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elite structure, based on the power of the masses it had brought into the revolutionary struggle. It rejected the GMD and proclaimed that it was establishing a people’s democratic dictatorship.

From the communist perspective, China had passed into a new historical era in which its politics would be guided by the true interests of the vast majority. Just as a state serving a minority ruling class could not be democratic, so a state serving the majority was necessarily democratic, and bourgeois limits to its authority could only hamper its service to the people. The PRC was a democracy toward the people, and a dictatorship toward their enemies. The total crisis that had beset modern China had been resolved with an equally total solution.

Party-state formation in the 1949–1956 period was determined by three factors. First, revolutionary success had confirmed the CCP’s confidence in Marxism-Leninism and had opened new vistas and new tasks, so the natural course was to learn from the advanced experience of the Soviet Union in instituting state power. Second, success with two decades of base-area governance confirmed the political habits and values of the CCP, so new institutions and goals tended to be filled with familiar content. Third, the specific historical task of the 1949 to 1956 period was to make the transition to socialism. That task set the policy direction and political structures of the PRC, and when the task was accomplished in 1956, that opened the question of what the general political line should be for the new historical period. We shall briefly consider each of these factors.

The formal structures and the main policy targets of the PRC were determined almost entirely by the model for postrevolutionary government pioneered by the Soviet Union. Even the term “people’s republic” was an approved innovation: The first people’s republic had been Mongolia in 1924, and “people’s republic” (Hungary, Bulgaria, Poland) or “democratic republic” (East Germany) became popular after World War II to suggest governments based on a coalition of political parties. In the case of China, the term highlighted the role of the broad array of political and social forces symbolized by the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference in determining the provisional constitution and writing the 1954 constitution. As in the other people’s republics, the CCP moved rapidly to consolidate its power in the state and other public organizations and to secure control over the news media, finance, and commerce. The party continued to be flexible and broad-based in its recruitment, and it monopolized political leadership. It had been a vanguard party in pursuit of revolution, and it continued to be a vanguard party in pursuit of socialist transformation. In agrarian policy, where China’s methods differed most significantly from the experience of the Soviet Union, the three broad stages of land reform, basic cooperatization, and higher-level cooperatization were shared with other communist countries.

Despite the strong similarities between the political systems and policy orientations of the PRC and other communist countries, it should be emphasized that the CCP brought to these structures a very different political experience. Victory had convinced the CCP of its own correctness as much as of the correctness of Marxism-Leninism, and the massive scale of its popular revolutionary victory gave the CCP some unique advantages. The CCP began its rule with a large membership well dispersed and rooted in rural areas. It had thoroughly defeated its enemy, and neither foreign threats nor foreign friends overshadowed it. Within the centralized party-state framework, the CCP could operate with enviable confidence and power.

The political style of the revolutionary period, of course, remained a major influence, as Hong Yung Lee details in Chapter 6. The new leaders were experienced governmental leaders in the primitive and informal context of mass-line politics. Such political traits as mobilization campaigns, a general ambiguity of control and responsibility, the importance of access and connections, and the undercutting of formal institutions by personal power can all be related to the base-area pattern of governance. To be sure, some of these traits reinforced traditional authority patterns, and some were fostered by characteristics of the party-state system, but such habits were natural to people who had been socialized into their leadership style before 1949. However, the situation of real dependence on the people because of competition with a hostile government was necessarily lost. The high value placed on party–mass relations remained, but with only moral pressure and organizational sanction — not self-interest — to keep the cadre close to the people. The cadre became an official rather than a mobilizer of the masses. The success of the party diminished the clout of the people, and without constitutional provisions establishing citizen rights, popular influence faded.

The 1949 to 1956 period was defined as one of transition to socialism. That provided the CCP with clear goals: instituting the party-state, centralization and socialization of the economy, the cooperatization of agriculture. It was a phase in which continued alliance with nonworkers was justified, and so the united front that had emerged in the civil war remained. The 1954 constitution was explicitly a constitution of the transition period; its procedural guarantees and the legal codification movement of which it was the centerpiece had the Achilles’ heel of being specific to the pre-socialist stage. Unfortunately, that phase was much briefer than the fifteen or twenty years first
envisioned, and a new reorientation for the tasks of socialism became necessary.

AT THE EDGE OF HISTORY

With the completion of the transition to socialism in 1956, Chinese communism had reached a point where there were no clear models or practical policy guidelines. The Soviet Union could no longer be a guide, in part because it was itself still in the socialist stage, and in part because Khrushchev’s criticisms of Stalin had raised serious questions about Soviet leadership. China still faced the obvious tasks of economic development, but it was not clear whether such problems should delay political progress toward the ultimate goal of communism or whether a political leap forward could pull the economy along with it. Recalling the power of mass mobilization in the base areas, Mao and most of the leadership believed that a Chinese way to communism would be to rely on the masses in an all-out campaign for comprehensive political-economic transformation – the infamous “Great Leap Forward” of 1958. The failure of the Great Leap Forward led to the restoration and tightening of a more routinized party hegemony identified with Liu Shaoqi. The inherent conflict between the left Leninism of Mao Zedong and the right Leninism of Liu Shaoqi definitely involved different conceptions of the relationship between popular power and public authority, and Mao asserted his idea in the Cultural Revolution.

The leftist period of Chinese politics, 1957 to 1976, was characterized by dogmatism and a self-deluding, authoritarian optimism. It is correctly associated with Mao Zedong, but it is odd that his previous politics had been more prudent and practical, and yet his beliefs had not undergone a major change in the 1950s. I have argued elsewhere that by 1957 Mao had run beyond the practical targets set by goals such as victory and socialist transformation and had begun to orient his politics according to the vision of the communist future alluded to by Marx and Lenin.

Policy was judged by insatiable standards of equality: the elimination of societal differences, government through mass participation, the replacement of private incentives by public incentives, and maximum communization of ownership and productive activity. Mao knew that realization of those goals would involve difficult experimentation, and he assumed that individuals who hindered, questioned, or opposed the socialist road favored the capitalist road.

There was a profoundly contradictory relationship between the power of the people and public authority during that period. On the one hand, the great engine of China’s transformation was to be mass mobilization. At the beginning of each campaign there was great optimism that the party and the people thought in the same way, and so the problem was how to unleash the enthusiasm of the masses. On the other hand, individuals and groups could not participate in their own right and for their own interest, but only as members of the masses and for officially defined public interests. If their conceptions deviated from the current orthodoxy, that was proof that they were enemies of socialism – rightists or “capitalist-roaders.” The more the losing faction proclaimed their devotion and commitment to socialism, the more strongly they were denounced as “waving the red flag to oppose the red flag.”

The first mass mobilization to display the contradiction of mobilization and control through orthodoxy was the “Hundred Flowers movement” of 1956 to 1957. All were encouraged to contribute their ideas for building socialism. A Mao Zedong speech from that period, “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People,” seemed to be a virtual Areopagic. He said that truth is often with the minority, that Marxism cannot flourish as a hothouse plant protected from other ideas and criticism, and so forth. But when criticism suggested that there were tensions between the party leadership and the people, the “Anti-Rightist Campaign” of 1957 was launched, and the critics were denounced and punished as “poisonous weeds.”

Because the Great Leap Forward followed on the heels of the Anti-Rightist Campaign, it did not have a problem with ideological conformity. Everyone tried to be more left than the next person. Partly as a result of such hyperleftism, the Great Leap crashed into unperceived realities of objective limits of productivity and organizational effectiveness. Production shortfalls and the inability of the new communes to function effectively were inadmissible, and so China was plunged into famine. Only a government that had been built from the countryside and had the self-confidence of popular support could have been strong enough to cause a disaster of such magnitude.

In the aftermath of the Great Leap, a clear difference began to emerge between Mao Zedong’s tendency to rely on mass campaigns and ideological appeals and Liu Shaoqi’s reliance on improving the organization and discipline of the party structure. Mao’s position might be called “left Leninism,” because it emphasized the interactive relationship of party and masses and an openness to experimentation and volatility in the campaign cycle. It contained the potential for a radical, mass critique of the party as an elite. Liu’s position was “right Leninism”: a more Stalinist assumption of the correctness of the party and of the party’s bureaucratic responsibility to administer the revolution on the people’s behalf. Their underlying Leninist similarity lay in the assumption that mass and party interests could be identical. Both Mao’s radical critique of the party and Liu’s confidence in the party’s self-discipline were
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based on that assumption. If that assumption was questioned, then the institutional relationship of the party and the masses would have to be reconsidered.

THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

The Cultural Revolution, like any revolution, was a vivid swirl of noble ideals and human tragedy, heroic action and the collapse of social order. Unlike any other revolution, it was called forth to do battle with a political hegemony by the founder of that hegemony. The Cultural Revolution was effective because of the strength of the party-state, and because it was effective, it irremediably undermined that strength. Because it was an official revolution, only its positive aspects were highlighted while it was going on, but that has been reversed since its termination. Without suggesting that there is a "proper balance," both need to be appreciated.

From the vantage point of the relationship between popular power and public authority, the Cultural Revolution was nightmarish for all concerned, including, I think, for Mao himself. But from a more detached perspective it was an endlessly fascinating event that has not begun to be sufficiently analyzed. There were three broad aspects that deserve our attention: the ideological dimension of interpreting Mao’s actions, the political dimension of mass activities, and the question of the effects of the Cultural Revolution on subsequent Chinese politics.

By the 1960s, the revolution that Mao had led seemed to be in grave danger of derailment and decay. Of course, the failure of the Great Leap was a cause of great disorganization and disillusionment, but the problem was more general. Khrushchev’s Soviet Union showed that it was possible for revisionism to triumph in a socialist state. The negative example of Soviet revisionism not only sharpened policy debates but also highlighted the urgency of providing for revolutionary successors. Meanwhile, the resistance to and misinterpretation of Mao’s initiatives by the CCP organization, and the contrary spirit of its own initiatives, began to focus Mao’s attention on the possibility that the party’s own leadership might be the chief danger to the revolution. That would be an unthinkable thought for a Leninist, and Mao was not prepared to face the possibility head-on. He first concentrated on the problem of work style, and then criticized persons in authority as capitalist-roaders, but he never went so far as to call into question the system of authority itself. Mao never intended that his call to "bombard the headquarters" would lead to destruction of the structure of party authority and a free-for-all among the masses. When it did, he sided with party order: He brought in the army, suppressed mass organizations, and restored party hegemony.

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Although the Cultural Revolution was intended by Mao to be a reliance on the masses, on the model of the mass-line politics of revolutionary days, it had the opposite effect. Indeed, the mass mobilization of the Cultural Revolution was a complete inversion of mobilization in the base area. The primary difference was that the new mobilization was ideologically derived, rather than being connected to the practical necessities and material interests of everyday life. An untenable contradiction was posited between the public good, on the one hand, and particular and private interests, on the other, though, of course, the actual pattern of group formation reflected such interests. Although mass spontaneity was encouraged, it was encouraged only as support for Chairman Mao. The "truly red" masses were in direct communion with Chairman Mao; to raise concerns over individual rights, procedures, or elections would seem hopelessly (and dangerously) bourgeois. Instead of the united-front, alliance logic of the base areas, which had tried to maximize friends and minimize enemies in pursuit of a common goal, the driving principle was to draw a sharp line between "ourselves" and any possible contamination by the enemy. Therefore, factionalism predominated, rather than the overwhelming coalition, producing fissured and destructive competition. That was in the name of selfless idealism, though factionalism is actually the lowest form of common interest.

In contrast to the quasi-democratic system of the 1927–1949 period, we might call the mass politics of the Cultural Revolution a quasi-totalitarian system. It was characterized by competing factions that were mass-controlled, rather than shepherded by the party’s authoritarian structure. But the mass-regarding policies of the quasi-democratic system were replaced by a total submission to the deified will of Mao. The terrorism of the Cultural Revolution was to a great extent self-imposed at the basic level, rather than being the work of a centralized organization. In the context of a strong state’s call for an ideologically derived mass mobilization, even decentralized, competing mass organizations could be expected to be leadership-regarding in their actions.

Although the Cultural Revolution cannot be said to have had constructive effects in Chinese politics or to have accomplished any of its goals, some of its destructive effects have defined the context of post-Mao politics. First, it ended the ideological appeal of leftism in China. Its failure to establish a new, viable ethos of socialism provided conclusive proof of the bankruptcy of leftist idealism. The "Gang of Four"—especially Jiang Qing, Mao’s wife—became seedy symbols of the feudal opportunist reality behind the slogans, whereas the targets of the revolution were returned to power or were vindicated posthumously. Leftism had hanged itself on a ten-year-long rope; a succeeding regime stressing
material interest and social order was bound to be popular. Any person, policy, or practice associated with the Cultural Revolution became vulnerable.

Second, the vicissitudes of the Cultural Revolution destroyed the political innocence of the public. One could no longer assume that the party's rule was a natural hegemony of virtue, or that the current orthodoxy had a given, objectively valid content. Following the removal of Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, and then Lin Biao, and then the Gang of Four, and then Hua Guofeng, one could certainly doubt the quality and orthodoxy of even the highest levels of leadership. And people were disillusioned by their own experience of the quality, morality, and effectiveness of mass mobilization. The Cultural Revolution confirmed a distance between the party and the people, and therefore the post-Mao regime has been constrained to offer inducements to participate and to institutionalize public authority.

Third, the Cultural Revolution provided a unique political education for all concerned. For the elite, who were attacked but eventually returned to power, it was a personal experience of the tyranny of the masses. They returned with a visceral knowledge of the fallibility of the party and the danger of mass action. For almost everyone else, apparently, the experience gave rise to a general suspicion of ideology, of politics, and of the party. As a result, the political demands made by demonstrators in the 1970s and 1980s included constitutional specifications of citizen rights and party authority. Such demands were similar to suggestions made in the 1950s, but they were being made from vivid experience with the excesses of a strong party-state. Nevertheless, the demands were for structural reform of the party-state, rather than for its downfall or replacement.

In general, the Cultural Revolution failed as a millenarian effort to create a purely socialist society, but it succeeded in calling into question the assumptions concerning the legitimacy of an absolute party and the mass base of party authority. It was an attempt to preserve the revolutionary spirit beyond its natural life, and its failure ended the revolutionary period of Chinese politics that had been defined by total crisis. In the Cultural Revolution, a crisis had been caused by totalism, by an "all-round dictatorship." The reaction to the Cultural Revolution, therefore, was to pursue a postrevolutionary politics of security and material welfare for both the establishment and the masses.

REFORM AND REACTION IN POST-MAO CHINA

The relationship between state and people in China was profoundly shaken and disoriented in 1989, first by the spectacular demonstrations of April and May, and then by the declaration of martial law and the bloody repression of the demonstrations on June 4. Both the demonstrations and the repression were surprising to participants as well as to observers. In my opinion, neither was a "necessary" event, an unavoidable outcome of trends, but it is possible in retrospect to see the characteristics of the post-Mao situation that led to confrontation between the forces of reform and those of reaction. This section will analyze the overall situation, and then separately consider Deng Xiaoping's politics, structural reform, and the reassertion of orthodoxy and central control.

Because of the failure of the Cultural Revolution and the generally acknowledged bankruptcy of leftism, the post-Mao regime could be content with a negative ideological definition — opposition to the Cultural Revolution. Reaction to the Cultural Revolution explains the major policy guidelines of the 1980s: the precedence of economics over ideological politics, the utilization of material incentives, and the acknowledgments of the need for expertise and of the importance of societal complexity. Criticism of the Cultural Revolution created a pleasant but peculiar ideological situation for the leadership: By rejecting dogmatic purism, the regime backed into a naturally more permissive and relaxed intellectual environment.

Tang Tsou has well described the resulting "middle course" of Chinese politics: Rather than seeing itself as waging a "two-line struggle" between the forces of good and evil, the Chinese leadership, headed by Deng Xiaoping, has pursued an essentially pragmatic "struggle on two fronts," occupying a broad middle ground between two unacceptable extremes. Although Chinese policies have undergone tremendous development, the boundaries remained remarkably clear and stable until 1989. On the one hand, it has been unacceptably leftist to criticize the priority of economic development. Any critique of current policy is suspect if it is ideologically derived and indifferent to considerations of material welfare. At the Thirteenth Party Congress in 1987, Zhao Ziyang defined that edge of the field of discussion as the acceptance of the policies of modernization and openness. On the other hand, challenges to the party's leadership and its orthodoxy have been ruled out. In 1979, Deng defined this as the obligation to uphold the "four fundamental principles": the socialist road, the leadership of the CCP, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and Marxism-Leninism and "Mao Zeedong thought." It was already clear from the failure of various reform initiatives prior to 1989 that the right boundary of the political field was the political and ideological hegemony of the party. That also was reaffirmed at the Thirteenth Party Congress. Officially, at least, these boundaries remain in place. The demonstrations in Tiananmen generally avoided openly challenging party hegemony until martial law was declared, and Deng Xiaoping claims to be pursuing
modernization and openness even more strongly since declaring martial law. But in fact, the demonstrations and ensuing repression broke the boundaries, and politics has begun to spill into new terrain.

The "struggle on two fronts" allowed reformers and the party's orthodox conservatives to cohabit an ambiguous middle ground. It was not a peaceful cohabitation; each tried to gain control of policy, and part of the struggle was the effort by the reformers to extend the definition of modernization, countered by conservative alarms concerning alleged violations of the four principles. The reformers would push forward when their economic policies were doing well, and the conservatives would push back when the top leadership was scandalized by a particularly adventurous literary piece, the spread of pornography, or economic difficulties related to reform. Some issues were interpreted by the two sides to fit their respective causes. Corruption, for instance, was condemned as a remnant of feudalism by the reformers, but the conservatives saw it as a product of bourgeois influence.

The differences between the reform and conservative policy camps became more and more clear and personally acrimonious throughout the 1980s, and the two camps were confirmed by the removal of Hu Yaobang by the conservatives in January 1987. But the divisions in the leadership were officially denied, and policy-making at the center continued to be controlled by a process of consensus. That was demonstrated, for instance, when Hu was succeeded by Zhao Ziyang, a fellow reformer. The process of consensus, however, was a highly pressured and dynamic matter. On a spectrum of policy options from A to E, policy would tend to move from B to A, and then, as difficulties mounted with that extreme, to D, and then to E. The A-to-D movement would be the result of a coalition shift (but in terms of a change in Deng Xiaoping's position, not in terms of a majority vote count), and the B-to-A and D-to-E movements would be the results of consolidations of initial victories. Consensus, therefore, was not a negotiated process of finding the middle position. It involved forbearance in not removing the losing side from leadership circles, but there was tremendous pressure on the losers to conform. Discipline was as important as real agreement in building a consensus.

Reformers and conservatives had asymmetric advantages in that power environment. Reformers benefited from the negative ideological definition, that is, opposition to the Cultural Revolution, because it provided less control over innovation. More important, the overall characteristic of the reform program was decontrol, and decontrol is much easier to initiate than to terminate. So any system that allowed policy oscillation would favor reform in the long term. The actual structure of policy, however, benefited the conservatives. It was an informal, highly centralized configuration of personalities in which age was the sine qua non of influence. Deng Xiaoping was the authoritative swing vote on major decisions, and his world was that of the "court politics" of the elderly. Because the conservatives could not be removed, and oscillation would favor reform, the decentralizing and societally liberating effects of policy in effect crowded and cornered the center's political structure.

China's economic problems of inflation and lower grain production weakened the reform leadership of Zhao Ziyang in 1988, and by early 1989 the reformers were anxious, and the conservatives aggressive. The sudden emergence of massive political demonstrations by Beijing students on the occasion of Hu Yaobang's death more than turned the situation around. Besides showing the societal strength of reform, the demonstrations challenged the center's control over the pace of reform, as well as the party's control of political articulation. The conservatives tried to regain the initiative with the April 26 editorial condemning the demonstrations as disturbances. The editorial infuriated the students, and it prompted Zhao Ziyang to present his own official view, not condemning the students, in a speech to the Asian Development Bank on May 4. Zhao's apparent approval and the visit of Mikhail Gorbachev encouraged much larger demonstrations. As Premier Li Peng described it, "more than one million people took part in the demonstrations on May 17 and May 18. The Central Committee immediately decided to impose martial law." From May 19 onward the conservatives were in total control. When the initial implementation of martial law was frustrated by Beijing citizens and evoked opposition within the army to the conservative course of action, the center decided to act harshly, leading to the massacre of June 4 and further repressive measures.

It is clear that the April 26 editorial, and then Zhao's May 4 speech, broke the rule of consensus and made it impossible for the reformers and conservatives to continue to cohabit at the center. It was as if two people in a small boat were moving farther and farther apart, and finally one fell out. As the reformers were excluded, the actions and rhetoric of the center lurched back into the terminology of class struggle dating from the Cultural Revolution. The boat is now so out of balance that the possibility of the reformers climbing back in is less likely than is a fall of the current factional victors.

With this general situation in mind, we can now return to a closer analysis of the positions of the conservatives, Deng Xiaoping, and the reformers with regard to democratization.

Although the conservatives of the 1980s often are called "leftists" by their opponents, they have little in common with Cultural Revolution leftist. Indeed, their efforts might more aptly be viewed as a re-Stalinization, in that their chief concerns initially were to restore Marxist-
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Leninist orthodoxy and central control over politics and economics after the intellectual and social turmoil of the Cultural Revolution. Similarly, they defended central control and ideological orthodoxy against the innovations of the reformers in the 1980s. Because the conservative position reflected the unquestioned orthodoxy of the party in the 1950s and early 1960s - the high tide of the careers of the current top leaders - their arguments and values seem intuitively obvious to party elders, while appearing opaque and atavistic to students. It is probably more than coincidental that this viewpoint also serves the convenience and interests of the party elders.

The key to the relationship between state and people in conservative thought is the party's role as the vanguard of the proletariat. Attempts at democratization are unnecessary and suspect because they imply that the current relationship between party and people is institutionally inadequate. Political problems are to be overcome by strengthening the party, not by limiting it. Any external challenge to the party, whether from individuals or from demonstrations, threatens the party's vanguard role and thus is counterrevolutionary. Such a threat cannot be from the people, of course, but must result from a small number of agitators who mislead the people.

The problem with upholding the old idea of the vanguard party is that even the conservatives do not now maintain that there is a historical goal that is the special domain of the party. In the 1950s the party believed in the future historical stage of communism, but the Cultural Revolution shook Marxist millenarianism out of the party. The conservatives have the residual orthodoxy of the vanguard party, but without any justifying dynamic. The ideological, political, and practical conveniences for the central establishment explain the orthodoxy, not any active, future-oriented function. The orthodoxy of the vanguard party is in fact used to cover the reality of a rear guard party fighting the historical necessity of succession.

Deng Xiaoping's politics certainly appears to be inconsistent. Had he died before May 1989, he would have been considered a hero of reform; but since the summer of 1989, many believe that China cannot return to a reform path until after Deng is gone. The key to Deng Xiaoping's politics is his pragmatism. His spirit is captured in his most famous theoretical statement: "black cat, white cat, it doesn't matter as long as they catch mice." His approach was exactly antithetical to the dogmatic factionalism of the Cultural Revolution and well suited the mood of the people and the leadership after Mao's death. Economics prevailed over ideological politics, material interest over moral appeals and collectivism, expertise over "redness."

The role of the people in Deng's politics was more tricky than complex.

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In the struggle against leftist inertia in the party, the popularity of Deng's policies made the people a natural ally. In the heyday of "Democracy Wall" in November and December 1978, when Deng was deep in the final struggle with the leftists, he was even allied with demonstrators. But his support for democratizing reform was always predicated on the assumption that the people would support the party and his policies. That had two implications: first, that power was not really yielded in reform; second, that if reform led to a confrontation with the party, reform would yield. Within the party-state structure, Deng acknowledged the need for structural reforms in order to reduce bureaucratism, but that did not imply a lessening of party hegemony or a redefinition of the party's relationship to the people.

Essentially, Deng's political thought adjusted for the predicament in which the party found itself after the Cultural Revolution, as well as for reorientation of policy toward economic modernization, but it remained uncritical concerning the basic relationships of party to state and of state to people. Reform was a process of self-limitation and self-control by the party. The party retained its political monopoly. Despite new rules and new directions, it remained a vanguard party.

Deng's commitment to old values of party hegemony and to new policy content made him the perfect arbiter of the "struggle on two fronts." The flexibility of that position suited his pragmatism. He could be either conservative or reformer, depending on the circumstances. However, as the gap between the conservative and reform positions widened, his flexibility and discretion were reduced. With the ejection of Zhao Ziyang, the uniqueness and power of Deng's position as arbiter collapsed. Deng has attempted to rebuild his middle position by sponsoring as his successor Jiang Zemin, who is not tainted with the blood of Tiananmen. But the continual concern with health, retirement, and succession in the central leadership proves the transitional nature of current arrangements. Regardless of how long Deng continues to live, the era of Chinese politics that he defined is over.

The reform position is, of course, much more difficult to define, because its supporters have ranged from those at Democracy Wall and Tiananmen Square to the highest levels of the party, and policy content has changed during the decade. What I would use as the defining feature of reform was the attempt to provide an external, institutional definition to the relationship between state and people - in effect, to institutionalize the party-state. From the point of view of the reform leadership, that was a challenge of structural reform and political modernization. Each level of the cascade of power - the party center, party leadership within the state, and the state's penetration of society - should be brought under a rule of law and institutional definition, and also under popular control. From
the point of view of the intellectuals and of concerned people in general, the objective was citizen rights, including both rights of control over officials (articulated as criticism of corruption) and individual rights against the state.

Significant progress was made in every area except structural reform of the party center. Constitutional and legal activities flourished, with the high points of new state and party constitutions in 1982. The state became less intrusive into the personal lives of citizens, and electoral mechanisms were strengthened in the party and workplace, as well as in the people’s congress system. Although they were far from acting as a parliament, the people’s congresses expanded their roles of overseeing officials and policies at the national and local levels. The changes in China’s political life in the 1980s were not as dramatic as those in economics and society, but if one compares the political activity of early 1989 with that of early 1979, innovations that had once seemed radical were becoming routine.

The Achilles’ heel of the reform program was that it was fostered by and depended upon an unreformed central leadership structure. Deng Xiaoping was the hero and patron of reform, much as Mao had been for leftism. The power of reform did not depend on the support of its beneficiaries, but on the support of its ultimate target. Political reform was acceptable as long as it provided an orderly accompaniment to economic reform and made difficulties for the middle bureaucrats remaining from the Cultural Revolution. But when societal forces became self-confident enough to challenge the party’s political monopoly and to criticize the center leadership, Deng abandoned and attacked his clients.

Was Deng correct in saying that the conflict was inevitable? Are democratizing reforms ultimately incompatible with the party-state? Both conservative communists and anticomunist observers would say yes. In my opinion, which is elaborated elsewhere, 34 democratizing reforms do not simply evolve into a democratic party-state, but party-state democracy is possible. The key threshold for party-state democracy is that crises of political leadership be resolved by recourse to institutionalized, democratic procedures rather than by a retreat into the assertion of central authority. In other words, in order to become democratic, the party-state must put itself at risk to the people through public institutions. The demonstrators confronted the party center at this threshold. Zhao Ziyang, probably like most of the younger leadership, was willing to accept the challenge of democratization in order to re legitimize the party as a postrevolutionary, popular party, just as Gorbachev was willing to do in the Soviet Union. But the octogenarians still in charge of the party center were not.

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CONCLUSION

The historical course of the people–state relationship in China does not dictate a course for the current crisis of the Chinese state. Indeed, according to my analysis, China stood at a crossroads in the spring of 1989 between a decisive move toward party-state democracy or a fall back into party authoritarianism, either of which would have been a significant change from the ambiguity of the Deng Xiaoping era. Moreover, the age and frailty of the top leadership, its lack of ideological credibility, and the contradiction between repression and modernization all suggest an instability in the current situation. It seems likely that the leadership’s failure to resolve the succession problem has brought China to a period of unpredictable crises and crossroads.

One utility of the historical perspective developed here is that it enables us to perceive the resonances of the current situation with the past. It is clear, for instance, that the conservative orthodoxy rests not only on a Stalinist interpretation of Marxism-Leninism but also on the assumptions of a natural hierarchy and order that go to the roots of traditional Chinese political culture. Democracy, minzhu, in its general, modern sense of institutional control of authority, is as foreign to the current old guard as it was to imperial China. Care for the people is a status obligation of those in power; the vanguard party shepherds the people, but it does not represent them.

Perhaps the most important historical resonance of the conservative position is with the fear of chaos and the drive for order in the twentieth century. The postulate that the interests of the parts should be subordinate to the interests of the whole becomes salient when the existence of the whole political order is threatened. The historic achievement of the CCP was meeting the challenge of total crisis presented by imperialism and internal disintegration, and the conservative viewpoint is defined by that experience. Every crisis is seen as one of life or death, and every challenge appears to lead ineluctably to a crisis. Any demonstrator calls for the overthrow of the party and the socialist system, no matter what that demonstrator actually says. 35 The overriding concern for order reinforces the traditionalist and Marxist predilection to deny legitimacy to pluralization, institutional and procedural structure, and citizen rights. Even if the leadership does not really believe itself to be mortally threatened, it is to the interest of its complacency of power to sound the alarm. Crisis justifies dictatorship, even if the party produces the crisis.

The reformist position also has ancient and modern resonances. The traditional notion of the people as the root of the state was not simply the hypocritical convenience of those in power; it was grounded in the perception that the survival as well as the justification of the state de-
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Pended on its service to the material interests of its inhabitants. And from the time of Confucius, scholar-officials have acknowledged the possibility of misrule and the advantages of rational government over the convenience and unreflective inclinations of power-holders. Clearly, the June 4 massacre drew a line between the power-holders and the scholars. History will show the power-holders in the wrong, if for no other reason than that the scholars write the histories.

A key concept of reform is modernization, and it possesses today the overtones of support for diversity, openness to Western influences, and criticism of established power first voiced at the beginning of the century. But I think that the primary modern root of reform in the 1980s is the post-1949 experience of the PRC. Political structural reform is based on the perception that postrevolutionary crises of government in China have been caused primarily by the amount of unstructured power cascading from the center of the system. Instead of total crisis, the problem has been numerous crises of totalism, in which the diversifying society has been especially vulnerable. "Order" is not the monistic prevention of chaos, but a differentiated texture of laws and institutions to which a complex society can relate. This approach will require the restructuring of the vanguard party-state into a constitutional party-state dependent on the citizenry.

The Deng Xiaoping era pragmatically combined conservative habits of power with reform policies, and as a result its political direction oscillated as it struggled on the two fronts of defending the existing orthodoxy while promoting modernization. But the declaration of martial law introduced a qualitatively new level of uncertainty. By once again preventing the transfer of power from the old guard to designated successors, it put the center of Chinese politics at the mercy of a handful of very old biological clocks. Moreover, the regime is fully committed to a repressive consolidation of its own power that threatens even-widening circles of people and policies. Its declarations of support for modernization and openness merely demonstrate that, in contrast to the idealistic turbulence of the Cultural Revolution, repression now serves no higher end than the preservation of power. Clearly, there is a practical contradiction between the tightening of central party control and the premises of decontrol and diversification inherent in modernization and openness. Recent events have demonstrated to my satisfaction that the future of Chinese politics is difficult to predict, but it seems to me that the old-guard regime is a transitional phase to a basic question, namely: Is China heading toward a new total crisis or is it merely working out the last painful throes of the party-state vanguardism? The new total crisis would be the end of the party-state. If repression so radicalizes the forces of reform that they reject the possibility of reform within the party-state system, then future politics will be defined by a chaotic struggle between new forces of revolutionary radicalism and establishment forces defending public order. The vanguard party will re-legitimize itself as an ideologically authoritarian party, and reform politics will be radicalized into antiregime activities reminiscent of opposition to the late empire. The advantage will be with the establishment, which might in time feel secure enough to tolerate a new cycle of reform efforts.

The other possibility is that the intervention of the old guard into the general trend toward modernization and democratization will prove temporary. If vanguardism is interfered with the last of the revolutionary vanguard, and a new regime condemns the Tiananmen massacre, much of the political optimism of the 1980s could be rescued. The triumphal return of reformers and their policies, strengthened in their popular support by their mistreatment, would be reassuring. But the trauma of the June 4 massacre probably would require that a returning reform leadership provide institutional guarantees of popular control of authority. Constitutional reform would be a high priority, and the task would be to structure a modern democratic regime with Chinese characteristics. At that point, China’s search for democracy would not be over, but perhaps its path could be expected to be less tortuous.

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13. Balazs, "China as a Permanently Bureaucratic Society."
14. The other was science. See Chen Duxiu, "Xin Qingshan zujuan zhi dabaoshu?" (A refutation to the crimes of New Youth), in Zhongguo xianshui sixiang shi ziliao jianbian (An anthology of materials for modern Chinese intellectual history) (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin chubanshe, 1986), vol. 1; originally in Xin qingshan 6, no. 1 (January 15, 1919).
25. Mao Zedong, "Rectify the Party’s Style of Work (1942)," in his *Selected Works*, 3:45.
28. As Marc Blecher points out in Chapter 4 in this volume, mass participation was much more benign when it remained focused on the material and economic problems facing basic-level units.

In search of democracy

32. That editorial was written and approved while Zhao was out of the country, clearly a manipulation by the conservatives. Yang Shangkun claimed that "a cable was sent to Comrade Ziyang, informing him of the Standing Committee’s decision and Comrade Xiaoping’s view," and that Zhao carried back his support. Editorials are (or should be) authoritative, consensus positions agreed to by all members of the top leadership. See Yang Shangkun’s speech of May 24, 1989, trans. Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), May 30, 1989, p. 17.
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