
Chinese Intellectuals Fighting Ideas in Global Context

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Summary

This paper examines the dilemma Chinese intellectuals face in China's transition. On the one hand, both those on the left and right try hard to distance themselves from the traditional Chinese intellectuals who are either the masterminds of the state or the critics of the state. On the other hand, both sides especially those on the left could not help but act as critics of the state.

Facing the increasing gap between the rich and the poor in China and carrying the burden of Mao's China, the new left intellectuals have played unequalled role in shaping perceptions in China both within the government and outside the government.

The paper uses both regional and global levels of analysis to examine the background of the new intellectual formation in contemporary China. I shall use transnational processes that create and frame debates between the new left and new right in China. The obvious examples in this instance are 1. the Western classical liberals have influenced and restructured education for a whole generation of Chinese intellectuals; 2. ways in which subsequent U.S. educational institutions affected the Chinese new left because many Chinese students go to study at American universities.

After discussing the global influence for the formation of the new left and new right, the paper discusses the problems new liberals face as well as the new threat the new left may cause. The new liberals with few exceptions on the other hand have become a cheer leading class and have formed a habit of flirting with the state's economic plan. This uncritical role has weakened the liberalism among the people and thus given the new left much legitimacy among the populace.

The liberals have done many great things. Its advocacy for private ownership rights and for market economy in general are excellent and its introduction of European enlightenment ideas like translation of Hayek's work and other classical liberals have bred a generation of Chinese intellectuals and made any return to the old left difficult. Despite having a healthy mistrust of Maoism and socialism, the new liberals have not realized that they have estranged from feelings of the masses. The most new liberals refuses to admit that popular concerns about environment, large income disparity, official corruption, and job security have become the arenas of the new left.

The new liberals' explanation has relentlessly pushed the market idea and hope that once market forces come into full play, those side effects will disappear.

The new left, however, has done a great job in becoming a critic for the government policies. Hu Angang and Wang Shaoguang have become the leading spoken people for the poor and disadvantaged in China. Hu's and Wang's criticism of the government favoritism for the rich regions at the cost of the poor region is both right and reasonable.

What should be the new liberals' ammunition has become the new left weapons used against liberals?

Given the fact that most of those new left have been influenced by the new left in the West and in the United State in particular, the Chinese new left has become a strong force for socialism in China because they are

basically anti free market economy and globalization. Since market economy is such weak system in China, the new left may in the end fundamentally weakened the economic base of liberalism.

Key words: intellectuals, cultural interdependence, Chinese economic reforms, post-modern critics, Chinese nationalism

While farmers, entrepreneurs, workers, government officials and migrant workers are busy making money or dealing with the daily life struggles, the everyday life of Chinese people has moved past communism or any other ism. Pragmatism rules the Chinese mindset. But Chinese intellectuals still search for new ideas because the old communist ideologies and the new liberal ideas of the market with the authoritarianism do not arose their interest or loyalty. All sorts of ideas have been pushed forward by different intellectuals. By intellectuals, I follow Schumpeter's words: "Intellectuals are in fact people who wield the power the spoken and the written work, and one of the touches that distinguish them from other people who do the same is the absence of direct responsibility for practical affairs".ⁱ

This chapter focuses on the ideological debates among the intellectuals by examining, assessing, and commenting on the intellectual discourses in China since 1978. We hope to reveal the historical and intellectual debates among intellectuals in China. This nuanced analysis will provide a way for us to understand Chinese politics and society. Those voices and tensions among intellectuals show social concern, social tension, and social changes in China.

We will discuss why and how the intellectual ideologies have become increasingly diversified. We should discuss the diversified views of those intellectuals, the forms they take and their limitations.

Intellectuals' role in Chinese history

To begin, a brief introduction of Chinese intellectuals is needed. For centuries, China was an intellectual-ruled authoritarian state. Because government officials were appointed through a system of open examinations, the dream of every family was to raise a smart son who would one day pass the examination to become an official. This open competitive system meant that intellectuals played a key role in the total structure of Chinese society.ⁱⁱ As a result, Chinese intellectuals tend to "take responsibility for all under heaven"(yi tianxia wei ji ren) and to speak on behalf of society.

The problem with this tradition is that there was little social space between the state and society. Intellectuals were not interested in setting up a separate identity between the state and society. Even dissenting intellectuals became critics of the existing regime, only hoping to replace one form of authoritarian rule with their ideas of ruling.

In order to understand the intellectual debates, we must also attend to the intellectual influence of foreign ideas. To a great extent, modern Chinese intellectuals' ideas came from outside China (Marxism from Germany, Leninism from Russia, classical liberalism from British and America, the French liberalism and post-modern concepts, Japanese leftist ideas, German Frankfurt school, American new left and the Western state welfare system).

In the early 20th century, Chinese intellectuals were radicals and revolutionaries, who carried on the French revolutionary ideas and Lenin's 1917 Communist revolution, totally rejecting Chinese

culture, exemplified by the famous works of Lu Xu. This kind of cultural rejection came from China's domination by outside powers (Opium Wars, Sino-Japanese war and the Boxer Rebellion). Intellectuals wanted to borrow foreign ideas to rebuild China. Lu studied medicine in Sendai, Japan and got to know radical revolutionary ideas in Japan. The Japanese radical left ideology deeply influenced Lu while the Japanese social racism deeply offended Lu. Japan was the breeding ground of the political left and revolutionaries in China. In 1900, it was through Japan that Rousseau's *On Contract* was translated into Chinese and passed on to China. Rousseau's theory had great influence among the young intellectuals in the 1920s and 30s including Mao and Deng Xiaoping (who studied in France). It was in Japan that Sun Yat Sen set up his newspapers "Mingbao" and "Tongming Hui" and finally started the nationalist revolution in 1905. It was also in Japan that Mr. Liu Shipai translated the communist Manifesto in Tianyibao (Justices News).

The events of World War I and the disgraceful war settlement (the Allied powers gave German territory in China to Japan) enraged the intellectuals and set up the most important student's movement on May 4th, 1919.ⁱⁱⁱ

Also at this time, the Russian Revolution of 1917 offered an attractive alternative to the ideas associated with the allied countries. Classical liberalism in China that focused on individual liberties lost its political base and the left leaning political idea triumphed.

After 1919, the Russian and French style revolution pattern dominated the intellectual world with left dominating social justice discourse while classical liberal thinkers like Hu Shi and Liang Qichao became marginalized. Between 1905 and 1907 Zhu Shixin held a two-year debate with the liberal thinker, Liang Qichao in *Mingpao*.^{iv} After this, the socialists held the upper hand.

There is no doubt that intellectual victory preceded Mao's military victory in China. By the early 1940s, most intellectuals and artists had adopted socialism as the future of China. Unfortunately, scholars both in China and outside China current do not recognize this intellectual influence. But it was recognized by Guomindang leader Jiang Jieshi and his opponent Mao. Jiang focused on getting rid of Mao's army in Shaaxi while ignoring the Japanese invasion in Northeast China, which triggered a nationalist grass root backlash. That became one of the reasons for Mao and his associates including Deng Xiaoping to launch many political campaigns to keep the intellectuals in line with the party. They knew the power of ideas. In the late 1930s, many idealistic young intellectuals risked their lives to go to Yanan to work for Mao's army and became leaders on the ideological front. According to Chinese historians, the main reasons that the intellectuals were attracted towards Mao were two: 1. Mao used the words, *ziyou* (freedom) and *minzhu* (democracy) which appealed to most intellectuals; 2. Intellectuals opposed Jiang Jieshi's authoritarian regime.^v

Although radical in terms of rhetoric, those left liberal intellectuals in fact were traditional. Chinese political culture, like many other cultures, has promoted egalitarianism as a central value. As Confucius said "*buhuagua, zhihuabuping* (What worries most is not poverty but equality)". It is precisely such a cultural foundation that enabled Mao and his associates to win the intellectual war long before their military victory: Maoist just society (socialism) vs. Jiang's corrupt society. After the Japanese invasion in the late 1930s, Maoism was allowed to survive as an ally fighting the Japanese along side nationalist army led by Jia Jiashi. Mao's victory was inevitable. To a great extent, Japan helped Mao's regime. That is why Mao was reportedly refused the Japanese government's offer to pay war damages, because without the Japanese invasion Mao could not have survived.

The left liberals were attracted to Mao's program of 'land to the tillers' in the late 1940s and land reform in the 1950s. But after Mao won the war, left liberals together with the classical liberals became Mao's targets. The Chinese communist regime created a mechanism for controlling the minds of intellectuals through *danan* (secret files), *gaodaiyu* (high pay and material privilege), *danwei* (government work unit), *yundong* (campaigns) and terror. In 1957, Mao and Deng Xiaoping started the anti-rightist movement, in which one million intellectuals were condemned and tens of thousands were sent to hard labor camps. It is through its control of *wenren* (intellectuals) the regime stifled individual thought and put Chinese people into submission. Chinese society watched without any dissent while intellectuals who used to represent the voice of the people were silenced in the name of egalitarianism.

This egalitarian spirit reached its peak during the Great Leap Forward, when monetary exchange and family cooking were almost abolished even in the countryside. Although regional inequality existed, for most of 20 years there were no important economic differences among people. The rich landlord and former rich peasants became criminals like convicts who had to do extra work to pay for the past sins.

It is important to point out that Mao-style collective spirit damaged not just the economic wellbeing of the nation, but also the spirit of the Chinese intellectual's innovation and artistic expression. Despite the repeated purges against intellectuals, intellectuals (artists and writers) played a key role in sustaining Mao's regime because the regime still used the intellectuals to influence society through propaganda.

Tracing the roots of modern Chinese intellectual history, Chinese intellectuals have identified with the state either as critics or defenders by promoting and protecting the idea of a national state culture. During the Cultural Revolution, Mao's intellectuals headed by Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan wrote daily articles, and the eight revolutionary dramas. Books were banned except Mao's work and Marxist classics.

The Cultural Revolution brought disasters to Chinese intellectuals, most of them were prosecuted and humiliated and came to realize that the intellectuals could not be *huoshe* (the mouthpiece) of the party state. After the death of Mao in 1976, a small-scale intellectual enlightenment took place in China. Since 1978 and after the Cultural Revolution, Chinese intellectuals began to have cultural reflections. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the success of limited market reform reversed the radical left Maoism. For a few years in the 1980s, intellectuals embraced liberalism with the British and American tradition. But today's intellectuals have become diversified.

By Chinese intellectuals in today's China, we mean those people who have influence in the field of ideology and culture. They are professors, researchers at the government and private think tanks, lawyers, journalists, Internet writers, artists, economists, writers of all kinds, and freelance writers (the later ones are important because they are independent writers). Roughly we can divide those people into major categories:

- The Maoist or old left
- The New Left/ Statist
- The mainstream liberals (economists)
- The classical liberals

Nationalists

Human rights intellectuals

The New Liberals and the new enlightenment in China

There are roughly two leading liberal camps within China's new intellectual life. First, there are the mainstream liberals. These writers, economists, and activists who suffered during the Cultural Revolution were the pioneers to reintroduce liberalism to China. They tended to have an optimistic view of human nature and they are influenced by enlightenment values (rule of law, equal opportunity, private sphere of influence, private property rights, and freedom of movement). The liberals felt that personal liberties must be protected in order to reduce the absolute power of the strong China state.

The leading figures for this line of thinking in the early 1980s were Li Shenzhi, Li Honglin, Wang Ruoshi, Liu Binyan, Wang Ruowang, Wang Ruoshui and others. It was Wang Ruoshui, Zhou Yang, Wang Ruoshi, Su Shaozhi, Liu Bin Yan, and Wang Ruowan (Shanghai) that started the humanitarianism debate between Marxism and humanism in China. Although the Maoist Hu Qiaomu was successful in bringing charges to force some liberals within the party to lose their party membership, the debate among intellectuals continued throughout the 1980s. Under leadership of Li Shenzhi and Mao Yishi in the early 1980s, a book series of classic Western books came to China, entitled *Culture: China and The World*. The publisher at that time was the Sanlian Press.^{vi} The editors for this series became leading public scholars in China: Xu Youyu, Gan Yang (who later became a leading scholar for the new Left), Liu Xiaolan and Wang Yan. Li Honglin took aim against what he called the modern superstition of Chinese communism, while Guo Luoji asked "Who killed Zhang Zhuxin", a woman who was murdered by the regime because of her criticism of Mao.^{vii} Guo's article brought back horrifying memories of the Cultural Revolution and forced the whole nation to reflect. The stories of Yu Luoke's murder by the regime shocked the nation. All Yu wanted was to be treated equally. His sister, Yu Luoqing's writing, "A Fairytale from winter" shook the consciousness of the nation. Yu's family suffered more tragedy than Dr. Zhivago. More and more Chinese people began to ask where humanist kindness existed and most intellectuals at that time had a common enemy: despotism.

This intellectual anti-despotism sentiment was also shared by the majority of Chinese people. The rural people were happy to get rid of the tyranny of the commune system, which tied them to land and created a caste-like system. Workers in the cities were relieved that their children did not have to leave home to do hard labor in the countryside.

Intellectuals also played a role in pushing rural reform and in supporting farmers decollectivization movement. Du Runsheng was one of the most important government officials and scholars that supported farmers' *baochan daohu* (contract production to the household) movement or decollectivization movement. Du used the failure of the Great Leap Forward and the experiments of farmers' grass-root initiatives in rural China to push the official recognition of the farmers' grass root movement.^{viii}

Another of the leading liberal thinkers is Mr. Cao Siyuan. Cao first worked at the Beijing Siyuan Research Center for the Social Sciences. In his new book, *The ABC's of Political Civilization*, Cao advocated public scrutiny of the National People's Congress and freedom of the press.^{ix} He was

the brain behind China's first bankruptcy law in 1985 and was nicknamed Caopocai (Bankruptcy Cao). For Cao political and economic liberalism should go hand in hand. He wrote many books advocating privatization and private property rights. He stated "The principle of a free press existing as a fourth power is based on two important premises. One is an economic belief in privatization, and the other is that political civilization must fairly balance divergent interests".^x

Liberal Legal professionals push for a relatively independent judicial system

As China has become more diversified, an increasing number of legal intellectuals emerged in late 1990s and early 2000s that desired to protect the rights of ordinary people, and to push for rule of law and constitutional reform in China.

The leading legal professionals for human rights in Shanghai are Zheng Enzong, Guo Guoding, Mo Shaoping, Zhang Sizhi, while in Beijing Fan Yafeng, Gao Zhichen, Zhang Xingshui, Pu Zhiqiang, He Weifang, and Luo Haocai.

In other cities, Xu Zhiyong, Yu Jiang, Dengpiao, Xiao Hao, Shen Gui, He Haibo, Shen Gui, Wang Lei, Wang Yi.

The list is only a small fraction.

Most constitutional thinkers in China emphasize the "rule of law" to push for change

For example, He Weifang has openly advocated an independent court system. Luo Haocai in Beijing University is a leading scholar on constitutionalism. Professor Chen Jie at Qinghua points out the problems of China's state lawlessness. For him, the law information agency has violated all Chinese laws.

Liu Haibo is also a PhD from Beijing University and became a professor at Renming University. Liu was influenced by American constitutional liberalism and hoped that China would one day follow the stable constitutional road. Politically, Liu preferred gradual change of the one party state from within. Liu rejected the French style of revolution. He is China's Burke.

According to Liu Haibo, the Chinese party permeates and dominates the bureaucratic politics of the judiciary; especially judges rely upon political kaoshan (patron) instead of procedure of the law. In his book, *On Political Systems*, Liu made use of American constitutionalism and rule of law to give advice to some moderates among the party leaders. Talking to Mr. Liu, we discovered a practical man with strong love for China's peaceful transformation. He believed that some moderates within the party are concerned about the lack of rule of law: "Increasingly party officials are engaged in rent seeking self-interested activities, increasingly the party moderates want to use the rule of law as the means to reduce corruption".^{xi} Liu Haibo admired Hayek's theory of spontaneous order evolving gradually. Like Hayek, Liu Haibo stressed that tradition and liberalism are not necessary in opposition.^{xii} Liu Haibo was able to get most of his work published and his advice sounded reasonable to many top leaders who realize that political patronage and corruption had weakened the Party's legitimacy. In 2005, Liu Haibo was promoted to work in the Law Institute, the top government think tank on law.

Fan Yafeng is one of the most radical liberal constitutional thinkers in China. Fan, a PhD from Beijing University, works for the Law Research Institute attached to CASS. Coming from Anhui where the state led famine killed many rural people, Fan advocated an independent judiciary system

as a check against the power of the party state. Fan also helps Christian house churches to defend their religious freedom.^{xiii} He advocated an independent political legal sphere in China.

Given the fact that the regime talks about obeying the law, legal professionals have become an important bridge to push China toward rule of law. To win some progress, it is also important to make compromise with the regime's more moderate leaders. Some leading legal professionals have used their personal connections (former students, classmates, friends and political linkages) to influence the moderates in the party. When the powerful Guangdong government bungled a case in 2004 against journalists, many lawyers sent messages to moderates in the party.

In 2004, the Guangzhou People's Court gave out long sentences to Yu Huafeng and Li Mingyong, two leading journalists in the liberal newspaper, *The Southern Metropolis News* (Nandu). Since the short term for the paper is called Nandu, the incident is called the Nandu case.

At the same time, eight leading legal professionals in China openly asserted their opinion in the case of Nandu. Three former party secretaries of Guangdong Ren Zhongyi, Wu Nansheng and Lin Ruo and the current Party Secretary Zhang Dejiang tried to defend the leadership of the newspaper by sending a letter stating that many leading legal professionals believed that the government made a mistake in the Nandu case, let us make compromise. The Nandu case has become an unprecedented case in PRC legal history because the government eventually admitted that they had handled the case incorrectly.^{xiv}

Apart from appealing to the moderate officials, some Chinese legal professionals have become increasingly adept at manipulating self-interested bureaucracies to push for bold legal reform in China. At that time, legal professional gave advice to top leaders in the Supreme court asking them to learn from the American Supreme Court to take over the judging power to check if the Chinese Constitution is violated or not. Most bureaucrats welcomed this suggestion and would send some signals to the media. This triggered bureaucratic competition among the leading state organizations, Supreme Court, the People's Congress and the People's Procuratorate. Mr. Li Fei, representing the interest of the People's congress, in 2004, stated that any citizen could demand to check the violation of constitution if they could appeal to the Committed on Law Supervision (which happened to belong to the People's Congress). Li posted this on the Qiangguo Forum on the People's web, a state sponsored internet site. This triggered major media debates and a fierce power struggle between the Supreme Court and the People's Congress. This case shows the maturity of Chinese professionals and the increasingly diversified interests within the one party state. The state bureaucrats are more interested in the expansion of their own power basis and less about one party domination. This could be used to divide the leadership of the one party state.

We do not have time to detail so many intellectuals one by one. But their names should be at least mentioned: Qin Cuan, Sun Changjiang, Kang Xiaoguang, Lin Zhili, Tong Dalin, Ma Jiaju, Wu Minyu and many others.

The mainstream liberal economists or neo-liberals

The neo-liberals would like to bring back China's rightful place in the world by pushing for modernization and market development. They are strong supporters of Zhao Zhiyang, Hu Yaobang and Deng Xiaoping.

Throughout the 1990s, they advocated for deepening China's economic reform by asking the

state to sell off state companies, shrinking the government, strictly enforcing property rights and letting the market work its magic.^{xv}

The economists, Yu Guangyuan, Wu Jinlian, Yang Xiao Kai, Zhang Weiyong were pioneers in pushing China's market reform. Those liberal economists have one thing in common: they either suffered in the Cultural Revolution or from poor family background. They were thirsty for new knowledge and information about how to reform China's poor economy. Mr. Mao Yushi helped to translate many books on Western economics (mostly pirated). For Zhang Weiyong, Hayek's theory on price signals has the greatest impact on his thinking on prices for China's market. For him, the key to modern microeconomics is price theory while price is the clearest indicator.^{xvi} In 1984, Zhang wrote his masters thesis, which laid out the transition plan for price reform: *shuangui shi* (two track price system). He pointed out that the root problem a planned economy is the formation of the price system. The price problem twisted the social economic structure because it failed to provide adequate information. Thus the key to economic reform is to change the system of prices. Zhang advocated the two-track system - keeping the planned products and prices while creating a market price system beside it. For Chinese enterprises and farmers, the surplus could be sold to the market once the planned quota had been satisfied. This reform plan fit the government goal to keep stability while reforming the economy. This plan boosted production for both farmers and for industries.^{xvii} Zhang's work gained national attention and he was invited back by Zhao Zhiyang, the reform leader at Economic System Reform Institute under the Tigaiwei (the State System Reform Commission) by the end of 1984.

Zhang has been a strong advocate for entrepreneurship and property rights. Influenced by Schumpeter, he put his hope on Chinese entrepreneurs to organize new ways to bring economic growth in his 1985 book, *The Kingdom of Economic Growth: on Entrepreneurs*.^{xviii}

After gaining his Ph.D. degree at Oxford, Zhang published his thesis in Chinese in 1995 on *Qiyue de Qiyue jia—Qiyue lilun* (Industrial Entrepreneurs and Contract Theory), which has played an important role for market institution building in China.

For many years, Chinese government leaders had blamed China's lack of economic development to its huge population and low land to man ratio. After studying other countries, Zhang realized that it is not land and population that were to blame but the economic system. In 1995, under the auspices of the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development, he published a book, *Monitoring the World Economy 1820-1992*. The earth had fewer natural resources and no more farmland in 1992 than it had in 1820 but in that period the earth's population multiplied by five. But, in 1990 U.S. dollars, the value of everything produced in the world grew from \$695 billion in 1820 to almost \$28 trillion in 1992 and the amount of that production per person went from \$651 to \$5,145.

Although the works of liberal economic theory became important for Chinese to learn about market institutions, liberal economic ideas became popularized first among economists, then the government elite and then the ordinary people. One of the most influential liberal economists in China is Mr. Steven Chung (in China he is known as Zhang Wuchang).

In 1981, he wrote an influential article, "Will China go capitalism" in a well-known Hong Kong journal, in which he predicated that China would become a capitalist country. No one believed in him including Milton Friedman, his former teacher at University.^{xix}

He was considered opinionated. But Chung continued to write and finally more and more

people in China especially young professionals and students came to realize that the keys to economic liberty are linked to protection of private property, personal choice, voluntary exchange and competition.^{xx} Although Hayek was the key person to provide price theory to show the superiority of the market, it was Steven Chung who provided the everyday example showing economically liberal institutions leading to swift economic development. His practical examples (in the book, *The Words of A Orange Seller*.) provided confidence for Chinese liberal economists and some young government officials to open up China to the outside world. Steven arranged Milton Friedman's visit to China and was a key influence in China's post-Mao economic liberalization by Zhao Zhiyang and his associates in the 1980s.

Even other leading Chinese economists like Tian Guo Qian, a professor of economics at Texas A&M University, who introduced Chinese students to basic theories of microeconomics by publishing a series of economic textbooks, are grateful to Steven Chung's influence: "For our generation, the most important thinker is Zhang Wuchang. His book influenced me greatly when I was a graduate student in Wuhan, China in the early 1980s. That is why I decided to study economics in the US".^{xxi}

The problem with most liberal economists is that they support the market in theory but support a mixed system in practice, and some even profited handsomely from official monopolist practice. Although most economics professors in China know that party state corruption is systemic, caused by the lack of transparency and rule of law, few dare to oppose anything because they are afraid that criticism will cause a reversal of reform policy.

For other liberals like Cai Hongbin, Zhou Ye'an, Zhao Xiaonan, and Feng Xinyuang, China's future lies in evolution of informal norms at the local level (corruption according to the state) because grassroots liberal norms which weakened the central government power, leaving more room for local innovations.^{xxii}

This is also supported by a Chinese American scholar, Yasheng Huang who argues that some of the inefficiencies of China's financial and legal institutions helped to drive up FDI inflows. In other words, by ignoring the central government rules and some degree of corruption (the state definition), China was able to lower the average level of competitiveness of domestic firms, which creates a number of propitious conditions for foreign firms.^{xxiii}

Hu Jingbei is a liberal economist that focuses on the study of China's labor market. For Hu, liberty and urbanization narrows rural/urban divide and bring about economic development.^{xxiv}

The new left

Like liberal intellectuals, any of the new left intellectuals have received their education in the West, especially in the United States between 1980s and 1990s. They are Wang Shaoguang, Wang Hui, Cui Zhiyuan, Gan Yang and Han Shuhai. They have some influence in Chinese government and at universities.

The new left in China is a term borrowed from the American political discourse. In the US, the new left often refers to radical left-wing anti-War liberals from the 1960s onwards. The "Chinese new left" often refers to an intellectually driven critical circle, which tried to change the perceived errors of the market reform in China since 1978. Its ideology is based on Western socialist ideology and seeks equality and justice as core values. They attribute the problems of social stratification, lack of social security, and other social problems to capitalism brought about by the market reform. Those

who consider themselves part of the new left regard liberal intellectuals their main opponents.^{xxv}

The term new is in contrast to the Old Left or the conservatives including Mao's propagandists like Deng Liqun who have political influence in Chinese politics, especially among retired officials and officers in the military.

The new left use fierce words to attack liberal intellectuals. They challenge the basic assumptions of liberalism based on personal liberties and reject liberal economic thought.^{xxvi}

For them, liberalism is linked to oppression and market capitalism must be rejected by China. One of their leading thinkers is Han Shuhai who argues that, in the name of liberalism, the vested interest groups with the political power has worked to oppress the poor and the weak. It is liberalism that led to market monopoly, corruption, oligarchy, and the fall of democracy.^{xxvii}

Prof. Zhiyuan Cui teaches at Tsinghua University after returning to China in the early 2000s. The American new left influenced Cui while he was a student and later an assistant professor. Influenced by the American left's impatience with the long stability of the American constitutional liberalism, Cui believes that China's choice lies either in participatory democracy or in violent revolution:

"This second path, of national emancipation and popular empowerment, can already be imagined. It can begin to be opened, however, only when many people in Chinese society and the Chinese state have decided to seize fortune by the throat, and have understood that hope is the consequence rather than the cause of action".^{xxviii}

Chinese new left intellectuals often work as professors or researchers at Chinese universities and government-supported think tanks.

Li Chengrui attacked privatization in China and urged the government to uphold the four cardinal principles, which were outlined by Deng Xiaoping in the early 1980s to appeal to the conservative leftists in the party. Li was appalled that the publicly owned economy accounted only "for 43 per cent of the country's gross domestic product, a proportion that was declining at an annual rate of more than 2.3 percentage points".^{xxix}

But Li did not mention that some non-state assets have also become the assets of the party elite and their children. By attacking only private sectors, corruption, and global capitalism, the new left critics may become new favorites in the Hu-Wen regime. Their new voices are heard both within the party and outside the party.

Ding Bing, from the Capital University of Economics and Business in Beijing, openly challenged Deng's practical policy of *buzheng lu* "no argument". Most elite since 1992 have accepted Deng's policy "Cross the river by feeling the stone" as a way to depoliticize the debt between socialism and capitalism. In fact, no one person in China can explain what is the nature of the socialism with Chinese characteristics. By attacking liberal economists as having political ulterior motives (to peacefully transform China), Ding in fact suggests that the liberals are anti-Communist state. Ding may be partially right. After talking with so many economists, they have high hope for China to become a real capitalist country in the world because they do believe that liberal democracy is the inevitable road for China. But for the new left, Chinese market reform is too aggressive, morally suspect, and ideologically wrong.

Liu Guoguang who used to support the economic reform suddenly became a new Marxist. Liu has been an adviser to the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. According to those new and old

left, China has become too much a market place although China ranks low in the world freedom index (Hong Kong is no. 1). For Liu, central planning is needed to correct the excessive market policies.

Those critics have helped the new leaders, Hu Jintao and Wen Jia Bao to pursue new policies that focus on fairness and equality or Hu-Wen's *hexie shehui*, (the harmonious society). Most new left intellectuals used to feel attractive to liberal values throughout 1980s. Three major events in China diversified intellectuals: the crack down of 1989 Student Movement, the rapid China's market reform with its problems and the rapid China's global economic integration.

Even in the 1989 student movement period, Chinese intellectuals tried to maintain the domination of the discourse by focusing on their leadership role for the future of China. The global independence and the rapid social and economic change led to diversified social stratification with intellectuals starting to represent difference voices from different sectors of Chinese society.

Many of the young new left are the products of the Chinese establishment (state controlled universities, like Beijing University, Chinese University of Hong Kong where the Beijing top leaders have influences) or their lives are shaped by the *Zhongnanhai* politics and Ivy League education in the US. Mr. Hu Angang in fact is both a government career man and a scholar. Hu and Wang made their reputations inside the establishment. When they wrote a paper on the importance of state revenue, the government recentralized the state finance by increasing taxation.^{xxx}

They criticized the government decentralization policies to weaken the power of the center, citing the fact that the government's tax revenue as a share of the country's overall economic output fell below 10 percent, much lower than French, the US, and Germany.^{xxxi}

Such a kind of loyal criticism (urging the party state to have more central power) was welcomed by the leaders at the top.

Thus when they criticized the government for uneven development between the west and the coast, the government in 2000 initiated the campaign for going west. Although the effect of the going west development has not proved to be economically successful, the government did spend a substantial amount on the Western regions. This could be one of the most important redistribution plans of the government in decades. This is directly attributed to the intellectual influence of the new left.

By contrast, the government oppresses the voices of the radical liberals Liu Junning and the old communist intellectuals turned radical liberals (Li Zhenzhi, Li Rui). While the new left were the products of establishment and have close ties to government officials, the new radical liberals were either critics of the regime or ousted communist apostates from within the communist party hierarchy. For instance, Li Zhenzhi was kicked out of the party establishment after the soldiers killed students and on lookers in June 1989. He remarked, "Never be an official under the bayonet!" and resigned his post as the vice president of the Chinese Social Sciences Academy.^{xxxii}

For the liberals, the new left's cry to strengthen the party state's power will undermine the limited liberty created by the market reform. While the liberals all rejected Maoist participatory democracy (Cultural Revolution) as fundamentalists, the new left like Gan Yang, Cui Zhiyuan and Wang Shaoguang regard the Cultural Revolution as participatory democracy which was effective to reduce corruption and ramp material desire of the masses. Wang's Ph.D. dissertation at Cornell University is called "Cultural Revolution in Wuhan", which positively portrayed the nature of

participatory democracy at that time between 1966 to 1976. Interviewed by the New York Times, another leading new left scholar, Gan Yang, a research fellow at the Center for Asian Studies in Hong Kong, explained why he hoped the Cultural Revolution, like participatory democracy in China, could tame corruption or at least entice people to pay attention to Public policies.^{xxxiii} To some extent, Gan is right that during the Cultural Revolution (CR), almost every urban citizen in China had several months (for many several years) of notoriety. The random fear was effective to reduce corruption and to have any personal desire.

But the majority of intellectuals in China reject participatory democracy precisely because they do not want to relive the days of CR Terror.

Of course, the new left does not agree on everything. Some want to go back to Mao's days, while others want to have social democracy (Sweden), still others want a true socialist state. The result of these intellectuals' disputes is a schism in the ranks of the government officials in China today.

Despite the differences among the new left, the main message of the new left can be best expressed by the following quote:

“China's failed 20th century experiment with communism cannot be undone in the 21st century by embracing 19th century-style laissez-faire capitalism”.^{xxxiv} Wang Hui of Tsinghua University, the editor of *Du Shu*, is the leading figure of the new left. Most of their ideas also come from Western new left, the American new left in particular.

The new left with Western post-modern deconstruction

Those new left often use the Western anti-American and anti-colonial discourse to criticize the regime. Post-modernism, communitarianism, and post-colonialism criticize the new China with great moral indignation. For them, the social injustices between rich and poor countries were brought about by the international capitalist system led by America with its puppets (IMF and WTO). This line of thinking reminds one of the dependency theory in the West in the 1970s and 1980s. Prof. Ren at Zhongshang University has a good description of this kind of new left in China:

“The new left departs from the fundamental state dominated leftist's admiration for violence, Stalism, rigid planned economy and totalitarian political system. They also differ from the traditional Marxist ideological and theoretical exploration. The new reflects the new leftist focus: advocating for people's sovereignty and participatory democracy to oppose the emergence of political and economic power monopoly”.^{xxxv}

The most important theoretical thinkers for China's new left are Michael J. Sandel, Charles Taylor, Alasdair MacIntyre, Foucault, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Cassirer, Marcuse, Sartre, Freud, Edward Said's theory of Orientalism.^{xxxvi} All those western theorists are anti-liberal especially classical liberal in particular. Foucault has become the favorite weapon for the Chinese new left.

The main post-modern and post-colonial critics come from a group of returnees from the West and Japan. Since they use new theories and vocabulary to describe China's situation, the post-modern and post-colonial theories have become popular. For them, the discourses on human rights, freedom and democracy are used by the West to dominate other nations. Wang Hui is the leading critic against Western liberalism in China and uses scholars like Habermas, Foucault, Noam Chomsky and French deconstructionists to attack emerging liberal capitalism.^{xxxvii} Chomsky's attack against American

capitalism has become a weapon in the hand of the Chinese new left. For them, what took place in China is a replay of what Chomsky's wrote about the American "history of systemic inequalities, oppression, and sanctioned violence that have resulted in this country's current culture of violence".^{xxxviii}

The problem with this school is that they ignore the systematic inequalities between rural and urban brought about by Mao's socialism. What is more, they often do not pay attention to rural people's outcry for land rights and private control of resources.

These new post-colonial critics don't offer a coherent set of alternate policies to the existing problems while Maoists want to take China back to Mao's days.

What is more troubling for this school is their failure to make the Chinese government responsible for the violation of human rights in China.

Thus this kind of post-colonial critical left does not speak to the society at large.

As one rural teacher put it, "Those intellectuals do not touch our hearts because they do not understand our pain. It is not the outsider that exploit us but our own authorities. If the land belongs to the farmers, most of the conflict will be less".^{xxxix}

The tension between the new left and the liberals resembles the debates in the early 1920s between the liberal Hu Shi and the radical left. The radical left won but the new Communist China did not bring social justice to China. It is important for both sides to examine Chinese history carefully.

The Traditionalist (Confucianism, new-authoritarianism, Communitarian and Corporatism)

Traditionalists focus on the traditional liberal elements in Chinese culture like Taoism (which focuses on limited government), legal school in tradition of Chinese culture and Confucian moral ethics.

The new Confucianists challenged liberals in that they would like to replace rights based discourse with ethics. They also want to use morality to replace self-interest. For them, the traditional culture of the public good is better than liberal procedure based on rule of law.^{xl} The key is to give the state power for redistribution. This group has no interest in democracy or competitive party politics because for them multiple parties still serve the interests of a few powerful interests. What they like is to have public participatory democracy. Since the group poses no threat towards the regime, it survives the censor and even gets some state support.

New authoritarians worry that reform will be difficult without strong hand to guide it. The leading scholar for the rise of new authoritarianism is Xiao Gongqin, a professor in Shanghai. For this group, the Chilean model looked attractive since Augusto Pinochet who was a dictator was able to push market reforms in the 1970's and 80's. Some officials working in the government who are influenced by this argument organized a study group to visit Chile in the mid 1990s and even invited José Piñera, Chilean Minister of Labor and Social Security from 1978 to 1980 to come to China to help design the Chilean-style pension reform in 1997. ^{xli}

Anti-American and Imperialist Nationalists

Nationalism has always been part of Chinese political culture since the late 19th century after China suffered defeat at the hands of both Western powers and Japan. Nationalism became a

powerful voice among some intellectuals.^{xliii}

According to Andrew Scobell, the new Chinese nationalism is a product of the intellectual elite culture and the political power game in Chinese domestic politics.^{xliiii} Several leading nationalist writers in China are Kang Xiaoguang (Qinghua University), Pan Wei (Beijing University and Berkeley Ph.D), Wang Xiaodong, Kang Xinnian (Qinghua University), Zhang Guangtian (the director of the play, Che Guevara) and Huang Jisu (the play writer for Che Guevara.).

While Pan's anti-American rhetoric follows the Berkeley tradition of the radical American left (Pan received his Ph.D. from Berkeley, Wang Xiaodong is homegrown. For Wang, "Modern nationalism must be political nationalism. Through the modern nation-state system, every citizen must be included in the system: national social security, education rights and protection, regional economic security, tariffs, protection of nationalist economic security and interest. Modern nationalism in fact is politicalization of every citizen, which was impossible in pro-modern times. Because of this, modern Chinese revolution is in fact the process of politicalization of everyone. It is in this point that Mao's action had some positive significance: you must pay attention to important national affairs. Only by paying attention to important national affairs, you can become a citizen".^{xliiv} Wang and Pan link Chinese socialist state building with nationalism.

The popularity of Che Guevara shows that the traditional Marxist class struggle still occupies the mind and soul of Chinese people.

Facing the anti-American and anti-Japanese sentiment in China, outside observers tend to use the discourse of "rational and irrational" to describe the rising nationalism. The rise of Chinese economic and military power has made many Chinese elite very proud as stated by Wu Bangguo, the head of the People's Congress, while meeting with a group of American Chinese in Honolulu, March 2005".

It is a wonderful feeling for Chinese to go aboard. It is called "caida qicu"(the more richer one is the more confident one becomes). Twenty years ago, the Chinese embassies in London had worked hard to get some low-level government officials to meet our delegation. But now, even the top official, like M.P. and ministry levels leaders, have to make appointments to have a chance to meet with us. The world has changed.^{xliiv}

But sometimes, this confidence gave rise to xenophobic behavior that creates problems for peace. The "chuqi" (seeking revenge) sentiment was responsible for 2002 anti-America demonstration after the accidental bombing of the Chinese embassy and the 2005 anti-Japanese mass demonstration. It is important to differentiate the roots of this new nationalism. Some are linked to traditional anti-imperialist nationalism; some are linked to elite manipulation of the nationalist sentiment since the communist ideology can no longer hold the people together. Few Chinese elite themselves believe in communism. Nationalism became their only left over ideological weapon to mobilize the nation. Still others are fierce anti-imperialist nationalist, especially anti-American and anti-Japanese nationalist because that is the only enemy that they can hate. Since freedom of speech is not possible in China, the government only allows the attack against outsiders mainly the USA and Japan.

For Chinese government officials, the get-America-and-Japan sentiment may back fire since China depends on trade with those two countries to continue its development.

However, there are some reasons for anger. In the 1990s, a few young Chinese writers wrote

several books with the title like “China Can Say No” and “Why China can say No” Some may say that the book writers just wanted to capture the anti-American sentiment to make money by writing a book to smooth the inferiority-complex nationalist sentiment in China.

Since the people cannot participate in the state’s decision formation, many Chinese people, especially those from the countryside, could not understand why the Chinese government used the people’s saving to buy US Treasury bills. “Our government attacked the American war effort in the world”, remarked Ms. Liu in Shanghai, “But every year, we spend billions to ensure that the US will have plenty of money to toss around and boss others around”.^{xlvi} Liu was very active in the anti-Japanese demonstration in the Spring, 2005. For her, it provided a good reason to express her anger and her inability to say no to the “wrong” government policies.

Dicheng Maopai (Grassroots Maoists)

Those Maoists are anti-capitalist in nature and want to bring China back to Mao’s style of rule. They admire Mao’s revolutionary mass movement and mobilization and hope that Mao style would reduce widespread corruption and inequality in today’s China. Quan Yanchi, the son of a high-ranking air force officer, whose parents followed Mao in Yunnan in the 1940s, wrote one of the most pro-Mao book, *Ungodly Mao Zedong*. The book openly attacked the social change brought about by “waves of material desire” in market reform. This sentiment has become increasingly popular in the 1990s when massive lay-offs from the state factories and the problems of poor farmers became social concerns. One young writer, Xin Min wrote a book called Discover Mao Zidong (Faxian Maozidong), trying to bring a human face to Mao. The revolutionary songs and music of Mao Warship during the cultural revolution have regained popularity. Books on Mao and Mao’s pictures suddenly appeared everywhere in China. On Mao’s birthrate, December 26, 1990, close to one million people visited Mao’s village Shaoshang.^{xlvii}

The second camp, the new left, is mostly returned Chinese students from overseas and Maoist political activists in the society who are appalled by the rising inequality and the wide spread in the society. Leading scholars of the new left have drawn most sustenance from a critical tradition of the Western intellectuals (Marxism, post-colonial and post-modern). Like their Western counterparts, the new Chinese left have a much darker view of human nature.

Facing the increasing inequality and corruption in the government, some of the new left scholars asked why the government failed to coordinate efforts to mobilize the dedication of millions and government revenue to fight against social “diseases” like corruption and inequality. This complaint touched the soul of Chinese society with focus on egalitarian and the nerve of the Communist party whose basic support depended on this line of thinking.

Hu Angan and Wang Shao Guang are the leading figures. of the intellectuals of the day and many of the elite assumed that market has gone too far and needed the government to step in to correct the market excesses.

To some extent, both the intellectuals Maopai and the political anti-Maopai elite may be wrong because dicheng Maopai could not be sustainable in times of global commodity life and new culture of individualism. When the party-state initiated some social security programs however small they are, the urban unrest is put aside. Unless Maoist intellectuals used “democracy” to mobilize this group, it would be difficult if not impossible for them to initiate a democratic movement from below. It

is precisely for this reason both the elite and the liberals may reject the grass root Maoist.

Participant politics in China is feared by Chinese elite and some liberal intellectuals who also worry about the repeat of another Mao's revolution.

The young intellectuals (below 40) who grew up in the past 30 years do not remember the horror of the Cultural Revolution. In fact, some even admire the Maoist eras as liberating experiences. For them, the national fervor for Mao created meaningful and powerful existential purpose in life, which for some is better than the current, diversified and often debated life.

But in the 2000, the Mao fever slowed down because Maoist clauses do not work given the fundamentally amoral commercial world that most Chinese now inhabit and are embracing. Even most Maoist leaders are working hard to catch the last train to make money. The Maoist generals who regretted that they were too "good" communists in the past are busy cracking their connections (*guanxi*) to find out how they could help with development projects of any kind so that they could enjoy some material comfort because many want to send their grand children to study and live in the US or Canada.

What the current elite fear most is the dicheng Maopai because they realize that the communists won China first by the outcry against Kuomintang corruption and massive unemployment in the late 1940s.

To a great extent, the crack down on Fa Lungong was an attempt to wipe out any sort of grass-root organization. The Fa Lungong started in Northeast China a stronghold of state industry. As the elite state workers lost their social position in the 1990s, more and more joined Fa Lungong to gain a new purpose in life. The newly elite who benefited from the mixed economy feared the popularity of Fa Lungong. That is why the attack on Fa Lun Gong was systematically carried out in 2001 and 2002.

How to face Chinese history and Maoist days

Intellectuals in China have begun to reexamine the state's indoctrination about Chinese history. Chinese were taught that Chinese history was full of invasions by other nations while China did nothing wrong. A brave historian in Zhongshang University challenged the orthodoxy by pointing out the xenophobia rural culture behind the Boxer Rebellions in 1900 published by Bingdian (Freezing Point), the liberal journal. On 11 January, 2006 by Yuan Weishi, pointed out that history text books did not point out the culpability of the state but blamed outsiders instead. "We were raised on wolf's milk", he wrote in the article, meaning a culture of hatred and violence.^{xlvi}

All hell broke loose. Three intellectuals representing the Maoist faction held a forum to criticize this new interpretation of Chinese history on Feb. 26, 2006. The forum was called "The Danger and Background of Chinese Intellectuals' Slavery Insinuating Attack on Historicism". In an open letter, the group denounced the recent closure of investigative newspaper Bingdian (Freezing Point).

The reaction of top leaders was to fire the editor, Li Datong and the associate editor, Lu Yueyong (another liberal journalist) and closed the journal. The liberals' attempt to reexamine history challenged the orthodox history text imposed upon Chinese. Although Deng was a victim of Mao's Cultural Revolution, Deng failed to systematically analyze Mao's era objectively as did Khrushchev to Stalin. Departure from Maoist thinking still impacts elite within the party state apparatus. While

some of the so-called new left has become supporters of Mao, liberals hold Mao and the central planning responsible for the famine death of millions of rural people. Mao's state policies led to the famine deaths of millions in China. Even government officials admitted that policies were the major cause of death. Although Deng Xiaoping was responsible for the Great Leap Forward campaign, the death toll changed his mind and he became more practical in dealing with rural production in China.^{xlix}

In general, the old left, the new left, Maoist intellectuals and the state defended the Great Leap Forward as the price to pay for China's industrialization. The Chinese government until today still uses the words, "*sannan zhinan zaihai*"(three years of natural disasters) to talk about the human death toll in China's soul. Even now, there is no monument built for those people. Even in 2006, the new left spoke persons, Wang Hui and Wen Tienjun defended the Great Leap policy of state building in China when debating with the classical liberal writer, Qin Hui:

"Your basic assumption is the primitive capital formation of capitalism and socialism. If you get rid of isms, primitive capital formation is in fact capital gathering. The manners differ between the state and the capitalist but the nature of the capital formation was the same(zhongguo gaige, Chinese Reform Web, 4/06/2006)".

Wen is the first person in China to state that extortion of Chinese state peasantry was a deliberate state policy choice on the part of the Chinese authorities. The implied message was that the deaths of millions of rural people were part of the price of socialism.

Some also praised the Cultural Revolution as a democratic movement in Chinese history. Problems brought about by the economic reform have alarmed some scholars. This tendency worries the regime's elite since it negates all achievements the regime leaders are so proud of. The Cultural Revolution not only brought poverty (long food lines) with so many urban young forced to go to live with the rural poor but also an era of terror for millions of Chinese. Nostalgia for the "meaningful life" for most of the new left transcends the social and material progress China has made.

The party recently agreed to set up a museum of the Cultural Revolution, a first step for de-Maoism in China.

Cui Zhiyuan wrote an important essay on the Cultural Revolution. According to him, moral decadence and corruption can be solved by direct democratic participation like the Cultural Revolution. The new left regarded the rise of commercialization as the source of moral decline and income inequality. Like Cui, most new left did not believe that education and economic development will bring justice to China, but hoped that a return to the centralized state will.

Despite differences, the new left and the Maoist share key values: 1. Social justice; 2. Marxist and Maoist ideal of class struggle. To achieve a just society, class struggle is inevitable because those who have political, economic and social power will try their best to exploit and to oppress the proletariat while the proletariat must struggle to change the social and political structure to gain real power. For this group, political compromise is impossible. Class struggle is a zero sum game. This rhetoric has scared the new rich elite class within the party and thus the regime tried to reign in some of the left through either bribery or through traditional terror methods.

Under pressure from liberal intellectuals and the new left, Hu Jingtao and Wen Jiabao balanced the debate on history by allowing the liberal journal to assume its business but ordered to change the leadership within the journal.

Views of Chinese economic reform

Although most Chinese intellectuals support the idea of economic reform in China, they have different views on China's market reform process. The liberal economists like Zhang Wuchang, Tian Guo Qiang, Fan Gan, and Wu Jinglian support further reform and attribute the problems of reform (corruption, environment pollution, inequality and farmers' pain) to lack of systematic reform. This view has become the mainstream view of the state including the majority of the government officials. Zhang Wuchang credited the 1994 tax-sharing policy of *fenzao chifan*, —(dividing the kitchen to cook separate meals) for China's rapid economic takeoff.¹ The implementation of the 1994 'tax-sharing' reforms led to decentralization of fiscal planning to local levels, which in turn encouraged local competition. Competition became more important to municipalities, counties, townships and villages.

For economist liberals, wealth is something good, an incentive or lure for Chinese to strive for. Wu Zhengzhang, who came from a poor farm family in Hubei, became a leading economist at the largest state policy think tank, the State Development Research Center. Before he became a banker at the Beijing Branch of Shenzhen Development Bank in 2001, he pointed out that decentralization and economic reform brought not only prosperity to Chinese people but also institutional reform. "To some extent, entrepreneurs, especially rural entrepreneurs, in the early stage, took considerable risks to create new markets and new institutions (factories, associations, and markets). Given the fact that most did not believe that the communist state would allow them to do this for long, they often sought short-term gains instead of long-term investment. But the 1995 policy of decentralization gave material incentives to engage in market activities. As more and more government officials began to directly participate in market activities either legally or indirectly, entrepreneurs with long term interest gained some certainty and property protection because they knew that they would reap the benefits of their risk taking activities".¹

The new liberals' explanation has relentlessly pushed the market idea and hope that once market forces come into full play, the unpopular side effects will disappear.

Local cadres have pushed more economic growth.

For the new left, this same policy led to the rise of regional inequalities in China. Wang Shao Guang and Hu Angan attributed China's inequality and problems to the weakening of the center. They did a survey to show that China was behind in terms of state' capacity because the central authorities cut down their own revenue which allowed local administrations to levy as much as they liked. To a great extent, their thinking was influenced by Marxism and new Marxist scholars in the West like Vivian Shu who advocated state intervention into markets because they like Marx believed that the power of the market was destructive and exploitative. Shu, a highly respected China scholar, wrote her dissertation on the Great Leap Forward in which she praised China's collectivization movement.

One of the most important critiques of the one party state came from a Shenzhen economist-turned-journalist. He Qinglian has written many books and essays to attack the lack of transparency and corruption within the one party system. Especially in her book, *Modernization's Pitfall*, she exposed the party-officials-profiteering scheme. He discovered that the so-called market reform became an easy means for officials at all levels to take control of resources (human, capital and land).

While some liberal economists have been trying to help the Chinese leaders to overcome the

urban welfare dependence on the government in housing, health care, education, and subsidies, the half way reform resulted in unfairness: the majority of working people have borne the burden of market transition while the officials and a few entrepreneurs have become rich.^{lii} Thus in the summer of 2005, scholars at Development Research Center of the State Council, the leading government policy think-tank published a report and admitted that that declared that the medical reform in China had failed. “The majority of Chinese workplaces no longer provide free medical coverage to workers in all forms of ownership structures. After replacing the work unit based medical care payment system with the new Health Care Insurance, more than half of urban people could not afford health care insurance”.^{liii} The situation in rural areas is worse. As medical equipment and medicines have become private, while the hospital remained public, the result has been corruption.

It is difficult to differentiate real dissent and the new power struggle arrangement. Some critics have been immediately welcomed by the Hu-Wen regime while other critics suffered purges and punishment.

For example, Li Changping was a bestselling writer from rural Hubei when he became famous by publishing a letter to the Prime Minister in 2004.^{liv} Li was born in rural Hubei. After gaining his education, he went back to serve his community. After witnessing so many abuses and brutalities, he finally chose to come out to expose the evil of the one party domination in the countryside during the reform period.

Sun Dawu was another liberal critic from rural Hebei that suffered for speaking out and for pushing for more reform in China. Sun Dawu, blamed the lack of rural economic development on the despotism of the one party state. Refusing to participate in buying political support, Sun Dawu cried out against the extortionate nature of different departments of the one party state machine. He informed students at Beijing university that the big problem in China is lack of political reform: “In China, it is 8 big hats (government bureaucracies) trying to control a straw hat (farmers)”.^{lv} For Sun, the lack of political reform blocked real economic reform and development. Sun was framed in a financial matter and was sentenced to three years of probation.

The Hu-Wen administration has used some of their left leaning intellectuals like Liu Guoguang, to attack the economic reforms.

How to deal with the rise of Chinese inequality

The Chinese new left became an important force in the 1990s because they raised public concern for the gap between the haves and have-nots. The Gini index of China’s economic inequality became one of the worst in the world. For them, all this was a result of markets and the rich people. The new left advocated that the strong hand of the state should reduce inequality, provide a social safety net, stop privatization of state factories, intervene more in the market, and get rid of the corruption. As unchecked power enabled only a small minority people and government officials to make money while millions of others lose their job security and money in stock markets, this social critique was welcome in Chinese society. Since the government also was concerned about social stability, their outcry against inequality attracted both official attention and Chinese public attention. The new left was welcomed by the society in the late 1990s because rapid economic development and a lack of political reform had left many social problems unsolved. Their appeal played into the traditional egalitarian culture of Confucianism, the traditional Marxist egalitarian communist

ideological social habit, and the public disgust of unjust means of official profiteering.

The old and the young Chinese people were attracted to this new left ideology. The trouble is that those new left and new Marxists fail to attack the root cause of social equality in China: *hukou* (household registration system) which could be possible under a centralized state.

The liberals have done many great things. Their advocacy of private ownership rights and of the market economy in general are excellent and their introduction of European enlightenment ideas like translation of Hayek's work and other classical liberals have bred a generation of Chinese intellectuals and made any return to the old left difficult. Despite having a healthy mistrust of Maoism and socialism, the new liberals have not realized that they have become estranged from feelings of the masses. Most new liberals refuse to admit that popular concerns about environment, large income disparity, official corruption, and job security have become the arenas of the new left.

The liberals also recognized the rise of inequalities in China but they attributed it to the continuing of state discriminative policy and anti-rural policy in particular.

One of the leading sociologists, Lu Xueyi, linked the rural inequality to *hukou* (the household registration system) and state extortion of rural people. Lu stated that the average income ratios between town and country reached 6:1. What is more, the urban people paid only average annual taxes of 37 Yuan per capita while rural people paid an average 146-Yuan.

This outcry from both the liberals and the new left did send a signal to the top elite. In 2005, the government eliminated agricultural taxes for most rural people.

Li Changping, the government-official-turned-freelance-writer, became the most outspoken critic of unchecked government power in rural China.^{1vi}

Li wants the government top leaders to know that it is not just the inequality between rural and urban that is galling but that the inequality has favored those with political power and forced farmers to bail out the government's bad decisions in the name of "protecting the livelihoods of workers".

The solution is to have more radical reform especially political reform.

Liberal economist He Kaiyin claimed that the lack of transparency and property rights in the countryside are the root causes for conflicts between land developers including local government officials and farmers. He Kaiyin has argued for a properly targeted national 'agricultural-rural plan' that would address farmers' needs for land use rights.

Of course, politics depends on a lot more than underlying ideology. The Chinese want their government to deliver more. In this aspect, the intellectuals from the left and right by introducing the Western ideas about freedom, democracy and welfare in fact provide information and methods for Chinese government to deal with two important issues: catching up with the developed countries while trying to manage the transition to the new modern state.

Most Chinese people are neither left nor right, but rather voice their preference on the basis of current situations and specific issues. But all things considered, if the new left continue to appeal to disadvantaged groups (laid off workers and poor farmers), the fear of a new Maoist revolution may drive the government elite to the right. At this point, the fear of chaos is common for all Chinese. This fear has driven the government to take a more authoritarian approach.

From tizhiwai (outside the system) to tizhinei (inside the system)

During the 1980s, intellectual debate on reform reached its peak in 1989 when the June student's movement was crushed by the state, forcing many to work in the government to adopt gradual peaceful change. "During the dark days between 1989 to 1992, the liberals were silenced", recalled Liu Junning "Deng's southern tour lifted the political oppression against liberal intellectuals. Liberals began to dissolve into two camps: classical liberals and the neo-liberals".^{lvii} While the classical liberals focus on institutional change in constitutional liberty, the neo-liberal intellectuals have moved from tizhi wai to tizhi nei in order to solve problems. The new guidance became "Socialism with Chinese characteristics" which in fact means that the party officials and a few connected to the party could benefit from market development. "To justify the Communist Party's intervention on behalf of elites, some neo-liberals reached for historical precedent. They disavowed China's Francophilic past and embraced England's "Glorious Revolution" which led to parliamentary rule by the aristocracy, championed by Edmund Burke. Likewise, Isaiah Berlin's 1958 essay on freedom, "Two Concepts of Liberty" became a touchstone. Mr. Berlin's focus on "freedom from" instead of "freedom to" was treated as a guiding philosophy for a minimalist state that let the market work".^{lviii} More and more neo-liberals want to have gradual reform. Given the strong state's lack of rule of law, the neo-liberals in fact encouraged elite in the government to not to be concerned with social responsibility.

At the same time, the classical liberals like Liu Junning who advocated constitutional protection for the poor and the left's concern for equality, were pushed aside and they had to go around established elite channels (formal media, college campus, and the party organizations) to express their concerns about rights issues and social justice.

Some intellectuals are either bribed into tizhi nei or interested in going to make real change inside the party organizations. This includes many professors in Chinese elite colleges and think tanks.

Those who are pushed out of the system have become dissident intellectuals who have contempt for compromise. Some of important dissident intellectuals include Wei Jingsheng, Liu Binyan, Fang Lizhi, Zhang Guowei, Chen Xiaonong, He Qinglian, Liu Junning, Wang Juntao, and Wu Guogang.

When those dissidents found themselves out of step with a large portion of the national elite in 2004, they turned into political activists.

Views of globalization

Intellectuals also differ in their views of China's globalization. The new left and Maoists blame social injustice on foreign investment and global capitalism. This is much like the world system theory and the dependency theory that were popular in the US in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Arghiri Emmanuel's concept of *unequal exchange* stated that the rich controlling the world economy are responsible of the poverty of the 3rd world.^{lix} Like American and Western anti-globalization groups, the new left hope to resist the world capitalist invasion of China. Encouraged by the anti-globalization movement in Seattle, they rejected the argument that world trade liberalization has intrinsic value.^{lx}

Since the theory disappeared in the 1980s with the rise of East Asian NICs (newly industrial countries whose economy boosted because of linkage to the world market, especially market), most

Chinese elites tend to reject the dependency approach. Many Chinese government officials want to learn from Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan to focus on global trade.

Liberals tend to have a positive attitude towards globalization. Chen Li refers to supporters working in the government as global institutionalists.^{lxi} The liberals have made great efforts to arrange for China to join the WTO. Liberals working in the government also worked hard to make China to obey the WTO rules, including the rules governing the financial sector, because they believe China's integration with the world economy is benefiting China and the world beyond. Many would like to have more multinational companies to come to China so that Chinese can get used to modern international standards not only in manufacturing but also in worldviews. On the other side are the popular nationalists (the new left) who still have faith in socialism and resent American world domination by spreading democracy and freedom.

Forms in which the debates have taken place

Given the fact that the one party state controls speech, in what forms do those different views appear?

There are informal and formal ways.

One form is through popular journals

The most influential magazine for the Maoist left is *Zhongliu*, and *Dangdai sixiang* while the new left ones are *Dushu* and *Tienyan*. When *Dushu* was published in April 1979, the title of its lead article, 'No Forbidden Zone in Reading' carried a liberal message for liberalism. But in the 1990s and after 1989 Tianan Men, it became the new left intellectual journal. The journal "launched a series of major debates on the fate of rural society, ethics, Asia, war and revolution, financial crisis, liberalism, law and democracy, nationalism, feminism reaching to six figures".^{lxii} Most influential new left articles come from the journal.

Bingdian is a liberal journal, often introducing new ways to examine China's political and economic affairs.

Book publication

Elsewhere I have discussed how writers of banned books can gain access to publishing through private contractors or private printing, another indicator of how freedom brought about private economic development.^{lxiii}

This is especially true for fiction writers (TV dramas, song, novels, and fictions). In the 1990s, long novels by Lu Tianming, Chen Fang, Zhang Ping, Wang Yuewen, Liu Ping, and others have exposed corruption brought about by the one party state in China.

But the most influential ones are the TV dramas. Although those dramas are intended as entertainment to make money for the artists and distributors, yet the writers can be sometimes specifically critical of the lack of transparency and lack of rule of law resulting from the one party domination. For example, one popular drama, "She Wei Shuji" Provincial Party Secretary. "Why have so many government officials dared to be so corrupt", remarked the hero in the movie, "the answer is that there is no other alternative power to check the powerful". In order to capture social reality, many contemporary dramas examine the systematic corruption of the Communist system.

Other forms of new arts have been bold to advocate freedom and criticize the one party state.

Another example is in publishing. Shu Shang is a middle person between state controlled publishing house and writers, buying ISBN numbers from the government and selling them. This private channel is more efficient than the traditional state ones. Some intellectuals even joined the “second publication channel” and published many books that have public influence. The leading intellectual private vendors are Ding Dong, and Fu Guoyong.^{lxiv}

Increasingly, intellectuals have been able to publish books that are considered “politically not correct” in China. For example, the Shenzhen Special Zone News journalist He Qinglian wrote the controversial book “China’s Quagmire” (Zhongguo de xianjing). It is amusing those critical books like “Interviews from the Bottom of Chinese Society” (Zhongguo diceng fangtanlu) by Liao Yiwu, Xiao Shu’s “Harbingers of History” (Lishi de xiansheng), and Cao Jinqing’s book, “China Along the Yellow River” (Huanghebian de Zhongguo) all came out in China. These are all important works that criticize the state by using real case stories.

The most liberal T.V. station is Hunan TV, in Mao’s hometown.

The informal or second channel includes books that are labeled “feifa” (illegal publication). For example, one of the most sought after books is In Memory of Li Shenzhi (Huanian Li Shenzhi), a collection of liberal writers’ essays about Li. The book edited by Li Rui, has no publisher, no date, no printing information and no ISBN number. Other “feifa” books are The Collections of Havel, Collected Works of Huang Wangli; Collections of Hu Jiwei. Those books are highly valued among intellectuals. Sending, giving and receiving these books is part of the formation of a like-minded intellectuals.

Newspapers are becoming bolder to criticize the government from both the left and the liberal journalists^{lxv}

The leading liberal newspapers exist almost all in Guangdong, Shenzhen Special Zone News, Southern People’s Weekly, 21st Century Global Herald, and The Southern Metropolis News. Apart from publishing news that is relatively fair, journalists working in those newspapers constantly test the limits of the state. For example, Southern People’s Weekly published a cover story entitled, “Fifty Public Intellectuals Who Influenced China” in September 2004. By giving credits to some brave critics of the regime including Liu Xiaobo, the paper in fact defended those brave intellectuals and encouraged more open debates among the intellectuals.

One strategy that newspapers use to get away with reporting “bad news” or the “dark side of the Chinese society” is called *yidi baodao* (reporting news in different localities). Interviewing with Gao Song, a reporter from Guizhou, we realized that local propaganda censors minded less if the journalists reported bad news about other places in the local news because the local people could feel that officials in other places are worse than their local officials, thus reducing the anger at their governments. Guangzhou, which is close to Hong Kong with its press freedom, has become a favorite site for people to expose the wrong doings of government officials in other places like Hunan and Hen.

It is also important to know that economic competition resulting from the 1995 decentralization led to the rise of local economic competition. The exposure of bad institutional problems in other localities could make Guangdong more attractive to both foreign investors and consumers.

What is more, journalists and newspapers have to pay attention to the bottom line: to make money.

But there are journalist who are trying to bring news that fit to print. One leading liberal and legal journalist is Chu Aizhong. His book, *The Fourth Power: from News Supervision to Media Legal System*, has great influence in Chinese society. The government banned the book but many illegal copies appeared at the black market. On October 1st, 2001, Chu posted a comment to one of the website bbs to express his views on the state policy of yanda (heavily strike) against criminals. On the 17th of the same month, three policemen went to his office to investigate the Internet comment incident. The next day, the police in Hang Zhou demanded Chu to pay a 5000 Yuan (about \$700) fine for violating the regulation of item five: “copy, spread, making rumors and accusation to disturb the social order’s information”.^{lxvi} In the past, most people would give a sigh of relief since the punishment was monetary, not a prison sentence. But Chu did not want to give in. Chu asked the Hang Zhou police to reconsider this administrative decision because Chu’s view belonged to the freedom of speech guaranteed by the constitution. But his appeal was turned down. Chu appealed again to the higher court and lost again. This process showed that both free and un-free elements. China has made progress in terms of going through the legal procedure. Thirty years ago, Chu would have put in prison with no trail and no explanation. But his failure also showed very little has achieved in terms of rule of law because the state still failed to implement rules according to its own constitution.

But this case has three important implications for China. First of all, intellectuals began to take a new approach to deal with the state by holding them accountable for the rule they created. Second, Chu was so consistent while elite showed some constraint because Chu was not arrested. Third, through the Internet, everyone is watching what the state would do. It could create public opinion, which creates social pressure for the state.

The process of using the court system to express dissent has emboldened other writers to be more open despite the regime’s Internet police. Through Internet, both liberals and the new left have some places to express their independent and non-state imposed views to the public. In this aspect, the private sector development has played a role for the intellectuals to express their ideas in printing officially and unofficially.^{lxvii}

Global linkage

Chinese intellectual debates are linked to global intellectual debates as well. A New York Times reporter puts it: “Discussion of China’s current problems often hinges on classical, Western views of development, with scholars debating whether French radicals or British gradualists are better models for reform. Rousseau inspired thinkers during Mao’s time; Burke’s rejection of the French Revolution and his support for the aristocracy appeals to many today. There are postmodernists, feminists and libertarians in the mix”.^{lxviii}

There are bridges to link China to the outside world. Hong Kong, Taiwanese, overseas Chinese and Chinese with good command of English play a key role.

One of the reasons that newspapers in Guangdong, close to Hong Kong, are bolder is because they are influenced by Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, intellectuals in magazines, newspapers, and research institutes, have played a role to spread liberal ideas to China and to lead support for liberal

intellectuals. Two of the most important Hong Kong journals are Kai Fang (Opening up) and Jieshiniandai (The Nineties), helping the Chinese scholars to publish articles critical of government policies.

For example, The Christian Culture Research Institute on Chinese Learning has a website that is read by many Chinese (<http://www.iscs.org.hk/main.shtml>).

Sometimes, scholars and intellectuals could get their books published in Hong Kong to avoid the Chinese state censors. For example, the books like in Memory of Hu Yaobang; and Li Rui's Recent Work were also published in Hong Kong.

More and more, the Chinese educated elite are able to get their ideas across through the foreign press and websites. For example, when the Chinese government banned Liu Junning from publishing his radical reform ideas, he was able to meet reporters from the New York Times and declared that "property rights is the basis of all human rights". As an increasing number of Chinese learn English and gain access to foreign news, they can hear interviews on Voice of America, Radio Free Asia, the BBC, and in Hong Kong that would be broadcast back to China.

The most influential liberal overseas academic journal is Dang dai zhongguo, based in Princeton whose goal is dedicated to intellectual debates on China's transformation to liberal democracy. The journal was first set up by an exiled intellectual reform leader, Chen Yizhi in 1991 and now headed by Chen Xiaonong, another exiled liberal Chinese economist. This journal has become influential because both Chinese intellectuals and the Chinese elite read this journal.

Another important liberal overseas publication is on the internet, New Century (<http://www.ncn.org>).

On the left side, overseas Chinese scholars have translated books into Chinese. One of the most important new left is Xudong Zhang in New York University. Zhang introduced post-modern and post-colonial books to China.^{lxix} In the 1990s, a series of books called Society and Thought (left learning) came to China through the Oxford University Press Chinese language division. A new generation of Chinese scholars began to know the names of Walter Benjamin, Jacques Derrida, and Stanley Fish

Michel Foucault, Frankfurt School Hans-George Gadamer
 Anthony Giddens, Antonio Gramsci, Felix Guattari,
 Jurgen Habermas, Donna Haraway, Martin Heidegger,
 Jacques Lacan, Jean Francois Lyotard,
 Georg Lukács, Paul de Man, Herbert Marcuse,
 Richard Rorty, Jean-Paul Sartre, Edward Said, Charles Taylor, Paul Virilio, Ludwig Wittgenstein.^{lxx}

The new left important websites are China and the World (Zhongguo yu shijie) and Outcry, (Nahan).

Left leaning scholars like Jia Jingxi (NGO scholars), Wang Yongchen (People's Radio), Kang Xiaoguang received financial backing from the Ford Foundation in Beijing.

On the liberal side, Liu Junning translated many works of Hayek and other classic works into Chinese. Liu has also received some support from the Cato Institute and the Atlas Economic foundation.

Internet and other IT technologies have enabled Chinese intellectuals to have direct

conversations with people outside China especially with Chinese speaking people. The new linkage through msn and skype.com makes it so easy to talk to Chinese on the free phone, a delight for Chinese intellectuals.

Internet is the most important form for intellectuals in China

Internet has become the most important vehicle for diversified ideas to be expressed. It is difficult for the government to control it although it tries hard to do so.

Secondly, it allows a lot of directly political issues to be addressed, which the print media in the mainland cannot touch. Thirdly, it spreads information from local levels very quickly across the country, which otherwise would not get national attention. So it offers the possibility of linking local, national and international spaces. But its limitations remain obvious too. The information it purveys is not beyond regulation by various forces. The net is also an ideal medium for intervention without responsibility, encouraging personalized attacks and reckless vituperation under cover of anonymity. At the same time, it does not lend itself easily to theoretical discussions, which are still more or less the preserve of print journals in China, though some are now setting up their websites. Still, the internet has certainly created a public forum and alternative to the official dominated media.

There are hundreds of liberal and left websites. The most well known liberal sites are Forum on Chinese Constitutionalism headed by Fan Yafeng, <http://www.gongfa.com/>. This is the most important gathering place for constitutional liberal intellectuals.

For classical liberals, the most popular website gathering place is one headed by Cathay Institute for Public Affairs, <http://www.jiuding.org/>.

Another important site is yanan.com, which was closed down by the government in 2005.

An increasing number of websites deals with religion. Intellectuals with Christian faith often gather and express their ideas in the websites like <http://godoor.com/xinyang/>, <http://www.gongfa.com/>.

Other mainstream websites reach hundreds especially bbs in major college campuses.

There are important old left websites: Chinese Workers Web; Workers (<http://www.zggr.org/>), Peasants and Soldiers BBS, and Communists Web (www.comunist.com.c, www.comunistonline.com).

These are many well-known individual Internet essayists. One of the most influential classical liberal internet essayists is Qiu Feng, <http://www.sinoliberal.net/qiufeng/qiufengpolitics.htm>.

Qiu is a Hayek scholar and uses his website and other essays to advocate economic and political liberties in China.

Wang Yi's website is another popular website for liberals to read and to post questions. Yu Jie's website focuses on human rights in China.

The Communist Web was set up by Shen Qianhong in 1999. Shen was impressed by the Internet and tried to use his site to educate the public about Marxism and Mao thought. He was able to list his website in search engines like Sohu, Yahoo, Easy net, and Google. ^{lxxi}

With 200 million users in China, the Internet will play an even bigger role for liberty in China.

Sometimes ordinary people use the Internet to create incidents to influence public opinion against the government. For example, the controversial trials of a BMW driver who killed a peasant woman in Harbin of Heilongjiang Province showed that the government court backed down by giving

out heavy sentence. This incident shows how common people could use the internet to create a critical mass of public opinion to enforce laws.

More and more Chinese intellectuals prefer to express themselves and their ideas through the Internet.

While the liberal essayists like Qiu Feng, Wang Yi, use the Internet to express liberal ideas and debates, the leftists also use the internet to oppose the liberal ideas by introducing Marxism and new isms to expose the evil of the market.

There are two leading leftist websites: maoflag.net and huayue.org.

While participants at the pro-reform meeting held a meeting in Beijing to push China for further political and system reform in early 2006, the left used a website to attack the liberals.

Li Chengrui, a director of the National Bureau of Statistics in the early 1980s, ridiculed claims by CSER president Gao Shangquan that reforms must be pushed forward unwaveringly.

“The key to the debate regarding economic reform is whether we should keep public ownership as the mainstay of the economy or make a shift to seek privatization”, Mr. Li said. “The focus is whether we should uphold or overturn the four cardinal principles”, he said, referring to the political legacy of late leader Deng Xiaoping aimed at maintaining Communist Party rule.

Mr. Li said pro-reform economists often exaggerated the role of the market in economic reforms and deliberately ignored the importance of the issue of ownership in the debate.

Citing official statistics, Mr. Li said the publicly owned economy accounted for 43 per cent of the country’s gross domestic product, a proportion that was declining at an annual rate of more than 2.3 percentage points.

Frustrated by comments from President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao that sided with the pro-reform camp, conservative scholars accused Professor Gao and other so-called mainstream economists of taking advantage of government backing.

Ding Bing , from the Capital University of Economics and Business in Beijing, said: “Elite economists have ulterior motives behind labeling those who are opposed to neo-liberal reform as being anti-reform”. Professor Ding criticized the pro-reform camp for attempting to rein in different opinions in the debate by repeating Deng’s famous “no argument” line.

Wu Jian , of the Central Party School, repeated remarks.^{lxxii}

For the new Chinese leaders like Hu Jingtao and Wen Jiaobao, reconfirmation of Jiang’s line does not give legitimacy to the new leadership. What is more, the party has lost its political legitimacy because of wide spread corruption involved in the market transition. The new attack can be best used to push for a new government.

Formal and informal meetings

The most common gathering for people who share the same ideas are at dinner or lunch tables. Among the intellectuals, those dinner gatherings are like the salon that people with like mind come together to discuss ideas. Unlike in the late 1980s where intellectuals could only express their dissent in secret, the new Chinese intellectuals are often quite open and critical of the state politics.^{lxxiii}

Sometimes, the meeting can be very formal like in the name of a scholarly conference. The new left, who have become the favorites of Western and especially American left academics, have more opportunities and support to have formal meetings to meet people among the same ideologies.

The classical liberals with a few notable exceptions like Liu Junning and Cao Xiyuan do not often have support to come to international conferences.

But sometimes they meet in Hong Kong. And on January 16-18, 2003, the Chinese liberal intellectuals had a big gathering in Australia at which the most important liberal scholars attended: Qin Hui, Wu Guoguang, Liu Junning, Wu Jiaqian, Xie Yong, Xiao Bin, Ren Jiantao, Xu Youyu, and Gao Hua.^{lxxiv}

As recently as 2006, the liberals who supported markets and liberalization had a meeting of the China Society of Economic Reform (CSER) at an undisclosed location in Beijing. CSER was pushing for both political and market reforms in China. In this meeting, encouraged by reform rhetoric from President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao, those liberals urged the government to undertake political reform to solve the social problems in China. The society's president, Gao Shangquan, urged that reforms must be carried out thoroughly despite the difficulties.

In 2005 and 2006, classical liberals had a formal conference of the Chinese Hayek Society. More than 30 classical liberals gathered in Shenzhen to talk about ideas.

The left Hua Yue Forum (<http://washeng.net/HuaShan/BBS/shishi/gbcurrent.html>) immediately responded by posting transcripts of both meetings. Both public and the state response has been critical of those liberals, giving the left strong confidence. In the words of a former college graduate at Nanjing University of Finance and Economics, Frank Huang, "Liberals are defeated at last".^{lxxv}

Intellectual forums sometimes take place with a certain news organization. For example, when one young journalist, Chu Aizhong, wrote a piece on the internet calling the government "yanda" (heavy strike) policies a new kind of terrorism in 2002, on August 24, 2004, a group of journalists and lawyers gathered together to have a study meeting at Workers' News, the official newspaper controlled by the party state.

Informal gatherings are the norms for both liberals and non-liberals alike. One important informal public gathering is so called dushuhui (book reading clubs). The most important new left journal is named Dushu. The journal introduced important ideas from the outside through book reviews. Often those people gather together to discuss the books they read and share.

A meeting of old leftist officials who had been pushed aside by Jiang's regime and the new left scholars from universities and government-backed think-tanks gathered on April 9, 2006, in Beijing to announce their war against "rightist liberal elites" according to a statement posted on a mainland website critical of reform.

The leading classical liberal book club is Cathay Book Reading Meeting, which hold a meeting every Tuesday. In Beijing, Liu Junning is the leader for the club. Apart from discussing classical liberal ideas, this reading group also discusses civic education in China. "I have lost my hope for the Chinese Communist party's elite to reform", Liu Junning said in a 2002 interview in Beijing, "Now I focus my attention on the liberal education effort on people. Now I am helping the entrepreneurs while at the same time writing a textbook for the young kids. These frequent informal gatherings help me to gain some insight from others who share the same goal to bring liberal democracy to China".

Another important means for intellectuals is to gather signatures to appeal to the state

Both the liberals and the left use this means to influence policies. For example, when the state prosecuted the internet essayist Ms. Liu Di, many intellectuals signed their names to demand her release.

When Li Datong, editor for Freezing Point, a supplement of The China Youth Daily, lost the job and the magazine was banned by the state, on February 5th, a group of intellectuals and government officials wrote an open letter to the party top leaders through the internet to demand the party to stop strict censorship because this “may ‘sow the seeds of disaster’ for China’s political transition”. Among the signatories are an ex-aide to Mao Zedong, a former newspaper editor and a former party propaganda chief.

“History demonstrates that only a totalitarian system needs news censorship, out of the delusion that it can keep the public locked in ignorance”, the group said in the letter.

The letter was signed on 2 February but publicly released on Tuesday.

Those signing the letter include Chairman Mao’s former secretary, Li Rui; the former editor of the Communist party’s own mouthpiece, People’s Daily, Hu Jiwei; and ex-propaganda boss, Zhu Houze. ^{lxxvi}

The nationalist intellectuals, Kang Xinnian, Zhang Guang Tien and Han Deqiang started a signature campaign to attack the American war in Iraq called “The Statement of Chinese Society against American Government’s War Plan in Iraq”. ^{lxxvii}

The Rise of freelance intellectuals and patrons of ideas

As social interests became more diversified, business people in the 1990s began to support some intellectuals who may voice their concern. In this aspect, the rise of global capitalism and Chinese private industrial revolution led to the increase of patrons of ideas on both the left and liberal sides. This is the key for the emergence of Chinese independent intellectuals who push China to be more.

Thus the 1990s witnessed the rise of freelance writers, journalists, artists and tutors of all kind. Liu Junning was forced to become one. Liu’s call for private property rights won the sympathy of many private business people. His Tuesday forum is supported by a group of small-scale business people. Some of those people are either friends or former anti-state intellectuals who were forced out of the system after June 4th movement. For example, Chen Zimin’s website was supported by a network of Tiananmen activists. “Chinese politics is very complicated”, remarked Xiao Yuan, a supporter of Chen, “Some minyun fenzi (June 4th democratic fighters) who were not imprisoned after the crack down feel guilty for those who did and thus give a little; others like me who were imprisoned after the crackdown felt obligated to support democratic fighters like Chen; still others who betrayed us and were afraid of us were also forced to give to those dissenting writers”. ^{lxxviii}

Other independent critical writers are Yu Jie, Liu Xiaopo and Wang Li Xiong.

One very powerful intellectual-turned-businessman is Mr. Liu in Shanghai who became a billionaire in the Chinese real estate market in the 1990s. He supports publication of many books on opening up China’s financial markets and the most pro-market internet intellectual forum called, Renaissance Team. Once a week, discussions on market reform are discussed. After the regime cracked down in 2005 and 2006, this email-based network became the most important intellectual

network in China.^{lxxix}

Sometimes, the donors want to remain anonymous. One successful businessman provides major funding for a controversial website that spread constitutionalism in China but he was afraid that open patronage would hurt his factories in South China.

Human rights intellectuals

Human rights intellectuals include people from all walks of life who focus their attention on improvement of human rights in China. In the early 1990s, the most notable case is Zhang Sizhi who became a defense lawyer, and Wang Juntao, the so-called “black hand” behind the students’ anti-government demonstration in June 1989.

Legal professionals have become activists to hold the Chinese government accountable for obeying the human rights documents they signed.

A unique group is headed by Ding Zilin whose son was killed on June 4th, 1989. Ding set up Tiananmen Mothers group and continues to ask the government to apologize for the crack down.

Yu Jie became a human rights advocate in China and he states: “Individual liberty and rights can not exist only one’s heart but also in daily practice”.^{lxxx}

Several important leading human rights intellectuals pushed to defend the rights of Chinese people by holding the government accountable for severe mistakes. The leading one was Dr. Jia in the Army Hospital. Jia openly challenged the party’s attempt to hide the outbreak of SARS in Beijing.^{lxxxi}

Fan Yafei is the most important legal advocate among Chinese intellectuals. In many of his internet essays and his lectures, he openly calls for religious freedom.

Those people have played an important part in the rise of civil rights awareness in China.

More and more lawyers in China have the courage to expose the Chinese government officials’ hypocrisy by holding them in violation of the law they created themselves.

Fan Yafeng and others work hard trying to replace the traditional Chinese communist “work unit” (gongzuo danwei) system with Fan’s Zhengfaxi (Politics and Law System). There are three important aspects of Zhengfaxi: 1. Evolution of constitutional political rationality; 2. Respect and protect citizens’ rights; 3. Peaceful transformation.^{lxxxii}

In short, Chinese intellectuals have began to form what Schumpeter called a critical group to “work up and organize resentment, to nurse it, to voice it and to lead it”.^{lxxxiii}

Limited to the pluralism

The Chinese government has used both carrots and sticks to keep the Chinese intellectuals in line. On the one hand, the regime showed no hesitation to imprison leading thinkers like Wei Jingshen,

Recently the government shut down the think tanks like Jiudi, with no mercy and arrested defense lawyers.

Some anti-reform conservation publications were also shut down.

The hush treatment and the incentives to work inside the system have led the majority of Chinese intellectuals to apply self-censorship. While the new Chinese liberals of all kinds tried to learn from the enlightenment idea to reduce the root cause of Chinese despotism and pushed for

liberty and freedom in China, politically those people tend to advocate gradual reform and work within the party-state. One leading economist has this to say about working within the party state:

“It is stupid to knock our heads against the iron rock of the Chinese one party state. We must work closely with a few people within the system to bring gradual change to China. We are tired of revolution. The whole nation could not afford another rapid revolution any more. Deng Xiaoping, Hu Yaobang, Zhao Zhiyang and many other government officials have played a key role for China’s transformation. We should work together with reform minded leaders to push for changes”.^{lxxxiv}

Interviews with many officials show that this sentiment is shared by most intellectuals. It is precisely those shared norms among intellectuals that have emboldened the regime to use harsh treatment against the dissident intellectuals.

The government spent huge amounts of money as incentives. Professors of economics, business and other liberal scholars who do not challenge the one party state will have the best houses, the highest salaries, state research grants and private support.

The political elite are privately much more in line with the liberal economists, Zhuang Wuchang and Tian Guoqiang who was named the dean of School of Economics in Shanghai in 2005. But in public, the official line is left learning and anti market reform.

As the internet became more and more important to express ideas that challenge the one party state, the government started to crack down, especially after 2004 when Hu-Wen’s new regime came to power. Nowadays in China the government works hard to shut down websites on both the left and the liberal ones. According to one report, the state has hired 50,000 or more Internet police. To spy for government has become an economic opportunity for a new Chinese educated class. The result is a surge of Chinese Communist Party membership applications across college campuses all over China.

For example, in 2005, several influential websites were shut down like *gaizhao yu jianshe* (Reform and Construction) headed by Chen Zimin, (www.bjsjs.net).^{lxxxv} On July 25, 2006, the Chinese state shut down the influential intellectual website *Century China Web* (www.cc.org.cn).

Co-opting intellectuals

But the most effective way for the regime to weaken the liberal intellectual environment is through carrots: increasing material benefits.

In most prestigious universities like Beijing, Qinghua, Fudan, and Wuhan Universities, professors have tripled their income since the late 1990s. For example, at Beijing University, the average salary for social sciences professors are 80,000 Yuan per year (more than 10,000 US) ten times than national average. What is more, the government also subsidizes housing for all professors. With huge apartment (big asset) and high salary, it is difficult for the majority of professors to express views that challenge the status quo. With the risk of student spies and the big carrots in front, self-censorship has become a new norm for most college professors.

Sometimes the outspoken intellectuals have to pay a heavy price. Human rights lawyer, Zheng Enchong who exposed the wrong doings in Shanghai real estate and the local officials corruption was convicted and sentenced to three years in Shanghai. Guo Guoting and Gao Zhicheng who defended Falun Gong and Christian believers were also arrested.

Government grants and support

What is more, dissenting people will not get government grants or support for research or for academic conferences abroad. As one well-known Professor in Beijing stated: “Nowadays I have to be careful what I may say in class because I do not know who is the informer in my class. I do not worry about the state research grant but I am afraid that my dissenting views will be used against me that I may never be allowed to attend conferences. No journal will dare publish my articles. Intellectual isolation is my no. 1 fear”.^{lxxxvi}

In Shanghai, other professors and researchers informed us that political campaigns like the 2005 “to keep the Communist Membership as the Pioneering Spirits” are the way of the party-state testing loyalty. Many just followed the theater. The top elite felt secure when even the rational intellectuals would follow the seeming unreasonable party campaign. Most intellectuals know how to use the Marxist rhetoric to play the double face.

With the increasingly tight state control, book contractors often dare not to help to print those materials that are politically sensitive. They are happy to help writers who can write just about whatever they want to know as long as they do not touch the bottom line set up by the party state.

Apart from the state institutional constrains, those intellectuals’ impact on Chinese society is also limited.

The actual readers of these Internet essays are primarily intellectuals and the overseas Diaspora Chinese. Inside China, ordinary people are tired of both the state ideologies and other ideologies as well. The dependence on enlightened and reform-minded leaders for liberal intellectual environment is also limited because Zhao Zhiyang and Hu Yaobang who were powerful top party bosses could fall.

What is more, no elite could remain consistent in their political views because China is changing so fast. For example, one day, Deng could say that everyone must obey the four cardinal principals to appeal to his political support base while the other time Deng would say that “To get rich is glorious”, which gave support to liberalism. The same is true of Jiang Zhimin. In 1990, Jiang stated that he would get rid of all private sectors by freezing the loans and private assets. But it is the same Jiang who invited Chinese capitalists to join the party.

From the way that Hu and Wen abandoned the liberal economists and liberal reforms by arresting liberals, it is not surprising that regime survival is Hu and Wen’s no. 1 strategy. They wish to balance the left and right to fit in the domestic and international situation.

They use the state sanctioned internet work to show the world that China has changed while at the same time to serve their domestics political power manipulation. No matter, those different voices will serve China well.

Although liberal lawyers have become bold to challenge the state on behalf of the people, numerous prominent lawyers have been detained, delicensed or blacklisted from publishing even on line. For example, Zheng Enlu was given three year sentences while Guo was delicensed in the early 2000s despite the fact that they were able to convict politically powerful profiteering officials.

Sometimes, the regime even used the means of organized crime to crack rights lawyers. According to Wang Yi, two Beijing lawyers were killed and two committed suicides in 2004 because political pressure from the one party state. The legal profession has become dangerous.^{lxxxvii}

In short, there are signs of diversity among China’s intellectuals, there are also stories to

show the hand of the state is still strong. In the case of the violence against the defense lawyers, China still has a long way to go.

Without an independent court system, it is difficult for judges and lawyers to have freedom and to reduce the fear. In order to get license, all lawyers must pay so called “protection fees” to the state court system, fees ranging between 3-5 thousands Yuan (\$400-600) per year. Moreover, lawyers do not have the freedom of association like all Chinese citizens apart from lawyers association, which is often controlled and watched, by the state. No Chinese lawyers have the freedom to accept defense freedom. This is especially true if those cases are sensitive cases. The court will intervene to force the lawyers to toe the line. ^{lxxxviii}

On August 15, 2006, Mr. Gao Zhicheng was arrested in Beijing for defending Fa Lungong people and house church Christians. Gao’s legal license was taken away in 2005. His two young children and his wife were put under house arrest with 24-hour surveillance cameras and four police on the watch.^{lxxxix}

As result of the state crack down, China ranked bottom 159th out of the 167 countries listed in the 2005 world press freedom index despite the progress China has made.

Conclusion

The vicissitudes’ of Chinese intellectual discourses on social justice, reform, democracy, freedom, the Cultural Revolution, and equality show that despite the ideological differences, the liberals, nationalists, new traditionalists, and the new left have added pluralism to Chinese society. Various debates together with global commerce, trade, media, internet, cultural exchange, and new trends have enabled Chinese people to be exposed to different ideas, making China increasingly cosmopolitan. Chinese people have been informed of different tastes, religions, and ideas.

Chinese communist political culture has become increasingly irrelevant in the life of people although the authoritarian state is trying to keep them in power.

The genuine dialogue is possible only if left and liberal sides start to have a shared conviction among them that despotism in China should still be their common opponent.

The liberals, especially those liberals within the state, must realize that pushing the government to respect the basic rights of the poor should be the priority. With the exception of a few liberals, the main stream tend to overlook the problems of lack of political reform in China. The new left politics will prove fruitless as long as they refuse to pay attention to rights of common people (freedom of movement and land rights for the poor) especially the rural people and expose the lack of political reform within the party.

As China becomes increasingly plural, the party-state’s ideological influence declines together with the influence of intellectuals. China has become increasing plural and linked to the world market. Intellectuals, once the consciousness and the soul of China, have become marginalized in the society. How will China allow such a critical mass of intellectuals to create public anger at the government officials without fear?

Chinese intellectuals have still a long way to go before they could hope to behave like the left in the US colleges that dominate the discourse of intellectual ideology.

- ⁱ Joseph Alois Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, New York, Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1947, p.147.
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