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图片 :

MAO AND LINCOLN

Part 1: Demon and deity

By Henry C K Liu

<http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/FC31Ad02.html>

Chairman Mao Zedong, the greatest revolutionary in modern Chinese history, has been unfairly vilified by the neo-liberal West, but he set a decaying China on the path to renewed greatness and provided a vision for a new China that will survive for centuries to come. In fact, Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president of the United States, is deified, while Mao is demonized.

Lincoln's assault on due process was decidedly more violent than Mao's alleged autocratic leadership style. The difference between Lincoln and Mao is that Lincoln's high-minded quest for equality in practice allowed a few to monopolize the resultant national wealth, while Mao tried to distribute it to all equally.

A look at the two great leaders - one of them a great revolutionary - is instructive:

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPCCC) held a seminar at the Great Hall of the People on December 30, 2003, to mark the 110th anniversary of Mao Zedong's birth. Hu Jintao, Chinese president and CPCCC general secretary, called for carrying on the great cause of the older generation of Chinese revolutionaries as the best way to commemorate Chairman Mao. The great cause is to build a socialist China that is prosperous, peaceful and strong, with equality for all its citizens, to carry on the grand tradition of Chinese civilization with friendship and goodwill toward all around the world.

The neo-liberal West goes so far as to accuse Mao of being a ruthless dictator, **allegedly murdering 30 million of his fellow citizens with his radical programs**, such as the controversial Great Leap Forward. Such propaganda bears little relation to the reality of Mao (as the greatest revolutionary in modern Chinese history who **set a decaying China on the path to renewed greatness**). Mao was neither perfect nor a superman. Like all humans, he made mistakes as a leader, but he provided **a vision for a new China that will survive for centuries to come**. Mao was demonized by the neo-liberal West simply because he was a communist. It is also a mistake for the Western left to interpret post-Mao China's strategic response to changing global geopolitical conditions as an ideological deviation from Mao's revolutionary vision for China.

Some libertarians vilify Lincoln

Lincoln, a great leader, is also vilified by his libertarian detractors as the US president who **suspended civil liberty and destroyed free markets**. While there is historical evidence of Lincoln being accountable for these partisan charges, there is also evidence that he did such with a higher purpose. **Elected by narrow pluralities, Lincoln is known as the US president who preserved the Union**. Under his leadership, and largely because of it, the United States moved closer to the full implementation of the promise that was contained in the Declaration of Independence: that all men are created equal; and toward fulfillment of the potential of the US constitution, which is the commitment to equality under the law.

Stopping in Philadelphia in 1861 on the way to his inauguration, Lincoln visited Independence Hall, where he said in a speech, "I have often inquired of myself what great principle or idea it was that kept this confederacy so long together. It was not the mere matter of the separation of colonies from the motherland, but something in that Declaration giving liberty, not alone to the people of this country, but hope to the world for all future time. It was that which gave promise that in due time the weights should be lifted from the shoulders of all men, and that all should have an equal chance. This is the sentiment embodied in that Declaration of Independence." Lincoln aimed to give hope to the world for liberty **by example, not by foreign wars**.

Lincoln scholar Harry Jaffa argues in *The Crisis of the House Divided* that Lincoln was a model statesman who stuck by high-minded principles as he fought to promote liberty, even though he had to suspend liberty temporarily to achieve his higher purpose. Gore Vidal's *Lincoln: A Novel* views Lincoln as a heroic figure who moved to change the very nature of American government and society, aiming toward greatness against the tide of popular opinion in sympathy with the South. **Preserving the Union was decidedly an undemocratic undertaking**.

And there are more dissenting critical views. Lincoln critic Tom DiLorenzo argues in *The Real Lincoln* that Lincoln was a calculating politician who waged the bloodiest war in American history, not to free the slaves, but to build an empire of corporate welfare. DiLorenzo points out that there were incidents of war-waging on innocent civilians at the very beginning, in 1862-63. **The town of Randolph, Tennessee, was burned to the ground** because Confederate sharpshooters sniped at Union ships. **Not being able to find the sharpshooters for punishment individually**, Union troops retaliated by burning down the whole town.

This kind of wholesale atrocity also was perpetrated **by the Nazis** eight decades later, but only in occupied lands and **not on fellow ethnic Germans, unless they were communists**. And this sort of wholesale atrocity went on all through the American Civil War, because **in a war between brothers**, there is usually no honor code. It is a sad testimony to the ascendance of inhumanity that wholesale slaughter of innocent civilians continues to this day in the name of a holy war on terrorism. And although preemptive self-defense may be justifiable, it is hardly a high-minded principle.

Lincoln sacrificed individual freedoms

In another book, *The Great Centralizer*, DiLorenzo documented much centralization of power in the first 18 months of the Lincoln administration, at the expense of individual freedom and states' rights, the founding principles of the American republic.

Regarding internal development, Leonard Curry wrote in *Blueprint for Modern America* that **constitutional scruples against government subsidy for private monopolies disappeared after Lincoln**,

ending seven decades of constitutional resistance against corporate welfare prior to Lincoln's presidency. **And money was nationalized under Lincoln.** Senator John Sherman said of the **National Currency Acts and the Legal Tender Acts**: "These will nationalize as much as possible, even the currency, so as to make men love their country before their states. All private interests, all local interests, all banking interests, the interest of individuals, everything should be subordinate now to the interest of the [central] government." The New York Times editorialized on March 9, 1863, that "the Legal Tender Act and the National Currency Bill crystallize a centralization of power such as [Alexander] Hamilton [the first US treasury secretary] might have eulogized as magnificent."

The tariff was tripled by Lincoln and remained at that high level for decades after the war ended. Harvard professor David Donald, a Pulitzer Prize-winning Lincoln biographer, wrote: "Lincoln and the Republicans intended to enact the high protective tariff that mothered monopoly, to pass a homestead law that invited speculators to loot the public domain, and to subsidize a transcontinental railroad that afforded infinite opportunities for jobbery [political-patronage jobs]."

One not-so-high-minded reason Lincoln and the Republicans gave for their opposition to the extension of slavery was that they wanted to preserve the new territories for white labor, not opposition to an immoral institution. They said clearly that they wanted the political support of **white laborers who did not want competition from black slave labor.** In practice, democracy often thrives on **the lowest instincts** of impassioned voters while ignoring the rights of the disfranchised. Representative democracy, as practiced in the United States, is an electoral power game in which the rich and the powerful have an overwhelming advantage over the weak and the poor, which is objectionable enough by itself, and it becomes absolutely repugnant when vaunted as a universal standard for a global holy war.

Lincoln a dictator?

In many scholarly works, such as *Constitutional Problems under Lincoln* by James Randall, *Freedom under Lincoln* by Dean Sprague, *The Fate of Liberty* by Mark Neely and *Constitutional Dictatorship* by Clinton Rossiter, **Lincoln is labeled a dictator because he launched a military invasion of the Southern states without consent of Congress and suspended habeas corpus**, with the result that at least 13,000 Northern citizens were imprisoned without arrest warrants being issued. For that matter, **the last war declared by Congress, constitutionally the sole authority for war declaration, was World War II**, after which all wars had been executive wars. Lincoln **censored all telegraph communication to control developing news on the Civil War; nationalized railroads for war transport and ordered federal troops to interfere in Northern elections.** David Donald writes also that the Republican Party won New York state by 7,000 votes in 1864 "under the protection of Federal bayonets".

Clement Vallandigham, Ohio congressman and leader of the Copperheads, Northern sympathizers with the South, accused Lincoln of continuing the Civil War after the Union had already been saved militarily in the Battle of Bull Run, simply to enslave white labor by freeing black slaves to compete unfairly in tight labor markets in the North. **Lincoln deported Vallandigham** after General Ambrose E Burnside, then commanding the Department of the Ohio, accused Vallandigham of violating General Order No 38, which threatened punishment for those declaring sympathy for the "enemy". Vallandigham was arrested, court-martialed, and sentenced to imprisonment for the rest of the war.

Lincoln also **confiscated firearms** from the public, depriving the American people of their constitutional right to bear arms. **Ministers in the South were imprisoned for not praying** for Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln's secretary of state, William Seward, set up a secret police force, and famously

boasted to Lord Lyons, the British ambassador, that he could ring a bell and have any man in America arrested without due process. The Journal of Commerce, early in the Lincoln administration, published a list of 100 newspapers in opposition to Lincoln's administration, and **Lincoln ordered the postmaster general to stop delivering the mail for those papers**, putting the government squarely in the business of violating freedom of the press. And these newspaper owners and editors were imprisoned for opposing Lincoln. All were justified as necessary to stop the secession.

Lincoln's famous Gettysburg Address resolution of not letting "government of the people, by the people and for the people" perish from the Earth was not kept by actual events after the Civil War, nor the resultant United States that emerged. A 2004 poll conducted by a non-profit organization shows that only 20 percent of Americans believe that their government works for them, ie, for the people in general; 56 percent believe that it works for special-interest lobbyists; and 80 percent believe that it works for large corporations.

Unlike Lincoln, Mao was dedicated to equality

Yet unlike Lincoln, Mao is not given credit in the West as a revolutionary of high-minded principles who fought for equality with all necessary means. In the context of the strong US tradition of civil liberty, Lincoln's assault on due process was decidedly more violent than Mao's alleged autocratic leadership style, since such is natural in Chinese political tradition. The difference between Lincoln and Mao is that Lincoln's high-minded quest for equality in practice allowed a few to monopolize the resultant national wealth, while Mao tried to distribute it to all equally.

Like Lincoln, Mao's tenure as leader of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the People's Republic of China (PRC) was entirely under **wartime conditions**, first a civil war with the Nationalists and, after the founding of the PRC, with more than two decades of total embargo imposed by a hostile US with extreme prejudice. Garrison state was not merely a mentality during Mao's time, it was a reality. Most of his policies, like those of Lincoln, must be viewed in the context of **wartime exigencies**. Still, it was Mao who engineered the US-China rapprochement in 1972, and it was Mao who rehabilitated Deng Xiaoping to carry on socialist construction with Chinese characteristics.

In March 2004, Chinese Premier **Wen Jiabao** vowed to live up to the people's expectations and commented on many issues related to China's political, economic and social development at a press conference shortly after the conclusion of the National People's Congress. The premier also highlighted the goal of maintaining a balanced and sustainable yet still relatively fast economic growth and he identified **agriculture, rural areas and the welfare of farming peasants** as the most pressing problems. He identified issues related to people as being those he cares about most. Wen pledged to continue reform, innovation and forging ahead with political courage, quoting verses from poems of Chairman Mao and the ancient Chinese patriotic poet Qu Yuan, the father of Chinese poetry and a national cultural hero, to express his determination to work harder for the people in spite recognized difficulties.

The premier identified as the first goal the establishment of a **"scientific and democratic decision-making mechanism"**, including a group decision-making system based on the people's will and consultations with experts and professional people. The second goal is to **administer the country according to law**: "We must prompt the government to administer the country in line with law, build a clean and honest government, and pursue the combination of the government's power and responsibility." The third goal is to **accept supervision from every corner of the society**, including the supervision from the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, and governments, both central and local, must solicit mass opinion and listen to diverse

views from the people.

Party to lead the people in respecting law

Wen also urged leading officials of the CCP and all party members to abide by the constitution and the country's laws. The constitution and laws will not be changed according to changes of state leaders or changes in the leaders' attention. The premier also stressed two principles: that **the party, as the people's vanguard, leads the people in making the constitution and laws**, and **leading party officials and all party members should play an exemplary role in implementing the constitution and laws**.

The amendment to the constitution is of great significance for China's development, he said, adding that it had just been passed at the national legislature's annual session with overwhelming support, reflecting the will of the entire people. He highlighted the **incorporation into the constitution the important thought of the "Three Represents" along with**

- **Marxism-Leninism,**
- **Mao Zedong Thought and**
- **Deng Xiaoping Theory**

as the guiding ideology for the party and the nation.

(The Three Represents, the CCP's modern mission statement, say that the party must always represent

- the development trend of China's advanced productive forces,
- the orientation of China's advanced culture and
- the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people.

It is now considered the distillation of the party's collective wisdom and is to be the party's guiding ideology for many years to come.)

These goals are not new in Chinese communist political culture. Mao, while always placing his faith in the power of the people, was also a vocal admirer of statesman **Shang Yang** (died 338 BC) of the Kingdom of **Qin** in the Warring States Period (408-221 BC). Shang Yang built the state's legal system upon the Book of Law, introduced a legalist government and propelled the Qin state to prosperity that enabled it to unite all of China, ushering in the Qin Dynasty. He introduced a new, standardized system of land allocation and reforms to taxation, he encouraged the cultivation of new frontiers and favored agriculture over commerce. Shang Yang burned books by Confucians in an effort to curb the philosophy's pervasive influence. Shang Yang was credited by Han Fei-zi with putting forth two precepts: **Ding Fa (fixing the standards)** and **Yi Min (all people as one)**. Han Fei was a prince of the state of Han who joined the state of Qin, but eventually he ran afoul of Qin's chief minister, Li Si (died 208 BC), and was forced to commit suicide in 233 BC.

Legalism, Confucianism, Taoism

Legalism is one of the three main schools in Chinese philosophy, the other two being Confucianism and Taoism (also transliterated as Daoism). **Legalists** believed that a nation should be governed by law, which must be clearly written and made public. All are equal before the law. Under the previous Zhou Dynasty (1122-256 BC), laws had been loosely written and controlled by tradition based on social classes. Legalism advocates that laws should reward those who obey them and punish those who break them. In addition, the legal system rules the state, not the officials. It is only through the impartial administration of law that a ruler can rule the state effectively.

In contrast to Confucianism, Legalism restricts moral issues to the making of law, not the administering of the law. Strict enforcement of the law is the foundation of a stable society. Still, the term "rule of law" has distinctly different meanings in Chinese political culture than in the West. Critical theory views the Western concept of the rule of law as merely a method by which the ruling class can justify its rule, as it alone determines what laws get passed based on its own narrow interests.

Legalism places importance on three aspects. **The first is shi (influence) or legitimacy**, the legal basis of power based on the legitimacy of the sovereign and the doctrinal orthodoxy of his policies. In a socialist society, legal legitimacy is inseparably tied to the interests of the people as represented by the socialist party. **The second is shu (skill) in manipulative exercise of power** in order to respond to the highest aspirations of the masses. **The third is fa (law)** which, once publicly proclaimed, should govern universally without exceptions. These three aspects Legalists consider the three pillars of a well-governed society.

This concept of the rule of law is different from that used in the US legal system, in which laws are made by lobbyists, manipulated to serve special interests and applied by courts dominated by high-priced lawyers. The US legal system is blatantly undemocratic, with its courts packed with politically appointed judges and a legal-fee structure unaffordable by the average citizen.

The so-called **Gang of Four** distorted Legalist politics in China toward the end of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in the 1970s. For their power-usurping game, they used as shi (influence) for legitimacy; rote resuscitation of Marxist orthodox doctrine, reinforced by a co-opted Maoist personality cult that negates the very nature of Mao; party factionalism as shu (skill) for exercising power; and dictatorial rule as fa (laws) to be obeyed with no exceptions allowed for tradition, ancient customs or special relationships and with little regard for human conditions. These self-styled Legalists yearned for a perfectly administered state, even if the price was the unhappiness of its citizens. They sought an inviolable system of impartial justice, without extenuating circumstances, even at the expense of the innocent or the wrongly accused. Worst of all, they put themselves above the law.

Feudalism with fascist, socialistic, democratic characteristics

Feudalism in China has concurrent aspects of what modern political science would label as fascist, socialist and democratic. As a socio-political system, feudalism is inherently authoritarian and totalitarian. However, since feudal cultural ideals have always been meticulously nurtured by Confucianism to be congruent with the political regime, social control, while pervasive, is seldom consciously felt as oppressive by the contented public. Or more accurately, social oppression, both vertical, such as sovereign to subject, and horizontal, such as gender prejudice, is considered civilized self-restraint and natural for lack of a socially acceptable alternative vision. Concepts such as equality, individuality, privacy, personal freedom and democracy, are deemed antisocial, and only longed for by the mentally deranged, such as radical Taoists.

This would be true in large measure up to modern times when radical Taoists would be replaced by other radical political and cultural dissidents. A distinction needs to be made between genuine indigenous dissent and dissent from those merely playing opportunistically for foreign imperialist favor. Dissidents who hide under foreign imperialist patronage and protection, conveniently enjoying bogus martyr status without the inconvenience of martyrs' fates, will pay for such free rides with loss of credibility. Economic self-interest, the foundation of market fundamentalism, is viewed in Chinese culture as a character flaw. **Until modern times, merchants were ranked in social status below**

prostitutes in feudal society.

The imperial system in China took the form of a centralized federalism of autonomous local lords in which the authority of the sovereign was symbiotically bound to, but clearly separated from, the authority of the local lords. Unless the local lords abused their local authority, the emperor's authority over them, while all inclusive in theory, would not extend beyond national matters in practice, particularly if the sovereign's rule was to remain moral within its ritual bounds. This tradition continues to the modern time. This condition is easily understood by Americans, whose federal government is relatively progressive on certain issues of national standards with regard to community standards in backward sections of the union.

Confucianism (Ru Jia), through the code of rites (li), seeks to govern the behavior and obligation of each person, each social class and each socio-political unit in society through self-constraint. Its purpose is to facilitate the smooth functioning and the perpetuation of the feudal system. Therefore, the power of the sovereign, though politically absolute, is not free from the constraints of behavior deemed proper by Confucian values for a moral sovereign, just as the authority of the local lords is similarly constrained.

Issues of constitutionality in the US political milieu become issues of **proper rites and befitting morality** in Chinese dynastic politics. To a large extent, this approach continues to apply to the modern Chinese polity. The legitimacy of the dictatorship of **the proletariat** (defined in Chinese political nomenclature as **the property-less class**) lies in its intrinsic moral validity, upon which the CCP assumes its leadership role in government. Criticizing the CCP for not subjecting itself to election challenge is a debate that lies outside the range of its discourse. Morality is not an elective issue.

The party must lead the people

The Three Represents is a newly adopted theory put forward by former Chinese president **Jiang Zemin**. The official formal statement of the theory is as follows: "Reviewing the course of struggle and the basic experience over the past 80 years and looking ahead to the arduous tasks and bright future in the new century, our party should continue to stand in the forefront of the times and lead the people in marching toward victory. In a word, the party must always represent

- the requirements of the development of China's advanced productive forces,
- the orientation of the development of China's advanced culture, and
- the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people in China

."

The correct interpretation of the theory is still under study. Logic dictates that the "Three Represents" must be of equal priority. The ultimate test is "the fundamental interest of the overwhelming majority of the people" without which the first two "Represents" would be irrelevant. And the overwhelming majority in China is the Chinese peasant. The inclusion of capitalists and entrepreneurs in the party and the legitimization of private property in the constitution remain ideologically problematic in a political party of the proletariat.

The ideal Confucian state rests on a stable society over which a virtuous and benevolent emperor rules by moral persuasion based on a Code of Rites, rather than on law. Justice would emerge from a timeless morality that governs social behavior. Man would be orderly out of self-respect for his own moral character, rather than from fear of punishment prescribed by law. A competent and loyal literati-

bureaucracy faithful to a just political order would run the government according to moral principles rather than following rigid legalistic rules devoid of moral content. The interest of the masses is the highest morality in politics.

Confucian values, because they were designed to preserve the then-existing feudal system, unavoidably ran into conflict with contemporary ideas reflective of new emerging social conditions. It is in the context of its inherent hostility toward progress and its penchant for obsolete nostalgia that Confucian values, rather than feudalism itself, become culturally oppressive and socially damaging. When Chinese revolutionaries throughout history, and particularly in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, rebelled against the cultural oppression of reactionary Confucianism, they simplistically and conveniently linked it synonymously with political feudalism.

Mao aimed to smash Confucian dominance

These revolutionaries succeeded in dismantling the formal governmental structure of political feudalism because it was the more visible target. Their success was due also to the terminal decadence of the decrepit governmental machinery of dying dynasties, such as the ruling house of the three-century-old, dying Qing Dynasty (1583-1911). Unfortunately, these triumphant revolutionaries remained largely ineffective in remolding Confucian dominance in feudal culture, even among the progressive intelligentsia. **Mao** understood this reactionary aspect of Confucian culture. He aimed to reform not only the polity of the Chinese state but also the culture of Chinese society.

Almost a century after the fall of the feudal Qing dynastic house in 1911, after countless movements of socio-political reform and revolution, ranging from moderate democratic liberalism to extremist Bolshevik radicalism, China has yet to find a workable alternative to the feudal political culture that would be intrinsically sympathetic to its aspirational social tradition of populist government. Chinese revolutions, including the modern revolution that began in 1911, through its various metamorphoses over the span of almost four millennia in **overthrowing successive political regimes of transplanted feudalism**, repeatedly killed successive infected patients - in the form of virulent governments.

But these revolutions failed repeatedly to sterilize the infectious virus of Confucianism in its feudal political culture. The modern destruction of political feudalism produced **administrative chaos and social instability in China until the founding of the People's Republic** in 1949. **That is the undeniable contribution of Mao Zedong to Chinese political history.**

But **Confucianism** still appeared alive and well as cultural feudalism, even under communist rule, and within the CCP. It continued to instill in its victims an instinctive **hostility toward new ideas**, especially if they were of foreign origin. Confucianism adhered to an ideological **rigidity that amounted to blindness** to objective problem-solving. Almost a century of recurring cycles of modernization movements, nationalist or communist, liberal or Marxist, did not manage to make even a slight dent in the all-controlling precepts of Confucianism in the Chinese mind. In fact, in 1928, when the CCP attempted to introduce a soviet system of government by elected councils in areas of northern China under its control, many peasants earnestly thought a new "Soviet" dynasty was being founded by a new emperor by the name of "So Viet". Mao Zedong recognized **this feudal mentality** as the central obstacle to China's revitalization.

Confucianism considered Legalism an aberration

During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of 1966-76, **the debate between Confucianism (Ru**

Jia) and Legalism (Fa Jia) was resurrected as allegorical dialogue for contemporary power struggle. Legalist concepts such as equal justice under law for all and none being above the law are considered by Confucians aberrations of social morals and corruption of moral governance. At the dawn the 21st century, Confucianism remained alive and well in Chinese politics regardless of ideology in political economy. Modern **China was still a society in search of an emperor figure and a country governed by feudal relationships, but devoid of a compatible political vehicle that would turn these tenacious, traditional social instincts toward constructive purposes**, instead of allowing them to manifest themselves as rationalization for corruption.

Of the three great revolutions in modern history - the French (1789), the Chinese (1911) and the Russian (1917) - each overthrew feudal monarchial systems to introduce **idealized democratic alternatives that had difficulty holding the country together without periods of terror**. The French and Russian revolutions both made the fundamental and tragic error of revolutionary regicide and suffered decades of social and political dislocation as a result, with little if any socio-political benefit in return.

In France, regicide did not even prevent eventual restoration of monarchy imposed externally by foreign victors. The Chinese revolution in 1911 was not plagued by regicide, but it prematurely dismantled political feudalism before it had a chance to develop a workable alternative, plunging the country into **decades of warlordism**. Worse still, it left largely undisturbed a Confucian culture while it demolished its political vehicle. The result was that almost a century after the fall of the last dynastic house, the culture-bound nation was still groping for an appropriate and workable political system, regardless of economic ideology.

Next: Mao's glory will outshine neo-liberals

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Part 2: The Great Leap Forward not all bad

<http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/FD01Ad04.html>

By Henry C K Liu

Most of the mass movements initiated by Mao Zedong were successful in changing old ideas and reshaping Chinese society. Even the Great Leap Forward, for which Mao is vilified, was successful in important areas, and estimates of 30 million deaths are wildly exaggerated. Bad weather, famines and the US trade embargo caused most of the deaths. Today's neo-liberal globalization has inflicted far more death and suffering than the Great Leap.

Mao understood that the pernicious power of Confucianism was permeating Chinese society and hindering its advancement, so he tried to combat it by launching mass movements, culminating in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in 1966. But even after a decade of enormous social upheaval, tragic personal sufferings, fundamental economic dislocation and unparalleled diplomatic isolation, the Cultural Revolution failed to achieve its goal even with serious damage to the nation's physical and socio-economic infrastructure and to the prestige of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), not to mention the decline of popular support and near total bankruptcy of revolutionary zeal among even loyal party cadres.

Imperial monarchy cannot be restored in modern China. Once a political institution is overthrown, all the king's men cannot put it back together again. Nor would that be desirable. Yet **the modern political**

system in China, despite its revolutionary clothing and radical rhetoric, is still fundamentally feudal, both in the manner in which power is distributed and in its administrative structure.

In Chinese politics, **loyalty is always preferred over competence**. The ideal is to have both in a minister. Failing that, **loyalty without competence is preferred as being less dangerous than competence without loyalty** - the stuff of which successful revolts are made. For socialist China, loyalty is **to the socialist cause**. It is imperative that leaders remain loyal to the socialist ideal. Confucianism (Ru Jia), by placing blind faith in a causal connection between virtue and power, has remained the main cultural obstacle to modern China's attempt to evolve from a society governed by men into a society governed by law. The danger of Confucianism lies not in its aim to endow the virtuous with power, but in its tendency to label the powerful as virtuous.

In order to change Chinese feudal society toward communist social order, which is understood by communists as a necessary goal of human development, Mao Zedong developed specific methods out of Leninist concepts that rendered special characteristics to Chinese communism, its strengths and shortcomings. These methods, above all the system of organized mass movements, stress the change of social consciousness, ie, the creation of new men for a new society, as the basis for changing reality, ie, the mode of production. The concept of the mass politics, relevant in Chinese political thought from ancient time, plays a role as important as that of the elite cadre corps within the party.

Mao's mass line

The mass movement as an instrument of political communication from above to below is peculiar to Chinese communist organization. This phenomenon is of utmost importance in understanding the nature and dynamics of the governance structure of the CCP. The theoretical foundation of mass movement as a means of mediation between the will of the leaders and the people pre-supposes that nothing is impossible for the masses, quantitatively understood as a collective subject, if their power is concentrated by a party of correct thought and action. This concept comes out of Mao's romantic yet well-placed faith in the great strength the masses are capable of developing in the interest of their own well-being. So the "will of the masses" has to be articulated by the masses and within the masses, which the CCP calls the "mass line".

Mao's mass-line theory requires that the leadership elite be close to the people, that it is continuously informed about the people's will and that it transforms this will into concrete actions by the masses. From the masses back to the masses. This means: **take the scattered and unorganized ideas of the masses and, through study, turn them into focused and systemic programs, then go back to the masses and propagate and explain these ideals until the masses embrace them as their own.**

Thus **mass movements** are initiated at the highest level, announced to party cadres at central and regional work conferences, subject to cadre criticism and modification, after which starts the first phase of mass movement. Mass organizations are held to provoke the "people's will", through readers' letters to newspapers and rallies at which these letters are read and debated. The results are then officially discussed by the staff of leading organs of the state and the party, after which the systematized "people's will" is **clarified into acts** of law or resolutions, and then the mass movement spreads to the whole nation.

The history of Chinese politics is a history of mass movements. **Mass movements successfully implemented Land Reform 1950-53; Marriage Reform 1950-52; Collectivization 1953 - the General Line of Socialist Transformation (from national bourgeois democratic revolution to**

proletarian socialist revolution); and Nationalization 1955 (from private ownership of industrial means of production into state ownership). The method used against opposition was thought reform through "brainwashing" (without derogatory connotation), which is **a principle of preferring the changing of the consciousness of political opponents instead of physically liquidating them.**

Mao's mass movements succeeded until 1957

The Hundred Flower Movement of 1957 was launched on February 27 by Mao with his famous four-hour speech, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People", before 1,800 leading cadres. In it, Mao distinguished "contradiction between the enemy and ourselves" from "contradiction among the people", which should not be resolved by a dictatorship, ie physical force, but by open discussion with criticism and counter criticism. Up until 1957, the mass-movement policies of Mao achieved spectacular success.

Land reform was completed, the struggle for women's emancipation was progressing well, and collectivization and nationalization were leading the nation into socialism. Health services were a model of socialist construction in both cities and the countryside. The party's revolutionary leadership was accepted enthusiastically by society. By 1958, agricultural production almost doubled from 1949 (108 million tons to 185 million tons), coal production quadrupled to 123 million tons, and steel production grew from 100,000 tons to 5.3 million tons.

The only problem came from bourgeois intellectual rebellion. On May 25, 1957, Mao expressed his anxiety at a session of the Standing Committee of the Politburo, and gave his approval to those who warned against too much bourgeois liberty. That afternoon, Mao told cadres at a Conference of Communist Youth League that "all words and deeds which deviate from socialism are basically wrong". At the opening session of the People's Congress on June 26, Zhou Enlai initiated the "counter criticism" against the critics. Mao's call for open criticism was serious and genuine, but the discussion he had conceived as a safety valve reached a degree of intensity he had not anticipated. Mao overestimated the stability of the political climate and underestimated the residual influence of **Confucianism.**

Crossroads: Soviet model or independent path

Against this background, the CCP stood at the crossroads of choosing the Soviet model of development or an independent path. Economy development was based on three elements:

Build up heavy industry at the expense of agriculture.

Establish an extensive system of individual incentives by means of which productive forces could be developed from a conviction that the superiority of socialist modes of production would be vindicated by a visible rise in living standards.

The acceleration of the socialist transformation of society in order to create the precondition required by the CCP for establishing a socialist order.

Two paths were opened to the CCP leadership in 1958:

Consolidation.

Pushing forward toward permanent revolution.

Mao was forced by geopolitical conditions (the abrupt withdrawal of Soviet aid and the US Cold War embargo) to overcome the lack of capital through mobilization of China's vast labor reservoir. The strategy was to **connect political campaigns to production campaigns**. Under pressure from orthodox Leninists within the party apparatus, with the failure of the "Hundred Flower Movement", Mao concluded it was impossible to create a socialist consciousness through a gradual improvement of material living conditions; that consciousness and reality had to be changed concurrently and in conjunction through gigantic new efforts at mobilization.

This led to the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957-58, followed by "Three Red Banners" in the spring of 1958, initiating simultaneous development of industry and agriculture through the use of both modern and traditional methods of production under the "General Line of Building Socialism". It was to be implemented through a labor-intensive development policy by a "Great Leap Forward" and by establishing a comprehensive collectivization by establishing "People's Communes".

Great Leap Forward succeeded in many areas

The Great Leap Forward (GLF) was not a senseless fantasy as many in the neo-liberal West and some in China have since suggested in hindsight. It called for the new system of "Two Decentralizations, Three Centralizations and One Responsibility". By this was meant the decentralized use of labor and local investment; central control over political decisions, planning and administration of natural investment capital; one responsibility meant every basic unit to account for itself to its supervising unit.

The GLF was successful in many areas. The one area that failed attracted the most attention. It was the area of back-yard steel-furnace production. The technological requirement of **steelmaking**, unlike hydro-electricity, did not lend itself to labor-intensive mass movements. Yet steel was the symbol of industrialization and a heroic attempt had to be made to overcome the lack of capital for imported modern mechanization. The attempt failed conspicuously, but its damage to the economy was overrated. The program did not operate year-around, and did not disrupt farm harvests.

The real test, however, was in the People's Commune. Favorable weather conditions produced high yields in 1958 in the experimental communes. True to Confucian cultural behavior pattern, this led to a rush nationwide to follow suit, even though almost everywhere the fundamental preconditions for successful operation were absent. Most did not have adequate administrative offices, nurseries, canteens, old people's homes, hospitals, etc, institutions necessary for successful communal life. In other places, the local leadership took the transition to communism at face value and severed all connection with supervising organs in the name of the withering away of the state. Disorder grew into chaos within months.

During the Wuhan Party Plenum of December 1958, Marshal Peng Dehuai criticized the overextended commune program, leading to the plenum initiating a readjustment of the "Three Red Banners" policy. Concurrently, the Central Committee approved "the wish of Comrade Mao Zedong not to stand again as a candidate for the chairmanship of the PRC [People's Republic of China] after the end of his term in office". Liu Shaoqi was elected as head of state by the second People's Congress on April 27, 1959, and became heir apparent after Mao in the party.

Mao, criticized, vowed to lead new peasant revolt

In the fateful Lushan Conference of July 2-August 16, 1959, Marshal Peng shifted his criticism from policy to the person of the leader. On July 23, Mao, in an emphatic speech, rejected the reproach of his critics and declared, with justification, that the Great Leap Forward and the People's Commune had brought about more advantages than disadvantages. Mao threatened an open split: "If we deserve to perish I shall go away, I shall go to the countryside and lead the peasants to overthrow the government. If you of the PLA [People's Liberation Army] will not follow me, then I shall find a new Red Army. But I believe that the PLA will follow me."

On August 16, 1959, Peng and his followers were condemned as an "anti-party clique" by a resolution passed by the Eighth Plenum. On September 17, Peng was dismissed as defense minister. Peng died in 1974 and was rehabilitated posthumously in 1978, after Mao's death.

In late 1959, several natural disasters and bad weather conditions were reported in the press. Floods and drought brought about the "three bitter years" of 1959-62. After 1962, the economy recovered, but the politic was shifting toward a struggle against revisionism, which brought on the Cultural Revolution four years later.

There would have been no deaths in the 1961-62 famines if not for the US embargo.

Reports of severe natural disasters in isolated places and of bad weather conditions in larger areas appeared in the Chinese press in the spring of 1959, after the Wuhan Plenum in December 1958 had already made policy adjustments based on the technical criticism of Peng Dehuai on the People's Communes initiative. In March 1959, the entire Hunan region was under flood, and soon after that the spring harvest in southwestern China was lost through drought. The 1958 grain production yielded 250 million tons instead the projected 375 million tons, and 1.2 million tons of peanuts instead of the projected 4 million tons. In 1959, the harvest came to 175 million tons. In 1960, the situation deteriorated further. Drought and other bad weather affected 55 percent of the cultivated area. Some 60 percent of the agricultural land in the north received no rain at all. The yield for 1960 was 142 million tons. In 1961, the weather situation improved only slightly.

US embargo caused millions to starve

In 1963, the Chinese press called the famine of 1961-62 the most severe since 1879. In 1961, a food-storage program obliged China to **import 6.2 million tons of grain from Canada and Australia**. In 1962, import decreased to 5.32 million tons. Between 1961 and 1965, China imported a total of 30 million tons of grain at a cost of US\$2 billion (Robert Price, *International Trade of Communist China Vol II*, pp 600-601). More would have been imported except that US pressure on Canada and Australia to limit sales to China and US interference with shipping prevented China from importing more. Canada and Australia were both anxious to provide unlimited credit to China for grain purchase, but alas, **US policy prevailed and millions starved in China**.

The University of Wisconsin's Maurice Meisner, whom many consider to be the dean of post-World War II Chinese scholarship, presents three related ways of looking at the alleged 20 million to 30 million deaths caused by the Great Famine begun in the late 1950s under Mao's tenure in The Deng Xiaoping Era and *Inquiry into the Fate of Chinese Socialism 1978-1994* (New York, Hill and Wang, 1996). One, it was a horrible miscalculation. Two, it was the end of famines on this scale (famines had been occurring for the previous few centuries off and on in China about every generation or so). In other words, it brought this horrible historical pattern to an end. Or, three, it was a horrible miscalculation, while also afterward bringing this pattern of famine every generation of so to an end,

thus saving millions from a similar fate.

It is now the common perception in the West that 30 millions starved to death as a result of Mao's launching of the Great Leap Forward. Is it true or is it again a result of manufactured history? An article from the Australia-China Review contains a noteworthy refutation of the widely accepted figures of tens of millions of deaths caused by the GLF. The following is excerpted from this article, "Wild Swans and Mao's Agrarian Strategy" by Wim F Wertheim, emeritus professor from the University of Amsterdam, one of the best-noted European China scholars:

But the figure amounting to tens of millions ... [lacks] any historical basis. Often it is argued that at the censuses of the 1960s "between 17 and 29 millions of Chinese" appeared to be missing, in comparison with the official census figures from the 1950s. But these calculations are lacking any semblance of reliability. At my first visit to China, in August 1957, I had asked to get the opportunity to meet two outstanding Chinese social scientists: Fei Xiao-tung, the sociologist, and Chen Ta, the demographer. **I could not meet either of them, because they were both seriously criticized at that time as rightists**; but I was allowed a visit by Pang Zenian, a Marxist philosopher who knew about the problems of both scholars. Chen Ta was criticized because he had attacked the pretended 1953 census. In the past he had organized censuses, and he could not believe that suddenly, within a rather short period, the total population of China had risen from 450 [million] to 600 million, as had been officially claimed by the Chinese authorities after the 1953 census. He would have [liked] to organize a scientifically well-founded census himself, instead of an assessment largely based on regional random samples as had happened in 1953. According to him, the method followed in that year was unscientific.

For that matter, a Chinese expert of demography, Dr Ping-ti Ho, professor of history at the University of Chicago, in a book titled Studies on the Population of China, 1368-1953, Harvard East Asian Studies No 4, 1959, also mentioned numerous "flaws" in the 1953 census: "All in all, therefore, the nationwide enumeration of 1953 was not a census in the technical definition of the term"; the separate provincial figures show indeed an unbelievable increase of some 30 percent in the period 1947-1953, a period of heavy revolutionary struggle. (p 93-94) My conclusion is that the claim that in the 1960s a number between 17 [million] and 29 million people was "missing" is worthless if there was never any certainty about the 600 millions of Chinese. Most probably these "missing people" did not starve in the calamity years 1960-61, but in fact have **never existed**.

Globalization causes more death, suffering than Mao

Neo-liberal globalization has caused poverty for three-quarters of the world's population, which brings it to more than 3 billion. At least 3 percent of these victims die prematurely of starvation, bringing it to 90 million, mostly children who died from malnutrition. That statistical evidence is more scientific than the alleged 30 million deaths in China. Anti-China neo-liberals dismiss the lack of evidence with the arguments that "totalitarian" governments are "guilty" by their very nature.

While Mao headed the CCP, leadership was based on mass support; and it is still. The chairmanship of the CCP is similar to the position of pope in the Roman Catholic Church, powerful in moral authority but highly circumscribed in operational power. The Great Leap Forward was the product of mass movement, not of a single person. Mao's leadership extended to the organization of the party and its policy-formulation procedures, not the dictation of particular programs.

To describe Mao as a dictator merely reflects an ignorance of the true workings of the Chinese Communist Party. The failures of the Great Leap Forward and the People's Communes were caused

more by implementation flaws rather than conceptual error. Bad luck and a US embargo had also much to do with it. These programs resulted in much suffering, but the claim that 30 million people were murdered by Mao with evil intent was mere Western propaganda.

Without Mao, the Chinese Communist Party would not have survived the extermination campaign by the Nationalists. It was Mao who recognized the invincible power of the Chinese peasant. It is proper that the fourth-generation leaders of the PRC are again focusing on the welfare of the peasants.

In Europe, the failure of the revolutions of 1848 led to World War I, which destroyed all the monarchical regimes that had successfully suppressed the democratic revolution six decades earlier. The full impact of Mao's revolutionary spirit is yet to be released on Chinese society. **A century from now, Mao high-minded principles of mass politics will outshine all his neo-liberal critics. Like US president Abraham Lincoln, Mao Zedong will be remembered in history as a great leader; and unlike Lincoln, Mao will be remembered also as a great revolutionary.**

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在六十年代，有那么一段时间，世上万事都变得可能，换句话说，那个阶段是全人类大解放的时机，也是全球性能量大释放的时候。就这一点来说，毛泽东对这个进程所作的比喻最发人深省：“我们这个民族”，他大声疾呼，“就像一颗原子……一旦里面的核子被撞碎，其释放的热量将会产生巨大无比的力量。”在文革中，这个意象促使了旧时封建与乡村结构的粉碎，同时也促使了那些结构中旧习俗神奇般地消除，进而唤起了一场真正的群众民主运动。——弗里德里克·杰姆逊