not institutions and permanent arrangements that would make popular input and supervision of politics possible. As such, it showed how the limited Maoist interpretation of democracy as popular mass activity directed against officials still influenced some of the Democracy Movement writers. In this people practising free speech with demands to the officials *was* in itself democracy.³⁵ There were therefore two lines to argue that democracy was only a means to end: it was either, perceived as institutional arrangements which helped to create a strong and rich country by making modernisation possible; or as mass activism that would help in reforms, but

which lacked any institutional form. Clearly the latter was the meaning of extensive democracy used during the Cultural Revolution. However, both these views were in a minority, as the majority of the Democracy Movement journals saw democracy in institutional terms and valuable in itself.

The majority of the Democracy Movement writers who addressed this issue saw democracy as a goal in itself. For example, writing to Wotu, Hu Ping criticised those who saw democracy in an instrumental way. As he argued, some people still thought openly, or secretly, that to have dictatorship was better than to have democracy, particularly when an economically backward country had to be developed fast. For Hu, economic development under dictatorship only brought suffering and misery with it since it was temporary, deformed, based on sacrifice, and suppressed creativity. The Chinese also had to ask if mankind wanted only economic development, or did it have some higher ideals, too? People not only had their material needs, but had their human value, self-respect, human rights, and human nature, too, whose free development was not empty words. Therefore, aiming only for economic development would have disastrous results.³⁶ Hu saw that many people understood the value of democracy, but he was afraid that there were still many who saw it as a makeshift device which could rectify the evils of excessive dictatorship, but nothing more. Therefore, the debate on democracy had to become deeper, and not hastily halted the battle, as otherwise the Chinese would commit another mistake again.³⁷ Nevertheless, For Hu, democracy was intrinsically valuable in itself.

Many Siwu luntan writers also criticised regarding democracy as only a means to end. As the writers of the article *'The People's Right to Know the Facts'*³⁸ in the August issue wrote:

*"At the moment the most used slogan is 'democracy is a means to end, not a goal in itself'. Because according to the dominant political education, our road to socialism is the mission to liberate the whole of mankind and realise communism. To realise communism has two conditions, one is material affluence, and the other is to raise the level of consciousness of the masses. ... Because there is no people's democracy outside these goals democracy can be regarded as a means and means are just ways to reach goals. It can be used or some other means can be used instead. But is it really correct to use the ability to satisfy goals as the criterion [of socialist democracy]?"*³⁹

The writers argued that there are three basic aspects to man, viz: work, construction of a society, and the animal nature of man, which should be the basis of any analysis of the goals of social revolution. Because of the animal nature of man, material affluence was one of the goals in social development. Before class societies had existed, work had separated man from beasts, whereas in class society work had become means of exploitation and the duty of the labouring class. However, in a socialist society the original meaning of work was to be restored (presumably, as a

means to self-development.) Man was also a social animal, so social relations determined the nature of mankind:

*“From the history of the development of mankind’s class societies one can see that progress is connected to the developments and defeats of dictatorship and democracy. And in communism the democracy of a part of the society, class democracy, will develop into democracy that encompasses all citizens – democracy of the whole people.”*⁴⁰

The writers argued that it was difficult to accept that when the people lived otherwise in prosperity they would tolerate the shackles of any kind of dictatorship. It was also hard to believe that living in a society of increasing affluence, but without democratic life, could be called ‘liberation’:

*“So when the people demand material affluence, they also demand mental and ideological liberation, and this kind of liberation demands that the society has democracy. Therefore establishing people’s democracy is one of the goals of our revolution.”*⁴¹

Thus to regard democracy only as ‘means to end’ was the legacy of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four’s deception as well as one of the conditions for their ascendancy to power. They continued:

*“Therefore eradicating the ‘means theory’s’ wrong influence in the realms of ideology and thinking is the necessary condition of establishing people’s democracy and the right of knowledge.”*⁴²

Further, the old belief that ‘without the Party, there could be no new China,’ had evolved into a new realisation: *“Without democracy there is no socialism.”*⁴³ So, the issue was whether democracy should be struggled for in its own right, or as a part of some factional policy. Clearly, if mankind’s history was about people’s struggle against oppression, then it was a struggle in its own right, which is what most writers who dealt with the issue affirmed. Wang Xizhe also commented in the March issue of *Siwu luntan* in 1980 on the claim that democracy was only a means to end. As Wang noted, during the first year of the Democracy Movement, the official enthusiasm for the slogan ‘long live the people’ had notably declined, and as a sign of this on January 21, 1980 *Renmin ribao* had ran an article ‘*Support the Correct Direction of Socialist Democracy*’,⁴⁴ which indicated that the Democracy Movement was ran the risk of being misdirected and it should be returned to the correct path. Wang wanted to discuss what this ‘correct path’ was. For him socialist democracy was the goal, not a means to end. The article had seen democracy as necessary for modernisation but, citing Mao Zedong, stated that democracy was only a means to end and served the development of the economic base.⁴⁵

For Wang the essence of Marxism could be summarised in one sentence: abolition of private property. As he reasoned, the biggest problem in capitalism was alienation, and socialism's duty was to liberate man from this, which was not an empty ideal. Marxism had demonstrated that alienation and mankind's ability to overcome nature were incompatible. The only way to overcome alienation was by the means of control of production by the proletariat and the abolition of private property. Mankind's history was about moving from necessity to liberty, from barbarism to civilisation. In it mankind used the forces of production to overcome its animal nature to finally create the history of 'real man', or 'free man'. This man, according to Engels, was one who dominated the nature, was self-aware and owned society. This society was a coalition (*liánhétǐ*) of free men. Since the prospect to fulfil this goal of becoming free was only possible in democracy, how could it then only be a means to an end and not the goal in itself?⁴⁶

Based on this, Wang refuted the interpretation of Engels which stated that he had argued that the proletariat could seize political power through democratic means, yet in their hands it was a "*means to end like any other political system*". Wang explained that this implied that when the proletariat seized capitalist democracy, it was a means to end, and only after its old state machinery was eliminated, could the real democracy emerge. This democracy had to be utilised in order to abolish private property, or otherwise it was useless. Proletarian dictatorship was a transitory period where in private property and the capitalist class were abolished, and the people became masters of the society in a same way that they took charge of their own household affairs (*dāngjiā zuòzhǔ*). If this were not the goal, then what was, queried Wang.⁴⁷

Thus critics believed that the proletariat only needed democracy to build socialism and communism but if some other political system met these ends, then the proletariat did not need democracy. But what then were socialism and communism for after all, asked Wang? For without democracy the proletariat would sink even deeper into alienation while ostensibly constructing socialism and communism. Even public ownership of the means of production could not immediately remove alienation, which was measured by the degree a person's individuality attained freedom in a system. The result of modernisation should only be higher individual independence and individuality, as well as development of '*one's democracy and liberty*'. To answer then the Renmin ribao commentator, Wang argued that if the four modernisations did not advance democracy under these conditions, they could not be not socialist, but capitalist, modernisation.⁴⁸

For Wang the difference between socialist and capitalist democracies lay in the system of ownership. Democracy that was based on private property was a capitalist democracy, but democracy that was based on public ownership was a socialist democracy. If social analysis was not based on a system of ownership, it was subjectivism. Therefore, it was mistaken to reason that the Democracy Movement demanded capitalist democracy. If that were so, why was private property also not

demanded? Wang's point was that the democracy criticised in the Renmin ribao was basically just a straw man. If the democratic forms of government protected capital in capitalism, would they then also not protect development of freedom for the labourers in socialism?⁴⁹ For Wang, liberty and democracy had to have limitations in an underdeveloped country, but these were not based on the notion of democracy as means to end, but because of the low level of material and cultural development. The former notion dictated that when society developed, democratic rights enjoyed by the people should also expand, whereas the latter notion refuted the idea that development of democracy was the basic character of socialist society. It would only lead to a concentration of the power in the hands of a minority and increase the alienation of the people.⁵⁰

Sun Feng also offered his view on democracy in Kexue minzhu fazhi, seeing democracy as the necessary outcome in the people's struggle through history which actually went beyond the means to end – goal dichotomy. As he argued; *“It is wrong to see democracy as a means to end, but it is not a goal either. It is a natural desire that mankind possesses...”*⁵¹ Sun criticised the view that emancipating minds only served the four modernisations, and asked if China would not modernise, should the Chinese still have to remain ignorant and ossified, and should the feudal dictatorship still continue? To argue that emancipating minds only served the four modernisations was non-democratic, since it regarded the people as tools that were given only a little democracy for the four modernisations. Declared Sun:

*“As if democracy would be given to the people by the masters. Wrong! Democracy is something the people struggle for in bloodbath; it is the necessary outcome of history.”*⁵²

Sometimes the writers themselves did not seem to be sure how to regard democracy. As Hua Chuan argued on 24 April 1979 in Kexue minzhu fazhi:

*“Democracy is a political means to an end, in a socialist system it is a method whereby the citizens of the country gain access to national politics, can influence the nation's political movements, supervise the Party and the government's political direction, and when necessary, rectify the Party and national leaders' mistaken lines.”*⁵³

However, after defining democracy as a means to end, Hua then went on to argue that in democracy the most significant factor was that one was allowed to express political opinions and attitudes in public. Only then could one take part in politics, influence political movements, and supervise the Party and the government's political direction, rectifying the leaderships' mistaken lines as the result. *“This result is called ‘democracy’, the goal of these political methods.”*⁵⁴ Hence, the freedom of speech was a means to end, but exercise of it created a democratic system that was the goal of the whole exercise.

Yet, for the majority of the Democracy Movement, democracy was an end in itself and an integral and necessary part of socialism and future communism. Democracy was also a necessary precondition to successfully go through the transition to socialism and communism, partly because it promoted economic development, but also because empowerment of the people to take charge of public affairs was also a part of the original promise in socialism to liberate man from alienation and exploitation. Ipso facto, democracy had to be an integral part of socialism. Another issue was, of course, that the status of democracy directly reflected on the status of the Democracy Movement. If democracy was only a means to end to create a strong and prosperous country, then Democracy Movement was also perhaps not so necessary after all. But for the majority of the Democracy Movement activists, the movement was a product of historical necessity, and therefore also democracy had to be a goal in itself.⁵⁵

That democracy was regarded both as a goal and means to modernise at the same time was not confined to the Democracy Movement; the Party reformists could express also similar perceptions. For example, Liao Gailong, an expert on the Party history and a member of the Party Policy Research Department, gave a speech on October 25, 1980 stating that: “*Democracy is the means as well as the goal; it is the means to achieve our political goal and it is also our final goal.*”⁵⁶ To be sure, in theory, democracy had always been part of centralist democracy, but for the Democracy Movement activists, also those who accepted Party leadership in principle, advocating democracy was about disapproving of the actual practise of centralist democracy in China. History had shown them how the Party Centre could turn the limited democracy on and off at will just like a light switch. When activists demanded democratic institutions while still accepting the leadership of the Party, they envisioned arrangements whereby the Party would have been made to abide by popular rule. These arrangements would force the Party to listen to popular opinion, subject centralism (i.e. Party leadership) to democracy (i.e. popular opinion), and not vice versa. The creation of such arrangements was also what the reformist intellectuals who wrote to Beijing zhi chun wanted, when they proposed, for example, the end of the life-long tenure system in the Party and intra-Party elections.⁵⁷ However, most of the Democracy Movement went far beyond these proposals.

Orthodox Arguments and the Paris Commune as the Model for Democracy

Writing to his journal Wotu, Hu Ping largely summarised the way the Democracy Movement activists saw their mission. Referring to a student of the Yugoslavian socialist political economy as his source, Hu stated that: “*A big question in the 20th century is to properly solve the relationship between socialism and democracy.*”⁵⁸ However, how exactly this was to be done, resulted in the major division in the Democracy Movement. What would socialist democracy be like in practical terms? As seen in the introduction, earlier research on the Democracy Movement has mostly

focused on this issue, seeing the movement as divided between the Marxist mainstream and anti-Party radical wing. Although this division existed and is also used here, the question of democratic institutions under socialism was more complicated than it indicates. It is proposed here that the Democracy Movement argumentation should be analysed against the wider context of the movement as a reformist socialist movement, and its demands therefore as variations on socialist democracy, which the author categorises here as: *orthodox*, *eclectic* and *anti-Marxists* approaches.

Those writers taking the orthodox approach, argued for the return to the orthodox principles of socialist democracy, which were to be found in the works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. Those who took the eclectic approach also affirmed the superiority of Marxism in principle, but argued for the study of the various features of capitalist democracies, in order to incorporate them into socialist democracy, such as human rights. Standing clearly separately from the two previous approaches were those who either heavily criticised or discarded Marxism in their arguments for democratic reforms, but still affirmed the value of socialism. They converged heavily on the models offered by Western liberal democracy. The rejection of the Stalinist political system that produced bureaucratism and Leftism united all writers who took these different approaches, but they disagreed on which direction to take from this position.

One of the three major variations of socialist democracy in the Democracy Movement's argumentation was offered by the activists who used orthodox Marxist arguments, but also with some references to more recent developments in socialist theory in Yugoslavia and Eastern-Europe.⁵⁹ The examples of socialist democracy they found in the early writings of the world socialist movement provided them with the practical model of direct worker's management of industry and participation in politics through direct elections at all levels of government, recall and referendums. The major orthodox Marxist journal was *Beijing zhi chun*, where the Paris Commune (*Bālí Gōngshè*) was presented as the true institutional socialist solution for the 'feudal-fascist dictatorship' of the Party Left.⁶⁰ Its writers also defined the existing political system as a 'cadre appointing system' (*gànbù wěirèn zhì*), or hierarchal cadre system (*děngjí shòuzhí zhì*).⁶¹ The Paris Commune was also a theme discussed in the official press and academic debate as a model for possible political reforms, and even Deng Xiaoping offered it as a model to study during the Conference of Theory Work.⁶² Discussion on the Paris Commune was therefore the least risky option of the approaches on socialist democracy in the Democracy Movement.

The Paris Commune had already captured the imagination of the Rebel Red Guards in the early phases of the Cultural Revolution, and had also been present in new class thought. This combination also influenced the orthodox Marxist arguments. This was shown, for example, by Lü Min in *Beijing zhi chun*, who argued that the problem in China was that the communists had taken over the old state machinery in the revolution but not abolished it. Instead, an undemocratic cadre appointment system

had been established. Lü Min argued that the crux of the problem was that the old and new systems were different in their class nature, but not in practice. In the system of “ranks and hierarchies”, bureaucratic elements could be reborn and careerists (*yěxīnjiā*) could stage a restoration. Therefore, when the Paris Commune system was established, not only should the people in power be changed, but also the system of appointment abolished. Only this could ensure that the people’s servants would not turn into people’s masters. Indeed, merely attacking the bureaucrats and not the system, as the Leftists had done, meant neglecting the source of the problems and had therefore not been true Marxism.⁶³

Lü Min also argued that at the time more and more people realised the need to abolish the whole bureaucratic system. The people had learned to appreciate the Paris Commune type of institutions that the original Marxist state theory demanded, which the Leftists and bureaucrats tried to prevent from realising. As Lü argued:

“...At the present there are many cadres, who proceed from protecting special interests, twist Marx’s state theory trying to distort people’s thinking hiding the essential problems with this political theory in order to prevent the people from smashing down the hierarchal bureaucratic system. But the people cannot be deceived for long; in the final analysis the people can tell the difference between false and true teachings and completely grasp the pure quintessence and clear objectives and concentrate power to smash the hierarchal bureaucratic system.”⁶⁴

For Lü, elections and popular supervision of cadres were needed to control the inherent tendency to moral deterioration of an unsupervised bureaucracy. Indeed, no matter how much the old cadres fought against it, the system would otherwise develop to be opposed to the people.⁶⁵

Gao Jimin also shared Lü Min’s views in Beijing zhi chun, arguing that what ailed the hierarchal system of cadre appointment at the top, was the lack of popular supervision, which alienated cadres from the people: *“this [cadre appointment] leads to degeneration of the quality of the cadres. In time, the people’s servants become the people’s “masters”, that is, a new bureaucracy.”⁶⁶* Therefore, Gao Jimin argued, only by following the Marxist state theory and establishing the Paris Commune type of political system could the people ‘grasp’ (*zhǎngwò*) cadres and the productive forces and realise a system of popular control and socialism. Indeed, Gao argued against both the Leftists and the Democracy Movement radical wing alike that: *“The criterion to distinguish between true [and false] Marxism is exactly the attitude to the abolition of the old state system and establishment of the Paris Commune system.”⁶⁷*

Another Beijing zhi chun writer who took this approach was Qi Wen, who argued that after the revolution it had not been enough to only replace individual soldiers and bureaucrats in order to prevent the alienation of the ruling officials from the

people. The whole superstructure should have been transformed into self-governing democracy modelled after the Yugoslavian experience. The reason for this was clear:

*“Our Party uses over and over again methods to get the cadres in touch with the people and [make them] learn through work, but bureaucratism still repeats itself, as does the phenomenon of [cadres] becoming morally degenerated. Is it not just because of the ‘state system’ that causes this scourge?”*⁶⁸

Other Beijing zhi chun writers, who argued for the Paris Commune type of democratic institutions on similar grounds, were (at least) Gong Ren⁶⁹, and Han Zhixiong and Yi Ma⁷⁰. However, advocating emulation of the Paris Commune as a model for political reforms was not confined to Beijing zhi chun. The veteran activist Wang Xizhe of the Li Yizhe group also contributed to the discussion on the needed reforms in Siwu luntan. For Wang there existed a dialectical relationship of unity of opposites in the people following Party leadership and supervising it at the same time, and Wang showed how this could also be used to justify more general forms of popular supervision:

*“If the people lack the leadership of the Party that represents their interests and understands the laws that guide the development of society, they run the risk of becoming blind and losing their road forward. If a communist Party (especially a Party that uses political power in a socialist country) loses the supervision of the people, it turns into a bureaucratic Party riding over people’s heads and deceiving them running the risk of becoming a fascist Party.”*⁷¹

Therefore, argued Wang, based on the example of the Paris Commune, “*which all are familiar with*”, the Party should have promulgated rules that prevented it from becoming an oppressor of the people, instead of being their public servant. The right to criticise the Party prevented it from changing into a Party of a minority with special privileges. The Party was only able to control itself at too high a price, as the struggles during the Cultural Revolution and the rule of the Gang of Four had demonstrated, argued Wang.⁷²

For Wang, as for many others, the fundamental reason for the problems in the Party rule lay in Stalinism, in which the Party supervised itself and all-important decisions were made under its leadership. Wang saw that such system was based on Lenin’s opinions on Soviet rule, yet was against Marx’s and Engels’ views about the progressive nature of popular supervision in the Paris Commune, and even Lenin’s own views given in the ‘State and Revolution’. If the Party Centre violated the people’s interests under the Leninist system, the people had no recourse against it. As Zhang Zhixin’s case had revealed, no law, however well written, could bind the Party Centre if it was in the hands of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four type of cliques.⁷³ Wang therefore argued that measures should be taken to ensure that the Party would

always be in the hands of the real Marxists, who were those who served the interests of the people, which only the people could be the judge of. The question was how, through what measures and routes, the people could use their powers as masters of the society, and it was also how the people could use their powers when the Party Centre misused its prerogatives and oppressed the people. At the time, it seemed that only the use of violence was the option; *“But why to use violence? Why not to establish a political system where the people can use legal and effective methods to supervise and control the Party Centre?”* Wang asked, making clear that the democratic reforms he advocated were the antithesis of the Leftist mass line approach to politics.⁷⁴

Many writers in Kexue minzhu fazhi also advocated emulation of the Paris Commune. A ‘Beijing Railway Worker’ argued that one reason why bureaucratism and a special privileged class still prevailed was that the Chinese political system was modelled after the Soviet example. If this system was not thoroughly reformed, modernisation would be left unfinished, or China would become to resemble the Soviet Union. The anonymous writer continued, Marx had summarised the experience of the Paris Commune in three points: that officials should be elected by the people and be responsible to the people; such officials should be recallable; and that their salaries should correspond to those of the workers and should have no special privileges.⁷⁵ This formula was generally accepted by all who advocated emulation of the Paris Commune as the basic model of socialist democracy.

The writer cited Lenin on the ‘State and Revolution’ on the nature of the future state wherein officials’ privileges would be abolished, and they would receive equal salaries with the workers. The writer claimed that the Chinese people had either forgotten, or not even originally known this aspect of Marxism. Equal salaries, elections, and recall systems were the ‘original’ form of democracy in socialism, and incidentally, without returning to them China could not surpass the capitalist countries, and these would form the bridge to socialism too, argued the writer. Further, Engels had also pointed out the importance of recall and election systems that would protect against the eventuality that the public servants might turn into public masters. This meant the people elected their leaders, not some heroic figure who selected his own successor (a direct reference to Mao). These rights required socialist legality to protect them in practise, and had important consequences:

“Strictly speaking from a legal point of view, all leaders, Chairman Mao, Premier Zhou, Chairman Hua, Deng Xiaoping... all could be recalled from office. Please comrades, do not get agitated. It just is like this in theory without any chance of confusion. If it were not like this, the people would lose its sole weapon in the struggle, as the Cultural Revolution demonstrated.”⁷⁶

Another variant on the orthodox Marxist theme of socialist democracy was presented by Xu Shuiliang in Taolun based on a Marxist vision of society governed by free men based on voluntary cooperation. He based his reasoning on the notions of

freedom, autonomy (*zìzhì*), and concentration of power, or collective decision making (*jízhōng*). As Xu saw it, personal freedoms were the fundamental freedoms for production and life. Additionally, freedoms of speech, publication, assembly, organisation, residence, travel, demonstration, and strike were also fundamental. Laws, regulations and rules were necessary to create discipline required by social life and production. Freedom was the basis of autonomy which was the basis of democracy. The question of how to protect certain forms of common social life and rules and regulations was a question of the relation between autonomy and collective decision making.⁷⁷

For Xu, democracy was a concept regarding the state; it meant the people managing the affairs of the state. This was a class concept, whereas autonomy and collective decision making were not class concepts, but rather concepts of social management in both class and classless societies. Democracy would wither away, but not autonomy and collective decision making. Marx and Engels had summarised this in 'On Authority' and 'Civil War in France'. The question was about how to rule a society and protect discipline. Based on this [somehow] it was wrong to say that the democracy in 'democratic centralism' only meant freedom of speech, argued Xu. Indeed, when 'a person' [Mao] had stated that democracy meant 'the method of education', he had confused the meaning of democracy: "...saying that democracy means [only] freedom of speech and not managing the state in a collective way is nonsense."⁷⁸ For Xu, the systems of 'household head management', official management, and bureaucratism were also false forms of how to manage autonomous people.⁷⁹ In classless societies the practice, protection, and upholding of collective decision making was accomplished through the residents' direct use of benevolent authority where the minority obeyed the majority. It was protected through custom, tradition, morality, and religion.⁸⁰

Xu also advocated the Paris Commune as the model for the future socialist democracy, and argued that while in old societies the state had been an oppressive machinery, in socialism it served the people, and a step further from this was the free association of men under communism. The socialist state only suppressed class enemies, or those who imperilled the society, abolished division of labour in society and made economic and cultural matters the most important tasks of the state that would gradually become a free association of economic and cultural producers. Lenin had pointed out many times that the most important factor in proletarian class dictatorship was not coercion, but proletarian discipline and high level of labour organisation, and as Xu saw it, Mao had violated this principle, as he had not understood Marxist state theory.⁸¹

The task at hand was to transform the state based on the model of the Paris Commune as an association of producers of the entire people of the nation. Under it, dictatorship would wither away, as classes withered away too. But as dictatorship withered away, democracy also had to lose its meaning of 'ruling over' (*tǒngzhì*). The original democracy would thus perish and be transferred onto the shoulders of

the entire people. When democracy and dictatorship faded away, the non-class freedom and disciplined autonomy and collective decision making would become stronger. This would make it possible to create democratic systems of social control, which in capitalism incidentally were only shams. The bureaucratic system and special privileges would disappear. As classes withered away, a ruling Party would also disappear and in classless society all organisations, collectives, factions, groups and associations would freely and peacefully compete for, and elect and recall their own leaders, according to the majority principle.⁸² Thus, Xu's essay was a good example of classical Marxist arguments whereby democracy based on the model of the Paris Commune was portrayed as the necessary precondition to reaching communism.

The Meaning of Elections

The central institutional arrangement that the Democracy Movement writers generally regarded as urgently required was popular elections. However, elections had a distinctly different meaning for them than is usually accepted in liberal democracy. Thus, elections were to protect against deterioration of the officialdom into a bureaucratic class, and not to create a representative government. A writer in *Kexue minzhu fazhi* demonstrated this well in an essay on 'Peoples' Rights'. It was argued, the people had lacked all rights under feudal dictatorship in China, and in 1949 they should have gained the right to manage their own affairs, but due to the influence of feudalism this had never been achieved. Electoral rights would especially demonstrate the superiority of socialism to capitalism. This right should be combined with the popular right to freely discuss who was right and who was wrong, i.e. freedom of speech. The old imperial system had not been able to do away with emergence of bad officials with repeated 'uprisings of the righteous' and political reforms. Now the Chinese should change the situation. Argued the writer:

*"There was a great attempt [at that, meaning probably the Cultural Revolution], but the old bureaucracy was not toppled, new bureaucracy just increased, good people were all struck down, could the people really not see this? It was not so, it was that the people did not have rights, [and] only through protecting people's rights, through giving them electoral rights, could the people elect those who they preferred and produce leadership which really works for the people. Within the people there are many persons who are capable leaders having great revolutionary ideals and work methods with their feet on the ground, but if they are promoted in rank, it unavoidably occurs only at the leadership's will, some will prefer flattery, fawning on their superiors for promotion, and those really talented people who are upright and not given to flattery can only feel inadequate and frustrated."*⁸³

Echoing many others, this writer argued that the system of appointment of cadres from above had given the opportunists the chance to form cliques to pursue their

selfish interests. In this system it was a custom to appoint people by favouritism and promote supporters and demote opponents of their superiors. Even now these kinds of people occupied leadership positions, some of whom with no talent at all. For the writer they had the common traits of bureaucrats: They were high officials with big salaries, climbing ‘up the mountain’ [the bureaucratic hierarchy] their heads full of bad thoughts and cruelly oppressed the common people as they went. The Chinese needed electoral rights to prevent these kinds of people ever getting the power and to really manage the state and choose those people with real talents to be their leaders. In a socialist country, human talent should not be wasted, only thus could China develop prosperous and strong. Therefore:

“We want people who want to serve the people, have high revolutionary ideals, [but are] not necessarily Communist Party members. China has millions of Party members, if they really followed the Party charter, were unselfish and magnanimous, open and aboveboard, worked hard and endured criticism, bear hardships first and enjoyed rewards latter, the people would certainly elect them. Some people put on a false face to curry favours thinking that after entering the Party they can become officials. To purify our Party we must block this road and make these individualists feel inadequate and frustrated; only [if] the people who do not care for individual interests [are elected] can the people’s protection be achieved, and only these people can be given the glorious name of communists. All who pretend enthusiasm but avoid their responsibilities are only temporarily [in power], the people will know them and expel them...”⁸⁴

If the old system stayed intact, it would resemble the rule of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four when the people were helpless against their feudal tyranny and the harm they caused. If the people had electoral rights, they would have removed the Gang of Four. The Chinese had gone through enough to know that they needed to obtain the right of election. The people could tell the difference between true Marxists and revisionists, and topple the latter. This would also be significant in consolidation of proletarian class dictatorship. If the people had extensive democracy they would be sore self-aware with national affairs. The people hated factions, so let them unite under red colours and reach consensus, concluded the writer.⁸⁵ Thus writer’s argument was clearly that elections would unite the people behind the true Marxists in the Party, and not divide them.

Only one writer, who wrote in Beijing zhi chun, developed an argument that could be taken as an advocacy of a more competitive political system. Zhen Ping argued, the cadres’ ‘iron bowl’ was the sole survivor of feudalism, but the right to recall incompetent officials was part of regular governmental life. Alluding to the theory of a new class, he continued, according to the hierarchal appointment system those cadres selected from above could not become the servants of the people, but only a special privileged class of “successors”. The question of solving the successor problem was therefore a problem of finding persons of ability and the system of

selecting cadres. Here Zhen Ping made a suggestion, which seemed to imply free electoral competition: all local levels and departments should be given autonomy to make decisions concerning themselves and cadres had to take new and uncommon stands, and compete against one another to advocate their views in the media at every occasion. As a result, those who just copied ideas from others could not become cadres. Further, the people had to decide the outcome of the competition, for which they also needed the right of information in order to exercise make their electoral rights properly. And under a proletarian party and government, there could be no excuses to fail to undertake this.⁸⁶ However, although in Zhen Ping's proposal officials would have assumed some of the characteristics of politicians in the West, his scheme also implied competition within the Party, not a multi-party system.

Although some writers argued that elections should be extended to the very top positions in the Party,⁸⁷ many writers in Beijing zhi chun paid more attention to the grass-roots level. What also characterised the orthodox Marxist argumentation, was the perceived relationship between grass-roots democracy in industry and the whole process of the creation of socialist democracy. For example, Han Zhixiong argued that the establishment of genuine people's democracy was the biggest question at the time and required resolute answers. If political democracy was desired, so was economic democracy. Thus Han argued that the Chinese should study the Yugoslav example in order to realise the four modernisations.⁸⁸

Lü Min also developed an argument to this end in Beijing zhi chun. According to him, basic level authority of Party committees in industry severely limited workers' democratic rights. Since elected officials had no real powers, this stifled the workers' enthusiasm and their feelings for the revolution. To correct this situation and bring enthusiasm back, the authority of the basic level Party cells had to be abolished in industry. Lü linked his argument to declining class-struggle and the theory of a new class, reasoning that a political party was a class-based concept and an instrument of class struggle. Party's power would vary with the intensity of this struggle, and since it was now decreasing in China, the Party should also reduce its prominence and this process start from the basic level. Only the system of private property could create exploitative classes and if an economic system produced such class, clearly it could not be a socialist system. In the Soviet Union the national capitalist class had been created by transformation of the socialist system into a planned economy where a ruling group had usurped power and transformed itself into capitalists.⁸⁹ Lü stated:

“At present it is like this: due to a gradual loosening of class struggle it [the Party] is gradually losing its progressive role and popular support. People move gradually from supporting it to avoiding it and finally to hating it. This is a generally known fact. The basic level Party leadership has already become an obstacle in the progress of history. And the people feel like this more and more.”⁹⁰

As Lü saw it, in Yugoslavia the Communist Party basic level control had been abolished in industry which had had a positive effect in production. So Lü did not propose a total abolition of the Party as yet, but advised the Chinese this had to start gradually. To abolish the authority of the Party committees in industrial enterprises would serve as the start and later the abolition of the whole Party would follow. The Party leadership in industrial enterprises would be replaced by elected “Workers’ Representatives Assemblies” (*gōngrén wěiyuánhui*) which would assume political power in factories. The Party cadres could participate in the election of workers representatives’ assemblies, but not longer run the show anymore.⁹¹

In orthodox Marxist arguments, elections were therefore seen as essentially a system of popular supervision of cadres and a method to transfer the power to the people, commencing from the grass-roots level. Framed this way, elections were designed to ensure the purity of the officialdom, and not to make the political system an open arena of competition and conflict solution. This was naturally a logical result from the class-based view of democracy in which the people had united class interests against the bureaucrats. Elections and the supervision system (*guǎnlǐ yú jiāndū*)⁹² proposed by different orthodox writers were therefore not an argument for liberal competitive democracy, but rather a system whereby the correct functioning of bureaucracy was ensured through cadres’ high public-mindedness as brought about by direct elections. In this system, officials did not represent their constituencies’ interest vis-à-vis other different interests, but against their own interests as a potential bureaucratic class.

The notion of the people having a united interest against the bureaucrats influenced also clearly the way the writers did not discuss the risk that elections could lead to factionalism and support corruption, for example, through the purchase of votes. The idea that candidates could mislead their constituencies in democracy too, was also not discussed. Furthermore, although the gradual transitional nature of the reforms needed was usually emphasised by the orthodox writers, none of the activists in any of the three camps developed practical blueprints on how to proceed and in which order the elections should be realised. Such practical issues were generally not discussed in the journals, which warranted some of the criticism against the Democracy Movement as being too theoretical in its orientation (see chapter 11). Conversely though, it also demonstrated the activists’ general ignorance of contemporary democratic theory and workings of democratic politics – except for those given in the Marxist classics on the 19th century Europe.

Enlightenment Mission and Democracy

The argument that the people should supervise the officials had one further problem: it required a politically aware populace to elect politically aware cadres, but the Cultural Revolution had shown how the masses could be deceived into blindly following various false prophets. The Democracy Movement’s enlightenment

mission was therefore directly connected to the third level of reforms, the cultural realm and raising the political awareness of the masses, or as some of its writers termed it, the ‘real cultural revolution’.⁹³ Thus orthodox Marxists too, had to deal with the argument that the cultural level of the Chinese masses was too low for self-management. For example, Gao Jimin addressed the problem in the following way:

“To establish the Paris Commune type democratic system requires a certain cultural level from the people, the cultural level of the Chinese is very low, but although this is a definite hindrance in the reform movement, the [true] problem for the democratic reforms is the obstruction from numerous cadres who protect their own interests.”⁹⁴

Gao argued that if the political reforms had been started in 1956 during nationalisation and collectivisation, the problems that had followed would have been avoided. Further, Yugoslavia was a country where matters had been done in the correct way immediately from the beginning. The Yugoslavs had been able to overcome their economic and cultural backwardness and achieve living standards higher than those in China; *“Therefore, cultural backwardness cannot become the reason to oppose this reform”*, stated Gao.⁹⁵ But the Paris Commune type of reforms were not a one-off process which could be completed immediately at all levels from the periphery to the centre:

“The reform steps will indeed have to be considered vis-à-vis the people’s cultural level, and must not exceed the actual level of the masses, and propose programmes that are hard to implement. The reforms must proceed with the idea of raising the cultural level of the people according to the idea of “ship rises with the tide” [shuǐzhāng-chuángāo]. Reforms advance culture, culture advances reforms. The development of culture and reforms will accelerate the whole country’s flourishing. If this is not understood and one does not reform and only waits for the rise of the cultural level, the results of this wait are not its rising, but the emergence of a great bureaucratic class.”⁹⁶

Thus, this could lead to a vicious cycle whereby waiting would lead to no reforms which in turn would lead to no economic development and more one waited, the more serious the problems developed. Indeed, if there were no political reforms, then the alternative was a revolution more fierce than the Tiananmen riots, warned Gao.⁹⁷

Following a similar line of argumentation, Lü Min held that the reasons for the rise of bureaucratism had been the combination of internal and international threats after 1949 and the people’s low cultural level and ability of (self-) management. Following the narrative analysed above on the rise of Leftism and popular resistance to it, Lü Min argued that the people’s cultural level for (self-) management had finally risen high enough, so that gradual abolition of the hierarchical cadre system could commence. Otherwise, the new bureaucratic class would entrench itself and usurp the power.⁹⁸ The confidence that the Chinese could be educated to understand

the socialist democratic institutions of the Paris Commune was also expressed by Su Ming in the *'Tragedy That Might Happen in the Year 2000'*,⁹⁹ in which year the story was set to occur, although the argument for granting the people supervisory powers was for the year 1979.

Su argued, the people's supervisory powers included political, economic and legal rights, e.g. personal freedoms, the right to elect officials, and 'right to propaganda' i.e. freedom of expression. He was confident that the Chinese people were mature enough to cope with the change, and that when politics went through such a great change, so the people's thinking too would follow this change. Moreover, elections were a simple and familiar procedure; *"Just to write the name of the most preferred person on the ballot paper does not require anyone to guide you."* Anyhow, institutional guarantees were needed to ensure no one was coerced to vote against sincere personal opinion.¹⁰⁰ However, evidently no real mental barriers blocked the road to the Paris Commune type of institutions for Su. Indeed, as he argued, democracy on its own accord would teach the people how to act right:

*"If the people really have the rights to take charge, apart from the benefits mentioned above, it would have wide and deep consequences. This kind of democratic education can remake the face of the Chinese people."*¹⁰¹

To want such socialist democratic rights was natural, because:

*"The good outcomes are too many to enumerate... In history the rulers who wanted to be tyrants have been afraid of this kind of [popular] power, and have made the people ignorant, dispersed, and strangled them. Why should a socialist state still want to harm the people? Harm them more than a feudal state would do?"*¹⁰²

For Su, a cadre supervision system should be established and democracy could be learned through practise. The argument that the people were mature enough to elect their leaders was also voiced by Li Yizhe, who argued that:

*"In China workers with developed socialist consciousness and culture, are demanding the actual power of managing the means of production, and that the higher [political] strata should wholly represent the economic interests of the people."*¹⁰³

These arguments were also directly related to the arguments on the Democracy Movement as being the revolutionary vanguard which through the experience of the practise of Leftist rule had become politically aware during the Cultural Revolution. Indeed, for those activists who used orthodox arguments, as for the others, the Democracy Movement demonstrated that the people were mature enough to assume management of the grass-roots level units and then gradually the whole country. This argument, as such, was powerful as the legitimacy of the Party rule relied heavily on

the claim that it served the interest of the people. Therefore the Party would have to listen to the people who had grown to recognise their own interests. Naturally, trying to show detailed understanding of Marxism boosted the activists' claim for their political maturity and awareness too, and those Democracy Movement activists who used orthodox arguments did not need to emphasise their Marxist nature. Their arguments were full of citations from Marx, Engels and Lenin, and the Paris Commune itself was offered as the icon of ideal socialist democracy which would also enable the socialist economy to fulfil its full potential. It was therefore relatively easy for them to make the case for their variation of socialist democracy and the Democracy Movement as an attempt to return to correct Marxist principles after the Leftist distortions. However, the cases of the other approaches in the Movement were not as straightforward.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 9

¹ Liu Qing 1983, 171

² Apart from briefly mentioning the names of the Leftist theories the Democracy Movement activists refuted, they were not usually dealt with in detail in the Democracy Movement's articles. As they had been repeated *ad nauseam* during the Cultural Revolution, there was probably no need to make explicit contrasts between them and what the Democracy Movement activists were arguing. However, knowing this silent target of criticism helps to understand the form the Democracy Movement's argumentation took.

³ Christiansen et alii. 1980, 44-45

⁴ Xu Shuiliang: *Guānyú jiējí, guójiā dèng ruògān wèntí* [On Classes, State and Other Questions], Taolun 1 / 1979, 25.12.1979, CUP 18, 113-115; N.B. Taolun was Shenghuo's special publication.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 116

⁶ *Ibid.*, 118

⁷ *Ibid.*, 118-119

⁸ *Ibid.*, 119-121

⁹ *Ibid.*, 121-123

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 124-125

¹¹ Similar arguments for democratic reforms were used, for example, by Yuan Bo and Ling Jun in *Qishi bao*, who saw that proletarian class dictatorship was a transitional period from capitalism to socialism.

Republican forms of government fitted proletarian class dictatorship well and would be conducive to the withering away of classes and the state. Yuan Bo and Ling Jun: *Guānyú wúchǎnjiējí zhuānzhèng wèntí de wèndá* [F.A.Q of Proletarian Class Dictatorship], *Qishi bao* 13 / 1979, CUP 5, 77-79

¹² Gong Min: *Zhì Kate zǒngtǒng* [To President Carter], *Qimeng* 3 / 1979 (*biānwěihùi*, editorial board edition, Beijing), DCDM II, 636

¹³ *Ibid.*, 637

¹⁴ Hui Jun: *Pīpàn Lin Biao zài zhèngquán wèntíshàngde miùlùn (xù)* [Criticising Lin Biao's Fallacies on Political Power (Series)], *Qishi bao* 2 / 1979, CUP 2, 270-271, the quotation from p. 271

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 271-272, the quotation from p. 271

¹⁶ Chen wrote his article originally in 1975 when Mao Zedong had called the nation to study the theory of proletarian dictatorship to counter the rightist current led by Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping, who were stressing economic modernisation and toning down class struggle. Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan had provided the Maoist position in the debate, insisting on further radicalisation of class struggle, i.e. more rigid ideological controls, intolerance to dissent and hunt for bourgeois habits in the people, as well as attacks on capitalist roaders in the Party, under the title of 'Exercising All- Round Dictatorship over the Bourgeoisie'. (Munro 1984b, 37) Chen Erjin: *Lùn wúchǎnjiējí mǐnzhǔ géming* [On Proletarian Democratic Revolution], *Siwu luntan* 10 (8 / 1979), CUP 1, 57.

¹⁷ *Communiqué of the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of C.P.C.*, in *Hsinhua News (Weekly)*, December 28, 1978, 11

- ¹⁸ Fan Quan: *Lùn dāngqián wǒguó shèhuìde zhǔyào máodùn* [On the Important Contradictions in Our Present Society], *Qiushi bao* 12 / 1979, CUP 5, 63-65
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 66
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 67
- ²¹ Yu Ren: *Lüè lùn jīnrì zhī Sì Wǔ yùndòng* [Briefly on Today's 'Fifth of April Movement'], *Siwu luntan* 7 (5 / 1979), CUP 5, 16-17
- ²² *Ibid.*, 17-19
- ²³ Yu Ren: *Lüè lùn jīnrì zhī siwǔ, yùndòng* [Briefly on Today's 'Fifth of April Movement'], *Siwu luntan* 9 (7 / 1979), CUP 6, 43-45
- ²⁴ For other similar articles see, e.g. Gao Shan: *Mínzhǔ yùndòngde lìshǐ gēnjù hé lǐlùn gēnjù* [Historical and Theoretical Reasons of the Democracy Movement], *Zhongguo renquan* 3b / 1979, CUP 3, 274-276; Shi Du: *Shénme shì shèhuìzhǔyì* [What Is Socialism], *Zhongguo renquan* 3a / 1979, CUP 3, 252-257; Shu Min: *Cóng wǒguó kēxué jìshù wèishénme bù fādá ér xiāng dàode...* [Thoughts on Why Chinese Science and Technology Are Not Flourishing], *Shidai* 2 / 1979, CUP 12, 223-233; Chang Chun, Ming Zhu: *Bù shì 'bùxíng' ér zài bù 'xíng'* [Not 'No Way', But No 'Way'], *Siwu luntan* 15 (13 / 1979), CUP 10, 56-57.
- ²⁵ See Burns (1983, 39), and Guang Lei (1996, 7)
- ²⁶ Zhou Xun: *Mínzhǔqiáng xiàng héchù qù - jiān lùn shèhuìzhǔyì mínzhǔ* [Where is the Democracy Wall Going—On Socialism and Democracy], *Siwu luntan* 8 (6 / 1979), CUP 5, 37-48
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 43
- ²⁸ Lan Sheng: *Lùn Mínzhǔqiáng* [On The Democracy Wall], *Siwu luntan* 5 (3 / 1979), CUP 2, 92
- ²⁹ *Qián tán rénmínde mínzhǔ quánlì* [Briefly on the People's Democratic Rights], *Siwu luntan* 7 (5 / 1979), CUP 5, 9
- ³⁰ *Bó Qimengde tiāozhàn* [Refuting the Qimeng's Challenge], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 7 / 1979, CUP 12, 20
- ³¹ Wei Min: *Yě tán mínzhǔ* [Also on Democracy], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 5 / 1979, CUP 10, 149-150
- ³² *Ibid.*, 149
- ³³ *Ibid.*, 150
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 150
- ³⁵ Wei Min was not alone in his limited perception of democracy; there were some others who saw democracy as free expression of opinions but not much else, e.g. see a poster by Qinghua students in March 27th 1979: *Hūyù* [Appeal], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 7 / 1979, CUP 12, 29-30, in CUP the date of the poster is given as 1975, which is clearly an error.
- ³⁶ He Bian: *Lùn yánlùn zìyóu* [On Freedom of Speech], *Wotu tekan* 2.4.1979, CUP 12, 74-75
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 75
- ³⁸ *Rénmín qúnzhòngde zhīqíng quán* [The People's Right to Know the Facts], *Siwu luntan* 11 (9 / 1979), CUP 7, 27-36
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, 33-34
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 34
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 34
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, 35
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, 35-36
- ⁴⁴ RMRB 21.1.1980: *Jiānchí shèhuìzhǔyì mǐnzhǔde fāngxiàng*
- ⁴⁵ Wang Xizhe: *Mínzhǔde fāngxiàng* [Direction of Democracy], *Siwu luntan* 17 (2 / 1980), CUP 11, 12
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 12-13
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 14-15
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 15-16
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 16-19
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 19-20
- ⁵¹ Sun Feng: *Zhì Hua Guofeng Dèng Xiǎopíng tóngzhìde gōngkāi xìn* [An Open Letter to Comrades Hua Guofeng and Deng Xiaoping], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 14 / 1979, CUP 16, 62-112
- ⁵² Sun Feng: *Zhì Hua Guofeng Dèng Xiǎopíng tóngzhìde gōngkāi xìn*, 98
- ⁵³ Hua Chuan: *Shèhuìzhǔyì -rénmín dāngjiā zuòzhǔ* [Socialism—the People in Charge of Affairs], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 13 / 1979, CUP 16, 35
- ⁵⁴ Hua Chuan: *Shèhuìzhǔyì -rénmín dāngjiā zuòzhǔ*, 35
- ⁵⁵ It is useful to note that in this the activists also differed profoundly with Mao, who had seen democratic forms of government only as means to an end in politics, and therefore dispensable should proletarian class domination be guaranteed otherwise (Schram 2001, 409-410). It was Mao's notion which caused the debate

- in the Democracy Movement in the first place, since it confused institutional democracy with free speech. Nevertheless, from a liberal point of view the whole distinction is false, since democracy is always both a set of institutional arrangements ('means') and a desirable state of social organisation that make high degrees of individual freedom possible ('goal').
- ⁵⁶ Chen Ruoxi 1982, 102
- ⁵⁷ Zhèng Yán: *Shèhuìzhūyìde zhèngtǐ wèntí* [Problems of Socialist Political System], Beijing zhi chun 9 / 1979, DCDM I, 540-545
- ⁵⁸ Hu Ping: *Làn yánlùn zìyóu* [On Freedom of Speech], Wotu tekan 2.4.1979, CUP 12, 76
- ⁵⁹ Judged by the number of articles and authors, this approach was preferred by a little larger group than the eclectic approach and considerably larger than the non-Marxist one, which had quite limited following.
- ⁶⁰ When the Beijing zhi chun printed articles about or by Li Yizhe, the system under criticism was called Lin Biao –system (*Lin Biao tǐxì*). The use of such name was due to the early (1974) nature of Li Yizhe's essays – the Gang of Four and Leftism in general were off limits for direct criticism at the time. See Li Ying: *Li Yizhe wúzuì!* [Li Yizhe Is Innocent!] Beijing zhi chun 2 / 1979, CUP 2, 238-240 and Li Yizhe: *Zhè shì Mǎkèsīzhūyìde yuánzé ma?* [Is This a Marxist Principle?], Beijing zhi chun 3 / 1979, CUP 4, 195-203.
- ⁶¹ Lǚ Mǐn: *Zhúbù fèichú guānliáo tǐzhì hé jiànlì, Bǎlǐ Gōngshè shìde mínzhǔ zhìdù* [Abolish Gradually the Bureaucratic System and Establish Democratic Structures after the Paris Commune], Beijing zhi chun 1 / 1979, CUP 3, 290-296 (part I) and Beijing zhi chun 2 / 1979, CUP 2, 288-291 (part II)
- ⁶² Nathan 1985, 94-97; Ruan Míng 1994, 8-9
- ⁶³ Lǚ Mǐn: *Zhúbù fèichú guānliáo tǐzhì hé jiànlì... Part I*, 290-293
- ⁶⁴ Lǚ Mǐn: *Zài lùn fèichú dēngjí shòuzhíde guānliáo tǐzhì* [On the Abolition of the Hierarchical Bureaucratic System], Beijing zhi chun 3 / 1979, CUP 4, 190-193, the quotation from p. 193
- ⁶⁵ *ibid.*, 192
- ⁶⁶ Gao Jimin: *Jiānchí Mǎkèsīzhūyìde guójiā lǐlùn zǒu Bǎlǐ Gōngshè mínzhǔ zhìdùde dàolù* [Support the Marxist State Theory –Take the Road of the Paris Commune Democratic System], Beijing zhi chun 7 / 1979, CUP 8, 100
- ⁶⁷ *ibid.*, 101
- ⁶⁸ Wén Qì: *Zìzhì mínzhǔ yǔ guójiā xiǎowáng xuéshuō* [On the Theory of Self-Governing Democracy and Withering Away of the State], Beijing zhi chun 6, CUP 7, 86
- ⁶⁹ Gong Ren: *Yī bù shíjì xíngdòng shèngguò yī dà gānglǐng* [Real Action Triumphs over a Great Programme], Beijing zhi chun 5, CUP 6, 91-96
- ⁷⁰ Han Zhixiong: *Siwu zhànshì tán mínzhǔ* [The Tiananmen Incident Heroes Talk about Democracy], Beijing zhi chun 4 / 1979, CUP 5, 94-95 and Yi Ma: *Nán yì gēduànde lìshǐ* [History Cannot Be Severed], Beijing zhi chun 4 / 1979, CUP 5, 126-133
- ⁷¹ Wang Xizhe: *Dǎng de língdǎo hé rénmín jiāndū* [Party Leaders and Popular Supervision], Siwu luntan 15 (13 / 1979), December 1979, CUP 10, 21. This article was originally a speech on the theory of youth at the third provincial conference of the Communist Youth League's Guangdong secretariat.
- ⁷² *Ibid.*, 21-24
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*, 25
- ⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 26-27
- ⁷⁵ Beijing yī ge tielu gongren: *Yě tán xiàndàihuà* [On Modernisations], Kexue minzhu fazhi 3 / 1979, CUP 8, 275
- ⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 275-279, the quotation from p. 279
- ⁷⁷ Xu Shuiliang: *Guānyú jīējī, guójiā dēng ruògān wèntí* [On Classes, State and Other Questions], Taolun 1 / 1979, 25.12.1979, CUP 18, 125-126
- ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 129-131 the quotation from p. 131
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 127
- ⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 127-128
- ⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 133
- ⁸² *Ibid.*, 133-135
- ⁸³ *Rénmínde quánlì* [People's Rights], Kexue minzhu fazhi 5 / 1979, 176
- ⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 177
- ⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 177
- ⁸⁶ Zhen Ping: *Tán zǔzhī bǎozhèng hé xuǎnbá jiēbǎnrén* [On Organizational Guarantees" and "Selecting Successors"], Beijing zhi chun 8 / 1979, CUP 9, 130-132

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- ⁸⁷ Zhèng Yán: *Shèhuìzhūyìde zhèngtǐ wèntí* [Problems of Socialist Political System], Beijing zhi chun 9 / 1979, DCDM I, 540-545
- ⁸⁸ Han Zhixiong: *Tántán jīngjì guǎnlǐ mínzhǔ yǔ zhèngzhì mínzhǔ*, Beijing zhi chun 2 / 1979, CUP 2, 233-234
- ⁸⁹ Lü Mìn: *Qūxiāo chǎngkuàng qǐyè jīcéng dǎng zǔzhī de xíngzhèng língdǎo quán*, [Abolish the Grass-Roots Level Leading Authority of the Party in the Industry], Beijing zhi chun 2 / 1979, CUP 2, 255-256
- ⁹⁰ Lü Mìn, 257
- ⁹¹ Ibid., 258
- ⁹² This was a catch phrase for the system of Paris Commune that the many Democracy Movement writers used as its code see e.g. Shi Du: *Shénme shì shèhuìzhūyì* [What Is Socialism], Zhongguo Rénquán 3a / 1979, CUP 3, 256-257
- ⁹³ See e.g. Hua Chuan: *Wénhuà dàgémingde lìshǐ zuòyòng* [The Historical Role of the Great Cultural Revolution], Kexue minzhu fazhi 11 / 1979 (10.5.1979), CUP 15, 16
- ⁹⁴ Gao Jimin, *Jiānchá Mǎkèsīzhūyìde guójiā lǐlùn...*, Beijing zhi chun 7 / 1979, CUP 8, 102
- ⁹⁵ Ibid., 103
- ⁹⁶ Ibid., 103
- ⁹⁷ Ibid., 103
- ⁹⁸ Lü Mìn: *Zhúbù fèichú guānliáo tǐzhì hé jiànli...*, 294-295
- ⁹⁹ Su Míng: *Kěnéng fāshēng zài 2000 nián bēijù* [Tragedy That Might Happen in the Year 2000], Beijing zhi chun 5, CUP 6, 131-146
- ¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 141
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid., 142
- ¹⁰² Ibid., CUP 6, 143
- ¹⁰³ *Li Yizhe fāngwèn jì* [Special Interview with the “Li Yizhe”], Beijing zhi chun 4 / 1979, CUP 5, 122-123

10 CHAPTER: Liberal Ideas and Marxism

When the Red Guards were disbanded and sent down in 1968-69, many of them received a golden opportunity to return to Marxist classics in order to deepen their knowledge of Marxist social analysis to explain the events around them. However, not all had stopped their endeavour at that stage, but had ventured even further into the forbidden zone of Western liberal thinking. The establishment of full diplomatic relations with the West and the first steps of opening up to the outside world had also increased the opportunities to find out more about the politics in the West. Notions of pluralist democracy and human rights had therefore found their ways into the activists' thinking and a significant number of the writers in the Beijing Democracy Movement journals demonstrated how these inputs could be turned into criticism of the Party Left and arguments for political reform within a socialist framework.

The difference between activists who used orthodox and eclectic arguments was most evident in their choice of sources, viz: classic Marxist arguments for the former, whereas Western examples for the latter. However, this did not mean that those using classical Marxist arguments were against learning from abroad, for example, Yugoslavia served as a model for them, but their arguments for reforms were justified differently. None of the Democracy Movement journals printed anything which supported the Leftist self-seclusion. Nor does this mean that the examples in Marxist classics were disregarded by the eclectics, but that they were supplemented with learning from the West. As Robin Munro has pointed out concerning Chen Erjin, such borrowing actually indicated reinstating sublation (i.e. synthesis) to Marxist political analysis in China after a decade of 'affirmation of negation'.¹ Instead of seeing only negation between bourgeois democracy and socialism, the eclectic writers now proposed ways on how certain progressive features in bourgeois democracies could be adopted under a socialist economic system in order to create a synthesis of socialist democracy. At the same time, what Munro states about Chen Erjin and his admiration of the American political system was true for most of the eclectic writers: it was the form, not the content, of the Western democracies that attracted them.²

Indeed, China's relationship to Western learning has traditionally been not only a source of innovation but also confusion, frustration and controversy. This sensitivity had only been exacerbated by Leftist xenophobia and isolationism during the Cultural Revolution. This became even more dangerous when it involved acceptance of features from bourgeois democracy which was generally regarded as the way of the class enemy. Most Dengists too, who proposed learning from the West, meant only technology and management techniques in industry, not in politics.³ Not surprisingly, the Democracy Movement's relationship to liberal democracy was a sensitive one and many journals were at pains to deny that they advocated 'bourgeois

class democracy’, even if they saw some positive aspects in it. Bi Dan gave a good example of this in *Kexue minzhu fazhi*, when he proclaimed that:

*“We do not want the sham democracy of capitalism. We bitterly hate the capitalist civilisation and universal love. But we disdain even more the system of feudal fascism that has caused so much misery to the Chinese people and must be opposed even more than capitalism.”*⁴

Capitalism was naturally regarded as the number one enemy of socialism, and the Chinese had been taught to believe that bourgeois democracy was only a sham democracy constructed to deceive the proletariat and protect bourgeois class interests. This notion was also used to categorically renounce bourgeois democracy by many writers in the official press,⁵ but even the Xidan Wall had a share of posters which repeated the positions where human rights were denounced, for example, in the following way:

*“...Some people think that the US, Japan, England, and other capitalist countries have human rights and want to lure China to join the free world, but there, rights only serve a minority of monopoly capitalists, so that capitalists can, at will, exploit and oppress workers, whose human rights are a sham, and we must resist such human rights...”*⁶

Typical accusations that the Democracy Movement’s adversaries could throw at it was to call the activists advocates of ‘bourgeois democracy’, ‘bourgeois liberalisation’, or being ‘individualists’ and ‘liberalists’. Against these arraignments those activists who used eclectic arguments had to find ways to justify their calls to learn from the West.

In general, the eclectic arguments took the form of demonstrating how Marxism was an adaptable ideology and how socialism had to inherit many features from the earlier stages of the historical development of societies. According to this view, socialism was the result of contradictions in capitalist society, and socialist society retained many of its features after revolution, e.g. productive forces. Socialist democracy was a step above bourgeois democracy and therefore had to inherit the features that had enabled popular liberation from feudal oppression in bourgeois democracy. That the actual Chinese socialist democracy remained inferior to bourgeois democracy did not accord with the objective laws of history and the situation had to be transformed through intellectual and institutional borrowing. The major journals which published eclectic articles were *Siwu luntan*, *Zhongguo renquan*, *Qimeng*, *Kexue minzhu fazhi*, *Wotu*, and *Minzhu yu shidai*. In *Siwu luntan* the eclectic approach was already apparent in the journals’ opening words, which proclaimed that it welcomed; *“exchange of ideas from all foreigners, who are friends of China.”*⁷

Marxism as an Adaptable System

Importing ideas and practises even from bourgeois democracy was justified by construing Marxism as a living ideology that could and should be rectified. This, in turn, was based on the experience of ‘enlightenment’, which many Democracy Movement activists had acquired during the Cultural Revolution, to be able to use Marxism independently against the Party Left. Accordingly, many eclectic writers argued that the original zeal of Marxism as a critical and innovative approach to society, had to be rekindled. As, for example, Zhou Xun argued in Siwu luntan, Marxism was a critical ideology that also welcomed criticism.⁸ In a similar vein, Hua Chuan argued in Kexue minzhu fazhi that Marxism did not have to defend itself against ‘revisionism’ because Marxism itself had been revisionism of Hegelism at the time it was created. “*Revisionism means new life for old theories. Why should Marxists regard ‘revisionist’ Marxism so heinous and something that needs to be opposed and guarded against?*”⁹ asked Hua, and argued that ‘revisionism’ was the sign of historical progress which Mao and Cultural Revolution had violated. Hua further argued that in general, Marxism was only one faction in mankind’s intellectual history and to make it so revered that it could not be doubted, violated, opposed, or ‘revised’, was a deviation from the rules of mankind’s intellectual development, and from the truth.¹⁰ Hua asked:

*“The policy of ‘practise is the sole criterion of truth’ has already been promoted, so why do we not go and constantly weigh and examine Marxism and ‘revisionism’ and all the other social theories that mankind’s societies have? If ‘revisionism’ is correct we will then accept revisionism. If Marxism is not correct, we will rectify it. Would it not be a sign of actual and concrete historical progress?”*¹¹

Arguing in another essay, Hua also saw that every ideology and thinking had to be subjected to the people’s reflection and rectification, as had Marxism also originally been. It had opened minds, not closed them. Only thus could a theory develop and absorb new knowledge from experiences. Otherwise a theory would become backward and conservative. If someone used such a theory to oppose new knowledge, *he* would take a counterrevolutionary stand.¹² This was clearly criticism against the Party Left, as was the whole argument to allow rectification of Marxism. Hua also made it clear that he saw that the Cultural Revolution had made Chinese Marxism become religious dogma whereby it could not be analysed, studied, doubted, or opposed. He argued that in the future, people would see farther and deeper than Marx and Lenin had and therefore formulate theories and ‘isms’ that would be more suitable for their times.¹³

This line of argumentation was also well presented by a Siwu luntan writer, Yu Ren, whose article was also demonstrated how critical Marxist spirit was used to analyse the emergence of bureaucratism and, as its adversary, the Democracy Movement. Yu saw that regaining this critical spirit of Marxism based on Hegelian dialectical

materialism, was necessitated by the class contradictions which were present in Chinese society. For Yu, it was a natural that later generations criticised the earlier generations in intellectual development, and this was the case with Marxism, too. Naturally, the bureaucrats disliked a theory that; “*does not withdraw on the verge of violating against rulers*”, but when the economic power was centralised in the hands of one class, Marxism would become a façade and any critical study become ossified and cease. The bureaucrats had spoiled Marxism’s good original taste, argued Yu; “*Bureaucratism turns science into new religion ... and forces the people to believe that this is the original revolutionary theory...*”¹⁴

Yu held that today’s Marxists could not be indifferent to democratic reforms, instead they should be as effective as their teachers had been in their times. As Yu argued, socialist democracy advocated by the Democracy Movement was the dialectic negotiation of its opposite of ignorance, and it showed how socialist democracy could revert back from the distorted road; “*otherwise it would not be dialectical*”. Yu cited Hegel’s notion of the progressive nature of ‘idea’ or world spirit as the proof of this, although concealed from one’s eyes, it was nevertheless constantly at work in history.¹⁵ For Yu, the Democracy Wall Movement was therefore the result of the dialectical struggle between the correct and incorrect notions of socialism. The defence of the originally critical nature of Marxism was there a way to express the basic realisation that most of the Democracy Movement’s activists shared viz: that they could use Marxism freely to criticise the Party and its policies if they deemed it necessary.

To view Marxism as a living ideology that could be rectified, justified discussion on the import of ideas and practises even from bourgeois democracy. One of the most ardent advocates of learning from the West was Zhongguo renquan, whose name already indicated such an inclination. The ninth point of the Zhongguo renquan’s Declaration of Chinese Human Rights stated:

*“Citizens want to realise Marxism; socialism is a theory of societies with advanced freedom for everybody, and socialist countries’ forms of government are the inheritors of capitalist traditions. Socialist democracy and freedoms cannot be separated from the bourgeois material civilisation, this is the basic idea in orthodox theory and the important lesson the Chinese have learned from the last 20 years or so. We do not want to borrow only from Western technology, we also want to borrow from Western traditions, democracy and civilisation; the citizens demand that the government opens the closed doors, let thinking smash its confines and freedom sweep across the country.”*¹⁶

Thus, Zhongguo renquan saw Western ideas as complementing Chinese socialism which, as they pointed out, was also originally a Western idea in itself. According to the Zhongguo renquan writers, even Marx had praised the American Declaration of Independence which together with the Declaration of Human Rights, formed the invaluable inheritance of the human rights movement. The positive aspects the

bourgeois human rights movement had to be acknowledged as it had helped to create economic revolution and raised standards of living for the people.¹⁷

The proponents of Western examples could also find statements from the Marxist-Leninist classics which supported their views. As Chang Chun and Ming Zhu argued in *Siwu luntan*, Lenin had stated that the capitalist methods of factory management should be studied, so why then could the capitalist form of government also not be studied? After all, it had scientific and rational features in it, too. As the writers saw it, public ownership of the means of production provided democratic revolution with a good basis.¹⁸ Learning from the West could also be compared to medicine, where a combination of Western and Chinese drugs worked the best.¹⁹ In a similar way a writer in the small journal *Xin tiandi* argued that without borrowing from the West, the country could not become strong and prosperous, and anyway all that the Chinese had borrowed, had become their own in history when it had been digested. Thus, in order to eradicate everything that stood in the way of the four modernisations, the writer demanded borrowing from the West – accurate, fast, and selective borrowing.²⁰ The Leftist policy of self-seclusion was also criticised, for example, as a sign of delusional peasant utopianism which had been in fierce contradiction with scientific socialism.²¹

Another way of arguing to learn from the West was by use of satire. The sensitive and often erroneous way Western learning and influences had been dealt with in Chinese history was discussed in *Qiushi*, where a writer described how an imported prize bull which was to be used to breed improved stock for the Chinese, had to be castrated because officials decided that its reproductive organs could offend Chinese viewers. The most valuable part of the bull was thus deemed an evil foreign influence and promptly done away with. The point here was that foreign influences tended to lose their efficiency in the Chinese setting, because the Chinese could not accept the way they were and therefore what was efficient in them.²²

The debates that the various open letters to President Carter created, also demonstrated the sensitivity of the issue of learning from the West. Here, some welcomed the new open door policies and good relations with the U.S., hoping that President Carter would pay attention to the Chinese human rights situation, that the Chinese would learn from the American political system, and even that the American government would invite ordinary Chinese to visit the U.S.²³ Others denounced such statements as forsaking the love and respect of their own country and shameful begging for pity from the other side of the ocean and a foreign ‘saviour’.²⁴ Many similar disapproving *dazibaos* were posted at Xidan especially during March-April 1979. Some writers supported Deng Xiaoping’s line not to engage in debate over human rights with the Americans and criticised the way some youth held belief in a saviour in the form of President Carter. As a writer argued, one should not ‘put hats’ on their heads, but their behaviour could endanger the whole Democracy Wall and cause dissatisfaction in the masses, and at worst might even cause national and international problems.²⁵

Thus both the eclectic Marxists and non-Marxists of the Democracy Movement came under criticism for their positive attitude towards the West and especially the US. It was hard to tell which was worse -that a major section of the Democracy Movement advocated learning from the West, or from the capitalist past. Both of these had, of course, been taboos during the Cultural Revolution and even now the denunciation of these matters in the press closely followed the text book refutation of Western and capitalist influence, and even some otherwise proficient Marxists writers in the Democracy Movement could use them to refute human rights or liberal democracy. Awareness that most people knew about human rights mainly from their critics' denunciations, led to a situation where this denunciation had to be taken into consideration when human rights were defended, and the manner in which they fitted in with socialist democracy had to be elaborated.

The Challenge of Human Rights

The sensitivity of borrowing from the West could be seen nowhere more clearly than in the calls for human rights that already appeared for the first time in the Declaration of Qimeng Society in late November 1978. These appeals also attracted wide attention from Western observers and analysis of this argumentation has been a central theme in literature in the West on the Democracy Movement.²⁶ However, the question which has not been addressed is how human rights were argued as an *integral part* of emerging socialist democracy. Indeed, to assess the Democracy Movement as only a human rights movement misses the point the activists were making when demanding human rights. For them they were essential component in socialist democracy and a significant part of the activists' argumentation was directed at showing how human rights were part of socialist democracy, and Marxism in general. By arguing to adopt human rights from bourgeois democracies, the eclectic writers offered a distinct variation on socialist democracy that is now analysed.

Unlike the concepts of socialist democracy and legality or rule by law, the Party did not use human rights in its terminology except to denounce them as a concept from bourgeois democracy, and after the crackdown on the Democracy Movement began, much of the ideological denunciation of the Democracy Movement was based on disputing the value of human rights and 'ultra-individualism'.²⁷ Therefore, to suggest that socialist democracy should include and respect human rights had to be carefully argued out, by separating human rights from capitalism and reasoning them as historically progressive achievements of mankind. As the main goal for many activists of the Democracy Movement, human rights had to be shown to be historically as progressive as the socialist revolution. Once again 'history' took centre stage as a source of justification for reforms. Indeed, the struggle for human rights in contemporary China was presented as the continuation of the same struggle against ignorance, want and exploitation that the socialist revolution had represented.

Struggle for human rights, like the rest of the Democracy Movement, were thus tied closely to the grand narrative of the unfolding Chinese revolution.

An example of this was provided by Cao Yang in Yuanshangcao, who argued that even the fact that at the end of the 1970s in the 20th century the Chinese still had to speak of democracy and demand human rights was hard to understand, since already early in the century, countless people with lofty ideals had spoken about democracy and human rights when they had toppled the Qing dynasty. Democracy and human rights had already been the content of bourgeois class revolution. So could it really be that the Chinese should not continue the century-old incomplete task of many revolutionary martyrs? Argued Cao:

*“Some say human rights are a Western and capitalist thing. But as far as I can see, there are no people at the Democracy Wall who listen to these kinds of clichés; no one writes this deliberately, even in Renmin ribao.”*²⁸

The argument for learning from the West was largely based on the historical relationship between capitalist and socialist societies. As the latter had developed from the former, they had to incorporate capitalism’s progressive features and develop them further, and human rights were offered as one of these features. For example, Liang Yao of Zhongguo renquan argued that socialism was created from capitalism and should have more advanced features than it. Under socialism the people should also enjoy more extensive freedoms and democracy which would make the people the real masters of the society. Citizens would contribute from each according to their individual abilities (*gèjìn-suǒnéng*), and develop the planned economy faster. On this basis a classless, partyless, equal, and materially prosperous communism would be established.²⁹ Such comments revealed how also the Zhongguo renquan writers could defend their arguments for human rights based on Marxist visions of a communist utopia.

Writers in Siwu luntan also offered an eclectic defence of human rights in the journal’s October issue in 1979. As these writers saw it, the usual way to refute human rights was to label them a ‘bourgeois class slogan’, ‘obsolete’, or a ‘declining’ thing. Although it was true that they were originally bourgeois, then so were socialism and class struggle in their origins, as Engels had stated. Proletarian revolution should not renounce all the progress made in history during capitalism. Human rights were not an evil instigation of a minority that had made them up, but rather they were:

*“a reflection of present social relations in the minds of the Chinese, a result of an imperfect legal system, incomplete democracy, feudal cruelty, bureaucracy on rampage, and a sign of the denunciation of the feudal fascist system created by Lin Biao and the Gang of Four.”*³⁰

The writers queried why ‘proletarian liberation’ had become the slogan under capitalism, and now ‘human rights’ had done the same to oppose bureaucracy and extremism in socialism. There had to be a reason for the fact that all socialist countries suffered from similar problems, and human rights were an important issue in them all. Thus, the reasons for this, as well as the historical background of human rights, should be studied, the writers argued; “*Marxism did not refute the capitalist class notion of equality of all men*”. Indeed, this was the common ground in capitalist and proletarian democracies. The major difference had been in Marx’s refutation of a capitalist economic system. Therefore, one could say that proletarian democracy was a higher, more refined, and mature form of democracy; “*And we can say Marxism is not against human rights, but against sham human rights designed to fool the people.*”³¹

The writers continued that if one did not recognise this, then even the ranks of the proletariat were unequal as inequality began with birth. But then, what was the difference between ‘human rights’ and ‘people’s democratic rights’? If the latter did not recognise human equality, then they would be even lower than those rights in capitalist democracy. Should the Chinese recognise the equality of human relations, or inequality based on money and seniority, or the equality of all revolutionary comrades, or that some were better than others and could act tyrannically over them? Was there any Marxism left in the theory of ‘democracy’ of such people, wondered the writers?³² Another way to refute human rights was also to ask how the people could demand human rights against the Communist Party, but then, against whom else, asked the writers? What was so difficult to understand that these rights had to be demanded even against the Party and the proletariat? The people had to have ways to deal with those leaders who resisted their demands, and were fearful of their democratic rights.³³

According to the writers, another way to refute human rights was to claim that China had already established proletarian class dictatorship and a socialist democratic system. As they saw it, this was a familiar and not a new argument. Already Lin Biao and the Gang of Four had claimed this, but of what use had such slogans been against their abuses? This argument against human rights was an expression of extreme Leftists who hid the social contradictions, and they had to be denounced and refuted. People who used this argument intended to simply protect by hook or by crook the conveniences privileges delivered to them. The writers concluded by affirming the argument that human rights were a historical necessity and claimed that China was at a historical turning point where those who were insecure about their positions tried to use various measures to impede the progress of human rights, but could not stop the progress of history that advanced according to its own logic.³⁴

Hua Chuan also used a similar defence of human rights and the Democracy Movement in *Kexue minzhu fazhi* in March 1979, when he discussed Chen Fuhan’s critical comments in *Renmin ribao* in support of the Beijing City Revolutionary Committee’s public announcement on restrictions of free speech and accused the

Democracy Movement activists of advocating ‘bourgeois class liberalisation’. Hua asked, did democracy and human rights really signify bourgeois liberalisation and why they could not belong to the proletariat and the masses. How was it that, when ‘the people’s democratic rights’ and to be ‘masters of their own affairs’ were demanded, it immediately made one a ‘capitalist’?³⁵ For Hua, the term ‘bourgeois liberalisation’ was one that could only be used about phenomena found in capitalist societies, and that such a phenomenon could simply not occur in socialism, yet this was exactly what Chen claimed was occurring in the capital of socialist China. Hua asked; “*How can sparrows lay goose eggs? How can a socialist society suddenly give birth to capitalist liberalisation?*”³⁶ Bourgeois liberalisation was a right enjoyed and advanced by capitalists to exploit workers and develop their right of private property, but where were these capitalists among those who demanded human rights and democracy at Xidan:

*“Do they advocate these rights in order to exploit workers and consolidate their privileged positions? ...Clearly, what Comrade Chen Fuhan does, when he calls the socialist citizens that express their own political opinions as ‘capitalist liberalisation’, is slander and a frame up in disregard of the real subject.”*³⁷

Hua therefore rejected the accusations thrown at the Democracy Movement by its adversaries. For him the freedom of speech and other human rights were part of socialist democracy, as they already had done in inferior bourgeois democracy. Use of these also brought to the fore the identity of the socialist citizens that the Democracy Movement wished to project.

The argument of ‘making up a missed class’ (*bǔkè*) of bourgeois democracy was also used by many of the eclectic writers. As a worker from Qingdao, named Sun Feng, argued in a long open letter to Chairman Hua and Deng Xiaoping in March 1979 in *Kexue minzhu fazhi*, proletarian class democracy should encompass more and be deeper than the bourgeois version of democracy. Therefore, the advanced features in the latter should be included in proletarian democracy; “*as middle school courses can include primary school courses.*” That the former were deeper and higher did not mean that the latter were false. Democracy was built on solid basis, for example, it was not a sham that the Americans were allowed to go to the White House and also listen to the Congress’ sessions. Indeed;

*“If one has not studied in primary school, one cannot enter middle school, and one must [first] study the courses of primary school. A country that has not gone through a complete democratic revolution is unable to realise communism, but it must make up the missed class of democracy, to miss it is not possible!”*³⁸

Writers in *Minzhu yu shidai* also used the missed class metaphor by portraying the Democracy Movement as making up this missed class of democratic revolution of

the past 60 years. According to them, the Democracy Movement had to carefully analyse the problems and contradictions in society in order to solve them and promote social revolution and democracy in opposition to those who; “*wanted to practise individual monarchy as leaders and bureaucratism.*” However, they also had to oppose those who used the name of Democracy Movement for their mistaken ‘anarchic’ and ‘extreme democratic’ ends, which was a reference to the movement’s radical wing.³⁹

In Kexue minzhu fazhi, a writer named Li Xi argued in a dazibao written on 24 February 1979, that during the bourgeois revolution human rights, freedom, and democracy had been achieved already through the sacrifice and struggle of the people. But this was not usually known or understood in China where these concepts had become distorted into synonyms for capitalism and imperialism. The idea that human rights, democracy, freedom, equality, and universal love were buried with socialism was an example of the false use of ‘negation of negation’ as used by specialists in ‘metaphysical literary inquisition’. Li Xi argued that because these notions had been created after feudalism, the Chinese had to develop them and study their class nature and establish definitive ‘class human rights’ and democracy:

*“But it must be justified to already state that human rights do not belong to the bourgeois class, they belong to the people! Human rights have been the goal of popular struggle for three hundred years! Why should the proletariat not face them squarely today, and realise them for real?”*⁴⁰

The people now called for human rights since feudalism under Lin Biao and the Gang of Four had lacked even the most rudimentary rights, but these rights did not just have to be copied from the West, the Chinese had to persist in developing the bourgeois notions of human rights and democracy in both content and form, in order to remove their quasi-democratic features, and:

*“carefully analyse the limited democracy and human rights which the workers have achieved in the West and what in their [the rights] content fits the developmental laws of socialism, as China has leapt from [the stage of] half feudalism and half colony to socialism, and this kind of direct leap can sometimes require making up the missed class...”*⁴¹

Some other writers made it appear that they only advocated learning from the West with long teeth like Wu Chanzhe, who wrote in Kexue minzhu fazhi:

“I don’t admire bourgeois class democracy, I really hate the capitalist system of private property. I love socialism, but I hate the system where the leaders are untouchable and which many other nations have already thrown into garbage bin of history. The banner of equality before the law was already raised 200-300 years ago when the capitalist class struggled against feudalism. Although different amounts of property made this difficult in reality, it was as a

*slogan which was much more advanced and revolutionary than the untouchability of leaders in feudalism. As mankind has progressed and proletarian consciousness grown stronger, the capitalist notion that the leaders should be removable has been acknowledged and became a reality, so as socialism is more progressive than capitalism, should it not also recognise these principles?"*⁴²

As Wu saw it, untouchability of the leaders was the biggest obstacle to overcome to construct socialism. That China had leapt directly from feudalism to socialism over capitalism was its biggest weakness, which had brought the poison of feudalism into the Chinese socialist system in great quantities. The Stalinist state system with individual dictatorship had also not helped in removal of the poison either, and therefore feudalism still permeated every pore of the Chinese society hindering its progress and development of production. Lack of human rights was therefore the greatest obstacle on the road to the four modernisations.⁴³

Others were not so adverse to praise the West. As Jie Jun argued in *Kexue minzhu fazhi*, the experience of America had to be studied and this included its political system which was connected to its affluence and advanced level of technology.⁴⁴ Indeed, Jie thought that America was a 'democratic paradise' and that Americans had more democracy than the Chinese who had to work hard to achieve such a level of development. To prove his point, Jie listed examples: the American legal system was universal and controlled both the ruled and the ruling class. The Chinese legal system only controlled the people, not its officials. Only when leaders lost political struggles could they be taken to justice, like the Gang of Four, who had not even been sentenced yet. President Nixon's case of impeachment demonstrated how in America a president could be publicly criticised and even forced to resign without risk to the critics. Conversely, Chairman Mao could not be even slightly criticised. If the Chinese had an American type of democracy, the Lin Biao and Gang of Four rule, and calamities it brought upon the people, would not have occurred.⁴⁵ Jie Jun's next comment was both bold and rare in the Democracy Wall Movement:

*"Right, America has 'bourgeois democracy', but what democracy do we have? Is it 'proletarian democracy'? It is not! Where is our socialist democracy? In the press, on the lips, written on the paper for everybody to see and read, to hear it from the lips of people. [But] the common people have not had any taste of it. The only thing they have tasted has been feudal fascist dictatorship. Although the common people have not tasted proletarian democracy, the high cadres in the Party and the state cannot escape it, we cannot make distinctions without comparisons, bourgeois democracy is more progressive and revolutionary than feudal fascist dictatorship, and therefore we would rather have bourgeois democracy than feudal fascist dictatorship."*⁴⁶

To defend bourgeois democracy in such an open way and deny the proletarian and socialist democracy their existence (but not their value as such) was quite

extraordinary in China. As we have seen, others who were bold enough to publicly argue that there were also good things in ‘bourgeois democracy’ usually only suggested that it should be ‘studied’ and adapted to the advanced features of a socialist society, but not adopted *in toto*.

Human rights were also demanded by application of Marxist social analysis to the collective experience of the Cultural Revolution. As a writer named Han Jie argued in *Kexue minzhu fazhi*, human rights and democracy were demanded at the Democracy Wall to prevent a repeating of the feudal fascist dictatorship of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four. Indeed; “*This is historically necessary conclusion of the times*”, argued the writer and continued that the demands that were now raised resembled those demands for personal freedom and equality during feudalism. According to the law of ‘negation of negation’ everything appeared twice in history, but not in the same form, as the later appearance would assume a more advanced form. Therefore:

“At the moment we definitely do not struggle for bourgeois human rights or democracy, but for proletarian human rights and democracy. What can we rely on? The people, the great Chinese people themselves!”⁴⁷

To achieve this, the Chinese did not need universities, since the truth had revealed itself for them as in the story ‘The Emperor’s New Clothes’ – so that even a child could see it. History had given them a lesson in ‘feudal democracy’ where the people had been irrelevant, and even rudimentary rights e.g. to live like human beings (*zuòrénde quánlì*), had been exploited by ‘total dictatorship’. The people had experienced constant struggles against each other and the line struggle concerning the nation and the state. Now, they had become sick and tired of ‘struggle’ and ‘classes’, and ‘dictatorship’. Some young people had even abandoned socialism as a useless ‘malady’ and foolishly turned to Jimmy Carter and the US for help, exclaimed the writer.⁴⁸ However, Han Jie expressed confidence that the people could smash the mental chains forged by the Gang of Four, and establish higher forms of human rights than in imperialist countries. But since the people demanded human rights at Xidan, and the foreign reporters concentrated on this issue, the writer felt compelled to ask, what did human rights and democracy meant then? What was so marvellous about them that they attracted attention from different kinds of societies and people? Could it not just be said that the ‘great human rights’ did not distinguish between class and social system, but that they were an irresistible tide of the times?⁴⁹

According to Han Jie, the Enlightenment thinkers had all believed in ‘heaven given human rights and equality’, whereas the Marxists believed that human rights were not heaven given, but products of history. All knew that human rights were created to resist feudal monarchy and clerical powers, a weapon in capitalist revolution against feudalism. The ‘Declaration of Human Rights’ had been a product of the Great French Revolution in this struggle as quotations from Marx and Engels showed. Stalin had committed the historical error of trampling on the socialist legal system

and citizen rights, and in China Lin Biao and the Gang of Four's feudal fascist dictatorship had destroyed socialist democracy. These were the lessons to be learnt from the history of international communism as distortions of scientific socialism, but they had not to lead to loss of faith in socialism and collapse faith in Marxism. The Chinese had to clear the righteous name of scientific socialism from all the filth it had on it, and return to its original objectives both in theory and practice and create democratic life a thousand times better than that in the capitalist countries. For this everybody had to earnestly look for ways to develop socialist human rights and democracy, and bring about economic modernisation through political democratisation.⁵⁰ Human rights were thus defended as part of original Marxism and revolutionary struggle, which was a belief widely shared by other Democracy Movement writers. However, the question of the relationship between natural rights and Marxism was not an easy one.

Combining Natural Rights with Marxism

Only a few of the eclectic writers really engaged the issue way how the problem of universality of human rights and particularity of class could be overcome. In this respect, Zhongguo renquan offered a rare and elaborate defence of how natural rights thought could be incorporated into Marxist. As the writer Yu Fan argued, human rights were both products of historical development, and a general concept with logical content. They were rights that differentiated man from animals and slaves, who were treated as tools in production and prevented by force to use their natural endowments. Human rights placed man higher on the ladders of historical development than they otherwise would have been, but their content varied through time, and they developed when the matters they referred to developed. This was the case with Chinese society, too. Referencing sources of his ideas, Yu described the development of human rights in the West from the Middle Ages to the American Declaration of Independence and the French Declaration of Rights of Men and Citizens. Yu argued that these events had had not been coincidental, but inevitable results of historical laws.⁵¹

According to Yu, all men were united by their desire for guarantees of individual existence, freedom, prosperity and respect. The development of history from primitive to bourgeois societies had witnessed expansion of human rights as a result of gaining these guarantees.⁵² Yu argued that man's class nature was a part of one's social attributes, but it did not encompass the whole of human nature, but that it was the qualities man possessed arising from his position in economic relationships in society. This denoted man's position either as an exploiter or labourer. The relationship between man's natural and social attributes was very complex, and to analyse it required both natural and social sciences and should be conducted at an individual level. Class origin was not enough to explain class position alone, as one had to take into account man's other attributes to determine it. Simplification of class analysis based on profession, class origins, economic position, etc. had caused great

disturbances in China. Yu argued that to deny that class position and human attributes did not have any relation was erroneous, but to deny human rights, humanism, and human nature was even more absurd.⁵³

Yu further argued that it was also absurd to claim that the bourgeoisie owned the struggle for democracy, promoted humanism, and spoke for human nature. They could not monopolise all rights to promote the struggle for existence, freedom, prosperity, and respect in the forms of slogans for science, democracy, freedom, equality, universal love, etc. Clearly, the bourgeoisie had raised these slogans first, but they had served their own class interest in exploitation and suppression of other classes. However, since they were not the only ones who needed these rights, the rights had retained their power and vigour to summon the people. History had shown that these slogans had promoted mankind's affluence. They were the splendid tradition of mankind and its quintessence; *"they definitely did not belong to some specific period of time or to some specific class."*⁵⁴ Argued Yu:

*"Recognising the virtue (mēidé) of human rights and that they are the common property of mankind, not of some specific period or time, or to some specific class, as well as recognising mankind's desire to progress and that it holds specific class nature in specific historical condition; these two things are not in contradiction, only recognising the class nature of existence and denial of the common nature of human nature and mankind's desire to progress, is not according to facts and dialectics."*⁵⁵

For Yu, emphasis of only man's class nature had resulted in the separation of individual and common human nature in an erroneous way. Of course, in different times comprehension of these concepts (human rights, etc.) and slogans (science, etc.) had been different, even very different, but they were still the results of pioneering peoples search for truth through social practise and deepening understanding of the issues in the realm of ideas. Although different people at different times had understood them differently, the matters they denoted had remained the same. Indeed, no man, whatever his position, could claim that dictatorship was democracy, restrictions were freedom, ignorance was bliss, war was peace, killing people was universal love, etc. Different understanding did not deny the existence of things themselves.⁵⁶ As Yu stated; *"To deny rights from oneself because of different understanding of matters is totally ridiculous and absurd."*⁵⁷

Yu's argument was that human rights were based on attributes which were common to all men, and embodied the historical progress of humankind in its struggle against want and oppression and for guarantees of individual existence, freedom, prosperity and respect. The need for human rights was based on common human nature, but they were only achieved through struggle. Therefore, bourgeois human rights should not be abandoned and denied from the people in a socialist society, as they were the result of this struggle in history; indeed, because they were based on universal human attributed and were result of historical progress, they should be incorporated into a

socialist society too. However, even Yu left it open as to what kind of changes or restrictions in practise the class nature of man brought to human rights under socialism. Notably, this was a common omission in all Democracy Movement articles, and demonstrated how little the writers probably knew of contemporary Western legal theory concerning human rights.

Another journal, which discussed natural rights and their relationship to Marxism, was Wotu. Although this journal published relatively few political essays, those that it did were mostly on the question of human rights and the journal's advocacy of learning from the West was evident in them. The journal's writers included Hu Ping (writing under the penname He Bian), Jiawen, and Hua Shi. All of them affirmed that human rights were based on man's common needs of survival and pursuit of happiness and that various political rights were devised to realise these in industrial societies and these rights should also exist in socialism. All three writers also discussed the relationship between natural rights and man's class nature. The latter was considered as real and affecting the exact nature of political rights, but was of lesser importance than the protection of human rights.

Hua Shi's argumentation illustrated example of an attempt to combine natural rights with Marxism in Wotu. Hua saw that political and natural rights were not demanded in their own, but based on the human needs they satisfied and as arrangements (e.g. democracy, freedoms, and legal order) that enabled this. Natural rights were the basis and at the core of political rights. Early on, the vanguards of the human rights movement, Locke and Rousseau, had coined these 'natural rights' meaning that man's needs of existence, reproduction, and aesthetics were inherent. The rights were categorically not bestowed by some great person onto the people. Equality, democracy, and freedoms were called political rights and were just a means to reach 'natural rights'. Natural rights spanned classes and periods of history, but political rights were dependent on them. Based on the level of productive forces, it was possible to choose certain kinds of political rights. Only industrialised economies could offer wider rights and their development had proceeded as the societies had developed, but in the final analysis, political rights were still subservient to the natural rights, reasoned Hua.⁵⁸

As Hua saw it, the basis for natural rights was common human nature. They were rights that protected 'legitimate desires' (*zhèngdàng yùwàng*), but then how could a legitimate desire be distinguished from an imaginary one? Only human nature could do this. Shi admitted that the issue was complicated and had caused much confusion in history. Already in China during the Spring and Autumn period, Xunzi and Mengzi had sharply differed on human nature over whether it was fundamentally good or bad. At the time there was the 'individual rights faction' starting from the Enlightenment thinkers, and continuing in the human rights movement, who believed that human rights were based on natural desires which were sacred. Another was the 'social rights faction', like Hegel and his followers, who believed that human nature was bad and man had to be subordinated to a higher authority in order to save

oneself. This authority could be God, ideology, or the state, and those who had the authority in society, were usually also the ones to demand that the people had to follow this view. This violated human nature and natural rights and was the basis for totalitarianism. Therefore, depending on the way the human nature was understood, political rights varied.⁵⁹

Hua did not want to provide a definitive answer to the question as to what was human nature as social science was about discovering this and was still in progress, as social science was unlike natural sciences in its clarity, and because human behaviour as a phenomenon was so complex. But as the human rights debate was becoming more profound, so should also comprehension of man and society do, and the study of the secrets of man should become a central issue in current research; *“Otherwise human rights movement will not have a definite theoretical basis”*, argued Hua. The second question for him was that of what man was, which had to be asked since the image of a ‘new man’ created in art during the Cultural Revolution was distorted. Hua argued:

*“As if all the desires of a man, all the rich emotions of mankind would belong only to the bourgeoisie and the proletariat would have parted with its ‘human’ category, and turned into an ideal creature of pure thought and ideology. ... Those who respect human nature must respect human rights, those who scorn human nature, must scorn human rights. These three: human nature – natural rights – political rights cannot be separated. All tyrants throughout history have negated human nature, and based on this, denied political rights from the people. All those dictators who want to become ‘old masters’ oppose the notion of ‘personal freedoms’ to the full...”*⁶⁰

When the common human nature was not accepted, it damaged aesthetics and arts by restraining them and the free expression of love by binding people up. Further, as Hua even reasoned, individuals had the right to seek personal happiness, and if this was denied, how could a nation attain its international freedom?⁶¹ This argumentation clearly followed the Enlightenment authors Hua cited. Hua saw that thousands of years old dictatorship was not only political dictatorship, but was also dictatorship of ideology over human nature; *“Should one see human nature or ‘ideology’ or ‘thought’ as the basis? Isn’t human nature after all a natural thing?”* asked Hua. In the past class nature had replaced human nature as the basis in China, and the latter had to remain silent and not allowed to influence matters. Why not to return to normal course of matters, Hua now queried.⁶²

Hua Shi’s arguments were echoed in other essays in Wotu. As a writer named Jiawen argued, for many years the discussion of human rights and human nature had been prohibited and only the theory of man’s class nature had been permitted. It had been like in the Middle Ages in Europe. Class nature theory dictated that in a class society there were no human characteristics which could surpass man’s class nature. What the bourgeoisie loved, the proletariat must oppose and vice versa. Thus, as there were

no shared attributes that belonged to all men, it followed that demands for human rights had been categorically denied as going beyond the class nature of man. However, people had gradually come to realise such a theory of absolute class nature was wrong. It had been the ideological basis for despotism of many years, but now, the people had fortunately begun to discuss human rights and human nature. For the writer the debate, including Hua Shi's aforementioned article, was very welcome for he believed that to care deeply about these matters had a great revolutionary significance.⁶³

As Jiawen saw it, the question of human rights and human nature had been studied for several centuries in the West. The Chinese intellectual predecessors also had analysed the question, but reached different conclusions than Locke and Rousseau. The matter had to be studied through analysis of the society in full, finding out facts and also dealing with the earlier results seriously. The Marxist position towards the theories on human rights and human nature of the 18th century should not be looked on with unconcern. Since its influence in China was very significant, one should be able to respond to its criticism on human rights theory. Otherwise, all who demanded human rights were unavoidably considered as playing the same old tune of bourgeois human rights. Jiawen saw Hua Shi's article as a step in the right direction, i.e. Jiawen clearly saw it as an attempt to accommodate the Marxist theory of human rights without discarding the rights' progressive essence.⁶⁴

Jiawen then outlined the problematic points in human rights theory. The first was the relationship between egoism and altruism, which he saw as a question of individualism and collectivism, which both had to be acknowledged. Egoism was a basic feature of human nature and the motivational force of history. Only through comprehensive scientific analysis of the both phenomena could progress be made to understand man. To explain how altruism limited and guided egoism would explain how creative force individualism was. If egoism was only emphasised in theory, people would not accept it, and the results would not be good. The second question was the relationship between human nature and class nature. Jiawen argued that when one went through historical classes, peoples, phases, words, and deeds, one could find out and abstract general human nature. But it still had many peculiarities and special features in particular situations. In current societies, people also bore the features of their respective class, which could also be abstracted. Although this did not remove anything from general human nature, it was important. Yet class nature could not be explained through general human nature, for class nature was included in human nature, and class nature was only a one specific aspect of human nature. The dialectical nature of the relationship between the two had to be acknowledged. This not only influenced human rights and human nature theory, but was an important precondition in the scientific comprehension of them both.⁶⁵

For Jiawen, the third problem was relativity and the perpetual nature of human rights. Marx had once said that human nature was the sum of all his social relationships. This had caused the rulers to declare that different classes had different human

nature, thus being relative and not absolute. Yet, this was absurd as the notion that class nature determined human nature was incorrect. However, human nature had also not been remained the same since Pan Gu had created the Earth. It had developed in different phases, as a comparison of modern Americans to ancient Eskimos with their different aesthetic tastes demonstrated for Jiawen. Complete denial of the development of human nature would be against dialectics which was the objective law in all material things.⁶⁶

The fourth problem was the relationship of natural rights and political rights. Jiawen saw that Hua Shi had argued that political rights served natural rights. Democracy and freedoms were a way and form to protect natural rights. But according to Rousseau, freedom was heaven given although some still denied this today. Jiawen asked Hua Shi to explain this, but otherwise affirmed the general direction of Hua's article, acknowledging that it had correctly emphasised the current revolutionary aspect of human rights and human nature.⁶⁷ Thus both Jiawen and Hua Shi ultimately left open the question of how to relate the universality of human rights to the particularity of class.

However, there were also those who did not accept the universality of human rights even though they advocated learning from their practice in the West, like Lü Po in *Kexue minzhu fazhi*. He argued that human rights were the inviolable rights that people should enjoy in society, but that they were different in their content according to different historical stages, productive forces, and social systems. People also understood them differently due to their different economic and political positions. Since class position affected these perceptions, there could not be a general notion of human rights accepted by all. As Lü argued, in socialist societies, the citizen's rights and democratic rights had to be protected and the rights of exploitation by feudal landlords, capitalists, and the counterrevolutionary classes had to be suppressed, otherwise the people's rights could not be guaranteed. As such, general human rights and citizen's rights were not the same. In capitalist revolution, human rights had played a progressive role, but had never become the common property of all members of society. Thus the Chinese should struggle for the people's rights (*rénmínde quánlì*), and not for 'political fantasy' – human rights (*rénquán*); "*because they can only create confusion in people's perceptions leading their thoughts to misguided directions.*" Society's class nature meant that the Chinese could not accept the capitalist slogan of 'equal human rights'.⁶⁸

Lü then added that only a blind people entrusted the creation of democracy and legal order to foreigners. This said, he did acknowledge that there were a few capitalist countries in the world where the working class had gained acceptance of its rights through struggle from the ruling class. They therefore had legal and democratic formulas that should be studied. Indeed, scientific socialism was very young, barely 100 years old, and socialist systems were not more than 60 years old, whereas China had only 30 years of experience of it. Although its experiences and lessons were

already many, they were still not enough to state anything definite about democracy and legal order as yet. Therefore, the Chinese had to:

*“study experiences, Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong thought, history and advanced ideas in foreign countries, further study in practice, repeatedly deepen [understanding] and gradually learn more.”*⁶⁹

Thus, in the same essay, Lü managed to denounce universal human rights as a bourgeois class concept yet also advocate learning from the way they were applied in the West. This was just one example of how flexible the eclectic arguments could be, but also how complicated the issue of universal human rights was when the writers viewed the world in class terms. The problem was also not satisfactorily answered, and so questions like, should the ‘counterrevolutionaries’ have full political rights, were not engaged.⁷⁰ However, in general those using eclectic arguments defended human rights less on the basis of the common nature of man in pursuit of life and happiness, than through the rights’ historical progressive nature. These arguments were also connected with the justification for the Democracy Movement: human rights’ progressive nature was demonstrated through the very fact that the people demanded them.⁷¹ In the past, human rights had been acquired through sacrifice and struggle, thus the people should not abandon them under socialism, but persist in the struggle. To be satisfied with anything less would mean betrayal of the revolution and the people.

Defining Legal Rights

Many of the Democracy Movement activists who discussed legal rights as guarantees of democratic practises and individual freedoms, did not invoke the sensitive concept of human rights in their argumentation, although occasionally they did offer very detailed proposals on how the political system should be reformed at the level of specific political rights, with a clear emphasis on the freedom of speech.⁷² Thus by avoiding the controversial issue of human rights, they could nevertheless argue for rights that were very much the same in content. Here the usual justification for rights was that they enabled progress of society and allowed the people to exercise supervision over officialdom, and therefore to be the masters of the society, rather than that they belonged to man due to some inherent human nature. Sure enough, the Dengists also advocated ‘strengthening the socialist legal system’ and the return to the ‘rule by law’ as the means to remove the Leftist legal cynicism that had reigned during the Cultural Revolution, which also made these arguments for legal reforms seem natural. However, in the end the activists were to discover that legal argumentation was still to be subjected to the Party’s old habits to define what was legal by what was politically acceptable.

Arguing about human and legal rights was actually a twofold task. While the Democracy Movement defended its existence as legal and constitutional, and one of

its collective identities was that of citizens using their legal rights, it also had to defend the specific rights in constitution and reason why and how they should be permitted to exist, and be exercised by the activists. Freedom of speech was at the core of all this. It was also related to other closely connected rights, such as ‘the right of information’, and the freedom of publication which all were discussed, for example, in two long articles in *Siwu luntan*. As an anonymous writer saw it in the journal in May 1979, people’s democracy required two kinds of people’s rights (*rénmínde quánlì*) viz: citizen’s rights (*gōngmínde quánlì*) and people’s democratic rights (*rénmínde mínzhǔ quánlì*). Citizen’s rights included rights of and freedoms to life, reproduction, education, work, rest, self-development, free marriage, occupation, residence, personal safety and property; whereas democratic rights included those rights which protected that the people’s opinion had the decisive influence in politics. These were the rights of information (or the ‘right to know the facts’, *zhīqíng quán*), freedom of speech / communication and supervision and management (*dū-guǎn quán*).⁷³ The last category of rights showed how the scheme was based on the premises of popular supervision over bureaucracy. Democratic rights formed three categories following the pattern of *comprehension of the situation, reaching correct judgement, and supervision and management of the implementation of decisions*. The right of information was defined as:

*“The guarantees that every citizen has the right to know completely and accurately the various important situations in the country; it is the necessary condition on which all citizens can base their reflection and judgement of matters.”*⁷⁴

Freedom of speech:

*“The guarantees of personal self-education and a necessary condition that the great majority will reach correct judgements [of matters].”*⁷⁵

The right of supervision and management:

*“The guarantees that the people can decide on the nation’s and society’s politics.”*⁷⁶

These rights not only had an aspect of popular empowerment to them, but also were meant to facilitate the creation of the required correct awareness and comprehension of a social situation as a precondition for their proper usage, which fitted well with the enlightenment role of the Democracy Movement. As the writer argued in *Siwu luntan*, with reference to historical justification for the Democracy Movement, these three categories of rights were needed for: *“the people to be the creators of history, the masters of the country, and the origin of progress.”*⁷⁷ The right of information was crucial for the progressive role of the people in history, and to keep them on the correct side of line struggles. Furthermore, the right of open discussion (*yánlùn*

quán) enabled citizens to reach the correct awareness of matters and exercise their right of management and supervision efficiently.⁷⁸

According to the writer, the last 30 years had demonstrated how bestowal of the people's interest into one government and Party had been a mistake. Life had not been like in the song: "*together with the Communist Party, we dash towards the communist future.*" Hopes should have been placed instead on the people. "*One Party can change, but the people remain clever about their interests*", the writer stated. During peace time, major decisions on the country and the people had to be conducted through the masses and their representatives. The legitimate method to establish and consolidate this was through the right of supervision and management of affairs. These included also the right to elect and supervise the functionaries at all levels.⁷⁹

Not surprisingly, the right to information was also defended as a countermeasure to Leftist deception. For example, Zhou Xun of Siwu luntan argued that people required a better picture of the leadership's situation and the reasons behind their decisions, rather than secrecy that kept the people in darkness. Only with knowledge of the reasons for policies could the masses correctly and effectively judge and supervise the leadership. If facts were unclear, people could be easily deceived, as had happened during the rule of the Gang of Four. But this also required true freedom of speech to allow the people to establish right from wrong themselves. Mistaken opinions also had the right to be expressed, since otherwise only praise of leaders would remain. "*Silence is not a good thing, and it is definitely not the same thing as unity and stability*", argued Zhou, who saw that Marxism was a critical ideology which also welcomed criticism, as the current leaders should have done, too. For this reason, the publication of people's journals had also to be supported.⁸⁰

Zhongguo renquan's *Declaration of Chinese Human Rights* included both freedom of speech and thought at the very top of the list. The other rights also included the citizens' right to criticise and evaluate the Party and national leaders. Zhongguo renquan demanded that all citizens should also have the right to information on matters of state, e.g. economic statistics. Furthermore, citizens also must the right to go to listen to the National People's Congress' sessions and have the right to free movement in and out of the country, create propaganda materials and see foreign correspondents, freedom to distribute works (of literature / art) abroad as well as access to *neibu* information and cultural equality. Further, the freedoms / rights to read and listen to foreign newspapers and broadcasts, as well as freedom to print should also be permitted.⁸¹

Most Democracy Movement's writers also defended freedom of speech through the official phraseology of '*only to speak can never be a crime*' (*yánzhě wúzuì*) arguing that to express an opinion in public should never be regarded as a crime, but only actual counterrevolutionary activities could be treated as such.⁸² In Tansuo, Qi Yun discussed the problem of "counterrevolutionary crimes" and "thought crimes".

According to him, after the liberation countless people had been persecuted for “thought crimes” and therefore no righteous person could be indifferent to this category of crime, which was as elusive as much as it was abused. Indeed, laws could always be read for the benefit of the rulers, therefore they were not enough to guarantee by themselves that real revolutionaries were not harmed. Qi saw the freedom of thought even more fundamental than the rights of election and supervision and management. Therefore, ideal legal regulations should have separated theoretical questions and questions relating to force (*bàoli*), and clearly dictated that ideas and advocacy of them were not criminal. Only actual action (*xíngdòng*) could be classified as counterrevolutionary crime.⁸³

The three most distinctive and elaborative writers, who argued specifically for the freedom of speech, were Cui Quanhong and Hua Chuan of *Kexue minzhu fazhi*, and Hu Ping of *Wotu*. In *Kexue minzhu fazhi*, Cui Quanhong argued that although the constitution affirmed that in socialism the workers had the freedom of speech and publication, leaders at every level obstructed this right and the official media was the media of a minority of leaders, as if the people were the tools whereby the officials created history.⁸⁴ As Cui saw it, the need to eradicate the ideas and forces that opposed democracy and to make officials public servants required strengthening of the freedoms of speech and publication. The notion that leaders created history distorted the way history had developed from ancient times to this day, as Cui argued:

*“Please explain: have any of the ideas, methods or revolution that has made history progress, originated from officials’ minds? Did the May Fourth Movement erupt because the officials wanted it to? Or the Tiananmen Incident? Lenin said it well: ‘The enthusiasm and creativity of the masses is the basis of the new society. Socialism cannot be created from above, it is incompatible with bureaucratism, and vigorously creative socialism is created by the people themselves.’”*⁸⁵

Therefore, all bureaucratic restrictions on publishing had to be cleared away to let history, the economy, and the whole of society to progress. Lenin had also supported freedom of publication Cui pointed out, and cited Lenin’s *Selected Works* to prove this point.⁸⁶ Also for Cui workers were the equal masters of society and rulers had to respect the workers’ freedom of speech and debate. Indeed, argued Cui; *“How could the opinions of the masters of the society be restricted by their servants?”*⁸⁷ Cui also rejected the claims related to the criticism against the Democracy Movement, that the promotion of freedom of speech equalled promotion of anarchy and extreme democracy. For him, speech and action were two completely different things. Action had to be restricted by laws and moral principles, but speech did not influence directly social order, production, or morality, and therefore should not be restricted. Confusing freedom of speech with anarchy and extreme democracy only protected various work styles of ‘family heads’, ‘master-servant notions’, inequality, and the harmful influence of feudalism.⁸⁸

According to Cui, some people also argued that freedom of speech equalled capitalist democracy, but that these critics did not understand social science. Employing an eclectic form of argument, Cui challenged them to explain why then only in capitalism could there be freedoms of speech and publication, how come socialism could not realise them and why was freedom of speech within workers so awful? Negative outcomes would not be the result, but quite the reverse:

“...the working people seek for happiness and are its creators, they also seek the truth and create it, how can one think that they would violate their own interests, and plant poisonous weeds and create disturbance?”⁸⁹

Thus freedom of speech and publication would be the preconditions to removal of the poisonous weeds and creation of order in society. The need to liberate minds also required it. Cui argued that public debate deepened knowledge and made it more accurate. Restrictions only worked to the opposite effect causing ignorance, social backwardness and stagnation. This had a negative influence on creativity and progress. Further, the six principles by Chairman Mao on the criteria to distinguish bad from good works, supported the notion for debate, not oppression, as the correct way to reach correct knowledge, raise the consciousness of the masses and advance ideological revolution.⁹⁰ This was a rare direct quotation from Mao Zedong on the issue.

Finally, Cui connected the defence of freedom of speech directly to the Democracy Movement journals, or as he put it, ‘the people’s mass media’. In them the people should not be afraid of wrong persons, policies or lines expressed; instead they had to be afraid of being unable to oppose such matters through freedoms of speech and publication. Freedom of speech would guard the people against social calamities and protect stability and unity and stable social development. Cui also linked freedom of speech to historical progress arguing that:

“In the final analysis, the freedom of publication is the weapon and talisman (fǎbǎo) of continuous revolution under proletarian class dictatorship and peaceful construction [of socialism]. To protect the peoples’ freedoms of speech and publication is the sacred task of the proletarian class dictatorship, the state and its legal machinery.”⁹¹

This was a clear reference to the role the Democracy Movement argued it played in Chinese society. On his part in Kexue minzhu fazhi, Hua Chuan linked freedom of speech to what he termed as the real ‘cultural revolution’. Hua also saw that socialism was a society of diminishing classes and an interlude in the progress towards the society of mankind’s great community (*dàtóng*). The Cultural Revolution should have diminished class culture, factional thought, imperial domination ideology, special privileges and inequality, but Mao’s motives for the Cultural Revolution had been totally incompatible with the principles of a cultural

revolution from socialism to communism, and thus, it had failed. “*Socialist cultural revolution is a movement to seek the truth, realising of democracy, it is a movement to bring into play the people’s whole energy and serves its interest.*” Hua argued. Truth was not in the hands of Marx, who was dead; it was in the hands on the living. Neither was it enough that it was written in laws, it had to be part of social life.⁹²

Hua argued that the freedom of speech was the freedom to express opinions both spoken and written. If it were restricted in any way, then it would not be ‘freedom of speech’, but ‘limited speech’. Writing in the post-March-April crackdown situation, also Hua argued that mere words could not constitute a crime. If the people did not engage in activities which harmed society and other people, they should be allowed to talk and other people had the right to criticise and reject other people’s opinions. Hua also connected the freedom of speech and the whole Democracy Movement to the progress of history:

“At the moment the people have too little of democracy in China, and society lacks reason; one needs to continue socialist Cultural Revolution. Like before, it is a roaring, seething, and unstoppable torrent charging forwards of seizing democracy and exploring the truth. This movement must create the undiminished conditions to wither away the classes, parties, state, and the estrangement that makes mankind to hate and to not understand each other, making it possible for mankind to enter the society of great consensus.”⁹³

For Hua, the liberation of mankind was the result of the withering away of classes and the liberation of true human nature. It was the natural end result of what would happen when mankind found objective knowledge, but truth and this could only occur if the people enjoyed freedom of speech.⁹⁴ Thus, freedom of speech, and therefore the Democracy Movement, indeed had a great role in shaping history through reforming political system and people’s consciousness.

One of the longest and most thorough essays on the significance of the freedom of speech was offered by Hu Ping in Wotu at the end of March 1979, when the Democracy Movement came under open attack. As Hu argued, if the freedom of speech was lost, man became just a slave and a tool. Hu compared the freedom of speech to the fulcrum in mechanics: without it nothing worked, but in itself it did nothing. With a fulcrum a lever could be used. Hu argued that the freedom of speech’s role in politics was like the fulcrum’s inventor Isaac Newton had said about it: “*Give me a place to stand and I will pull the Earth from its orbit!*”⁹⁵ For Hu the freedom of speech meant the freedom to speak out on different matters, good, bad, right and wrong; it did not limit itself to the leaders. The freedom of speech in the Constitution was not empty chatter. The Chinese had an old saying: ‘speaker is not a criminal’, but what did a ‘speaker’ mean? Obviously it was not the ruler, but those who sang ‘out of tune’. The principle did not mean only ‘correct’ singing out of tune, but also really singing out of tune. Democratic principles demanded that the minority followed the majority, but also that the minority had the right to hold on to its

opinions. No law, the Constitution included, which recognised this principle, could limit the freedom of speech.⁹⁶

Hu also argued that the democratic principles like freedom of speech were the result of bourgeois revolution, but they had become common property of the whole of mankind as the result of the progress of mankind's civilisation. Like before; "*Even today this principle is supported by the people who are in the vanguard of protecting people's interests*", Hu argued, making a clear reference to the Democracy Movement. Hu argued that since Marxism was based on Western capitalist societies, it had been easy for the Chinese intellectuals, deeply influenced by feudalism, to understand and approve only the critical and disapproving parts about Western civilization in this theory, but harder to understand and endorse the approving parts in it. Even after 30 years of the establishment of the PRC, the Chinese had removed the influences of feudal dictatorship ideas. Hu asked that had this lesson indeed not awoken them to ask how to approach Marxism anew from a more complete angle.⁹⁷

Hu reasoned that the practise of free speech was essential for scientific and ideological progress, but that in China some comrades still retained the strange logic that free speech had been necessary only before Marxism, since Marxism itself was a result of criticism of earlier Western capitalist theories. These comrades saw that all societies and thinkers in the capitalist world had produced nothing of value after 1847, when Marxism was formulated. This made Marxism a 'book from heaven' that answered all future questions and resembled a form of religious worship. In reality all revolutionary leaders in history had advocated learning from the West and its capitalist theories (of course not in their entirety, but only those useful parts) and admitted that there might be something worth studying in them. Thus, being unable to practise free speech would mean the loss of these benefits.⁹⁸ Indeed:

*"...if we do not practise genuine free speech, and if we are not allowed to criticise the tenants of Marxism, then we are not real Marxists, and we will turn Marxism into a lifeless thing."*⁹⁹

For Hu, the acceptance of Marxism as a guide did not mean not accepting non-Marxist criticism; correct ideological unity had to be acquired through long lasting ideological work, not expelling non-believers from the people.¹⁰⁰ Hu also argued to allow Party factions to exist openly, as Mao had wanted. The advance would then be that the Chinese could openly criticise those factions and thereby to learn how to commit fewer mistakes. That the truth would be acquired through competition would only make it stronger and strengthen the people's faith in it. Anti-Party, anti-socialism, and revisionist elements would not represent the interest of the people, but as they would be attempting to overthrow the communists¹⁰¹ by capturing people's hearts, they would have the appear to be asking for instructions from the people, and seize upon certain mistakes in the communists' work, especially in those policies that had caused dissatisfaction with some part of the masses. This would be highly useful for the communists, as it would make them pay attention to these points and take

measures to improve them Hu argued.¹⁰² Even Hu therefore did not consider the possibility that people could not agree on what was the ‘truth’ in politics and developed competing factions if political freedoms and rights were granted.

For Hu, political power and popular autonomy were in dialectical relationship. Those who wanted power had to accept controls on this power. Without freedom of speech, power could act without restraint and the people would be unable to rectify the government’s mistakes early on when still not serious.¹⁰³ Freedom of speech might be messy, but it would benefit the people, after all: “*Democracy is troublesome (máfan), it is not doing something once and for all.*”¹⁰⁴ Hu also saw that freedom of speech influenced people’s mentality and their national character engendering care for their country, instead of themselves, which was needed for the four modernisations.¹⁰⁵

Basically then, arguments for legal rights were therefore arguments for the Democracy Movement. As the activists saw it, legal rights and particularly the freedom of speech, enabled the Democracy Movement to play its progressive role in history and society, and were an integral part in socialist democracy. Like the role of elections, legal rights were also mainly framed within the people vs. bureaucracy dichotomy, where their function was to ensure popular supervision of the officialdom and enable the society to progress towards full socialism. Yet, this left some other central features of liberal democracies largely ignored in eclectic arguments, one of which was the party system.

Learning from Pluralism

Most of the mainstream writers who used orthodox or eclectic arguments did not regard the one-party system as fundamentally problematic. While some of those who defended freedom of speech, like Hu Ping, admitted that popular political opinions were always divided and different views had to be tolerated, very few of the writers actually saw this leading to a multi-party system or political pluralism under socialism. However, those few who did, also based their analysis on the necessity to curb bureaucratism. One such eclectic was idiosyncratic Chen Erjin who also saw the Democracy Movement as the agent which carried on the socialist revolution, and, in quoting Engels in the ‘Civil War in France’, pointed out the duty of the proletarian democratic revolution was to abolish the centralisation of political and economic power in the hands of a small minority. For Chen, ‘Marxist state proletarian socialist democracy’ was based on public ownership and self-management of the people.¹⁰⁶ Drawing on the theory of a new class, Chen argued that proletarian socialist democracy would:

“... Smash the bureaucratic class, dictatorship of a minority over majority, coercively fixed dictatorship’s special privileged production relationships, and resolutely and completely throw the systems of appointment of cadres from above, hierarchy, autonomy of state system and deification of the Party into the

*trash bin of history, and establish and perfect Marxist legal system, general elections, change the Party from managing slaves to be managed by the slaves and develop a state system which is suitable for economic development, firmly protect human rights, etc.”*¹⁰⁷

As Chen saw it, the workers could only be truly empowered under proletarian democracy where their human character and wisdom were protected and developed, and leaders lead only by consent of the led. When the rights and freedoms of speech, publication, assembly, and organisation were protected the people’s creativity was also protected and encouraged, and classes, exploitation, and oppression would vanish. Standards of living would rise, and the greatness of communism would be demonstrated to all. For Chen this kind of socialist democracy had its sources in the October revolution, the Paris Commune and the examples of the societies in Europe and America.¹⁰⁸

However, after paying tribute to the Paris Commune, Chen went on to argue that at the present, the Chinese should also learn from the strong points of European and American societies. Chen used a lot of space and quotations to illustrate how the great masters, Lenin and Engels, had accepted learning and emulation of capitalist practises for socialist purposes. Chen also cited the American Declaration of Independence on the right of people to resist tyranny, as well as Montesquieu on the separation of powers into judiciary, legislative and executive branches in ‘The Spirit of Laws’. The American political system was also a source of inspiration to Chen with its rights and freedoms of speech, assembly, publication, organisation, its written constitution, regular elections and checks and balances, two-party system, local self-government, separation of the military from culture and absence of a bureaucratic system and cadre appointment from above.¹⁰⁹

As Chen argued, in China the institutions such as cadre appointment from above, etc. did not accord with the socialist production base and had become ‘obstacles to the Marxist revolution’. Hence the Chinese needed the realisation of the second stage of socialist revolution, and for Chen it was obvious that this would borrow much from Western state systems, yet still not abandon socialist economy. The most fundamental matter to him was that under proletarian democracy, the final authority in all matters rested with the written Marxist constitution, which was the highest authority in the society and not men.¹¹⁰ More radically, Chen proposed a two-Party system, with its objective to subjugate the Communist Party to the rule of law. Further, two Marxist parties should have their own media and provide their own candidates for elections. Although those organisations which did not have faith in or respect for Marxism would be banned, Chen believed that in time this regulation would become quite redundant, as when Marxism really begun to demonstrate its truth, other ideas would pale in comparison with it; *“like campfires next to the Sun.”*¹¹¹

For Chen, political competition between the two parties would benefit the search for truth and prevent conspiracies of silence. Such competition would also aid in supervision of the executive branch of the government and protect against abuses of power, enabling timely corrections to incorrect policy lines as well as a guard against the degeneration of the Party into a bureaucratic monopolistic privileged class of masters which enslaved the people. As an example of a two-party system protection against the abuse of power Chen cited the Watergate scandal, but for him the benefits of such a system were based on longer historical experiences.¹¹²

In proletarian democracy the power belonged to the people, its basis was the universal suffrage. Citing Engels and Marx, Chen argued that only through elections could the people govern themselves.¹¹³ Chen then provided a detailed account of such rules that should guide the activities and elections of the Peoples' Congresses, the Executive headed by a President and an independent judiciary.¹¹⁴ Correspondingly, these representatives elected by their constituencies also governed at local level the cities, villages, factories, and the army.¹¹⁵ Socialist democracy would also uphold the personal rights of citizens. Here Chen quoted the Declaration of Human Rights as a bourgeois notion of human rights, yet also argued, as Marx had shown, that the capitalist notion of equality of all men was false. In Marxism to establish liberty and freedom required abolition of private property. However, the system of special privileges had negated this. To correct the situation the proletariat and workers should enjoy human rights like freedom of speech, publication and assembly. Chen also emphasised the right of genuine information, and the need for a hundred flowers policy in arts and research. Chen ended his defence of personal rights by declaring that; "*We want to live like human beings (zuòrén), not beasts of labour!*"¹¹⁶

However, Chen also actually transposed his two-party model onto the problem of how to control bureaucratism. In this he missed, or discarded, the essence of Western liberal democracy. The two parties he envisaged existed to supervise one other, not to represent the differing interests of different groups of citizen in the public arena – other than those of the people against the bureaucrats (or the 'revisionists', as Chen termed them). This was the natural result of the view that the people, as a single class, could have only one class interest under socialism, and that the officialdom could develop class interests of its own. Borrowing from liberal systems was therefore ultimately based on the class-based view of democracy, and seen in the light of the need to solve the contradiction between the people and bureaucrats. Therefore also Chen's Marxism excluded the notion of a multi-party system as a product of genuine social (or socialist) pluralism.

The differences between the orthodox and eclectic writers were also revealed in a few articles where they criticised each other. An example of this was the criticism on Chen Erjin's '*On Proletarian Democratic Revolution*'. In the August issue of *Siwu luntan*, Shi Huasheng argued that the proposed reforms with a two-party system and general elections were not entirely without merit, but in socialist democracy it was insufficient only to elect the leaders at all levels. Instead, all workers should have

been educated to be able to manage their own affairs, so that the system could not oppress those elected. Citing Marx, Shi saw that the workers should be; “*made from managing people to manage things*” i.e. self-governing. In a classless socialist society, governmental tasks were apolitical and thus did not require elections. Shi also disagreed that what was required was the election of leaders with correct policy lines, since control of economy by the elected few was basically against the development of productive forces: the state should have begun to wither away and industrial control given to workers and not their representatives. This required the dual revolution of handing the workers the power to manage tasks on their own together with political power required to make this possible. The contradiction between economic base and political superstructure could otherwise not be solved.¹¹⁷ This stand took Shi closer to writers in the Beijing zhi chun, where workers’ control over production was given more attention. However, it must be noted that Chen Erjin also saw that the state would begin to wither away some day but, like other writers using eclectic arguments, he was developing a model of what to do with the superstructure during the transition period.

The prospect of a pluralist political system was also discussed in Zhongguo renquan in March 1979, where writers raised the issue of party system reform. They welcomed the establishment of the Legal System Committee in the National People’s Congress under Peng Zhen and its direction towards the re-establishment of legality. It was seen as a step towards socialist democracy and therefore supported by the people, since it showed an attempt to take the path toward a modern society. However, to accelerate this process Zhongguo renquan proposed five reform points to be studied when the committee drafted its proposals for the 6th session of the National People’s Congress. Describing the constitution and laws as temporary, because the National People’s Congresses had not been directly elected by the people, the writers justified their arguments with the experience the people had gained from the Cultural Revolution.¹¹⁸ According to the writers, the most important law to promulgate was the election law. When a society with modern democracy and legal system was established, the first stage was general elections, thus the Party should have created a system that was more advanced than the multi-party systems in the West. Otherwise, progress towards modern society and democratic socialism was not possible. Therefore:

“We propose from now, or near future, a multi-party, multi-class, multi-organisation, double elections for the posts of people’s representatives at the National People’s Congress and its chairpersons.”¹¹⁹

Zhongguo renquanmeng had already also proposed strengthening the multi-party system and general direct election at all levels in its ‘*Declaration of Chinese Human Rights*’ in January 1979, but in it the multi-party system referred to was the that of ‘consultative people’s parties’ which existed as satellites to the Communist Party.¹²⁰ It is therefore unclear how liberal the proposals were intended to be, although if undertaken, their consequences would certainly have been profound.

Further, the splinter group from Qimeng, Jiedong, used some notably eclectic arguments during its short period of activism. On 8 March, 1979 the group declared its principles in its opening words energetic advocacy of the progressive thoughts of mankind and, at the present, especially the ideas of human rights by expounded Rousseau, as well as Sun Zhongshan's [Sun Yat-sen] theory of democracy. Furthermore, it aimed for the promotion of Christian civilisation and culture study to follow the example of peace, forgiveness, understanding, and universal love and to establish democratic polity on these principles. Jiedong also demanded rectification of all parts of Marxism which did not match the reality and getting rid of 'class struggle', 'violent revolution', and all forms of 'dictatorship' as these all divided mankind. This meant removing the outmoded parts of Mao Zedong thought and all policies based on these principles along with the personality cult created by the Gang of Four.¹²¹

According to the Jiedong declaration, China had to eradicate all notions that violated the common nature of mankind and oppressed individuality, like 'old isms', 'old ideas', 'old teachings', and all the notions of 'monarch-minister-father-son' that had oppressed the people for two millennia. As for the Party, Jiedong demanded that the 'private party of Mao Zedong' should revert back to a 'party of all Party members and the entire people', so that it would then practise complete democratic centralism to oppose personality cult and the small groups that monopolised the power against the interests of the people. Furthermore, a fundamental law governing the state had to be decided and established. The top leadership of state and the Party had to be elected through general and secret elections according to constitutional principles for fixed 4 year office term. This way, the upright and honest could become re-elected, but not for more than two terms, to ensure that a person could not usurp power.¹²²

Finally, Jiedong made its most controversial suggestions by arguing that the Communist Party and Guomindang had to settle their former disputes and start co-operation under the new circumstances. Furthermore, under this new system of co-operation between the two parties, competitive democracy should be established whereby the two parties would openly declare their platforms and the people then elect a government of their liking. This, as the Jiedong declaration argued, clearly accorded with the progressive trend in history.¹²³ The call for rapprochement with Guomindang was not unique, but nevertheless for its restoration in the Mainland was quite heterodox, even in the Beijing Democracy Movement. Even the two-party system proposed by Chen Erjin was not intended to be one whereby the nationalists and the communists competed democratically, but rather a system in which two proletarian parties would supervised each other.

As such it was no big surprise that Jiedong found itself named as a bad example of activist groups in Deng Xiaoping's speech in the end of March 1979, when he voiced hostility to the notion of a multi-party system asserting that the 'democrats' and some people at the Xidan Wall were demanding 'rotating the leadership'. According to

Deng, these people did not realise that without Party leadership it would be impossible to achieve anything in contemporary China and stability and unity and the four modernisations would be wasted. Although the Party had made mistakes in its past, it had always been able to correct itself. Argued Deng:

“After all, what is good about the multi-party systems in capitalist countries? That system came into being as a result of strife and competition among different sections of the bourgeoisie, and none of the parties represents the interest of the masses of the working people. The people in the capitalist countries do not, and cannot possibly, share any common ideal; many of them simply don’t have any ideals at all. This state of affairs is not the strong point in these countries, but their weakness: it prevents them from concentrating all their forces, many of whom hamstring and work against each other.”¹²⁴

Those who used eclectic arguments about the need to have political competition in socialism would also have probably agreed with Deng that bourgeois parties did not represent the proletariat, but Deng clearly evaded the question of what would happen if political competition were permitted under socialism, like the activists were actually proposing. However, the liberal political systems of the West were not the only source of inspiration for the activists.

Learning from the East-European Examples

The influence of East-Europe and the Soviet Union was visible in all of the three lines of argumentation analysed here. The Yugoslavian example was widely referred to particularly in the orthodox arguments for emulation of the Paris Commune and the eclectic calls to rectify Chinese Marxism, whereas the Soviet Union was mostly used as a proxy for criticism of Chinese society. Although the writers may have believed that things were worse in the Soviet Union than in China, at least in political terms, their criticism against the Soviet system was clearly directed against the bureaucratic system in China, too. For example, Shi Du argued in *Zhongguo renquan* that in the Soviet Union the means of production were in the hands of a small bureaucratic class, and therefore the system was essentially capitalist. Yet, in China the necessity to transfer the control of the means of production to workers was not well understood and repeating the Soviet mistakes was therefore imminent. Shi Du concluded that establishment of democratic rights through the system of public management and supervision was the only way out, and saw that the Soviet example therefore justified the Paris Commune type of democratic reforms in China.¹²⁵ The way the Soviet Union was used as a proxy showed how the writers accepted the Maoist notion that the Soviet Union had turned revisionist under Khrushchev, and how this criticism could also be turned against the Party Left by denying that that Cultural Revolution had corrected the similar situation in China, but instead had made it worse.¹²⁶

If the Soviet Union was used as a warning example, Yugoslavia was treated as a source of inspiration. Yugoslavia had also been classified as a revisionist country during the Cultural Revolution, when the only ally China had in East-Europe was Albania. A notable indication of changing foreign policies was in 1977 with the restoration of diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia and Tito's visit in China. From this the Chinese had been able to obtain information on Yugoslavian trials with worker's management in factories, which had impressed many activists in the Democracy Movement too. As a consequence, there were more references to Yugoslavia than there were to the US in the Democracy Movement articles. Even an anti-Marxist like Wei Jingsheng was positively impressed by the Yugoslav notion of workers management.¹²⁷ As many activists saw it, Yugoslavia demonstrated how a popular supervision of the Party and workers management of production were possible after all, or at least, that the road to this goal could indeed be taken under Party leadership. However, the Yugoslavian model was never really well described in detail in the journals, only referred to.¹²⁸ The dissident movements in East-Europe and the Soviet Union were also referred to, but apart from the Siwu luntan editors, the journals did not engage in any comparison between the various movements in Beijing journals.¹²⁹ They were nevertheless, seen as signs of popular resistance against bureaucratism that ailed all socialist systems, and presented as a further proof of the progressive role of the Democracy Movement in the vanguard of the entire world socialism.¹³⁰

Yugoslavian influence was also evident in the themes of alienation (*yìhuà*) under socialism and Marxist humanism that some writers discussed in the Democracy Movement. These themes were also a hot issue in academic debate where reformist intellectuals, like Wang Ruoshui, offered alienation and humanism as the concepts whereby the way out from the class based view of man could be found in Marxism and therefore open the way for more humane and democratic socialism.¹³¹ The theory of alienation corresponded to the Democracy Movement activists' criticism of the political exclusion of majority of the people from politics, and was therefore also invoked in some of the Democracy Movement journals, like Siwu luntan which addressed the issue in March 1979. In this article, Yu Ren introduced 'new Marxism' based on a Japanese article. According to Yu, this theory had been developed in Yugoslavia as criticism against Stalinism. The crux of it was that Marxism was seen as a general theory about alienation and the inappropriate objectification of man. Yu argued that if Marxism was not understood in this way, it was not true Marxism. Stalin and the Marxist-Leninist Party had drifted apart from the original theory of Marx and Engels in this point developing a bureaucratic worldview. Under such a situation alienation still existed, as did the necessity to overcome it, for if mankind did not solve alienation, it could not solve the problem of self-rule, reasoned Yu.¹³²

Zhongguo renquan also discussed alienation and Marxist humanism when it ran an article by a Yugoslavian writer translated as V. Po Wei Qie Wei Qi (Popovitch?). According to him, man's freedom was the central dogma of Marxism. Capitalism was able to develop productive forces, but it harmed working class at the expense of

the owning class. Both Marx and Engels had seen that in communism, the development of individual freedom was linked to the development of the freedom of all members of the society. Protection of human value was the highest duty of a socialist society. Marxist humanism evaluated society based on the freedom of man. “*In short, humanism is the deepest special character of Marxism*”, argued the writer. Marxist humanism surpassed all previous forms of humanism in history, and was the fullest form of humanism at the time. For *Zhongguo renquan*, it followed that, in a socialist society the rights of the constituent parts of that society, its citizens, must be paramount and politically respected.¹³³ Wotu also planned to hold a conference on ‘Marxism and humanism’ in the later half of October 1979, but this meeting appears to never have taken place.¹³⁴ These articles demonstrated how some of the movement’s mainstream, at least, followed academic debates, although direct references in the journals to academic discussion were otherwise rare.¹³⁵

Critical Marxists

While both orthodox and eclectic variations of socialist democracy were still mainly based on Marxist principles and offered as such, the movement’s radical wing adherence to Marxist principles grew notably thinner. Here a further subdivision among those critics, who argued that Marxism should be taken as any other ideology or theory and given no special status in society, and those who rejected Marxism outright, could be made. Writers who argued along both of these lines wrote mostly in *Tansuo*, *Zhongguo renquan*, *Jiedong*, and *Kexue minzhu fazhi*. Although these arguments drew much of attention, especially from foreign observers and the antagonists of the movement in the Party, the radical wing of the Democracy Movement was a minority to begin with. However, apart from scepticism or outright hostility towards Marxism and the Party, even the radical wing diagnostics shared many features with the rest of the Democracy Movement, e.g. endorsement of the socialist economic system and rejection of privileged rule of the bureaucratic elite.

Marxism as a Theory like Any Other

Although the critical stance on Marxism denied it any special status in society, it did not reject Marxism entirely. This approach was demonstrated, for example, in *Tansuo* where Mu Yi (the penname for Yang Guang), developed an argument for the scientific and objective study of Marxism. According to Yang Guang, even if the communist regime had used brute force to indoctrinate people with its official dogma, the fantasy of having hundreds of millions people with “one opinion and one way of thinking” had not yet come true in China. Instead, Marxism, as the people knew it, was; “*either fabricated empty talk with no rigid system, or popular, undesirable, coarse folk custom and unbearable absurd religion.*” The 30 years under tyranny had forced people to accept Marxism as the sole truth, and those who

had wanted to study it scientifically had been persecuted. As the result even if people may have detested Marxism, they still had to support it in public.¹³⁶

As Yang argued, under such conditions, the youth could not avoid developing blind worship of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong. To live with Marxism everywhere around you, unable to compare it with anything else and to see how the disloyal were treated with ridicule, mockery, struggle, and terror, had persuaded the smart to profess their belief in Marxism, and the stupid to even sacrifice their lives for it. As the result, many young people had lost their faith in their own thinking and confidence that non-Marxist thoughts and their achievements could also be studied. As such, the youth had no way to know if the Marxist notions of communism and class-consciousness were right or wrong. They had grown used to them, as if they were the 'highest form of public virtue'. This was the basis of a fascistic tyranny, which made a mockery of the scientific nature of Marxism. The results were there for everybody to see: ossification, apathy, stupidity, stagnation, ignorance, and silly manners.¹³⁷

Yang compared Marxism to religion: under Marxism people were told to work hard and sacrifice all comforts for the sake of the life hereafter, and were kept ignorant of other choices. But now people were starting to doubt this all, as the Fifth of April Movement and the Democracy Wall Movement spread sparks of free democracy to the every corner of the country. Argued Yang:

"The only way to get the country on the road of prosperity is to stop at once the stupid politics of using tyranny to carry out one ism and rely on the Chinese to explore matters freely, without restrictions. Let every Chinese freely ride their own thoughts!"¹³⁸

This meant that for those who wanted Marxism-Leninism Mao Zedong thought could have it, but should not be able to impose it upon anyone who did not want it. Thus, those who wanted to get rid of Marxism should be allowed to do so. This kind of freedom of thought was required for happiness and prosperity, as well as the four modernisations. Indeed, as Yang saw it, history demonstrated how the various campaigns to suppress non-Marxist ideas had caused great disturbances and suffering, which had not been conducive to the four modernisations.¹³⁹

Yang also posed polemically that, if Maoism was the highest form of socialism, and socialism was the best system for China, then what purpose did persecution of all different opinions with resultant unrest serve? If Marxism collapsed because of free discussion, this would be a natural result and thus obviously had to be discarded. The present sceptical attitude of the youth towards Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong thought was caused precisely by the ruling Marxists and their intellectual restrictions. They branded these sceptics as counterrevolutionary class enemies, yet all these sceptics had actually all been born and raised during Mao's rule.¹⁴⁰ Yang believed

that the Chinese had the right to be sceptical, even about Marxism, and that such scepticism was characteristic of modern citizenry. As he argued:

*“We want to throw off these restrictions on thought and let freedom’s reason guide all domains of life. We want the freedom of exploration and discourse, we want to become modern citizens standing on our own. ... If the victory of Marxism’s victory depends on bloodily suppressing other opinions, then our role is to be the clear-minded youth of the 20th century, disapproving this ism absolutely.”*¹⁴¹

Yang concluded his article by stating that he was uncertain whether intellectual freedom and exploration would result in the establishment of a national non-Marxist-Leninist theory, returning to the “correct Marxism-Leninism”, or the surrender of all guiding ideologies, but if the communist masters had the most scientific theory, then they had no reasons to be concerned about intellectual freedom.¹⁴² Thus, Yang Guang at least left the rhetoric door open for Marxism, and his arguments could be considered as justification for the Democracy Movement as a domain of free social discourse on the future standing of Marxism in China. As rational and mature citizens, the Democracy Movement activists undertook this discourse, and their efforts were therefore justified and necessary for the four modernisations.

When the Worker’s Daily accused the youth of a ‘crisis of confidence’ in September 1979, another Tansuo member, Lu Lin, took the paper to task to answer the accusation. The paper defined the crisis of confidence as the; “*lack of faith in Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong thought, leadership of the Party, superiority of socialism and the bright future of communism.*” Lu replied that Marxism may well be correct in principle, but judging from the state of current Chinese society and other socialist countries, and how their youth was living up the ‘rich life’, it was easy to see why such crisis of confidence was possible. Interestingly, Lu also posited that one could also ask whether the Marxism as practised after the fall of the Gang of Four was real Marxism as it appeared to be ‘commodity market Marxism’.¹⁴³ After criticism on how the absence of the right to elect leaders meant that the constitution was just empty words, Lu asked; “*In capitalist countries one can say out loud what one wants, in socialist countries ‘words are crimes’, how does this demonstrate the superiority of the socialist system?*”¹⁴⁴ Indeed, for Lu, actions spoke louder than words:

“Marxism and communism have not brought anything good to China, therefore it is natural that they [the youth] do not to believe in them. They will not worship blindly any idols and the time when they could be forced to do this is gone and cannot return! But what is the truth? What should we believe in? As I see it, a theory based on practical experiences should be regarded as the truth. (Of course, the truth still has its temporary and contextual limits.) Basically speaking, it does not matter which Party or faction you came from, if you can be of service to this country I support you, respect you and, it can be said, that

I believe in you. If you do this today, I will believe in you today, but if tomorrow you do not bring any benefits to the people, or oppose and oppress them, then I will stop believing in you, directly oppose you, strike you down, and then try to find the way that makes people happy and prosperous again."¹⁴⁵

The demands that Marxism should be subjected to free comparison with other theories also came from activists who accepted its utopian vision. Kexue minzhu fazhi published long and rather technical dazibaos to this end, written by a person using the penname Hou Baochen who argued that the withering away of the classes and states should lead to disappearance of those theories that supported them, as with Marxism in the hands of the proletariat. When communism was achieved, so would the absolute, non-class based, truth about society also be reached. Hence Marxism had to begin to change already now according to the demands of this development.¹⁴⁶

As Hou saw it, some were afraid that free scholarly debate would damage Marxism's prestige and although this was correct, it was useless to fear it. It was ridiculous to believe that without Marxism it would be impossible to tell the truth and judge between right and wrong. Free scholarly debate was required to rectify the basic fallacies in Marxism and prevent it from being used as a sacred learning that chained people's minds. Correction of errors could make Marxism's achievements digestible and nurture peoples' minds and, through this, a more accurate theory might be formed. Hou saw that this would also help in the process to wither away the classes, party factions, and the function of intellectuals in history. Indeed, Hou also saw that ideological struggle would thus wither away as man gradually reached the truth.¹⁴⁷

According to Hou, the dominance of Marxism in free scholarly debate perpetuated cultural dictatorship harming and damaging such scholarly debate. It harmed constantly new ideas. Socialist scholarly debate should be freer, wider, and deeper than its capitalist equivalent; it should enable socialism the more rapid development in understanding and knowledge of truth. The first thing after the proletarian takeover should have been the abolishment of the 'evil capitalist ways of scholarly debate' and disclosure of the hidden truths, establishment of the frank way of truth telling and not merely replacement of the overbearing theory of capitalism with a similar proletarian practise. Respect for the truth should be the paramount concern in all scholarly debate. Hou therefore argued for abolition of all domineering class practises and to allow everyone to freely achieve their own understanding of matters and to seek the truth through various theories. In this way, the capitalist class and even their own class would be abolished. The government were responsible to protect people's freedom of speech, thought, and debate. The protection of certain class bias and certain ideology only lead to deception and lies and made a society estranged from the truth. Hou noted that Lenin had said that the victory of Marxism would force its enemies to become Marxists, but thus far, it had been political power, not theory, which had forced its enemies to practice fraud, i.e. to claim false adherence to its principles. The victory of truth would render its opponents feel ridiculed in their hearts, and adhere to the truth and absolute truth only could be

achieved through absolute freedom of thought. Progressive societies like socialism therefore should create conditions for the free development of mankind's reason.¹⁴⁸

The Non-Marxist Alternative

While the critical writers still accepted Marxism as a possible alternative but demanded critical analysis of its premises and practise, the non-Marxist line discarded it altogether. This was a minority approach in the Beijing Democracy Movement journals and contributions to it rested heavily on the shoulders of Tansuo and Jiedong. However, as they were not in the mainstream, the arguments that the non-Marxist writers developed, offered an interesting contrast to the two approaches in the Marxist mainstream of the movement.¹⁴⁹ Yang Guang offered a concise inside analysis on the meaning of this difference in May 1979, when he stated that:

*“Confronting the widespread corruption, absurdity, stagnation, stupidity and backwardness brought about by the Party, those who have been participating in the Democracy Movement can basically be divided ideologically into two groups: The first, who believe that this is the result of the failure of CCP leadership to follow the principles of true Marxism-Leninism and the second, who believe that the CCP leadership has indeed followed the principles of Marxism-Leninism, the terrible thing being it is precisely this Marxism-Leninism itself which is absurd and erroneous.”*¹⁵⁰

Yang Guang continued by noting that the first line had dominated for the past 30 years, but even within this line of thought, people were not united over what constituted the ‘miracle-working true Marxism-Leninism.’ He also admitted that his arguments belonged to latter, minority, line.¹⁵¹ Tansuo's sceptical stance on Marxism was already clear in the opening words of the journal:

*“[Tansuo] does its best to take the actual Chinese and world histories as the basis of its analysis, and thus does not recognise any theory as absolutely correct, nor that any person can be absolutely correct. All theories – the present and those that will come in the future – are subjects for theoretical discussion in this journal, and all of them can be used as tools in the analysis.”*¹⁵²

The journals' editors were fully aware of the significance of their absence of endorsement of Marxism. This was demonstrated when the editors discussed the meaning of Wei Jingsheng's *dazibao* ‘*The Fifth Modernisation*’ in Tansuo. In the article Lu Lin recalled Wei's reply to a question on whether; *“the road that China has taken has been caused by the false Marxists making trouble or by the basic fallacies in Marxism?”* Wei's reason was in latter, although he seemed to have been alone in this thought even in Tansuo, as Lu Lin did not fully agree and Yang Guang stated that since he had not studied Marxism thoroughly, he was unable to say

whether it was right or wrong, but he wanted to study it and decide based on his own findings. As such, as they were unable to decide whether Marxism was basically flawed, or just incorrectly applied, Marxism was not the journal's guiding ideology. Thus pursuit of the truth, through intellectual freedom, was the uniting factor for the Tansuo editorial board, not total rejection of Marxism as such.¹⁵³

The foremost non-Marxist was undoubtedly Wei Jingsheng, the *enfant terrible* of the Democracy Movement and one of the most well known activists of the Beijing Democracy Movement in the West.¹⁵⁴ If there were dissidents in the Democracy Movement in the strong sense of the term, then Wei was one of these, and interest in his case and arguments may have even actually guided Western views on the Democracy Wall Movement too much.¹⁵⁵ As explained in chapter 5, Wei differed from the mainstream in his diagnosis on the source of the grievances, identifying their source as in a totalitarian political system and the struggle between totalitarianism and democracy. Wei also put the individual at the centre of his political analysis, as he argued that human nature was societal, but that men existed as individuals and societies were their assemblages. That human nature was societal was due to the common nature of men and their common interests. Yet, individual human characters and communality both co-existed.¹⁵⁶ The difference between totalitarianism and democracy was not about choice between individuality and communality, but how communality was created upon individuality. To constrain individuality was the basic condition of totalitarianism, of which its basic method was therefore to enslave individuals; whereas democracy's basic condition was to unite together the individualities of the people, thus it was a co-operative system to begin with. In democracy no one person could totally monopolise the power, individuality was not suppressed and no one was enslaved. Therefore, totalitarianism and democracy were two completely antithetical arraignments of social interactions of mankind, therefore the basic question for the people was: "*Do you like freedom or slavery?*"¹⁵⁷

Wei argued that as existing socialist systems did not tolerate individualism as their basis, they therefore remained totalitarian.¹⁵⁸ In his famous assertion, Wei claimed that the demand of democracy was basically to demand that which the people once possessed, but which had been taken away from them by the evil forces-that-be:

*"They [the people] should have democracy. When they demand democracy, they demand return of something they have possessed originally. If one does not give them their democracy, he is a shameless bandit, worse than the capitalists who steal the money, sweat and toil of the workers. Do the people now have democracy? No! Do they want it? Yes! This was the reason why the communist Party defeated the Guomindang. Where has this promise gone after the victory?"*¹⁵⁹

For Wei the workers too should have been the masters of the society, but what they had instead was 'proletarian dictatorship' and 'Soviet style dictatorship' yet was that

really what the people wanted? “*Can dictatorship really be equal to people’s happiness and prosperity? Is this what Marx described as the road to socialism? Of course not!*” Exclaimed Wei, and pointed out that, the communists in China, like Hitler and Stalin, had fooled the people in believing that democracy was their worst enemy.¹⁶⁰ After making his case that the people wanted democracy, not dictatorship, Wei then asked what kind of democracy they wanted:

*“What is democracy? To give the power completely to the people is ‘true democracy’. Is it so that the workers cannot seize the power to run the state? Yugoslavia has already taken this road and shown us that the people do not need big or small dictators, and can manage their affairs very well.”*¹⁶¹

For Wei, true democracy involved election of representatives to govern by and for the people, and manage affairs according to the people’s opinions and interests. The people should also possess the power to remove officials whenever they choose; “*to prevent these representatives from swindling the people in their name.*”¹⁶² Indeed, in his formulation of democracy as the people seizing control of affairs based on elections, with reference to the Yugoslavian model, Wei was close to the mainstream of the Democracy Movement. Wei also denied that in the people’s hands democracy would lead to chaos. Although all domestic problems could not be solved at once, popular democracy was a “million times stronger” compared to the system of ‘masters’ (*lǎoye*) and the shameless people, who defied democracy and rode roughshod over the people who had no recourse to seek redress for injustices. According to Wei, the people wished to be masters of their own destinies not the modernisation tools of the dictatorship of careerists.¹⁶³

Wei continued to develop his democratic theory and criticism of Marxism in another article entitled *Human rights, Equality, and Democracy*, wherein he argued that without equality human rights lost their real meaning. Wei therefore talked about the problem of ‘equal human rights’, arguing that originally even socialism had tried to establish a society based on equal human rights, and the common control of production was considered necessary precondition for this. However, some philosophers and economists had thought that, due to industrialisation, the social control of the forces of production was enough to achieve social equality and equality of power. This trend of thought had then become separated from the real democratic movement and came to be called ‘scientific socialism’.¹⁶⁴ Here, as in some other places in his essays, Wei briefly developed a historical argument on how democratic movement and Marxism had originally gone hand in hand until socialist countries had abandoned socialism’s original ideals and turned into corrupted tyrannies of the few.¹⁶⁵ However, in its denial of human equality, he also regarded Marxism as basically flawed.

Wei argued that man was born with the right to life and to pursue his betterment, which were also known as natural rights. For Wei they were natural, as a stone had its separate existence as its right; “*This is a most natural right, there is no need to*

*have anyone grant this right externally.”*¹⁶⁶ These rights were not limitless or absolute, as the similar rights of others limited them. These rights were also historical and developed and changed as man’s relation to his environment changed. Politics was a process whereby rights were struggled for from other people and social science existed to discover these rights. Thus politics either made possible the basic right of existence or suppressed it.¹⁶⁷ For Wei equal rights did not mean to equally share everything, but the opportunity to enjoy the same things in principle without restrictions. He used an apple as an example to illustrate this: If someone ate an apple it did not follow that everyone else also had to have an apple, just that they had the right to eat apples, too. Wei therefore advocated equality of opportunities, not results. Equality of rights could, and should, be achieved, but the equality of result was fantasy for Wei; indeed to strive for such would be harmful and meaningless struggle which should not be attempted.¹⁶⁸

For Wei, democracy was a system whereby the people were able to use their political rights as equals to protect their rights to pursue a better life. However, proletarian dictatorship negated the people’s equal rights to life because when Marxism had evolved into Leninism, a ‘merciless battle against the counterrevolutionaries’ had negated the rights of all men to participate in government and thereby equal right of life. When this had happened, socialist democracy had lost its truly democratic features and became a hideous dictatorship. For Wei, the suppression of people’s equal rights was the reason why politics that employed Marxist socialism had degenerated, without exception, into non-democratic and anti-democratic autocratic systems. Democracy was not a system of centralisation and discipline, but co-operation and mutual benefits. If this became confused the Chinese would once more return to the dictatorship like under Mao Zedong.¹⁶⁹

Wei’s hostility to Marxism was also shown in the way he discussed the reasons why Marxism did not recognise equal human rights. He argued that, Marx had stated that complete and full equality was not possible until the ideal society was established – before this the struggle for equal human rights was said to be meaningless. Although this had been a subjective assertion from Marx, it had caused much damage as it had; *“left many thinkers dumbfounded, and was used by the devious careerists as the main argument to deceive the peoples in backward countries.”* For Wei it was a great lie that people could only acquire equality under despotism. On the contrary, Wei asserted, only democracy could guarantee equal rights.¹⁷⁰ Indeed, Wei argued that the attraction of Marxism lay in its deceptive and mistaken view about rights:

*“To guarantee absolutely and without limits any fantastic desires, is the wishful thinking of the lazy and weak; Marxism uses the indolent and weak mentality of the people and relies on big words to satisfy all desires to lure and deceive the masses.”*¹⁷¹

Wei argued that the Marxist notion that material desires could someday be fully satisfied was absurd and would entail the end of history. If all desires were fulfilled,

mankind's development would halt, and this was an outcome no one probably wanted.¹⁷² Marxism therefore built its ideal society on erroneous and unachievable premises, deceiving people with fantasies. As such, Wei called Marxism idealism (*lǐxiǎngzhǔyì*), which was the ultimate criticism against an ideology which adjudged itself as opposed to idealism. Elsewhere, Wei also saw that although the socialist movement had originally been linked to the democratic movement, the main pillar of totalitarianism, the pursuit of an ideal society, could already be found in Marx. Therefore, Marxism's 'scientific' nature had also contributed to its totalitarianism.¹⁷³ Wei also argued that since Marxism could not analyse its own theoretical premises, its theory and practise demonstrated very different results. Marxism also could not tolerate other theories and its idealism was therefore inclined against democracy, and in favour of dictatorship.¹⁷⁴

Wei's hostile standing towards Marxism was also revealed in his defence in court in October 1979.¹⁷⁵ When answering to the charges of slandering Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong thought, the context of the trial probably moderated his rhetoric a bit, but Wei challenged the charge as absurd to begin with, as only living persons could be slandered. Moreover, he explained, the Marxism he criticised was not that of one hundred years ago, but Marxism of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four. Furthermore, he did not think that there existed any completely correct theory in the world as such. All theories had their strong points and fallacies, and Marxism was no different. There were various schools of Marxism and the core of Marxism, the image of an ideal society, could be found in other theories, too. But in practise all socialist countries suffered from the fact that centralised dictatorship had become a tool in the hands of a minority who did not want to realise democracy. Wei defended his views on Marxism:

*"Marxism's fate is similar to many religions in history, after their first and second phase, their revolutionary nature weakens, and their theories' ideal parts become pretexts to enslave and deceive the people, and the theory's nature goes through a profound change."*¹⁷⁶

In addition to his criticism of Marxism and defence of human rights, Wei also spoke of the Western form of representative democracy in favourable terms when he compared it to the Chinese socialist democracy. According to him, in bourgeois democracy no leader dared to oppose popular opinion, but in 'proletarian democracy' this was possible and the popular opinion could be coerced. Western governments protected their citizens' human rights, whereas a; *"Socialist state's citizens' right is to be obedient citizens of a ruling minority."*¹⁷⁷ Wei also refuted the arguments that the necessity to feed the people was more important than democracy, by pointing to the beggars on the streets of the Chinese cities, and how the 'three years of catastrophes' in the late 1950s and early 1960s had resulted in 20 million dead. He also refuted the claims that poverty, inequality of the sexes, and prostitution only existed in capitalist countries. Women and men suffered alike in China, he argued.¹⁷⁸

Of the other journals, Jiedong published an article that also lacked any attempts to justify democratic reforms through Marxism and argued for the freedoms and rights the Democracy Movement activists deemed most important for them: election, speech, demonstration, publication, faith, and organisation. The writer also advocated the separation of powers after the model of a republican system. The leaders at all levels had to be elected through general ballot and it was historically necessary to make this right universal suffrage, which would result in that mankind retrieved the rights it had lost for thousands of years ago. There could be no tyrants if everybody had the same amount of power, argued the writer.¹⁷⁹ For him, the U.S. and U.K. were the best examples of electoral rights in the contemporary world, wherein governments were changeable after fixed terms if the people disapproved of them. In many Asian republics, similar laws were in place, but in practise the people could not elect their leaders, and could be branded counterrevolutionaries or class enemies if they uttered just one critical word. Unless there were at least two candidates to choose from, the electorate's will could not be genuinely tested. In this respect, dictatorships were blind and it was this blindness, not some leaders' evil nature, which led to oppression and terror.¹⁸⁰ Based on this, the writers argued that:

*“Regardless of how the Asian and other autocratic states impede and suppress it, mankind wants to enter a world which conforms to actual universal elections. Without any doubt, there will be the moment in a not so far future when all mankind will have won the opportunity that reflects its will and feelings completely. When the people have this kind of opportunity and a democratic environment wherein they can elect their leaders, the country will no longer witness chaos and underground resistance.”*¹⁸¹

However, this would not come without a conscious struggle, as all valuable achievements in history were only gained through hard and earnest struggle. Only if the great people struggled bravely against the totalitarians and tyrants, scorning their despots as the English or the French had done, then a system of general elections could really be attained.¹⁸²

The writers also argued that freedom of speech must be regarded as a sacred and unalienable right of mankind. Without it, it was difficult for society to progress, as the right made possible debates and thus the ability to tell right from wrong. It was also the basic characteristic of all real democracies. Freedom of demonstration was also a basic right to express popular views to government, but only in the West was it truly protected. *“In there, the citizens can freely convene and use this extremely sharp and direct way to resist the bureaucrats who neglect their duties, or exercise power in a despotic manner, as well as radical economic measures”*, stated the writers. The Oriental peoples fared far worse in this respect of course, as their rights stayed at the level of constitutions.¹⁸³ Such argument about the function of freedoms of speech and demonstration illustrated how the Jiedong writers also transposed the Chinese situation to the West, considering as the most relevant the contradiction

between bureaucratism and the people even in the West. As such it served to show how little many of them actually knew about the systems they admired.

Freedom of publication was also justified in much the same way i.e. with its obvious benefits for mankind's progress.¹⁸⁴ Freedom of organisation was also regarded as the criterion of modern democracy. As the Jiedong writers saw it, associations were formed by likeminded workers, artists, intellectual and other strata to facilitate discussion and the solving of natural and social scientific issues, which then led to the progress of mankind in science and culture. Only through organisations could the labouring class realise true individualism. The writers concluded their article arguing that if the choice was that between democracy and dictatorship, democracy was their choice.¹⁸⁵ Even if these Jiedong arguments did not use Marxism to justify the democratic reforms they proposed, the way in which the rights were defended based on their progressive historical nature, revealed in their background a distinct Marxist understanding of history.

The Variations on Socialist Democracy

Democratic institutions occupied the final logical link in the chain of the diagnostics, motivational speech, and prognostics in the Democracy Movement's argumentation. Democracy was essential to resolve the contradiction between the people and bureaucratism which had made history itself call the Democracy Movement to the stage. Furthermore, democratic reforms would herald something that the Democracy Movement only gave just a glimpse of: a new democratic life in a socialist China with active citizenry. All the variations on the theme of socialist democracy proposed by the movement, held in common the notion of the people managing their own affairs through institutions of elections, human or citizen's rights, and strong legal system that the Party, if it still existed, had to honour and follow. The Democracy Movement was instrumental to realise this vision and it did not want to create something that was less than itself was; indeed, it wanted active citizens taking control of the country from corrupt and inept bureaucrats.

In most cases, earlier research has regarded the two loose groupings termed here as the orthodox and eclectic Marxists as 'moderates'. However, actually how justified is this description? From above it is clear that they were a part of a social movement as defined in the introduction to this thesis: they demanded changes in the existing political institutions wherein decisions were made and values distributed in the Chinese society. They demanded major changes to the rules of exclusion which kept most of the Chinese outside any meaningful political participation. Even if they retained a belief in Marxism and socialism, and the necessity for the Party's leading position in society, their reform proposals would have signified huge changes in the way the regime actually functioned. There were not any functioning legal framework, human or citizen's rights, free participation in political process, free press or speech, etc. The government was largely felt to be abusive and its socialist

ideals and democratic framework just empty words on paper. Both the orthodox and eclectic Marxist wanted the minimum of direct competitive elections at all levels of the state, the Party, and industry, and thereby popular management and supervision of the bureaucracy and economy. Furthermore, they acknowledged that a serious conflict between the people and bureaucratism / bureaucratic class existed which necessitated all reforms. They also retained for themselves, as citizens and electorate, the right to decide whom to elect and whom to demote from the Party leadership. Such demands signified a radical enough change, whether or not justified through Marxism. Added to this was of course the matter of the actual *practise* of the rights they demanded outside the Party control already in the Democracy Movement.

When Roger Garside summarised the Democracy Movement activists' ideological allegiances as the rejection of the thoughts of Mao and Lenin, and having only vague allegiance to Marxism showing no signs of; "*claims once made for socialism on the grounds of justice and efficiency*", and "*no interest at all in the ultimate goal of communism – the common ownership of property*"¹⁸⁶ he was plainly mistaken. As explained, even with the different approaches between journals and writers, the acceptance of Marxism and socialism, and ultimately communism as the goals of the reforms was widespread in the Democracy Movement and the movement justified itself by linking itself to the grand narrative of unfolding revolution in China. In this, democracy was the necessary condition to establish an advanced socialist society with freedom from economic and political exploitation. The movement's mainly eclectic relationship to liberal ideas has led some students and observers, like Garside, astray in taking socialism and Marxism as a target of rejection, not as a source of inspiration that it actually was for most of the activists. The activists were, by and large, arguing for ways how to achieve democracy in a socialist society, and when compared to the existing regime they were all radicals.

This also held true for the non-Marxist activists in the movement. Analysis of Wei Jingsheng's notions of democracy shows that even he shared much the same diagnostic and prognostic notions with the rest of the Democracy Movement. He argued for democracy as the means to end the conflict between the rulers and the ruled in Chinese society and as an arrangement whereby the people supervised the rulers; not as the political system that allowed representation of various interests and political competition. Although his emphasis on the individual was probably acquired through reading Enlightenment thinkers,¹⁸⁷ his concept of democracy was also based on the notion of socialist democracy as 'the people being their own masters'.¹⁸⁸ Moreover, he never rejected socialism as an economic system. This was even noted in the last issue of Beijing zhi chun, when its editors argued that although their views differed greatly with Tansuo and Wei Jingsheng, they felt that Tansuo too wanted to realise socialism, and that it did not oppose public ownership, but inequality, dictatorship, and privileges and his was what socialism was essentially about. Of course, Tansuo had made some mistakes on scientific socialism, but even this could be partially explained in the way Lin Biao and the Gang of Four had distorted them. Tansuo's general direction was nevertheless scientific socialism, and

to term it as advocacy of capitalism or anarchism, was mistaken. Indeed, the editors gave a rare praise for Tansuo by stating that; “*The state form it [Tansuo] pursues is likely to be much more advanced than our present one.*”¹⁸⁹

In one way Wei’s argumentation also resembled that of Hou Baochen. Both of them believed that the future of socialism was possible without Marxism or the Communist Party, and both criticised Marxism, yet at the same time utilised many of its analytical tools and accepted its ideals. If some of the Democracy Movement writers were eclectic in how they borrowed from the West, Hou and Wei were eclectic in how they borrowed from Marxism. Their argumentation showed how both those who used orthodox Marxist arguments and those who refuted them, were drawn to the notion of an utopian future where democratic institutions would be an integral part of socialist society and the people ‘would be their own masters’.¹⁹⁰ Naturally though, both also had their differences. Hou’s offered his criticism against the theory of continuous class struggle and strengthening of proletarian dictatorship. He saw that classes would start to wither away and ideology follow, whereas Wei replaced the official dogma of class struggle with his own notion of a struggle between totalitarianism and democracy. Many of Wei’s ideas about actual reforms were also even less radical than those put forward by some eclectic Marxists, e.g. multi-party system, and even Wei’s view on human rights emphasised the fact that actual rights were the historical results of man’s struggle and not universal, as such, although they were based on shared attributed of all men.¹⁹¹

However, what distinguished Wei different from most of the Beijing Democracy Movement was that his critical approach did not end with Marxism, but also included the Party. His warning that Deng Xiaoping might degenerate into a dictator illustrated how he was prepared to oppose both Leftist and Dengist factions in the Party. In Wei’s diagnosis the main problem in China was dictatorship, which both the Party factions were prone to uphold, notwithstanding their differences otherwise. This made them enemies of the people, and after his speech on 16 March 1979, even Deng Xiaoping fell under this category. Wei’s disbelief in Marxism was thus combined with distrust of the Party and its unwillingness to submit to popular supervision through elections.¹⁹² Although Wei never explicitly attacked the Party as an institution in his articles, his criticism was a clear theoretical refutation of its leading position in Chinese society. Many other Democracy Movement activists found this unacceptable and referred to Wei as either a person who did not understand Marxism, or an outright anarchist.¹⁹³ This was not just to protect the rest of the Democracy Movement from the wrath of Deng Xiaoping, but was a genuine split within the ranks of the Democracy Movement over the notion of what the emancipation of minds really meant, i.e. scientific and rational application of Marxism, or scepticism on the belief system that had produced such an uneven historical record in China. When Wei was arrested, his ‘problem’ was put succinctly in Tansuo as; “*Because when people were let to emancipate their thinking a little, this one really emancipated his thoughts.*”¹⁹⁴ However, in the final analysis, Wei showed how the ideal of socialism could be separated from the Party and even

Marxism, and still be seen as worthy for the Democracy Movement to defend as a social system.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 10

¹ Munro 1984b, 22-23

² Ibid., 30

³ For example, Guangming ribao ran an article to his end on 23 September 1978 (CA November 1978, 713).

⁴ Bi Dan: *Mínzhǔ qiáng zònghéng tán* [Survey of the Democracy Wall], Kexue minzhu fazhi 15 / 1979, CUP, 38

⁵ See e.g. RMRB 21.1.1980: *Jiāncǐ shèhuìzhǔyì mǐnzhǔde fāngxiàng*; Xiao Weiyun, Luo Haocai, Xu Xieying: *Mǎkèsīzhǔyì zěnmeyàng kàn renquan wèntí* [How Marxism Views the Human Rights Question], Hongqi 5 / 1979, translated in Angle and Svensson (2001, 281-288).

⁶ *Rénquán yǔ fǎlǜ* [Human Rights And the Law], Kexue minzhu fazhi 7 / 1979, CUP 12, 52

⁷ *Siwu luntan zhāngchéng* [Rules of Siwu luntan], Siwu luntan 11 (9 / 1979), CUP 7, 4

⁸ Zhou Xun: *Sìrénbāng' lèide rénwù bù huì zài chūxiàn ma?* [Can People Like the Gang of Four Re-Emerge?] Siwu luntan 9 (7 / 1979), CUP 6, 8-16

⁹ Hua Chuan: *Duì fǎn xiū fāng xiū lichǎngde tànlùn* [Exploring the Position of Opposing and Resisting Revisionism], Kexue minzhu fazhi 11 / 1979, CUP 15, 3

¹⁰ Hua Chuan: *Duì fǎn xiū fāng xiū lichǎngde tànlùn*, 3-5

¹¹ Ibid., 5-6, the quotation from p. 6

¹² Hua Chuan: *Wénhuà dàgémíngde lìshǐ zuòyòng* [The Historical Role of the Great Cultural Revolution], Kexue minzhu fazhi 11 / 1979, CUP 15, 12-13

¹³ Ibid., 14

¹⁴ Yu Ren: *Lüè lùn jīnrì zhī sì wǔ, yùndòng* [Briefly on Today's 'Fifth of April Movement'], Siwu luntan 11 (9 / 1979), CUP 7, 47-48, the quotation from p. 48 Also another Siwu luntan writer, Lu Yao, saw Marxism as open to revision and the Democracy Movement carrying out this desirable project. Lu Yao: *Shèhuìzhǔyì shìyī gè guòchéng* [Socialism Is a Process], Siwu luntan 15 (13 / 1979), CUP 10, 35-38

¹⁵ Ibid., 50-51, the quotation from p. 51

¹⁶ *Zhongguo rénquán xuānyán -shíjiǔ tiáo* [Declaration of Chinese Human Rights -19 Points], Zhongguo renquan 1 / 1979, CUP 2, 189

¹⁷ Ibid., 192

¹⁸ Chang Chun, Ming Zhu: *Bù shì "bùxíng" ér zài bù "xíng"* [It Is Not about "No Way" But No 'Way'], Siwu luntan 15 (13 / 1979), December 1979, CUP 10, 56-57

¹⁹ Jin Cheng: *Yī zhèngzhì shàngde bìng yě yào gāo Zhōng-Xī yī jiéhé* [Combination of Chinese and Western Medicine Should Also Be Used to Political Sicknesses], Minzhu yu shidai 1, CUP 2, 232

²⁰ Wang Yang: *Nálái xiǎoyì* [Defending Borrowing], Xin tiandi 1 / 1979, CUP 20, 210-211; in its inaugural words the journal declared its aim to facilitate the exchange of ideas between China and the US, Japan and other countries of the world: *Xiě zài qiánbian* [Writing Ahead], Xin tiandi 1 / 1979, CUP 20, 196.

²¹ Jiang Feng: *Zhongguo míncuì sīxiǎng jí qí yǐngxiǎng* [The Chinese National Purity / Essence Thinking and Its Influence], Wotu 2 / 1979, CUP 11, 304-307

²² *Shān diào* [Cut Them Off], Qiushi 3 / 1979, CUP 6, 153

²³ *Zhì Ka Te zǒngtóngde yī fēng gōngkāixìn* [An open Letter to President Carter], Kexue minzhu fazhi 8 / 1979, CUP 13, 19-23

²⁴ *Gěi Gong Nianzhou yī fēng gōngkāixìn* [An Open Letter to Gong Nianzhou], Kexue minzhu fazhi 5 / 1979, CUP 10, 186-187

²⁵ *Yào zhèngquè shǐyòng mínzhǔ quánlì* [Democratic Rights Have to Be Used in a Correct Manner], Kexue minzhu fazhi 5 / 1979, CUP 10 185; There were actually many open letters written to President Carter as the dates in the letters and the critique they received demonstrated. For some reason Kexue minzhu fazhi choose to publish open letters to President Carter in no particular order of appearance, so that the first open letter in it was dated 1st of March 1979, but criticism of open letters in it came from late January and early February. This meant that the first open letter to President Carter that was criticised in Kexue minzhu fazhi was probably the one by Zhongguo renquanmeng.

²⁶ See e.g. Svensson (1996); Angle and Svensson (2001), Müller (1997); Burns (1983); Harrison (1983); Seymour and Mab Huang (1980).

- ²⁷ However, it has been argued that the Democracy Movement did cause the Party intellectuals to debate the notion of human rights in public, even if only tentatively, see Angle and Svensson (2001), who also give two examples of refuting and defending human rights in official press at the time. See Lan Ying: *Rénquán cónglái jiù shì zīchǎn jiējí de kǒuhào ma?* [Is Human Rights Always a Bourgeois Slogan?], *Shehui kexue* 3 / 1979, translated in Angle and Svensson 2001, 288-296; and Xiao Weiyun, Luo Haocai, Xu Xieying: *Mǎkèsīzhūyì zěnmeyàng kàn rénquán wèntí* [How Marxism Views the Human Rights Question], *Hongqi* 5 / 1979, translated in Angle and Svensson 2001, 281-288.
- ²⁸ Cao Yang: *Bīngfēi xiánhuà* [Really Not a Gossip], *Yuanshangcao* 1 / 1979, 1.3.1979, CUP 13, 308
- ²⁹ Liang Yao: *Duì mínmǔ yùndòng héngjiā, zhízé shízhì shàng shì bù yào mínmǔ* [To Flagrantly Censure Democracy Movement Means Not Wanting It], *Zhongguo renquan* 2 / 1979, CUP 3, 226-227
- ³⁰ Guizhou sheguo: *'Rénquán' Pīpàn bóyì* [Refutation of Criticism on Human Rights], *Siwu luntan* 13 (11 / 1979), CUP 8, 44-45
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, 44-47, the quotation from p 47
- ³² *Ibid.*, 47
- ³³ *Ibid.*, 47-48
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 48-49
- ³⁵ Hua Chuan: *Shèhuìzhūyì rénmín dāngjiā-zuòzhǔ* [Socialism –the People in Charge of Affairs], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 13 / 1979, CUP 16, 22-24
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, 28
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 31
- ³⁸ Sun Feng: *Zhì Hua Guofeng, Deng Xiaoping tóngzhìde gōngkāixìn* [An Open Letter to Comrades Hua Guofeng and Deng Xiaoping], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 14 / 1979, CUP 16, 106-107
- ³⁹ *Lǎn mínmǔ yǔ jiànguó* [On Democracy and Establishing a Country], *Minzhu yu Shidai* 1, 222-223
- ⁴⁰ Li Xi: *Shèhuìzhūyì 'mínmǔ' yǔ 'rénquán'* [Socialist Democracy and Human Rights], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 5 / 1979, CUP 10, 142-144, the quotation from p. 144
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 144-145 the quotation from p. 145
- ⁴² Wu Chanzhe: *Cóng Butuo zhī sǐ tán 'xíng bì shàng dàfū'* [On Bhutto's Death and 'Touchable Leaders'], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 16 / 1979, CUP 17, 72
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, 73-74
- ⁴⁴ Jie Jun: *Meiguó shì mínmǔde lèyuán* [America Is a Democratic Paradise], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 9 / 1979, CUP 14, 23-24
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 24-26
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 26
- ⁴⁷ Han Jie: *Yě tán rén quán yǔ mínmǔ* [More on Human Rights and Democracy], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 5 / 1979, CUP 10, 137
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 137-138
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 138-139
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 140-141
- ⁵¹ Yu Fan: *Guānyú Zhongguo shèhuì wèntíde wèndá* [Questions and Answers Concerning Chinese Social Problems], *Zhongguo renquan* 1 / 1979, CUP 2, 202-203
- ⁵² *Ibid.*, 203-205
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, 205
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 205-206, the quotation from p. 206
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 206
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 206-207
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 207
- ⁵⁸ Hua Shi: *Rén - rénxìng - rénquán* [Human - Human Nature - Human Rights], *Wotu* 2 / 1979, CUP 11, 361-362
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 362-363
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, the quotation from p. 364
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 364-365
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, 365
- ⁶³ Jiawen: *Yě tán rénxìng, rénquán* [More on Human Nature and Human Rights], *Wotu* 2 / 1979, CUP 11, 366
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 366-367
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 367-368

⁶⁶ Ibid., 368-369

⁶⁷ Ibid., 369

⁶⁸ *Rénquán? Rénmín mínzhǔ?* [Human Rights? People's Democracy?], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 9 / 1979, CUP 14, 6-7

⁶⁹ Ibid., 8

⁷⁰ As their acceptance of the first crackdown on the radical wing of the Democracy Movement showed, some writers did indicate that even under a socialist democracy some degree of proletarian dictatorship, i.e. suppression political forces hostile to socialism, should exist.

⁷¹ One further line to argue for human rights was to see them as promoting the original Marxist goal of liberation of man from want and exploitation through collective arrangements, which some writers referred to as man's right to 'become man' or 'to live like / be a true human being' (做人, *zuòrén*). However, *zuòrén* argumentation was not as developed as those cited in the text, and was usually used in addition to other arguments for human rights. See e.g. *Siwǔ lùntán fūzé rén Xu XX* [The Man Behind Siwu luntan Xu XX], *Siwu luntan* 14 (12 / 1979), CUP 9, 44-4; *Rénmín qúnzhòngde zhīqíng quán* [The People's Right to Know the Facts], *Siwu luntan* 11 (9 / 1979), CUP 7, 27; Wang Xizhe: *Mínzhǔde fāngxiàng* [Direction of Democracy], *Siwu luntan* 17 (2 / 1980), CUP 11, 12-13.

⁷² Arguing for legal rights was not confined only to those activists who used eclectic arguments. Some of those using more orthodox arguments, like Xu Shuiliang and Su Ming, also referred to constitutional rights in their argumentation, but did not dwell on the subject or use the word 'human rights', whereas for the anti-Marxists, Wei Jingsheng for example also used the concept, but did not go into details concerning various legal rights.

⁷³ *Qiǎn tán rénmínde mínzhǔ quánlì* [Briefly on the People's Democratic Rights], *Siwu luntan* 7 (5 / 1979), CUP 5, 4-5. The essay was also published in *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 8 / 1979, CUP 13, 11-16, where its author was identified as a 'Beijingese person, who possess work permit 0538', that was penname of Lü Po. Very similar reasoning for the right of information can be found also in Zhang Yuan: *Lùn xīnwén zìyóu* [On Freedom of News], *Qimeng* 2 (Beijing) 1979, CUP 1, 242-243 and *Rénmín qúnzhòngde zhīqíng quán* [The People's Right to Know the Facts], *Siwu luntan* 11 (9 / 1979), CUP 7, 27 which was also anonymous, but contained the same division of rights into citizen's rights and democratic rights. The writers were most likely different persons than in the *Qiǎn tán rénmínde mínzhǔ quánlì*, because they had different views on whether democracy was a goal or only means to the four modernisations.

⁷⁴ *Qiǎn tán rénmínde mínzhǔ quánlì*, 5; Similarly in Zhang Yuan: *Lùn xīnwén zìyóu*, 242

⁷⁵ *Qiǎn tán rénmínde mínzhǔ quánlì*, 5; Similarly in Zhang Yuan: *Lùn xīnwén zìyóu*, 242-243

⁷⁶ *Qiǎn tán rénmínde mínzhǔ quánlì*, 5

⁷⁷ Ibid., 6-7

⁷⁸ Ibid., 8

⁷⁹ Ibid., 8

⁸⁰ Zhou Xun: *'Sìrénbāng' lèide rénwù bù huì zài chūxiàn ma?* [Can the Gang of Four Kind of People Re-Emerge?] *Siwu luntan* 9 (7 / 1979), CUP 6, 15-16, the quotation from p. 16

⁸¹ *Zhongguo rénquán xuānyán -shíjiǔ tiáo* [Declaration of Chinese Human Rights –19 Points], *Zhongguo renquan* 1 / 1979, CUP 2, 187-189; Similar list could be found also in Hu Fa: *Jiānjué bǎozhàng gōngmínde mínzhǔ quánlì* [Resolutely Protect the Citizens Democratic Rights], *Qishi Bao* 4 / 1979, CUP 2, 124-125

⁸² One of the few notable exceptions to this was Xia Xunjian's: *Pànduàn rénmen xíngwéi hé yánlùn shīfēi biāozhǔn* [The Criteria of Judging Behaviour and Speech Must Be Decided], *Qunzhong cankao xiaoxi*, *fakanhao* 1 / 1978, CUP 2, 158, in which he argued that even speech could be taken as behaviour and therefore criminal, although he stressed tolerance. The article was first written in 1974, which may have explained its stance.

⁸³ Qi Yun: *Mínzhòng yǔ xiànfǎ* [The Masses and the Constitution], *Tansuo* 4 / 1979, CUP 3, 35-36

⁸⁴ Cui Quanhong: *Dàdà jiāqiáng láodòng rénmínde yánlùn chūbǎn zìyóu* [Greatly Strengthen the Workers' Freedom of Publication], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 11 / 1979, CUP 15, 21

⁸⁵ Ibid., 23

⁸⁶ Ibid., 23

⁸⁷ Ibid., 23

⁸⁸ Ibid., 24

⁸⁹ Ibid., 24

⁹⁰ Ibid., 24-26. The principles were in Mao's Speech 'On Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People' from 1957.

⁹¹ Ibid., 27

⁹² Hua Chuan: *Wénhuà dàgémingde lìshǐ zuòyòng* [The Historical Role of the Great Cultural Revolution], *Xexue minzhu fazhi* 11 / 1979, CUP 15, 16

⁹³ Ibid., 17

⁹⁴ Ibid., 18

⁹⁵ He Bian: *Lùn yánlùn zìyóu* [On Freedom of Speech], *Wotu tekan* 2.4.1979, CUP 12, 67-68. Here He Bian's knowledge about history of Western natural science served him wrong, as it was Archimedes who is recorded of having first said this about lever. Although Hu did not reveal his sources other than Marx and Engels, his arguments and language hints directly to liberal sources. He knew Hobbes very well and he also referred to Locke and Rousseau in other essays. As such his argument was a major work in its thorough argumentation and precise nature. It also represented well the eclectic type of arguments where notions like freedom of speech were taken from liberal democratic tradition and defended through a blend of Marxist quotations and liberal logic. However, Hu was privileged among the Democracy Movement writers in that he had university degree in philosophy, which goes long way in explaining the elaborate and well argued nature of his essays.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 68-69

⁹⁷ Ibid., 70-73

⁹⁸ Ibid., 87-88

⁹⁹ Ibid., 91

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 91-92

¹⁰¹ Hu used here the word "us", as thought he were in the Party, but this was to show that he wrote his essay as a good communist.

¹⁰² Ibid., 92-93

¹⁰³ Ibid., 97-98

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 112-113

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 99-100

¹⁰⁶ Chen Erjin: *Lùn wúchǎnjiējí mǐnzhǔ géming* [On Proletarian Democratic Revolution], *Siwu luntan* 10 (8 / 1979), CUP 1, 142

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 143

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 143-145

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 145-148. As Munro (1984b, 30-31) points out, some influence of the Paris Commune model could be found in Chen's argumentation in the way he did, for example, advocate direct elections at all tiers of government which was a feature from the Paris Commune. Chen Erjin also called his system a 'dual Paris Commune system'.

¹¹⁰ Chen Erjin: *Lùn wúchǎnjiējí mǐnzhǔ géming*, 152-153

¹¹¹ Ibid., 153-155, the quotation from p. 155

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid., 158-159

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 159-165

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 165-169

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 170-174

¹¹⁷ Shi Huasheng: *Lùn wǒmen guāndiǎn zhī tóng yǔ yì* [On Similarities and Differences of Our Standpoints], *Siwu luntan* 11 (9 / 1979), CUP 7, 61-63

¹¹⁸ *Zhongguo rénquánméng zhī Rén-Dà chángwěihuì jíqí fǎzhì wěiyuánhuidè gōngkāixìn* [Open Letter from Chinese Human Rights League to the National People's Congress Standing Committee and Its Legal System Committee], *Zhongguo renquan* 3a / 1979, CUP 3, 249-250

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 250

¹²⁰ *Zhongguo rénquán xuānyán -shíjiǔ tiáo* [Declaration of Chinese Human Rights –19 Points], *Zhongguo renquan* 1 / 1979, CUP 2, 187-188

¹²¹ *Xuānyán* [Declaration], *Jiedong* 1 / 1979, CUP 20, 287-288

¹²² Ibid., 288

¹²³ Ibid., 289

¹²⁴ Deng Xiaoping: *The Present Situation and the Tasks before Us*, in *Selected Works II 1980 / 1995*, 266-267

¹²⁵ Shi Du: *Shénme shì shèhuìzhǔyì* [What Is Socialism], *Zhongguo Renquan* 3a / 1979, CUP 3, 252-256; Similar arguments also e.g. in Lü Min: *Qǔxiāo chǎngkuàng qiyè jīcéng dǎng zǔzhī de xíngzhèng língdǎo*

quán, Beijing zhi chun 2 / 1979, CUP 2, 255-256 and Chen Erjin's essay on 'On Proletarian Democratic Revolution', analysed above.

¹²⁶ For a rare positive assessment of Khrushchev and his role in de-Stalinisation in the Soviet Union, see Hua Chuan: *Wenhua dagemingde lishi zuoyong* [The Historical Role of the Great Cultural Revolution], Kexue minzhu fazhi 11 / 1979, CUP 15, 7-13

¹²⁷ Jin Sheng (Wei Jingsheng): *Xu di wu ge xiandaihua -minzhu ji qita* [The Fifth Modernisation – Democracy and Others], Tansuo 1 / 1979, CUP 1, 7

¹²⁸ See e.g. Wang Changmin: *Shilun jieji qiyuan he shehuizhuyi shehui de zhuyao maodun* [On the Origins of the Classes and the Important Contradictions in a Socialist Society], Kexue minzhu fazhi 8 / 1979, CUP 13, 35-37; Wen Qi: *Zizhi minzhu yu guojia xiaowang xueshuo* [On the Theory of Self-Governing Democracy and Withering Away of the State], Beijing zhi chun 6, CUP 7, 86; Han Zhixiong: *Tantan jingji guanli minzhu yu zhengzhi minzhu*, Beijing zhi chun 2 / 1979, CUP 2, 233-234; Lü Min: *Qixiao changkuang qiye jiceng dang zuzhi de xingzheng lingdao quan*, Beijing zhi chun 2 / 1979, CUP 2, 255-256; Gao Jimin, *Jianchi Makedonizhuyide guojia lilun zou Bali Gongshè minzhu zhidude daolu*, Beijing zhi chun 7 / 1979, CUP 8, 102.

¹²⁹ *Wu si luntan fuzeren Xu XX*, Siwu luntan 14, CUP 9, 44. In the Provinces some journals, like Huadong minkan and Feidie in Zhejiang also had reports on Soviet dissidents like Andrei Sakharov (Widor 1987, 143 and 145).

¹³⁰ *Shijiu he womende renshi* [The Current Political Situation in Our Reckoning], Siwu luntan 15 (13 / 1979), CUP 10, 8-10

¹³¹ Alienation and humanism in socialism was a central theme in the academic debate at the time, that peaked first in 1979 and then again in 1982-1983. At least 600 articles on the topic appeared between 1978-1983 in newspapers and academic journals before the conservative Party faction finally silenced the debate and punished its most notable intellectual figures. For the debate, see Nathan (1985, 97-101) and Goldman (1994, Ch. 1 and 116-121).

¹³² Yu Ren: *Luelun jinri zhi siwu yundong* [Briefly on Today's 'Fifth of April Movement'], Siwu luntan 5 (3 / 1979), CUP 2, 100-104; Also Wang Xizhe discussed alienation in Wang Xizhe: *Minzhu de fangxiang* [The Direction of Democracy], Siwu luntan 17 (2 / 1980), CUP 11, 12-26.

¹³³ V. Po Wei Qie Wei Qi: *Makedonizhuyide rendaozhuyi* [Marxist Humanism], Zhongguo renquan 1 / 1979, CUP 2, 212-213

¹³⁴ *Huiyi tongzhi* [Conference Notice], Wotu 4-5 / 1979 hekan, CUP 13, 151

¹³⁵ It might even have been that Wang Ruoshui, or some other reformist intellectual, had pointed out the theorising about alienation to some of the Democracy Movement activists. Wang was known to have visited the Democracy Wall often and had connections with at least Siwu luntan which first raised the issue in a Democracy Movement journal.

¹³⁶ Mu Yi: *Kan! hechu shi Zhongguo rende zijide siwei?* [Look! Where Are the Chinese People's Own Thoughts?], Tansuo 2 / 1979, CUP 2, 12-13

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 14-15

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 16

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 17-19

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 17-21

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 21

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 22-23

¹⁴³ Lu Lin: *'Xinren weiji' genyuan* [The Source of the 'Crisis of Confidence'], Tansuo 5 / 1979, CUP 4, 60

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 61

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 62

¹⁴⁶ Hou Baochen: *Qing kaolu shifou yingdang jinzao huifu zhéxué yanjiude benlai mingyi?* [Please Consider: Is It Not High Time to Return to the Original Meaning of Philosophical Research?], Kexue minzhu fazhi 5 / 1979, CUP 10, 126-130. The dating of Hou's articles on 10 February 1977 and 26 May 1978 gives one clue as to why Hou's articles concentrated on the epistemology of Marxism, and did not deal with political reforms at length. The articles had probably been originally written to be Hou's personal contribution to the emancipation of minds campaign to refute Leftist dogmas on class struggle. Hou's style and theoretical finesse that harked back to Kantian transcendentalism and traditional Neo-Confucian philosophy, also raises the prospect that he, or she, was a university teacher, or a least an advanced level student, like Hu Ping.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 128 Hou developed a similar argument also in Hou Baochen: *Jiejí douzheng ximiè lun* [The Theory of Dying Out of Class Struggle], Kexue minzhu fazhi 5 / 1979, CUP 10, 131.

- ¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 129-130
- ¹⁴⁹ To be sure, anti-Party posters, or at least those where the Party was demanded to relinquish its monopoly on power, did surface every now and then from the provinces, but when compared to the number of all political posters their number seems to have been small. See e.g. for Shanghai ICM June 1981, 13; July 1980, 18-19.
- ¹⁵⁰ Quoted in Goodman 1981, 133
- ¹⁵¹ Goodman 1981, 133-134
- ¹⁵² *Fā kān shēngmíng* [Inauguration Words], Tansuo 1 / 1979, CUP 1, 1
- ¹⁵³ Lu Lin: *Fā kān yǔ tíng kān* [Publishing And Discontinuing Publishing], Tansuo 4 / 1979, CUP 3, 17-18
- ¹⁵⁴ In some research Wei Jingsheng has even been called ‘the principle leader of the movement’ (Pan 1980, 48). But this is clearly misguided, as Wei’s position was rather marginal in the intellectual realm, notwithstanding the importance of his case in other ways to the Democracy Movement. Liu Qing has pointed out that Wei was either regarded as a hero or a ‘rotten element’ by his readers. Apart from Liu Qing, very few activists in the Democracy Wall Movement actually engaged in direct intellectual debate with Wei (Liu Qing 1983, 16 and 170-171).
- ¹⁵⁵ Here the author agrees with Garside (1981, 278) who also regarded Wei as not representative of the Democracy Wall Movement in general. For other views, see for example, Spence (1990, 662-664), on how Wei is called ‘the voice of a new China’; and how Schell and Shambaugh (1999) adjudge Wei’s ‘On the Fifth Modernisation’ as the representative document of the Democracy Wall Movement in their ‘Reader of Contemporary Chinese History’.
- ¹⁵⁶ Jin Sheng (Wei Jingsheng): *Xù dì wǔ gè xiàndàihuà -mínzhǔ jí qítā* [Continuing the Fifth Modernisation – Democracy and Others], Tansuo 1 / 1979, CUP 1, 14-15
- ¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 15-16
- ¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 20
- ¹⁵⁹ Jin Sheng: *Xù dì wǔ gè xiàndàihuà -mínzhǔ jí qítā* [The Fifth Modernisation –Democracy and Others], Tansuo 1 / 1979, CUP 1, 4-5
- ¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 5-6
- ¹⁶¹ Ibid., 7
- ¹⁶² Ibid., 7-8
- ¹⁶³ Ibid., 8
- ¹⁶⁴ Jin Sheng: *Rénquán píngděng yǔ mínzhǔ* [Human rights, Equality and Democracy], Tansuo 3, CUP 2 / 1979, 41-42
- ¹⁶⁵ Jin Sheng: *Ershí shìjìde bāshìdìyù* [The 20th Century Bastille], Tansuo 3 / 1979, CUP 2, 68-77
- ¹⁶⁶ Jin Sheng: *Rénquán píngděng yǔ mínzhǔ*, Tansuo 3 / 1979, 42-43
- ¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 43
- ¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 44-45
- ¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 46-47
- ¹⁷⁰ Jin Sheng: *Xù dì wǔ gè xiàndàihuà*, 8-9
- ¹⁷¹ Jin Sheng: *Rénquán píngděng yǔ mínzhǔ*, 47
- ¹⁷² Ibid., 47-48
- ¹⁷³ Jin Sheng: *Xù dì wǔ gè xiàndàihuà -mínzhǔ jí qítā*, 19
- ¹⁷⁴ Jin Sheng: *Rénquán píngděng yǔ mínzhǔ*, 48-49
- ¹⁷⁵ *Wèi Jīngshēng zìwǒ biànhùcí* [Wei Jingsheng’s Plea for Innocence], Siwu luntan 14 (12 / 1979), CUP 9, 84-90
- ¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 87-88, the quotation from p. 88
- ¹⁷⁷ Jin Sheng: *Xù dì wǔ gè xiàndàihuà -mínzhǔ jí qítā*, 16
- ¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 17-18
- ¹⁷⁹ *Lùn rénquán* [On Human Rights], Lun renquan 3 / 1979, CUP 14, 287-288. The journal was edited by Jiedong group, and Li Jiahua was credited as its correspondent editor. However, the leaflet was a combination of two articles, one reproduced from Qimeng and the other from Jiedong. It is also reprinted in DCDM II, 644-662 where it is accredited to Lu Mang.
- ¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 288-289
- ¹⁸¹ Ibid., 289
- ¹⁸² Ibid., 289
- ¹⁸³ Ibid., 289-292
- ¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 292-294

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 296-299

¹⁸⁶ Garside 1981, 237-238

¹⁸⁷ Buruma (2003, 104) notes that as an offspring of high Party cadres Wei had had access to restricted libraries, where he had studied himself with Marxist works, but also Enlightenment classics. However, unlike many other writers in the Democracy Movement, Wei never announced the sources of his ideas openly.

¹⁸⁸ This is also noted by Burns (1983, 45-46) who saw that Wei was advocating some sort of ‘*un-Marxist (anti-Marxist) socialist democracy*’. Wei was not consistent in this, however, as he also praised capitalist economic model for its efficiency (see Wei Jingsheng, *Xù dì wú gè xiàndàihuà*, Tansuo 1 / 1979, CUP 1, 21-22)

¹⁸⁹ Bianjibu wenzhang: *Shíshì-qiúshì, jiānchí yuánzé* [Seek Truth from Facts, Persist in the Principle], Beijing zhi chun 9 / 1979, DCDM I, 572-573

¹⁹⁰ The last is also noted by Goodman (1981, 7) and Burns (1983, 45-46) concerning Wei Jingsheng.

¹⁹¹ Wei Jingsheng: *Rénquán píngděng yǔ mínzhǔ*, Tansuo 3, CUP 2 / 1979, 43

¹⁹² Ibid., 29

¹⁹³ These references were seldom direct, but can be inferred from their timing. See e.g. *Jìxù dòuzhēng yíngjiē guāngmíng* [Continue the Struggle, Welcome the Light], Beijing zhi chun 4 / 1979, CUP 5, 92-93.

¹⁹⁴ Chong Ming: *Guānyú Wei Jingshengde duìhuà* [Dialogue on Wei Jingsheng], Tansuo 4 / 1979, CUP 3, 44

11 CHAPTER: Conclusions

墙,	<i>Wall,</i>
西单墙,	<i>Xidan Wall,</i>
西单墙民主,	<i>Democracy at Xidan Wall,</i>
西单墙民主,	<i>Democracy at Xidan Wall,</i>
西单墙,	<i>Xidan Wall,</i>
墙.	<i>Wall.¹</i>

As set out in the Introduction, this thesis had two aims: to analyse the Democracy Movement as an incident of politically motivated collective protest in China and to elucidate its place in the history of the contemporary Chinese Democracy Movement. In this vein we have sought the reasons for why and how the ex-Red Guard discontent was mobilised into a social movement, and how the notion of democracy became the core of its mobilisation rhetoric. As has been analysed, this was based on the collective identities of acting as the youthful and progressive vanguard, enlighteners, and citizens in socialist democracy. These collective identities were active and conscious constructions, which were used to legitimate the movement as a social actor, create a following and support for it, place its adversaries in disadvantageous position, increase the gravity of its demands, generate unity in the ways to understand the nature of its activities within its ranks, define the terms of its membership, and thereby to also restrict access to the movement from outside. These progressive collective identities created a platform whereon the movement's activists could agree on the desirability of collective action – or, to use a more Chinese metaphor, a cluster of banners under which the participants could rally. Furthermore, in its diagnostics, motivational speech, and prognostics, the Democracy Movement drew heavily on the resonant values and discursive resources that the activists had come to master during the Cultural Revolution. All these factors led the Democracy Movement to assume many unique characteristics as a social movement in Chinese history.

To conclude this thesis, from these findings will be extrapolated reasons to define the collective action the movement represented, explain its failure, and finally assess its historical significance.

The Democracy Movement as a Variation of Revolutionary Activism

As discussed in the Introduction, the Democracy Movement's activists have been characterised as either dissidents, remonstrators, or emerging citizens. Of these, the dissident term is problematic because of its connotations of total opposition to the regime. Furthermore, while it could be justified to use dissidence as a technical term

for the form of public discontenting represented in the Democracy Movement,² it is unsatisfactory in itself if considering the historical movement as it was perceived by its participants. The same problem arises when the Democracy Movement is defined as a remonstrance movement, as has been proposed by Andrew J. Nathan. This model does have apparent merit, as the Democracy Movement's mainstream's *modus operandi* can be said to have resembled remonstrance in many ways viz: that the activists generally affirmed the socialist values and the ethos that the People's Republic was built on, and demanded that the Party should have returned to practise these too. Further, they also attacked those individuals whom they deemed violating these values, while largely avoiding the Party as a target of their criticism, which was furthermore offered much like appeals to the authorities by morally superior members of the ex-Red Guard generation. However, it is difficult to see how the Democracy Movement's collective identities could have been the result of Liang Qichao's vision of democracy, transferred to the Democracy Movement through Mao Zedong, as Nathan has argued. Indeed, Liang Qichao was virtually unknown to the activists³ and Mao's views on democracy were considered greatly deficient by the Movement's activists.

Two reasons account for what appeared to be remonstrative tactics employed by the movement's mainstream. First, it reflected the activists' perception of how a Marxist reform movement was possible in a society which claimed to uphold Marxist ideals. As they regarded democracy as a class-based phenomenon, and the Communist Party as the representative of the people's interests in principle, they could only either form a communist party of their own, or support those forces in the existing Party, which they considered as willing to realise socialist democracy, and thus represent the interests of the people. Second, related to this, the activists believed in the strength of the reformists in the Party, and their ability to protect the Democracy Movement. Initially this was a plausible assumption, based on the direct support of Deng Xiaoping, the emphasis on democracy and legality given, for example, in the third plenum of the eleventh central committee communiqué in December 1978, the reformist spirit of the Conference on Theory Work, etc. Even the first crackdown in March-April 1979 sent a mixed message in this regard, as only the troublesome radical wing of the movement was silenced. However, the gradual worsening of oppression made the mainstream recognise the weakness of the reformist positions and lack of support from Deng Xiaoping. When this occurred, even those mainstream activists who were still at liberty were willing to consider establishing their own parties. A remonstrative stance was therefore largely the result of miscalculation, albeit understandable, of the strength of the movement's protagonist base in the Party, and an ideal of how a socialist reform movement should relate to a Communist Party.

Furthermore, as importantly, the objectives of the Democracy Movement went beyond mere remonstrance. They were intended to transform the Party – people relations drastically. The activists believed that they were engaged in a struggle between the people and the privileged bureaucratic strata, or class, in the Party and

aimed to bring this struggle to a permanent end through establishing democratic institutions and empowerment of the Chinese people. Their vision involved major institutional changes in the political system and the transformation of the Chinese into an active citizenry which used its legal rights of election, free speech, publication and association, etc. to influence politics and make the Party to be led by the people instead of leading them. Therefore, it was not remonstrance to return to the 'good old ways' of Party leadership, but complete reformation of the political system, and finally the realisation of Marxism's original promises of freedom and equality of man, and even the eventual disappearance of the Party itself under a socialist democracy.⁴ For the Democracy Movement activists their protest was about revolution with far more clearly defined aims and methods, than the activists as Red Guards had during the Cultural Revolution, therefore their action was a democratic variation on the theme of revolutionary activism.

The Democracy Movement aimed to a peaceful change in the way the Chinese polity related to its members, and believed that the movement occupied a permanent position in this process, and therefore in society, for the foreseeable future at least. Permanent activism was also the aspect wherein the identity of socialist citizens applied. Here Merle Goldman has argued that although the Democracy Movement activist; "*acted like citizens through their actions, they were limited ideologically and intellectually by little exposure to ideas other than those of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong thought.*"⁵ This notion of emerging citizens captures an important part of the activists' self-understanding. However, Goldman's formulation leaves unexplained how this came about, and what 'acting like citizens' meant for the activists. After all, how could it be that in a society which practically lacked the middle class, free civil society, and ideational basis of a liberal political system which all form the context of citizenry in liberal democracies, groups of people develop into 'acting like citizens'? This study argues that it was precisely those 'idioms of Marxist-Leninism', with a blend of liberal thinking, which provided the ideational basis and resonant values that could be associated with the Democracy Movement's project to create active citizenry under socialist democracy. For the Democracy Movement activists were not only acting '*like citizens*', but also *as citizens*. That is, as a part of their revolutionary endeavour, it was the activists' conscious effort to create socialist citizens through example and enlightenment. To be a socialist citizen meant acceptance of the Party leadership and also proletarian dictatorship against counterrevolutionary elements, but only in a law-based, restricted, and minimal manner; otherwise it called for unrestricted political activism by the citizens. As such, the difference between the notions of socialist and bourgeois citizens was small, but in the activists' opinion, socialist citizens (they themselves) would have continued where bourgeois revolution had stopped in the construction of a free society for all its members.

Therefore, as set forth here, a useful way to characterise the Democracy Movement is to consider it as a variation of revolutionary activism. Its activists had learned the purpose of social movements as agency of social change during the Cultural

Revolution and from the communist revolutionary lore, which knowledge they applied to mobilise the discontent of the ex-Red Guards. All aspects of the Democracy Movement's mobilisation argumentation can be read as variations on the themes expressed during the Cultural Revolution: despite their individual differences, in their diagnostics the activists accepted the conspiracy theory that had been behind the Cultural Revolution, but now ascribed to it a systemic explanation. In their motivational speech, the notion of the youthful vanguard of revolution was retained, but this time they did not have the Great Helmsman and his closest companions to lead them; instead, after seeing through the Leftist deception and understanding the value of democracy they led themselves. Their prognostics incorporated the call for extensive democracy as a way to realise socialist democracy, but at the same time, their movement was diverted from power seizure to demands for democracy with well-defined institutions at its core. However, the Democracy Movement's theoretical standards were much more elaborate, and also far more diverse, than during the Cultural Revolution. In this way, it can be said that, the Democracy Movement signified the growing up of Mao's children.

Reasons for the Democracy Movement's Failure

The single most important cause for the failure of the Democracy Movement was oppression, and the authorities' ability to remove the movement's leadership, cut lines of communication with its potential supporters, and intimidate society at large from joining. However, such oppression never occurs in a vacuum; it is the result of a regime's ability to create political will and opportunity for it, and the social movement's inability to resist that. Thus, this therefore poses the question what created the political opportunity for the Democracy Movement's suppression, and corollary, what made it such an easy target for such suppression?

These issues were also discussed in the Democracy Movement journals although under different names. After the first crackdown in May 1979, Yang Guang of Tansuo stated that the reasons for the movement's failure were many viz: the movement had firstly been unable to develop a strong and united theoretical response to the official dogma which still held a strong grip in people's minds from education and propaganda which offered no alternatives. Further, the movement was too small and had not resources – time, energy, sources of information – to acquire more expertise in theoretical matters. The activists were therefore unable to seize the opportunity to turn widespread discontent into a unified response against the Party dogma. This led to organisational weakness as without a clear alternative presented the attack against the old was not enough in itself. Yang also saw that the movement's problem was its naïve trust that a crackdown was not forthcoming because of international pressure, popular sympathy for the movement and internal divisions within the Party. Thus, no preparations were made for oppression, e.g. emergency printing utilities were not hidden, plans of resistance not formulated, and

therefore the movement was unprepared for clandestine action when the suppression began.⁶

Another analysis of the reasons behind the problems the Democracy Movement faced was offered by Cong Zhen during the second crackdown on the Democracy Movement in late 1979. Cong asked why:

“Even if the Democracy Movement represents the necessary trend of development of history and the people’s demand for the progress of socialism, why after one year is it becoming weaker, and the great tide that the Democracy Movement warriors have hoped for has not arrived?”⁷

Cong saw that the Democracy Movement activists had the enthusiasm of revolutionaries with the sentiment and sense of sacrifice needed, but that they lacked experience in political struggle, organisation, mature guidance from revolutionary theory, and especially an understanding of the history of Chinese society and the situation of different strata in it. As such, mistakes had been committed in trying to get the people to understand the close relationship between the Democracy Movement and their own interests. As the consequence many people did not understand the fundamental relationship between the Democracy Movement and reform of their own lives, work, and study.⁸

Cong listed reasons for this failure: First, that the chaotic years of the rule of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four had confused people as to who was counterrevolutionary or revisionist and who revolutionary and progressive; second, the Democracy Movement had made the mistake of adhering to extreme positions and committing a rightist mistake, even up to ‘reverting to the side of the Whateverists’. They did not urge, help or ally with the reformists to oppose the Whateverists, which enabled the Whateverists to claim that the Democracy Movement opposed the Party leadership, which damaged the close relationship of the Democracy Movement with the people. Cong also saw problems with the diagnostic skills of the movement, arguing the reasons behind the social maladies the people witnessed had to be explained, not just attacked. Further, the Democracy Movement should have concentrated all its forces on criticism of Whateverism, and exposure of their true feudal nature by the use of Marxism-Leninism and scientific socialism, and to ally with the reformist faction within the Party and help it to defeat forces that supported Whateverists. It also had to expand mass movement to prevent the Reformists from yielding to the Whateverists and complying with them to harm the Democracy Movement.⁹ Therefore, Cong laid the blame for the failure with the movement’s radical wing.

Moreover, although Cong saw that the Democracy Movement had to employ scientific socialism and Marxism-Leninism to explain the true nature of things to the people, he also argued that the movement also had to accommodate its agenda to be less ambitious. According to him, inspecting and revealing the sorrows and hardships of the people as well as their demands and wishes, would forge a close relationship

between them and the Democracy Movement, helping the people to understand that the Democracy Movement represented their interests. This said, Cong also argued following Lenin that; “*Without revolutionary theory, there cannot be revolutionary movement*”; the democratic warriors had to reinforce the movement’s ideological work and its theoreticians had to exchange ideas with professional ideological workers.¹⁰ Cong was therefore demanded both a higher theoretical level and, at the same time, more concrete issues on the movement’s agenda. The notion that the Democracy Movement would have needed the intellectual’s participation was clear, too. For Cong then, in order to survive, the Democracy Movement had to renounce its ‘rightist’ wing, stay close to the Party reformists, and step up popular mobilisation.

In his memoirs of the Democracy Movement, Hu Ping offers another view where he places the bulk of the responsibility for the movement’s defeat on the shoulders of the Party reformists who, as he saw it, abandoned the Democracy Movement. Furthermore, Hu also criticised those intellectuals who shared the activists’ ideals of democracy, but did not help them. If famous intellectuals had joined the Democracy Movement, Hu asserted, its status would have been consolidated.¹¹ With all their differences, which were probably caused by the writers’ different alignments in the Democracy Movement, all these accounts reveal how, in the end, the activists attributed the problems to two major factors, viz: failure to gain support from the regime, and to mobilise sufficiently wide mass support. So why did they fail in both accounts?

Failure with the Regime

To begin with, the Democracy Movement’s relationship to the regime was complex. Not only were the both sides split over the issue of how to relate to one another, but the social environment influenced the relationship, too. In effect, there were actually three different, but overlapping and interacting movements / campaigns simultaneously underway in the Chinese society viz: the petitioner movement, the Democracy Movement and the emancipation of minds campaign. The two popular movements drew their inspiration, and even direct encouragement, from the emancipation of minds campaign, but they also had direct links with each other, to an extent that it was sometimes difficult to clearly separate the Democracy Movement from the petitioner movement from outside. Many of the Democracy Movement activists had their own personal grievances and sympathised with the plight of the petitioners, and being cold-shouldered by the authorities in personal grievances, could turn petitioners into political activists, as the case of Fu Yuehua demonstrated. At the same time, in many of the Democracy Movement themes, e.g. emancipation of minds, critical use of Marxism against the Party Left, and criticism of the personality cult of Mao, activists could refer to the emancipation of minds campaign. Those elements in the Party which were sympathetic to the movement also encouraged this both directly and indirectly. As the consequence, the events in any of

the movements spilled easily into the others, too. If for no other reasons, then simply because the political adversaries of the different movements tried to turn anything negative or adverse in any of them against the other two.

However, for Deng Xiaoping it was the Democracy Wall Movement which was most expendable of the movements. For him the emancipation of minds campaign could not be sacrificed since it would have benefited the Party Left too much, and the petitioners' movement could also not be stopped without a similar price to pay. The Democracy Movement was a movement that grew alongside the campaign for emancipation of minds, taking inspiration and encouragement from it, but never officially sanctioned as the former was. The Democracy Wall Movement helped Deng secure victory in the third plenum of the eleventh central committee at the end of 1978, but after this the movement begun to strain the inner relations of the Dengist faction. However, this was difficult to see in the field, so to speak, with the 'fog of war' over information over the dealings of the Party leadership.

Various explanations have been put forward as to why the Democracy Movement was allowed emerge and remain active as long as it did. According to one, Deng Xiaoping cynically used and then discarded it when it became politically too embarrassing. When Deng Xiaoping cracked down on Democracy Movement, some observers even compared his actions to that Mao Zedong had done in the Hundred Flowers Campaign in 1957 when he had first lured the 'snakes out' and then removed his political opponents.¹² In contrast to this, for example Ruan Ming paints a picture of Deng Xiaoping as genuinely willing to follow his reformist intellectual allies and also reform the political system (at least to some extent), but when the situation required compromise and logrolling with more conservative forces within his faction, found these reforms easier to discard and postpone, rather than economic reforms. Activities of the Democracy Movement itself, the needs of cadre politics, and changes in the international situation, also contributed to these developments.¹³ Deng's position could be seen, for example, in the four cardinal principles. These were essentially Deng's reassurance to the Party conservatives that he would not allow reforms to go too far, too fast. That at the same time he allowed the more moderate wing of the Democracy Movement to continue showed that, at least at that point, he did not want to end freer intellectual debate. Therefore – although this is, of course, counterfactual – it can be argued that if the reformist forces had been stronger within the Dengist camp, some political reforms, for example after the Yugoslav model, might well have been possible and the moderate parts of the Democracy Movement might have been able to survive too. However, demands furthered by, for example, Wei Jingsheng would still had virtually no hope of success.

It has also been argued that it was the increasing organisation and coordination within the Democracy Movement that led to its final downfall, not its agenda, since the Party was more concerned about its organisations than its ideas.¹⁴ However, while it is true that the Party jealously guarded – and still does – its position as the only nation-wide organisation with self-determination in China, it is argued here that the

ideology and organisation of the Democracy Movement cannot be separated like this. The later development of the Democracy Movement can be read as estrangement process between the Dengists and the mainstream of the Democracy Movement which culminated in the Party attack on the Democracy Movement mainstream organisations and ideology. Although the movement was divided, the theory of bureaucratism / bureaucratic class provided it with the shared theoretical understanding of the nature of the social conflict which had given the rise to the movement. Such theory provided the activists with a potent tool to mobilise popular support against the authoritarian and abusive rule of the Party Left, but, if needed, it could also be turned to oppose the Dengist rule. It was not a surprise that in the end, Deng disputed the claim that there had emerged such a thing as a new bureaucratic class in Chinese society.

As noted in chapter 5, Deng also saw that bureaucratism had some systemic reason behind it, but he and again his conservative supporters were not ready to concede that there was such a thing as a bureaucratic class or stratum in the society, but only problems with the cadres' work style. This also became a central issue in the denouncement of the Democracy Movement. As Deng declared in his speech on 25 December 1980; "*There is no 'class of bureaucrats'. It is impossible for such a class to exist in our country.*"¹⁵ Also the Central Directive number 9 that was issued on 20 February 1981 in order to ban the remaining Democracy Movement journals and their groups, directed a harsh refutation to the theory of a new class. As the directive declared:

*"Some [of the Democracy Movement activists] have even concocted the story that the 'chief contradiction' in our country at the present stage is the one between the masses of the people and the privileged stratum of bureaucracy, and that at the moment the country is 'as dry as tinder.' They are scheming to 'use every disturbance in society to set fire to this pile of tinder,' seize power during the period of crisis' and carry out a 'second revolution' against Communism and the people."*¹⁶

Consequently, the crackdown in March-May 1981 was accompanied by a press campaign directed at refuting the notion that there existed a bureaucratic class in China.¹⁷ This indicates how the problem with the Democracy Movement for the Conservatives and Deng Xiaoping was not only its organisation, but its roots in the Cultural Revolution, and the new class theory of the Radical Red Guards. "The capitalist roader number two", Deng Xiaoping, had no reason to give the ex-Red Guards any credit for original social analysis, particularly when this analysis was still against the centralised monopoly of power of the Party leadership. As Anita Chen has pointed out, in the Dengist view the ex-Rebel Red Guards remained their chief enemies even after the Cultural Revolution proper, which was demonstrated, for example, when many of them were purged from the Party and government in the early 80s campaign to remove those cadres who had benefited from the Cultural Revolution.¹⁸

The fate of the Democracy Movement can therefore be seen as a part of the process whereby the Dengist conservatives settled their scores with the former (Rebel) Red Guards. It must have been an unwelcome surprise also to Deng to see how widespread and deeply rooted the theory of bureaucratism / bureaucratic class had become amongst the youth, and how therefore his anti-Cultural Revolution could lead to reawakening and further development of the Cultural Revolution criticism levelled against the Party and emergence of theories on socialist democracy as an alternative route to modernisation. It was also unlikely that the Dengist regime would allow the ex-Red Guards social mobilisation to continue while it was systematically dismantling other results of the Cultural Revolution. For the Democracy Movement activists it was an unfortunate coincidence that their criticism, which was originally essentially targeted against the Leftist Establishment, became a competing model for modernisation with Deng Xiaoping's more centralist approach.

Furthermore, the Democracy Movement was a threat to Deng because it was independent. The *raison d'être* of the Democracy Movement for its participants was that it offered a channel for, or at least a promise of, popular supervision of the Party. As the Democracy Movement activists saw it, without such control, socialist democracy could never be achieved and communism realised. The Democracy Movement activists lived up to their vision of socialist democracy and thus demonstrated what the life would be to the Party if it took the appropriate measures and reformed the political system to allow free civil involvement in politics. The ideas of the Democracy Movement, however close some of them were to the reformist stances of the Party intellectuals, therefore had different significance, because the activists who advocated them choose to remain outside of the Party, even when offered co-option or threatened with suppression. As Hu Ping noted, even those activists who were closest to the Dengist faction, choose to live up to their ideals of being democratic and citizens.¹⁹ It was the example the Democracy Movement gave to people as the channel to mobilise their grievances that was a threat to the majority in the Party and which contributed to the eventual crackdown.

The acceptance of Party rule in principle and reliance on reformist help did not make the Democracy Movement activists blind to their options of becoming true 'dissidents' or creating a Marxist party of their own. But these options were considered unacceptable until oppression made them seem necessary in 1980-1981. In a sense, the Democracy Movement mainstream was acting in a highly realistic way by staying close to the only force that was sympathetic to its cause and vision of democracy, and had some authority. However, the success of this strategy would have required that these forces been far stronger, so that Deng Xiaoping would have had to rely on them in order to get his agenda of economic reforms through. As it was, when the reformist faction failed, so did the Democracy Movement. It may have represented itself as being historically necessary, but with the benefit of hindsight, it can be seen that from the outset, the movement did not have much historical chance

of survival with its chosen strategy. Yet, would more effective mass mobilisation allowed it to grow stronger?

Failure to Mobilise Mass Support

Could the Democracy Movement have acted differently in order not to have had to rely on the good will of the Party reformists, and stand on its own? Thus this is a question of why the movement failed in social mobilisation. As explained, the movement's mainstream refused to engage in creation of organisation and leadership for wider discontent in society, like for the petitioners, workers, and peasants and attempts at that direction were of local nature.²⁰ Instead, it engaged mainly in publishing journals with theoretical debate on democracy. Although this was certainly necessary for establish it as a social actor, it is easy to see that clearly this was insufficient in itself and those internal critics who saw that the Democracy Movement was not close enough to the people also realised this.

A lack of resources provides only a part of the explanation as to why systematic mobilisation of social discontent was not engaged. The groups could have started small and this would probably have generated positive inflow of recruits to the movement, and thereby new resources. In this respect, the major obstacle was the strategic choice to remain enlighteners and (self-proclaimed) representatives of the masses, but not their leaders. This may also have been related to the fear of oppression, but another reason concerns for whom the movement's mobilisation was about, after all. It framed its protagonists as 'the people', yet its collective identity as the vanguard enlighteners, the ardent youth who had seen through Leftist deception and who sought truth and represented the high tide of history in their advocacy of democracy, was directed to the ex-Red Guards and younger generations. Consequently, these groups came also to form the core of the movement's activist base.

In this sense, the Democracy Movement was a movement for those ex-Red Guards who had realised the value of social activism and democratic institutions to abolish the power of the Party Left and bureaucrats, and concentrated on advocating their view. What some of the movement's writers noticed, was that this all made the movement too theoretical, too concentrated on transformation of the superstructure, and therefore too remote from the people. Furthermore, the collective identities of the Democracy Movement were also constructed to implicitly exclude from the ranks of the movement those who had not yet seen through the Leftist deception. Thus the values the Democracy Movement advocated about social mobilisation and democracy were therefore resonant in the ex-Red Guards circles, but less so amongst 'the people' in general. Requiring conversion to what was basically a further developed Radical Red Guard social analysis, was probably too much for many potential recruits of the movement, in particular of intellectuals.

What these identities implicitly required from the participants was also illustrated in the way many wrote of themselves as representing an 'awakened generation'. Such a notion required a shared understanding of a common background of the activists, not only in terms of age, but experience too. Clearly, the writers were arguing that the shared experience that had awakened them was the Cultural Revolution and the enlightenment which it had brought about the Leftist rule. But when the activists referred to themselves as members of the same generation, they drew a division between themselves and the rest of the people. Considering the Democracy Movement as a one of the Red Guard generation (enforced with some of the Fifth of April Movement 'heroes') was plausible because of the background of the activists, but emphasising it may not have been conducive to adding to the movement's recruitment rate, because it implied that once more the masses should follow the youth who had already demanded this as Red Guards, and even based these demands on their earlier Red Guard experiences. With all the discontent caused by the Cultural Revolution and what the Red Guards had committed during it, this was a lot to ask.

Furthermore, the movement's claim to represent the interest of the people was not realised when it did not raise issues such as low salaries, excessive grain quotas, organisation of help for petitioners, etc. to more prominent position on its agenda. The way in which the source of these grievances was diagnosed in the authoritarian political system as existing from the factory floor to the very top of the Party was plausible, but indicated that problems with the political system was only a part of what the Democracy Movement activists should have been concerned with and more definitive issues should have been on their agenda, too. Undoubtedly, fear of involvement in an unauthorised political campaign and satisfaction with the action the Dengists were already taken against the Party Left were probably further reasons why many intellectuals and workers did not participate in the Democracy Movement.

On the other hand, if the movement had assumed more aggressive and oppositional stance and identities on Marxism and the Party leadership, it is plausible that crackdown on the movement would have come sooner, and been harder. Further, the number of activists who would have participated in the movement would have been even smaller. Nevertheless, the movement's mainstream could have taken the road of organisational recruitment and mobilisation of petitioners, workers and all other discontent forces in society without any apparent anti-Marxist or anti-Party stance. Yet, it seems that, apart from the fear of repression and limitations of their resources, the activists chose to remain a journal-centred open movement because they saw it as tactically best and theoretically justified approach, but their concentration on enlightenment instead of channelling, organising, and leading wider social discontent rendered them weak in the face of repression.

The Movement's Legacy

While the Democracy Wall Movement can be said to have ended in 1981, on a wider perspective it was the beginning of the contemporary Chinese Democracy Movement. When remaining working in the mainland became too risky, many of the original core activists of the movement moved abroad – most to the United States – where they continued their activities establishing new journals and organisations. Unfortunately though, they also brought with them overseas their internal disagreements, and thus the Democracy Movement has remained as weak as it ever was after its inauguration. The influx of the old exiled democracy activists after release from prison and from the newer generations, especially after the 1989 student democracy movement, has only intensified these tensions.²¹ As it has been right from the beginning, a united Chinese Democracy Movement has remained a dream. Yet how should its first formative years at the turn of the 70s be reassessed, when judged as a part of the popular struggle for democracy in contemporary China?

As argued here, the discontinuities in the history of the Chinese Democracy Movement are as pronounced as its continuities. This becomes apparent when the Democracy Wall Movement is compared to the Democracy Movement of 1989. Both had their roots in the model the Cultural Revolution established for collective action and protest as a method to influence politics from outside of the Party in socialist China.²² The latter was much bigger and far more intense up to the tragic events on the fourth of June 1989. However, this latter movement was also even less organised and theoretically developed than the Democracy Wall Movement had been.²³ An emphasis on socialist democracy seems to have been particularly absent from the student's demands, which in the final analysis could be summarised as a request to be recognised as patriotic and allowed to commence a social dialogue with the Party on an equal basis.²⁴ This was, of course, what the Democracy Wall Movement had also demanded, but the contexts of each protest were in many ways fundamentally different. Firstly, in 1989, a dominant Party Left, the personality cult of Mao and an immediate social legacy of the Cultural Revolution no longer existed. Secondly, there was no Red Guards generation with its critical social analysis to lead the movement. This led the two movements to assume different hues.

However, although many of the social, political, and intellectual factors which gave rise to the movement for socialist democracy in 1978 were no longer present in 1989, some still remained. As the Democracy Wall Movement activists correctly claimed, they were the popular antithesis of the Leftist regime, which had been created during the Cultural Revolution proper and the Gang of Four periods. In this, their protest was in many ways a reaction to a regime which was already fading when they took up the issue of democracy in 1978-81. In their turn, the students and workers who participated in the movement of 1989 protested against the authoritarian Dengist regime as it had developed during the 80s. The Party Left, as known to the Democracy Movement activists, had all but disappeared, but what had remained the same, was the Party's refusal to grant meaningful popular control over its actions,

and its unwillingness to enter into any social dialogue with an independent social force – which the Democracy Wall Movement also constituted, however much its participants tried to deny this fact. Moreover, while the Dengist regime had purged most ‘Leftists’ from its ranks, many problems which the Democracy Wall Movement had diagnosed as bureaucratism, e.g. cadre corruption and bad government in general, had remained or even worsened under the new economic opportunities created by Deng’s reforms. However, when the new class theory and the shared antagonism toward the Party Left no longer united the 1989 activists,²⁵ the new generation of democracy activists had to find their critical democratic theory not from Radical Red Guards theorising, but more from the West (although in this area their knowledge still remained quite limited).

The Democracy Wall Movement therefore had features which made it belong to both the Maoist era and the emerging Dengist New Order. The movement’s attack on the Party Left and its doctrines were an explicit refutation of Maoism and the post 1968-69 political order. However, at the same time, their criticism against the autocratic political system with its unrepresentative Party organs causing ‘bureaucratism’ (i.e. bad government) was still valid in 1989, and it was these themes that the demonstrators of 1989 also returned to when they demanded dialogue with the Party and an end to corrupt practises in the officialdom. The Democracy Wall Movement was therefore the first social movement to raise the subject of popular democratic participation in politics in communist China as the solution to the defects in an authoritarian system, which the Chinese Democracy Movement has continued ever since. However, this continuity has perhaps been more evident in the general theme of democracy, rather than in the social analysis supporting it as such. Therefore, as a possible direction for future research in the development of the Chinese Democracy Movement, the way in which the contents of its social analysis and demands have changed along with the social and political context around it should be researched.

To conclude then, since in the view of the Party conservatives, including Deng, China could only develop into a strong and prosperous modernised country under stability and unity created through a centralised leadership of the Party, they silenced the alternative views of social development, which the Democracy Wall Movement offered. With this suppression of the Democracy Wall Movement, the Party lost a historical opportunity to engage in a genuine social dialogue which could have been – and still remains – crucial for political reforms in China, for it is difficult to see how genuinely democratic reforms, either socialist democratic or liberal, can ever occur from any solely internal committee process of a ruling party.

As of writing, China, more or less, remains on the same road the Party conservatives chose for her in the late 70s. Yet, as the subsequent events in 1989 demonstrated, this choice has not gone unchallenged and the Party still has to consider if, when, and then how, to progress through political reform. However, if this occurs without the involvement of a social movement that embraces a peaceful programme, a sufficiently large following, and a basic understanding of the objectives and

sequence of reforms within its own ranks, the results may prove dangerously destabilising. The Party's current strategy to keep Chinese civil society underdeveloped, and thereby social movements from becoming established social actors, can therefore be considered to be therefore very risky – particularly in the current circumstances where the economic stakes in social stability maintenance in China are higher than ever before.

Historically then, it can be argued that this conservative strategy may have brought the Chinese economic affluence, but it has also thereby made the likely social costs of attempting political transition even higher than they would have been in the early 80s, when the Party could have engaged in a dialogue with the Democracy Wall Movement. Currently, this option is still open for the Party, in principle at least, although especially the Democracy Movement would have to work especially hard to sufficiently unify itself as a force that could ensure a stable political transition on its behalf.

Finally then, it can be reasoned that the most lasting legacy of the Democracy Wall Movement was to set the scene to allow this option to develop – no matter how difficult, or even unlikely, such an outcome may prove to be in practice.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 11

¹ A Poem from the Democracy Wall from early 1980 in Pin Ho (1998, 22).

² If dissidence is defined simply as demonstration of discontent with demands for political reforms vis-à-vis the authorities, then the Democracy Movement activists may be termed dissidents, but this would not reveal much about their specific protest. See Davenport (2005) on this kind of use of the term dissidence.

³ For instance, he is only referred to by name in the writings from Hu Ping, and even then, only in passing.

⁴ One can compare this to Calhoun and Wasserstrom (2003, 250), who characterise the 1989 protesters as the students, who shared the notion that they were spokespersons of the people, and saw that this identification gave them the basic right to rebel. The students therefore used; “*the language of remonstrance, but also claimed the right to challenge not only the polices, but also the leaders themselves.*” Indeed, the resemblance with the Democracy Wall Movement is not coincidental, as the 1989 protesters carried on the new mode of popular mass protest that the Cultural Revolution had created in China, and the Democracy Wall Movement (and the Fifth of April Movement) had been the first instance where it had been used.

⁵ Goldman 2002, 170

⁶ Cited in Goodman 1981, 138-141

⁷ Cong Zhen: *Jiàoxunde lìshǐ hé lìshǐde jiàoxun* [How and What History Teaches], Taolun 1 / 1979, CUP 18, 149

⁸ *Ibid.*, 149-150

⁹ *Ibid.*, 150-151 Cong did not explain how it was possible for the ‘right wing’ of the movement to revert to the side of the Whateverists, when it was the Whateverists which oppressed them all.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 151

¹¹ Hu Ping 1992, 152-53

¹² Liu Sheng-chi 1984a, 136; Also Liu Qing (1998, xxii) thinks that Deng used the Democracy Wall, but never thanked it for its help. Goodman (1981, 149-150) discusses this theory but rejects it.

¹³ Uncertainty of the official line in the grass-roots also created inertia concerning the Democracy Movement. Messages from the centre concerning the movement were sometimes contradictory and most of the activists appeared not really so radical. Besides, lower officials had to beware too, as going too far too soon in suppressing the movement might have had dire consequences when the political tides turned next time. This created obvious inertia in both directions. However, while this caused friction in implementing the

orders concerning the Democracy Movement, it alone was not the reason for the movement's survival as long as it did. When the Party Centre finally indicated its determination to crack down on the whole Democracy Movement in 1981, the orders were carried out all over the country.

¹⁴ For example, Nathan sees that the fundamental reason for suppression was that the Party was unwilling to release its control over society, and not ideological differences between it and the journals as such. (Nathan 1985, 39, 41-42) Rosen (1985, 3) also seems to argue this way.

¹⁵ Deng Xiaoping 1980 / 1995: *Implement the Policy of Readjustment...* in SW II, 361

¹⁶ *Directive Concerning Illegal Publications...* in I&S November 1983, 106

¹⁷ Rosen 1985, 27-28

¹⁸ Anita Chen 1992, 80-83. It was during this campaign, for example, when Hu Jintao was taken into the programme to promote the next generation of Party leaders, which on its behalf offers an insight into his cautious non-reformist political line as this thesis is written, see Nathan and Gilley (2003, 67-68).

¹⁹ Hu Ping 1992, 147-148

²⁰ For example, it was reported that in Wenzhou, Zhejiang, the local Democracy Movement did establish ties with thousand of petitioners who had activated due to housing issues. (Widor 1987, 135) Nevertheless, such instances were rare.

²¹ For accounts of the Democracy Movement's more current situation, see e.g. Buruma (2003); Chase and Mulvennon (2002); and Pin Ho (1998).

²² This has been pointed out both by Calhoun and Wasserstrom (2003) and Perry (2003).

²³ One interesting question would be why the 1989 protests could draw participants in their millions from major urban centres in China, while the Democracy Wall Movement was left with, at best, only a few tens of thousands of activists. This enquiry goes beyond the scope of the study, though.

²⁴ See Baum (1996, ch. 11) on these.

²⁵ Some notable Democracy Wall Movement activists like Wang Juntao and Chen Ziming took part in the 1989 movement, but did not assume leadership in it.

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Used Abbreviations

CA	China Aktuell
CUP	中國大陸地下刊物彙編, <i>Dàlù dìxià kānwù huì biān</i> [A Collection of Underground Publications Circulated on Chinese Mainland]. Vols. 1-20, Zhongyang yanjiu zazhi shebian, Institute for the Study of Chinese Communist Problems, Taipei 1980-1985
DCDM	Documents of the Chinese Democracy Movement 1978-1980, Vols. I-II
FBIS	Foreign Broadcast Information Service 1978-1979
GMRB	Guangming Ribao
ICM	Inside China Mainland
RMRB	Renmin ribao
SWB	Summary of World Broadcasts 1978-1979
SWDX	Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping

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APPENDIX 1: The Democracy Movement Journals and Their Editors

Qimengs and Jiedong

The first of the Beijing Democracy Movement journals to appear was Qimeng (Enlightenment), which was edited by Huang Xiang and Li Jiahua. According to its own account, Qimeng's first issue came out on 11 October 1978 in Beijing, which was the date when some members of the group put up the 'God of Fire Symphonic Poem' poster at Wangfujing. The poem had been written in 1969-1975 to oppose personality cult and idol worship and to demand democracy and human rights. It had been hidden in a candle to be kept safe from police raids and published now in one of the most politically symbolical places of the People's Republic.¹ The birth of the Democracy Movement in Beijing caught the interests of the Guiyang petitioners and they decided to establish a branch of *Qimeng she* (Qimeng Society) in the capital. On November 24 they posted the rules of the Society and the 'God of Fire Symphonic Poem' poster on Tiananmen Square and at noon that day, seven members of the group declared the society formally established and distributed the copies of their journal. This made both the group and its journal the first to appear in Beijing Democracy Movement.²

On this date, the society also put up a dazibao titled '*Re-evaluate the Cultural Revolution: Mao Zedong's Merits and Faults Are [in the Ratio of] Three to Seven.*' The harsh criticism of Chairman Mao in the dazibao probably caused Deng Xiaoping to express caution on opinions on some posters in his interview with Robert Novak three days later and it therefore contributed to the closing down of the Democratic Forum on Tiananmen Square at the beginning of December. On 7 January, 1979 the Qimeng group also posted a 150 pages long open letter to President Carter at Tiananmen Square criticising the human rights situation in China and asking permission to visit the United States to make comparisons on site.³ A bigger inaugural meeting of the Qimeng Beijing branch was held in Zhongshan Park on 21 January 1979 and attended by some 150 people, who took a solemn oath in becoming members of the group.⁴

The Qimeng society had the longest organisational existence in the Democracy Movement. Its roots could be traced back to 1968 disbanding of the Red Guards in Guiyang. The members of the Qimeng Society included Huang Xiang who was an ex-Red Guard employed in a factory in Guiyang. He had been sent down to factory work in 1968 when the Red Guards were demobilised.⁵ He had also been persecuted for two collections of poems he had written in 1969 and 1973.⁶ Huang Xiang and other youngsters, like the other leading figure of the group, Li Jiahua, shared a similar fate and had formed the Enlightenment Society in Guiyang where the poems that now surfaced were originally written.⁷ The society had branches in other major cities like Shanghai, Chongqing and Nanjing, which made it a comparatively influential group in the Democracy Movement.⁸

At the end of January 1979 Qimeng split into three parts forming an 'editorial committee' under Huang Xiang, 'editorial department' under Qin Xiaochun and Yang Zaixian, and the Jiedong (Thaw) Society headed by Li Jiahua and Lu Mang. The last faction was active in Guiyang.⁹ Its members saw Huang Xiang too conservative and were

themselves more pro-Western and demanded, for example, competitive multi-Party system, whereas Huang Xiang supported relatively more cautious views. Jiedong came out four times in March 1979 in Guiyang.¹⁰ All in all, Qimeng and its splinter groups were rather outspoken in its criticism of the personality cult of Chairman Mao and advocacy of human rights. They were both among the journals that were suppressed in the first crackdown in March-April 1979, when the activists were sent back to Guiyang. However, the Qimeng group was released already in June 1979 and continued actively in the Movement although it did not return to the capital. The group revived its journal under the name of Shiming [Mission] for a short period in autumn 1979 and later still a literary journal titled Jueqide yidai [The Rising generation].¹¹ Both Jiedong and Qimeng were amongst the groups that joined the Joint Declaration of Chinese National Association of People's Publication in September 1980, which indicates that in Guiyang their activities continued in some form even after the second crackdown.¹²

Siwu luntan

The second journal to appear in the Beijing Democracy Movement was Siwu luntan (April Fifth Forum). It was started when Xu Wenli and Zhao Nan put up their respective posters on the Xidan Wall. Xu's poster was titled *Siwu bao* (April Fifth Paper) and it appeared on 26 November while Zhao's poster was named *Renmin luntan* (the People's Forum). Together the two found their views similar enough and founded Siwu luntan. In January another important figure in the Democracy Movement, Liu Qing, became the leading editor of the journal and Zhao Nan broke away from it when his views on the need to mobilise the petitioners to support the Democracy Movement were not accepted. Later at the end of August 1979, Zhao linked up with Tansuo group.¹³ The change of leading figures and dropping the names of the two groups from the journal's title happened at the same time as formal rules and organisational structure for the group were set up in late January 1979. Now Liu Qing's name also appeared for the first time as the correspondent address in the fourth issue of Siwu luntan.¹⁴

Siwu bao's Xu Wenli (using the penname of Xu Shu), was a 34 year old Railway Bureau electrician and a former Red Guard member from Beijing. Liu Qing a.k.a. Liu Jianwei, was a 32-year old engineer originally from Sha'anxi and also a former Red Guard member.¹⁵ Liu had been an ardent Red Guard member in the Cultural Revolution, during which he had even tried to go to Vietnam to 'exchange revolutionary experiences.'¹⁶ According to Siwu luntan, Liu had studied in Beijing before 1965 and was sent down to Qufu in Shandong in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution Proper. In 1973 he had enrolled to study civil engineering at a Nanjing Worker's College (*Nanjing gong xueyuan*) as a 'worker, peasant, soldier' student. He had graduated in 1977 and was assigned to work at Hanzhong Third Tractor Factory in Sha'anxi, but returned to Beijing because of chronic kidney disease.¹⁷ Another Siwu luntan editor Lü Po (using the penname '0538' from his work permit) was a son of Lü Ji, the chairman of the China Music Association. He posted one of the first posters on Xidan Wall critical of Zong Fuxian's play 'Where Silence Reigns'.¹⁸ Other known original members of the original Siwu luntan group were Yang Jing and Jin Kuiyang,¹⁹ but Yang Jing also left Siwu luntan and joined Tansuo in February.²⁰

A relative latecomer to the Siwu luntan group was Chen Erjin, whose long essay 'On Proletarian Democratic Revolution' came out in the journal's 10th issue in June 1979. Chen came from a peasant background, born in 1945 in Yunnan, and he had only five years of formal primary education but had also studied at teacher-training college at Kunming. He had graduated as a teacher just before the Cultural Revolution and became a leader of a Rebel Red Guard Group. In 1967 he was been invited to join the Revolutionary Committees in Yunnan, but declined the offer. From 1970 onwards he worked as a statistician at a coal mine in Yunnan and read translated Marxist classics profusely while writing his essay at the same time. After submitting the essay to the authorities in 1975, he was arrested, and tortured while in jail. He was released in early 1979.²¹ Chen's essay became one of the central documents of the ex-Radical Red Guard analysis of the state of Chinese society and divided opinions within the Democracy Movement.

The first issue of Siwu luntan came out on 16 December 1978, after which the group witnessed strong growth in membership. The number of people willing to dedicate their time and energies to it grew to over 20 in January 1979. The journal was printed in Xu Wenli's bedroom at Baiguang Road, South-western Beijing. Visiting foreigners described the apartment as an austere place.²² The Journal had a start-up capital of 306 RMB, which was collected from its members. It reached a circulation of about 1000 and it had some connections to the Party as some of its core group members were Youth League or Party members. Siwu luntan was one of the longest surviving of the original journals in the Beijing Democracy Movement. It published 19 issues and was also deemed to be one of the most influential of the journals. When the journal's original editors could not carry on in early 1980 (Liu Qing had been arrested in October 1979), Yang Jin, a worker from a Beijing iron factory, assumed charge of the journal and managed to resume publication for two more issues in November 1980. Both Yang Jin and Xu Wenli were arrested in April 1981.²³

Zhongguo renquan

Zhongguo renquan (China Human Rights) was established on 1 January 1979 in Beijing by the *Zhongguo rénquán tóngméng* (Chinese Human Rights League). At the beginning, the journal group had nine members headed by Ren Wanding, a 35-year-old Beijing worker with a 'rightist' background. During the Cultural Revolution Ren, like Liu Qing, had planned to go to Vietnam to 'exchange revolutionary experiences' with the comrades there, but he was arrested and denounced in his work unit for this. Although a skilled technician, he had to work at shop-floor level in a Beijing Equipment Installation Company under 'the surveillance of the masses' and was rehabilitated only in 1978.²⁴ As with many other Democracy Movement activists, the experience of personal persecution formed an important background factor for Ren's activism. As its name indicated, the journal he established had a special focus on human rights and legal matters. It published some posters and articles that were widely noticed and read, like the open letter to President Carter asking him to pay attention to the Chinese human rights situation, and the '19 Points Declaration of Human Rights in China', that became the group's 'trademark'.²⁵ *Zhongguo renquan* had selected its name provocatively. Putting a taboo subject onto its title attracted wide attention, not least from foreign observers, but it was

also risky. As such it was also the journal with relatively most human rights content in the Beijing Democracy Movement journals during its relatively short life-span.

The League had General Assembly, Executive Committee of ten members, and Secretariat governing over a quasi-bureaucratic structure.²⁶ It was divided into four sections which included the organization department, whose duty was to recruit members nationwide; the law department, which was the League's research unit on human rights matters and tried to extend help to the arrested activists; the propaganda department responsible for putting up posters and arranging public meetings; and the editorial board responsible for editing and publishing *Zhongguo renquan*. The League became popular and had over 100 members during its high point in early 1979, but it suffered from an internal split in March, between Ren Wanding and another activist a 29-year-old worker Chen Lü, who had made his home as available for the Association as its headquarters. As the result, both edited parallel journals (issues 2 and 3) before they were arrested in the late March-April 1979.²⁷ The last issue of *Zhongguo renquan* (by Ren Wanding's group) came out on 7 April 1979 containing criticism of the crackdown. Therefore, altogether there were 4-5 issues of *Zhongguo renquan*, depending on the way one counts, and at least two *Neibu jianbao* (Internal Leaflets) for reciprocal denouncements of competing factions.

The reasons for this *Zhongguo renquan* split were many, but they included, at least, the arrest of Fu Yuehua, on which Ren Wanding took more moderate stance than Chen Lü. Ren Wanding and Chen Lü also took different positions on the strategic issues concerning the League's activities. According to Chen Lü, the group should have pursued organising peasants and petitioners on a mass level, while Ren Wanding wanted to seek official recognition for the League from the National People's Congress, thus forming a party of its own.²⁸ They also held different views on the war with Vietnam which Ren Wanding approved, while Chen Lü denounced. As discussed in chapter 4, the factions also differed in their views about basic contradictions in Chinese society. According to Chen Lü's denunciation of Ren Wanding, he was less willing to admit that the Party contained a faction of privileged bureaucrats. All in all, Chen Lü saw that Ren Wanding's moderate line would have meant the abolition of the Democracy Movement, since Ren was too willing to obey the officials and too afraid to irritate them.²⁹ According to Goodman, a Gonganju *agent provocateur* acting as the third member of the journal's leadership group also contributed to the split.³⁰

Beijing zhi chun

Beijing zhi chun (Beijing Spring) premiered on 8 January 1979, and was the journal which had the closest ties to the Party reformists.³¹ The journal declared it stood for democracy, science, political reforms and the four modernisations and clearly took Deng's faction's side against the Whateverists. The journal's connections to the Party could be seen in the content of the articles that the journal ran, some of which were provided by the reformist intellectuals within Deng's faction. Consequently, it received some inside information on the Party policies and leading members, and was therefore able to advocate many policies even before they were made public, like the rehabilitation of Peng Zhen and Liu Shaoqi, and the Li Yizhe group.³² The way it had sensitive

information to attack the Whateverists, especially Wang Dongxing, was also the result of this relationship to the Dengists.³³

Beijing zhi chun had an editorial board of 13 members, the majority of whom were 'Tiananmen Heroes' and children of cadre families.³⁴ The members were also otherwise from privileged backgrounds as they were mostly students in prestigious universities, and the journal's editors Han Zhixiong, Zhou Weimin, Chen Ziming and Wang Juntao were all members of the Youth League, Han and Zhou even members of its Central Committee, while Chen was an alternate member.³⁵ Their connections to the Party were so good that the journal was rumoured to have enjoyed Deng Xiaoping's unspoken approval, and its third issue was printed in Foreign Language Press with 10 000 copies – one of the largest runs any journal had in the Democracy Movement.³⁶ The red cover page of the first issue even earned the editors the title of 'Deng Xiaoping's propagandists' from other Democracy Wall Movement activists.³⁷ Goodman sees the journal practically as a publication of the liberal wing of the Communist Youth League³⁸ and the connections and content of the journal does indeed warrant such a view. Early in the movement the journal's deputy editor Wang Juntao was even invited to Zhongnanhai to discuss with Hu Yaobang the Democracy Wall Movement, indicating high level connections to the Party leadership.³⁹

One of Beijing zhi chun's inside contacts to the reformist Party establishment was Yan Jiaqi, and another obvious connection was the Youth League. The editors of the League's organ, *Zhongguo qingnian*, had used the Xidan Wall in September 1978 to post their articles critical on the Party Left and Beijing zhi chun continued this criticism in open. Its closeness to the reformist forces within Deng's camp was also shown in a way some official papers like the *Guangming Ribao* and the *Bulletin of the Centre for Philosophical Research of the Academy of Social Sciences*, reprinted some of the Beijing zhi chun articles on political reform.⁴⁰ Independency from the control of Wang Dongxing and the Party propaganda organs status was probably one reason why these CYL members went on to establish the journal.

Beijing zhi chun editor Chen Zimin's background has been described above. However, not all of the editors were old enough to have been Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution. The journal's deputy editor Wang Juntao was the son of a military officer, who was an old comrade of Deng Xiaoping and a high cadre in the PLA in Beijing. Wang grew up in a Marxist intellectual atmosphere. He had been too young to be sent-down during the Cultural Revolution and managed to be enrolled to study physics at Beida in the mid-70s. Wang participated in the 1976 Tiananmen Incident by writing a poem of his own. The police arrested him after he had rather naïvely handed in his poems to the Bureau. He received a one and half year sentence on a collective farm, but was released after the fall of the Gang of Four, which enabled Wang to return to Beida to continue his studies. The intellectual atmosphere was now beginning to relax somewhat, but a certain caution still prevailed. However, the students at Beida knew of the ongoing power struggle and Wang took Deng's side, as he felt that Deng needed support also from outside the Party. The reversal of the Tiananmen verdict also made Wang Juntao a 'Tiananmen hero' overnight. He became an alternative delegate in the Youth League Central Committee and received privileges in his studies. The Democracy Wall also

attracted his attention right after its inception as it seemed a perfect way to support Deng in his struggle against the Leftists. Wang soon found other like-minded people from the Beijing University, like Chen Ziming and Han Zhixiong, and together with them he started to publish Beijing zhi chun.⁴¹

Tansuo

Not all journals could expect to have even the tacit approval of the Party reformers. The most notable and outspoken of all the journals in this respect was Tansuo (Explorations). It also had the fewest active participants: just three or four core members.⁴² It was edited by Wei Jingsheng and, after the arrest of Wei and its other editor Yang Guang in March 1979, by Lu Lin. Wei Jingsheng was undoubtedly the most liberal and therefore in many ways the most radical of the activists. His radical wall poster 'Fifth Modernisation' that appeared on Xidan on 5 December 1978, and was reprinted in Tansuo,⁴³ is the one single document that has caught the most attention in the Democracy Movement's argumentation in the West. Some commentators even see it as the epitome of Chinese human rights / democratic thinking at the time.⁴⁴ However, remarkable as it was as a document of the young Wei Jingsheng's political thinking, the poster was not very representative of the Democracy Movement's argumentation on the whole.

The Fifth Modernisation dazibao had the contact information of the author written on it. Impressed by its content and message, two activists who were already acquainted each other, Lu Lin and Yang Guang, contacted Wei, thus forming the core of the Tansuo's board of editors. Its fourth member was Liu Jingsheng, a 25 year old bus driver, who was responsible for the journals correspondence. Wei Jingsheng suggested the name of the journal which first appeared on 8 January 1979.⁴⁵ Tansuo was edited and mimeographed in Wei Jingsheng's room at the Wei family residence. This caused tension between him and his father, a Party cadre, but did not end the publication of the journal.⁴⁶ It had a circulation of 150 to 1500 copies, but attracted a much wider audience and interest for its radical message.⁴⁷ Tansuo came out in five issues altogether, but its catchy name spawned a copycat in October 1979 with a campus publication, when the Student Union of Wuhan University Department of Economics published a 'sixth' issue of Tansuo.⁴⁸ However, this journal did not continue the critical line of the original Tansuo.

Tansuo's founding members were from different family backgrounds. Lu Lin was a 24-year old press operator in an electric factory and a 'model worker'. His parents were both workers and he had received only junior high school education before the Cultural Revolution. He had also participated in the Fifth of April Movement.⁴⁹ Lu at the time attended classes in secondary school in order to enter university; he passed the Xidan Wall every day and was drawn into its activities.⁵⁰ Another member of the editorial board was Yang Guang, whose penname was Mu Yi, the son of relatively high cadre and U.S. trained engineer at the Ministry of Light Industry, he was also a student at the Workers University (*Gongye Daxue*) and a classmate of Hua Guofeng's daughter.⁵¹

As Lu Lin described Yang Guang in a rather idealistic way, Yang was 24 when he joined Tansuo. During the Cultural Revolution he had been sent down with his parents to Anlu village in Hubei. On his return to Beijing in 1971 he entered a senior middle school. And

following graduation, was sent to the countryside once again for two years, but managed to return to Beijing and enter university. Although teaching was chaotic in middle school, he never gave up studies and wanted to become a famous natural scientist, but the surroundings made him realise the importance on politics in modern world. He lived frugally and bought books about politics, history, geography and arts. With some of his friends he even organised a study society to discuss social questions. At university he studied social sciences and was good at English. When the Democracy Wall Movement began, Yang had realised its great importance and decided to take part in it. In order to be able to contribute all his energy to the Democracy Wall Movement he had sent a letter of resignation to this school, but it was rejected. Yang was described as enormously dedicated to the Democracy Movement.⁵²

Qunzhong cankao

Qunzhong cankao (Reference News for the Masses) appeared for the first time on 23 December 1978. Its editor in chief was Xia Xunjian who was a nuclear physicist living on the Beijing Daxue campus. At the moment of publishing the Qunzhong cankao Xia was a comparatively old member of the Democracy Movement, about 40 years of age. He had graduated in 1961 from Beida, and lost his job and forced to take temporary jobs afterwards.⁵³ Qunzhong cankao was largely his project, although the staff had at least seven other members. Among them were Chu Jipeng, a 41 year old worker in the chemical industry, Xu Qing, a 24 years old steel worker, Yang Changguang, also a 24 year old machinery worker, and Wang Shimin, an 'educated youth'. Members shared similar backgrounds with Xia Xunjian. For example, Chu Jipeng had a background of working as a teacher in the army for five years, but after losing his post he had become a common worker. He was noted for his disillusion with the ideal official image of Chinese society, and the nepotism and privileges the officials practised.⁵⁴ However, apart from the name of Xia Xunjian, the journal did not reveal the identities of the members of its staff on its pages.

In his writings Xia Xunjian was notably pro-Party and emphasised the role of science and a general scientific outlook on matters. He also used language more reminiscent of the Cultural Revolution than most of the other writers. This was probably partly because many of his articles were originally from 1972-1976. It also ran many articles in support of the petitioners and small news items, and did not engage in larger theoretical debate over political reforms. Nevertheless, the journal had one of the biggest runs in the Democracy Movement. In January it reportedly printed twenty thousand copies.⁵⁵ In its sixth issue in April 1979, the editors announced that publications the Qunzhong cankao would be temporarily suspended and that its title would be changed into *Minzhu yu sihua* (Democracy and the Four Modernisations).⁵⁶ The reason for this was that the new name better fitted the journal's ideals. That issue appeared on the third anniversary of the Fifth of April Movement in 1979, and was the last one as the new journal did not appear to have been published⁵⁷ – most probably as its editor Xia Xunjian was arrested on the 30th of April 1979.⁵⁸

Wotu

Wotu (Fertile Earth) was a bimonthly that has been usually classified as a literary journal. Over 90 % of its contents were short stories, plays or poetry, but as it declared, it also aimed to run articles on philosophy, history, economics and law.⁵⁹ It came out six times from January to October 1979, including one special issue in April to protest against the crackdown on the Democracy Movement and newly imposed limits on free speech.⁶⁰ It also published at least three supplementary issues, the last in November 1979, defending the right of the journals to exist.⁶¹ The amount of political prose published in Wotu was only a fraction of its literary articles, but its quality was comparatively high. For example, 'On Freedom of Speech' by Hu Ping (under the penname He Bian) which was published in the special issue of Wotu on 2 April was one of the longest and elaborative articles on the issue in the whole Democracy Movement.⁶²

Hu Ping, who acted as one of the Wotu's editors, was a graduate philosophy student at Beida. Originally from Chengdu, Sichuan, he had enrolled to Beida in 1978. With a radical Red Guards background he had published one of the first Red Guards publications in Chengdu in 1966. Hu had publicly criticised Lin Biao for the personality cult of Chairman Mao in 1970, which had brought him under persecution. In 1973 he was sent down to Yunnan, where the stay had not been a pleasant one, as his family had been accused of 'having overseas connections.'⁶³ Hu Ping's ideas on how to remove despotism and dictatorship had also begun to form during the Cultural Revolution around 1970, and his articles had been ready for three years before the Democracy Movement provided the opportunity to publish them.⁶⁴ The idea to publish a journal had first formed around the end of 1976 in the journal's nascent editorial group.⁶⁵

Wotu was a joint undertaking of people from various universities, which also probably explains the relatively high quality of its contents. The correspondent editor was Li Jiawen whose address was in the Haidian district – the university area of the capital. Other editors were Jiang Hong, a law expert from Shifan Daxue⁶⁶ and other editors and contributors to it came from the Beijing Broadcasting College. The journal was also one of most quoted in official and foreign press due to its relatively high quality of content and printing work. Wang Jing's story 'In the Dossiers of the Society' was one of its most popular short stories. It was even revised and reprinted in the October 1979 issue of the official Cinematic Creative Writing.⁶⁷ That the journal also had connections with the authorities was shown when its seminar in July 1979 on literature theory was attended by representatives of: the CASS institute of literary research, Ministry of Culture department of literary research, Youth League literary research office, Wenshu bao, Renmin wenzue, Zhongguo wenzue, and Zhongguo qingnian bao.⁶⁸ Since its articles were also reprinted in official journals demonstrates how the reformist elements in the Party and government at least did not deem some of the material in it as too controversial.

Kexue minzhu fazhi

Another central journal in the Beijing Democracy Movement was Kexue minzhu fazhi, whose first issue came out also on 8 January 1979. This journal began when Gong Nianzhou, from the *Beijing Xiqǔ Xueyuan* (College for Traditional Chinese Opera), put up a poster at the Democracy Wall on 12 December 1978, soliciting contributions to the

new journal. It was dedicated to collect and publish the Democracy Wall posters in the spirit of “*the beloved Zhou Enlai, the great Fifth of April Movement’s warriors and the founders of the Democracy Wall*”. It was exceptional in the sense that, apart from its editorial notes, the journal did not publish its own articles, but copied them from the Xidan Wall and other places. In so doing it served as the ‘Reader’s Digest’ of the Democracy Wall Movement when it came to accepting different points of view. Further, its editorial stance was the most liberal of the Democracy Movement’s journals. It included posters on various topics and lines, e.g. it could run posters both critical and praising of Marxism side by side. The journal’s chief editor Gong Nianzhou was also criticised for this, yet, as such, it probably fulfilled to some degree its self-declared mission of recording the events and opinions expressed at the Xidan Wall.⁶⁹

As the Opening Words of the journal stated, due to the great historical significance of the Democracy Wall Movement, the collection, research, and ordering of its poems and prose was a great task, indeed; “*If one disregards this great revolutionary popular movement, one will receive the condemnation of history!*”⁷⁰ It announced it sought material that praised Chairman Mao and the Party leaders, the late Premier Zhou, the old revolutionary generation, the Fifth of April Movement and the Democracy Wall, as well as those critical of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four and other dark characters in the Party. Other material that dealt with science, democracy and legal issues or assessed historical figures in scientific and dialectical matter was also welcome, as were other popular journals and public complaints.⁷¹ In practise then, almost everything that was posted on Xidan Wall could be published in Kexue minzhu fazhi. The journal was also not sold, but handed out free and posted to the walls of Beijing with the aim of reaching maximum audience.⁷²

The nature of the journal as a compilation of dazibaos made it different in content to the rest of the journals. For example, on the other hand there was both more criticism and praise of Mao Zedong than in all the other journals put together, yet on other hand, it could even run the posters critical to the Democracy Movement, but did not publish the most outspoken criticism of the Party by Tansuo group. Considering the size and frequency of the Kexue minzhu fazhi (once in two weeks) the editorial task has to have been comparatively demanding, yet, apart from Gong Nianzhou, the journal stayed quiet about its staff. In only one short article did Gong extend his thanks for copying the material from the Democracy Wall to Kexue minzhu fazhi to two editor groups viz ‘World Literature’ (Shijie wenxue) and Heart Stele (Xinbei).⁷³ Yet, both of these are unknown as journals and were thus probably activist groups without their own journals.

Smaller Journals

There were also a number of smaller journals which came out in the Beijing Democracy Movement. Qiushi (Autumn Fruits or Harvest, but also a word play of the ‘seek truth from facts’ slogan) was mostly a literary journal that was issued for the first time in March 1979. It was edited and published by the Beijing Broadcasting College students, but did not seek support from the school and was therefore considered to be an unofficial journal.⁷⁴ It disappeared in the first wave of arrests in March-April 1979.⁷⁵ Another

journals, one with a similar sounding name Qiushi bao (Looking for Truth Journal), and Baihua (Hundred Flowers) were actually edited by a team headed by a Bao Xiang, but very little is known about him and the other writers in the journal as they all used pennames.⁷⁶ Qiushi bao was first issued on 1 January 1979 and had various articles on politics and literature. Baihua came out later in October 1979 and concentrated on literary analysis.⁷⁷

In its articles Qiushi bao had, for the lack of better word, probably the most utopian stance the journals. For example, it ran an article from Bao Xiang on the political system of a future communist society in its sixth issue. The article was originally written in 1962, which demonstrates how even some long-standing utopian dreams from before the Cultural Revolution in Chinese society still found their way to publicity in the Democracy Movement's journals.⁷⁸ Other smaller journals included Yuanshangcao (Grass on the Plain), Minzhu yu shidai (Democracy and Modernity, or Time), Shidai (Times), Shenghuo (Life) and Yue man lou (Full Moon Tower). The last came out in three issues in the autumn of 1979 and was a literary journal edited by Ye Dechan. Xin Tiandi (New World) by a Wang Shuangli came out at least once in Beijing, probably later half of 1979. It was a 'synthetic' journal, i.e. it published both poetry and political essays. Its particular emphasis lied on advocating borrowing from abroad.⁷⁹ Finally, another small literary journal during this time, Hua Ci (Thorn), was edited by a Nie Baolin.⁸⁰

NOTES TO APPENDIX 1

¹ *Hòujì* [Postscript], Qimeng cóngkān zhì yì [Qimeng Collection 1] (Guiyang), CUP 3, 116

² Garside 1981, 218 and 284-285; Chen Ruoxi 1982, 15; According to Goodman (1981, 103) the Guiyang branch had four members in the beginning. Also some other authors see Qimeng as the first journal to come out in the Democracy Movement proper, see Chen Ruoxi: *Zhōngguó dàlù tánhuā...* 1981 in CUP 4, 314. Others see that the first one was Siwu luntan (Goodman 1981, 168; Liu 1981, 57). The early date, 11 October 1978, given in the first Qimeng journals is explained by the fact that the society used the date it posted its first poster at Tiananmen Square as the date of the establishment of its journal.

³ Christiansen et alii 1980, 31; Chen Ruoxi 1982, 43; Liu Sheng-chi (1984b, 64) gives the date January 1 1979 for the meeting.

⁴ Chen Ruoxi 1982, 41

⁵ Liu Sheng-chi 1984b, 63-64

⁶ Christiansen et alii 1980, 31

⁷ Nathan 1985, 4

⁸ According to Liu Sheng-chi (1984b, 58-59) Qimeng Society had been formed in the autumn of 1978 by former Red Guards and sent-down youth and had some one hundred members.

⁹ Liu Qing 1983, 78-79; Huang and Seymour (1980, 18), Liu Shang-chi (1984b, 70) and Goodman (1981, 103) date the split to the beginning of March when the declarations of establishing Jiedong Society were posted in Guiyang (27.2.1979) and a little later in Beijing.

¹⁰ *Jiědòngshè shēngmíng* [Thaw Declaration], Jiedong 1 / 1979, CUP 20, 289-290, was dated March 1979. Nathan 1985, 16-17; Chen Ruoxi (1983, 41) sees that *Jiedong* was the first group to publish a journal, but either this is mistaken, or then the Jiedong Chen refers to was different than the one that split off Qimeng in March 1979. The journals did not have any copyrights to their names and therefore same names could be used simultaneously, or in succession by different groups, as happened to Tansuo. Jiedong counted the second and third issues of Qimeng as its first and second issues.

¹¹ Widor 1987, 19-27

¹² *Liánhé gōnggào* [Joint Declaration], Zeren 1 / 1980, CUP 18, 158-159

¹³ Widor 1981 (I), 31; there is another version to this account, however, offered by Liu Sheng-chi (1981, 62-63; 1984b, 117) who sees that Liu Qing put up the Renmin Luntan poster and then formed Siwu luntan together with Lü Po and Xu Wenli. The way Liu Qing's name appeared only in the fourth issue of Siwu luntan supports the version offered above. Also Xu Wenli's (2001, 340) short biography supports this version.

¹⁴ These are in *Zhì dúzhě* [For the Readers], Siwu luntan 4 (2 / 1979), CUP 4, 77-79

¹⁵ Chen Ruoxi 1982, 50

¹⁶ Rosen and Nathan 1983, 3; Harrison 1983, 874

¹⁷ Qing Shi: *Líu Qīng jūn jiānjiè* [Mr. Liu Qing in Focus], Siwu luntan 15 (13 / 1979), CUP 10, 17

¹⁸ Liu Qing 1983, 64-65

¹⁹ Li Zong 1993, 118

²⁰ Goodman 1981, 93

²¹ Munro 1984b, 5-6

²² Christiansen et alii 1980, 37. Xu Wenli was responsible for the day-to-day working of the Siwu luntan (Liu Qing 1983, 75).

²³ Chen Ruoxi 1982, 52

²⁴ Widor 1981 (I), 411

²⁵ *Zhongguo renquan xuānyán –Shìjiū tiào* [Declaration of Chinese Human Rights –19 Points], *Zhongguo renquan* 1 / 1979, CUP 2, 187-190; Brodsgaard 1981, 766

²⁶ Widor 1981 (I), 411

²⁷ Chen Ruoxi 1982, 40-41; For denunciation of the splitters, see *Zhōngguó Rénquán méng zhíxíng wēiyuánhùi guānyú shǎoshù rénren gōngkāi fēnlì lìnglì tóngméng de juéyì* [Chinese Human Rights League's Executive Committee's Decision of the on the Minority Splitters], *Neibu jianbao* 2 / 1979, CUP 3, 243-245 and *Lùn rénquán yùndòng yǔ mínzhǔ yùndòng de qǔxiāopài*, DCDM I 1981, 540-541; Chen Lü's role in the *Zhongguo renquan tongmeng* is described in *Guānyú Chen Lü tóngzhì* [On Comrade Chen Lü], DCDM I 1981, 547-553-554.

²⁸ Widor 1981 (I), 21-22

²⁹ These issues are dealt with from Chen Lü's point of view in *Lùn rénquán yùndòng yǔ mínzhǔ yùndòng de qǔxiāopài*, DCDM I 1981, 540-541, the quotation on p. 541

³⁰ Goodman (1981, 96, 103-104 and 170) gives the date of the split as March 1979

³¹ Another journal with high official contacts was *Renmin zhi sheng* in Guangdong edited by Wang Xizhe of the Li Yizhe, a national celebrity after his rehabilitation in January 1979. Here the relationship was not straightforward, as Wang was a critic of the existing system that could not be co-opted (Rosen 1985, passim, especially 15-18).

³² Nathan 1985, 19-20. Peng Zhen was the former mayor of Beijing, who had had been one of the first victims of the Cultural Revolution in the Party leadership. The rehabilitation of the Li Yizhe group had been decided in the mid 1978, but carried out only after the third plenum of the eleventh central committee on 6 January 1979 (Rosen, 1985, 7-8).

³³ See e.g. Li Ying: *Wāng Dōngxìng jīnrì Wèi Zhōngxián?* [Wang Dongxing –Today's Wei Zongxian?], *Beijing zhi chun* 3, CUP 4, 168-172; *Rénmínde xuèhàn bāróng huīhuò* [The People's Sweat and Toil Does Not Brook Squander] *Beijing zhi chun* 3, CUP 4, 176

³⁴ Chen Ruoxi 1981, 318; According to Widor (1981 II, 57) only one member of the editorial board was not a 'Tiananmen Hero'.

³⁵ Chen Ruoxi 1982, 44-47; Widor (II) 1981, 58 and 60. However, both Han and Wang were forced to stand down from their Youth League posts after participating in the Democracy Wall Movement.

³⁶ Brodsgaard 1981, 765-766; According to Widor (1981 II, 67-68) the decision to print *Beijing zhi chun* was made on factory floor level by printers of the Foreign Language Press, and was due to the close connection of the Press and the 'Tiananmen Heroes' created, when the Press had printed collections of the Fifth of April Movement poems. As the consequence of printing *Beijing zhi chun*, the cadres at the Press had to undergo self-criticism.

³⁷ Chen Ruoxi 1981, 319; Black and Munro 1989, 45-46

³⁸ Goodman 1981, 89

³⁹ Lü Po of Siwu luntan also joined the visit. As a son of a relatively high Party cadre, he was of interest to the establishment. According to Wang Ruoshui, (in Hsu 1996, 110) Hu Yaobang later explained that he had tried to convince his young audience that they needed the leadership of the older generation in politics, but

they had not listened to him. Wang's account reveals that Hu Yaobang met with Lü Po at least once more, but could not convince him to stop his activism. See also Liu Qing (1983, 65).

⁴⁰ Widor 1981 (II), 67

⁴¹ Wang's story here is based on Black and Munro (1993, 33-41).

⁴² According to Chen Ruoxi, the journal's founding members were Wei Jingsheng, Lu Lin and Yang Guang (1983, 45). Another Tansuo member was named Yi Yi. Before joining Tansuo, Yang Guang and Lu Lin took reportedly part in the editorial work of *Minzhuqiang* which was a one-off journal that appeared at Xidan in the middle of December. It was practically a reprint of Lü Po's *dazibao* on 'Reign of Silence', but it had a non-Marxist introduction to it (Widor 1981 (I), 30).

⁴³ Jin Sheng (Wei Jingsheng): *Dì wǔ gè xiàndàihuà -mínzhǔ jí qítā* [The Fifth Modernisation –Democracy and Others], Tansuo 1 / 1979, CUP 1, 3-11

⁴⁴ Huang and Seymour 1980; Schell 1999

⁴⁵ Lu Lin: *Fā kān yǔ tíng kān* [Publishing and Discontinuing Publishing], Tansuo 4 / 1979, CUP 3, 17-18

⁴⁶ Lu Lin: *Rúciđe fǎngémìng fēnzǐ –wǒ suǒ liǎojiěde Wei Jingsheng, Yang Guang* [Such Counterrevolutionary Elements –How I See Wei Jingsheng and Yang Guang], Tansuo 4 / 1979, CUP 3, 38-39

⁴⁷ Lu Lin: *Fā kān yǔ tíng kān...*, 20-21, quotes figures from 150 to 800 issues, the higher figures are from Chen Ruoxi (1982, 44).

⁴⁸ Tansuo 6 / 1979 (October 1979), CUP 17, 299-312

⁴⁹ Butterfield 1982, 408-409

⁵⁰ Widor 1981 (I), 25

⁵¹ Goodman 1981, 36-37

⁵² Lu Lin: *Rúciđe fǎngémìng fēnzǐ –wǒ suǒ liǎojiěde Wei Jingsheng, Yang Guang* [Such Counter-revolutionary Elements –How I See Wei Jingsheng and Yang Guang], Tansuo 4 / 1979, CUP 3, 40-41

⁵³ *Xīnnián jìshū* [A New Year's Letter], *Qunzhong cankao xiaoxi*, 2 / 1979, 8.1.1979, CUP 2, 170

⁵⁴ Christiansen et alii 1980, 29-30

⁵⁵ Mab Huang and Seymour 1980, 15

⁵⁶ *Běn bào jiāng gǎibǎn hé gèng gǎi bàomíng bìng juédìng zànshí tíngkān qǐshì* [Announcement on the Temporary Suspension of Publication of the Journal Due to Revising Edition and Changing Its Name], *Qunzhong cankao xiaoxi* 6, 5 / 1979, 5.4.1979, CUP 4, 143

⁵⁷ Compared to the list provided by Widor (1987, 106-107); The announcement of the new association was made in public at the Xidan and could be found in *Kexue minzhu fazhi* (Jing Zhou: *Kuàibào tōngxùn dì èr* [Express Reports 2], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 10 / 1979 (1.5.1979), CUP 14, 105-106)

⁵⁸ Brodsgaard 1981, 768

⁵⁹ *Fākān qǐshì* [Declaration of Publication], *Wotu tekan* 2.4.1979, CUP 12, 119

⁶⁰ The last normal issue of *Wotu* in October 1979 was actually a reprint of the journal's first issue from January 1979.

⁶¹ *Wotu zengkan* 3, 11 / 1979, CUP 13

⁶² He Bian: *Lùn yánlùn zìyóu* [On Freedom of Speech], *Wotu tekan* 2.4.1979, CUP 12, 67-115

⁶³ Munro 1984, 80-81

⁶⁴ Hu Ping 1992, 156

⁶⁵ Widor 1981 (I), 83

⁶⁶ Chen Jinsong 1998, 120

⁶⁷ Chen Ruoxi 1982, 52-55. Original in *Wotu* 2 / 1979 (3.8.), CUP 11, 308-347

⁶⁸ *Guānyú xīnrén wèntí zuò tánhuì* [On the Meeting Concerning the Problem of New Man], *Wotu* 4-5 / 1979 hekan, CUP 13, 191-193

⁶⁹ *Zhēngwén qǐshì* [Soliciting Articles], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 1 / 1979 (8.1.1979), CUP 6, 286

⁷⁰ *Qiányán* [Foreword], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 1 / 1979 (8.1.1979), CUP 6, 239

⁷¹ *Zhēngwén qǐshì* [Soliciting Articles], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 1 / 1979 (8.1.1979), CUP 6, 286

⁷² Goodman 1981, 9-10

⁷³ *Zhì xiè* [Thanks], *Kexue minzhu fazhi* 7 / 1979 (10.4.1979), CUP 12, 1

⁷⁴ Chen Ruoxi, 1982, 66

⁷⁵ Christiansen et alii 1980, 32

⁷⁶ Liu Sheng-chi 1984b, 311

⁷⁷ Christiansen et alii 1980, 30-31

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- ⁷⁸ Bao Xiang: *Dùì gòngchǎnzhǔyì shèhuìde shèxiǎng* [Tentative Plan about Communist Society], *Qishi bao* 6 / 1979, CUP 3, 11.4.1979, 159-165
- ⁷⁹ *Zhēngǎo qǐshì* [Announcement to Solicit Contributions], *Xin tiandi* 1 / 1979, CUP 20, 214
- ⁸⁰ *Gǎoyuē* [Notice to Contributors], *Hua ci* 1 / 1979, CUP 20, 256, in the second issue the correspondence address was under the name of Wang Dongsheng, *Hua ci* 2 / 1979, CUP 20, 257.